

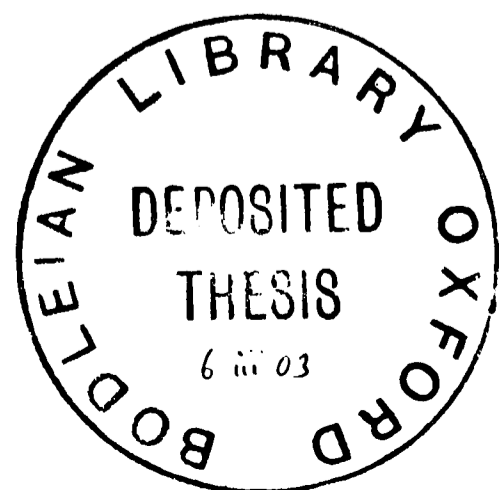
**THE CAPE VERDEAN 'COMMUNITY' IN PORTUGAL:
ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONSTRUCTIONS
FROM WITHIN AND WITHOUT**

by
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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This dissertation is based on a fifteen months' period of multisite fieldwork and sets out to analyse the notions of Cape Verdean 'community' and 'identity' in Portugal by viewing their construction through three different perspectives: the perspective of an old colonial elite of Portuguese Cape Verdeans, the perspective of the Cape Verdean labour migrants, and the perspective of the Portuguese mainstream society.

The archipelago of Cape Verde, a former Portuguese colony, is the homeland of the two groups who make up the Cape Verdean 'community' in Portugal. These two groups have separate identities based on linguistic, social and cultural differences, as well as time and place of origin. On the one side, there is an old Portuguese Cape Verdean colonial elite constituted by those who were born in Cape Verde while this was still a colony. Most of them left the archipelago at an early age to study in Portugal, then the metropole, and never returned. Some have remained in Portugal, but most found positions within the colonial administration of the other Portuguese colonies. They distinguish themselves from the other Cape Verdeans by their light complexion and their higher level of education. They view their Cape Verdeanness as part of an old colonial 'national' identity, seeing themselves as Portuguese and Cape Verdean at the same time without sensing any contradiction in this. On the other side, there are the Cape Verdean labour migrants who started to come to Portugal in the mid-1960s, when Cape Verde was still a colony. These are mostly uneducated peasants who were escaping the effects of drought and famine in Cape Verde. Most are black and come from the island of Santiago and speak Creole at home.

The elite and the labour migrants live in completely different worlds: the first in middle-class suburbs and the second in shantytowns and council housing projects. Notions of 'race' and 'class', based on differences in complexion, education and wealth, contribute to the existence of these two groups of Cape Verdeans as separate entities. While the elite Portuguese Cape Verdeans are almost invisible within the mainstream society, the Cape Verdean labour migrants are highly visible because of their poor social integration. While the descendants of the elite are diluting within the Portuguese mainstream, the descendants of the labour migrants are occupying the fringes of Portuguese society and developing an oppositional identity in relation to the Portuguese mainstream. The first part of this thesis gives a detailed description of the Cape Verde archipelago and the foundations of its colonial society, and of the important issue of Cape Verdean migration. The second part presents the life of the two groups of Cape Verdeans in postcolonial Portugal and the ways the Portuguese mainstream perceive them.

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Table of Contents

General Introduction	1
1. Why the Cape Verdeans?	1
2. Doing fieldwork	3
3. A few notes about ‘race’ and ‘ethnicity’	8
4. The aim of this work	13
PART I – IN CAPE VERDE	16
Introduction.....	16
1. The Cape Verde Islands	18
1.1. Introduction.....	18
1.2. A Portuguese Colony.....	19
1.2.1. Geography and Climate	19
1.2.2. Discovery and Populating.....	25
1.2.3. A stronghold of slave trade.....	32
1.2.4. Other economic activities	36
1.2.5. Fighting for independence	40
1.3. A newly independent country	43
1.3.1. Political organisation	43
1.3.2. Religion	45
1.3.3. Economy	46
1.4. Population and demography	49
1.4.1. Demographic evolution	50
1.4.2. Emigration	54
1.5. Conclusion	62
2. The Origin and Transformation of Cape Verdean Society.....	64
2.1. Introduction.....	64
2.2. From black and white to creole.....	66
2.2.1. The ‘colour’ of wealth.....	70
2.2.2. The <i>assimilado</i> status	74
2.3. The luso-tropical Eden	76
2.4. Society after abolition.....	83
2.4.1. ‘Masters’ and ‘slaves’ after abolition.....	85
2.4.2. The nature of ‘race’	87
2.4.2. The social triumph of the Creole.....	95
2.5. ‘Class’ and ‘race’ at the end of colonialism	100
2.6. Conclusion	106
3. The Creation of ‘the Cape Verdean Man’	108
3.1. Introduction.....	108
3.2. Identity in literature and poetry.....	112
3.3. The <i>Claridade</i> movement	114
3.4. <i>Chiquinho</i> as the imaginary Cape Verdean	121
3.5. Conclusion	126

PART II – IN PORTUGAL.....	128
Introduction.....	128
4. The Portuguese Cape Verdean ‘Elite’	133
4.1. Introduction.....	133
4.2. Defining the Portuguese Cape Verdean ‘elite’	135
4.2.1. Betwixt and between	136
4.2.2. Acting as ‘middleman’	138
4.3. The <i>Associação</i> as a postcolonial survival	142
4.3.1. The foundations of the <i>Associação</i>	143
4.3.2. Enacting the past	150
4.4. ‘We were all Portuguese, from Minho to East Timor’	157
4.5. Education as identity marker	161
4.5.1. Studying in the ‘metropole’	162
4.5.2. Cultivating ‘Europeanness’	165
4.5.3. Dealing with racial prejudice	171
4.6. Still ‘culture’ and ‘race’	177
4.7. The integration of the elite’s descendants	182
4.8. Conclusion	192
5. The Cape Verdean Labour Migrants	195
5.1. Introduction.....	195
5.2. The beginnings.....	196
5.3. The first generation	201
5.3.1. Settling in the <i>bairros</i>	207
5.3.2. The men: ‘good workers but quarrelsome’.....	210
5.3.3. The women: from peddling to cleaning	214
5.4. Parents in a strange world.....	226
5.4.1. Language barriers.....	227
5.4.2. The school: ‘We cannot control them anymore’.....	231
5.5. Second-generation ‘misfits’?	237
5.5.1. Deficient schooling	238
5.5.2. Residential and educational segregation	244
5.5.3. The expectations	249
5.5.4. Deficient assimilation and integration.....	253
5.6. Comparing experiences	260
5.7. Upward mobility	267
5.7.1. The importance of education	269
5.7.2. Cape Verdean identity in the U.S.....	272
5.7.3. Reconciling ethnicity and class.....	276
5.8. Conclusion	282
6. The Cape Verdeans: Views from Without.....	287
6.1. Introduction.....	287
6.2. ‘Place of birth’ and ‘nationality’	289
6.3. School and the ‘multicultural society’	292
6.3.1. ‘Ethnic’ labelling.....	293
6.3.2. The paradox of ‘multiculturalism’	298
6.4. Portuguese <i>patroas</i> and Cape Verdean <i>empregadas</i>	302

6.5. The construction industry site	308
6.5.1. The preference for Cape Verdeans.....	308
6.5.2. The coming of Eastern Europeans	312
6.6. The media as producers of identity	314
6.6.1. The ‘CREL case’	315
6.6.2. The murder of officer Felisberto.....	317
6.6.3. <i>Pedreira</i> na nha korason.....	319
6.7. Conclusion	324
Final Conclusion	327
Bibliography	335

General Introduction

1. Why the Cape Verdeans?

My first encounter with the Cape Verdeans happened in the late 1960s when, walking along with my father in the streets of Estoril, I questioned him about the black men who were digging trenches for electric cables and water-pipes. “Where do these *pretos* come from?”, I asked. My father then explained to me that they were Cape Verdean workers who had come in search of a living. I knew from geography lessons in school that Cape Verde was an ‘overseas province’ in the middle of the Atlantic, but one that was related to Africa since most of its inhabitants were black. To me Cape Verdean became synonymous with black African. I had had no previous contact with black people. During my childhood I do not remember to ever meeting any black person. The first black person I remember meeting was in my sixth grade. I was eleven years old. From Primary School, I remember one rhyme about the *preto da Guiné que lava a cara com café* (the black from Guinea who washes his face with coffee). This and other little stories were the only means through which I had the opportunity to construct my racialised view of the world.

After the independence of the colonies, in 1975, I began having contact with the *retornados* (returnees from the colonies) during my secondary-school years. Between the age of thirteen and eighteen I had schoolmates who had been born and first educated in the colonies. They were used to ‘multiracial’ contact, and through their eyes I was able to understand how people of different colours related to each other in the colonies. I learnt, for example, that the Mozambicans paid more attention to colour difference than the Angolans. Most of the mulattos

and blacks I knew were from Angola. My Mozambican schoolmates were mostly white and pretty much influenced by their 'South-Africaness'; they did not get along very well with darker people, especially those who were not from Mozambique.

However, the whole time I was in secondary school I do not remember meeting a single Cape Verdean student. If they existed, they seemed invisible to me (perhaps because they never made a point in saying that they were of Cape Verdean origin). It was only in my final year, right before entering university, that I met Stuart, a Cape Verdean with a Scottish family name. What impressed me was the fact that Stuart was white (though an experienced eye could spot the African influence in his complexion) and that the Cape Verdeans I remembered from the streets of Estoril, and who were at the time, in 1981, becoming conspicuous in the shantytowns of Lisbon and nearby areas, were black and spoke a language that was not Portuguese.

All these episodes happened long before I even knew what anthropology was about. It was only upon entering the university that I discovered how interesting anthropology could be. Having done some fieldwork for my B.A. among urban vagrants whose living was based on gathering from garbage containers, an idea I copied from James Spradley (1972), an American anthropologist who studied the gathering activities of vagrant people in Seattle and their strategies to keep out of imprisonment, I then turned to Morocco as the field of my M. Phil. (*mestrado*) dissertation, which I did with little fieldwork and much reading. Meanwhile, the idea of studying the Cape Verdeans lurked in the back of my mind the whole time I was working on other issues. Finally, when I decided to study for a doctorate in the mid-1990s, I also decided that this time I

would have to know better how the lives of João Stuart and the Cape Verdean workers I first saw digging trenches in the streets of Estoril interrelated.

The other reasons that led me to the Cape Verdeans are of a very practical nature. The fact that I had neither the disposition nor the availability to search for the 'other' in a distant land, something that the anthropological craft required a few decades ago, was the main reason. I preferred to try and find it at my door step than travel to distant lands where 'more real others' could be found. The Cape Verdeans represented the best 'other' that was available at home; they were coming from a different society and spoke a different language.

2. Doing fieldwork

My fieldwork took place between August 1998 and January 2000, the time I went back to Oxford and started the writing up process. However, since I last left Oxford, in September 2000, I have been in contact with some of my informants and have frequently visited the places of my fieldwork.

As I had to act in two completely different fieldwork settings I relied on different strategies. The contact with the black Cape Verdean 'community' was initially established through Ezequiel Monteiro (*Carbadjo*), a retired bus driver, who led me into his family and then into the wider world of the *bairros*. From him I was able to know other people and families and select a set of informants who I interviewed using a tape-recorder when there was consent and I found appropriate; tape recording was particularly important when collecting life histories. Other times, conversation took place without tape-recording and I had to rely on pen notes or just my memory. Oftentimes, I was taken by Ezequiel to visit people in different neighbourhoods and participate in family and local

neighbourhood events: weddings, feasts, Masses, burials, or just occasional meetings to which the only pretext was to eat a *catchupa* (Cape Verdean dish made with corn, beans and meat or fish) or play some *gaita* (small concertina) and *ferro* (an iron angle bar which works as a musical instrument when scrapped up and down with another piece of iron).

As my contact broadened within the Cape Verdean neighbourhoods I was able to rely less on Ezequiel and more and more on other informants. The fact that Ezequiel has four children with different ages eased my contact with the younger generations in the neighbourhoods. Because I played football reasonably well I was able to mingle with the youths in informal matches played mostly on Saturdays in the football ring of Ezequiel's neighbourhood. During my fieldwork Ezequiel's family moved from *Pedreira dos Húngaros*, a notorious shantytown, to a new housing development area. This allowed me to observe the life adjustment of his family and other neighbours to the setting of the council housing development neighbourhood.

I also did some observation in primary and secondary schools with the consent and collaboration of the staff. On some occasions I was allowed to go into classes and create discussions around the issue of 'being Cape Verdean'. These discussions helped me to guide my research and proved to be a valuable way to get in contact with the youths outside the neighbourhood setting.

After a few months I had a list containing about fifty informants in different neighbourhoods and with whom I would maintain contact during the following months of my research. For a period of two months I was also teaching English to a group of youths in the *bairro* Cova da Moura. This was possible thanks to the good will of the people in charge of *Moinho da Juventude*,

a local association which caters for the people in the neighbourhood in many ways, providing nursery and kindergarten facilities, and alternative education for drop-out children. The teaching experience allowed me to contact with youths who have trouble adjusting to school and oftentimes are on the verge of social marginality.

After finishing fieldwork proper I have maintained a close relation with Ezequiel, his family, and a few other Cape Verdeans. I have taken part in the resettlement of the local association that Ezequiel used to run in his former neighbourhood. My intention is to maintain a long-standing relationship with Ezequiel and his family, as well as with a few other Cape Verdean families in order to be able to make long-term observation of second- and third-generation descendants.

My contact with the 'elite' Portuguese Cape Verdeans took a completely different form. It was established mainly through the *Associação dos Antigos Alunos do Ensino Secundário de Cabo Verde* (AAAESCV), an association with the characteristics of a social club which served as the main venue for the gathering of Portuguese Cape Verdeans. These Cape Verdeans have little or no connection to their *patrícios* in the shantytown neighbourhoods and distinguish themselves from the mass of Cape Verdeans by way of their higher education and past experience at the service of the colonial authorities.

A few months after starting to frequent the AAAESCV I became a member. Although I am not Cape Verdean, I was accepted as someone 'interested' in Cape Verde and things Cape Verdean. I was given a list of all the members and their contact, which I used to select people who did not frequent the *Associação* on a regular basis. Many Saturdays (the only opening day)

during my fieldwork period I would be there talking to people, but mostly listening. I also collected life histories and other related information in tape-recorded interviews, of which some took place in the *Associação* and others in the informants' home or in some other quiet place.

Today, in the same manner as with the people in the *bairros*, after having finished fieldwork proper I continue to frequent the AAAESCV once in a while and to meet some of the people who were my informants. I intend to continue as a member of the club with the objective of doing long-term observation.

Needless to say, the fact that I have continued in contact with the fieldwork settings has brought continuous changes to my mind, of which many came too late to be incorporated in my work. These will be used in my future work.

My fieldwork has been 'multi-sited' in at least two senses of the concept. First, because the people and contexts I have dealt with are the creation of multiple variables that straddle across time and space. For example, the 'elite' Portuguese Cape Verdeans I have worked with developed their identity in the context of the Portuguese nineteenth- and twentieth-century colonisation of Angola, Mozambique, Guinea, and other parts of the 'empire'. However, their identity had to adjust to the postcolonial context of life in the 'metropole', and so their postcolonial existence is strongly rooted in their previous life as colonial actors. In the same manner, the life and role of the Cape Verdean labour migrants in the second-half of the twentieth century in the postcolonial metropole have also been determined by the social structure of Cape Verdean colonial society and the ideology that underpinned it, as well as by the economic and political conditions created during colonialism in Cape Verde.

Second, my work has been ‘multi-sited’ in the more literal sense of the definition, since I had to divide myself between two completely different settings: the setting of the ‘elite’ Portuguese Cape Verdeans and that of the Cape Verdean labour migrants. Many times I was moving from the setting of the lower-class immigrants in the shantytowns to that of the middle-class Portuguese Cape Verdeans centred in the *Associação* (see section 4.3). Moving from one setting to the other made the contrast of their livings more evident, and often the cross-view perspective allowed me to see and understand things that otherwise would have passed unnoticed.

As Marcus has pointed out:

Multi-sited research is designed around chains, paths, threads, conjunctions, or juxtapositions of locations in which the ethnographer establishes some form of literal, physical presence, with an explicit, posited logic of association or connection among sites that in fact defines the argument of the ethnography (1995:105).

Finally, the ‘multi-sited’ nature of my work has also involved travelling to Cape Verde in order to observe the connections of my informants to their ‘homeland’. On the two occasions I travelled to Cape Verde during my research in Lisbon, I had the opportunity to link people in Lisbon to people in Cape Verde; either carrying auto spare parts and musical instruments or simply news (*mantenhas*) back and forth. My travelling to Cape Verde allowed me to understand the nature of the ‘transnational’ bounds established between those within and those without, as well as between those without and without (for example between those in Portugal, France and Holland).

The huge differences I found among my informants in terms of their level of transnational interconnection do not allow me to speak of a very well

organised and effective transnational network among the Cape Verdeans (cf. Marques et al. 2001). I met people who connected back to the islands on a regular basis, and others who had gone for years, or even decades, without linking back to their homeland. And though we might think that transnational mobility would be more related to the 'elite' Portuguese Cape Verdeans, in fact many of my 'elite' informants had not been to Cape Verde for decades, while some of the poorer Cape Verdean immigrants had been capable of going back to their homeland once or twice since they first arrived in the 'metropole'. However, most of the Cape Verdeans I came to know in Lisbon will never be able to afford travelling to Cape Verde. As one of my informants sadly put it: "The thing that hurts me the most is to know that my body will not be sent back home and that I will be rotting away in some grave that nobody will care after".

Lastly, my work has been 'multi-sited' in the sense that I have had to translate the world of the Cape Verdeans in Portugal to the anthropology people in Oxford. This implied that I had to mediate between three languages, Creole, which most Cape Verdeans speak, Portuguese, which is my mother tongue, and English, the language in which I had to write my work. If I were to agree with Cutileiro (1971), I would have to say that perhaps the most difficult part of my work has been to 'impersonate' an Oxonian anthropologist and make my work comprehensible in the 'Oxford-site'.

3. A few notes about 'race' and 'ethnicity'

In my work I use the notion of 'race' mostly in the sense that my informants and myself use it to talk about differences perceived in terms of physical aspect (mainly skin colour, hair and facial traits), but which are essentially social.

When the words 'black' and 'white' appear in inverted commas, it often means that I am not endorsing myself its use in those contexts. When they appear without inverted commas they are mostly used as physical descriptors, though the distinction between the two uses is not always an easy one to establish. In some instances I use the words black and white without inverted commas, meaning that in those contexts the way my cognitive map organises social difference is not much different from that of my informants, since like them I am a member of the Portuguese society.

The reasons why I decided not to enter the terrain of 'ethnicity' are various. First, the word is not part of the everyday discourse of my informants, contrary to what happens in Britain, for instance, where the concept of ethnicity has long become part of the daily currency in terms of identity definition, as we can see from the words in a website set up to give voice to the 'British Chinese minority' after the blame of foot-and-mouth disease:

It is important that we move away from the idea of race since the academic history of that word is closely tied with eugenics and imperialism. Instead, we prefer to speak of ethnicity or ethnic groups. We define an ethnic group as a group of people who might share similar values, culture, beliefs, language and/or history. So when we speak of the Chinese, we are referring to them as an ethnicity and not a race (<http://www.dimsum.co.uk>, [authored in May 23, 2002, consulted in May 25, 2002]).

The words 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic minority' are still unknown to most of my informants, who are still rather tied to the notion of 'race'.

Second, I do believe that the use of 'ethnicity', as an analytical category in replacement to the notion of 'race' used by my Cape Verdean informants (and within the Portuguese society in general), does not add much to the analysis of the ways my informants organise social difference. In the case of the Cape

Verdeans, social difference is mostly constructed in terms of 'class' and 'race'. So, to introduce an external category such as 'ethnicity' could only make things more difficult to grasp, and, most importantly, it might give the 'analysed' a new instrument to organise social difference.

The recent uses of 'ethnic minority' and 'ethnicity' as organising categories of socio-cultural difference have not demonstrated that these terms are good replacements for 'race'. I believe that much of the discussion and confusion arisen from the notions of 'race' and 'ethnicity' has resulted from the impossibility to separate the categories of the 'analyst' and the 'analysed'. In American sociology the mingling of 'race' and 'ethnicity' is common, making the distinction between the two impossible to establish, both in the minds of the analysts and the analysed (see for example Denton and Massey, 1989).

It is not possible to make a clear distinction between the 'emic' and 'etic' nature of two categories such as 'race' and 'ethnicity'. Analysts and analysed most often share the same categories without a clear distinction of which belongs to whom. Moreover, many analysts are not conscious that the categories they use are also used by their informants or the people they analyse. As Banks recognises:

There are, however, occasional uses [of 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic'] that link more directly with academic uses (...). Quite how, when and why these terms entered popular discourse it is hard to say. Almost all of them came from ordinary speech in the first place, of course, but it seems to me that they have re-entered it, or been popularised within it as a result of contact with academic discourse (1996:162).

The interchangeable use of the categories 'ethnic' and 'racial' as a way of describing problematic social interaction between groups appears ever more common in the British media. In Portugal, the 'ethnicisation' of social conflict

has not yet taken off, at least to describe situations internal to the country. The local media use it mostly to describe situations abroad, whose description they gloss from the international media, as for example in the cases of the Bosnian or Rwandan 'ethnic conflict'. In Portugal, so far, the use of 'ethnicity' and 'ethnic' has been kept to the academy and, to a lesser extent, in the media. It has not poured into the public domain as a way of organising social difference.

Again, quoting Banks, I hope to make myself clear about the reasons which led me not to use much the category 'ethnicity' as a way to make sense of the world of my Cape Verdean informants:

This [perspective, as opposed to 'primordialism' and 'instrumentalism'] locates ethnicity in the observer's head: it is an analytical tool devised and utilised by academics to make sense of or explain the actions and feelings of the people studied. There are a number of advantages to this perspective. First, it shifts the 'responsibility' for ethnicity from the ethnographic subjects on to the analyst. This is not to say that the ethnographic subjects are not responsible for their 'ethnic' actions: they are fully responsible for their actions but it is for the analyst to decide whether – if at all – ethnicity is a useful tool to make sense of those actions (1996:186).

In the case of the Cape Verdeans I do not think there was much to be gained in terms of understanding by using 'ethnicity' as an analytical tool. I preferred to stick to the use of 'race', since it is already a category in the minds of my informants (and in mine as well). As Banks wisely remarks, there is no need to give extra weapons to our informants:

I hope that one of the lessons (...) was that to project one's own understanding of race, ethnicity and nationalism on to others under the impression that one is deriving those understandings from them is to make a profound mistake that leads to confusion at best, and to violence and bloodshed at worst (1996:186).

It was not my intention to add my personal understandings of 'race' and

'ethnicity' to those of my informants, but only to work and try to deconstruct the understandings they are already using. Fortunately, 'ethnicity' is not yet one of theirs. However, if 'ethnicity' is not an important category within the Cape Verdean social world, and at large within Portuguese society, the same cannot be said of 'race'. Michael Banton has recently re-affirmed the necessity of a compromise between the categories of the observer and the observed:

When discussing policy issues, social scientists cannot avoid using many of the same concepts as those to whom they address their remarks, but they should seek ways to eliminate the racial idiom from their theoretical language by developing better answers to the questions it has purported to answer (2001:184).

Despite Banton's optimism I do not believe that 'social scientists' will come up with a better language so long as they continue to make use of the same categories that the people they analyse use. Banton is himself a case in point, since he has been writing for decades about 'race' and 'ethnicity' without ever moving outside the boundary of these categories, and without being able to trace a clear frontier between 'his' categories and those of the people he describes. One could say that the critique made by Oliver Cox in his *Caste, Class and Race* (1948) that the sociologists had built too much upon the categories used by the public in general is still pertinent, since social analysts continue to base their analyses upon the categories of everyday discourse, making it very difficult to distinguish the 'scientist's view' from the 'layperson's view'.

This critical view of the incorporation of everyday discourse into sociological theory appears again in the work of Miles:

We must not incorporate in a scientific analysis the categories of description and analysis used in everyday discourse, because in so far as that discourse is uncritical and confines itself to the direct experience and appearance of the social world, then there is

the possibility of creating a false and misleading explanation (1982:31-32, cited in Banton 2001:184).

Marxist sociologists, like Miles, claimed that the use of the *race* discourse as an explanatory device might obscure the real nature of the processes of social 'struggle' and differentiation undergoing within capitalist societies. For them 'exploitation' and 'class struggle' were the most appropriate tools to understand the functioning of capitalism. In other words, they wanted to rely on an 'etic' structure which would allow them to grasp the 'social reality' without having to rely on the participants' own conceptualisation. But the crucial question is: did not their own 'scientific' conceptualisation emerge from the very same social world they were trying to analyse, and, in that sense, was it not as well culture-bound?

As Banton has recently remarked:

In a further fifty years' time social scientists may treat the two [race and ethnicity] as exemplifications of the same general principles, regarding racial studies as the examination of those ethnic relations which has been racialised (2001:189).

So, it seems that in the minds of the analysts 'race' and 'ethnicity' are more and more about the same (see Jenkins 1997:22). And, as I do not have any proof that one can be a better analytical tool than the other, I will use the one that makes more sense to my informants.

4. The aim of this work

The principal aim of my work is to deconstruct the commonly held notion of 'Cape Verdean community' and to present a two-edged portrait of the people who live in Portugal and claim, with or without purpose, some sort of 'Cape

Verdean' identity. During my fieldwork I came to the conclusion that there are two different groups of Cape Verdeans which barely relate to each other.

I have tried to portray the Cape Verdeans of the two groups in a way that could make sense to themselves and outsiders as well. I have not had the intent to come up with an unquestionable 'Cape Verdean' identity. On the contrary, I am sure that from what I have written about them many other hidden aspects (at least for me) of their social identity will surface in the future, as others read my work.

Of the many Cape Verdeans I have interviewed and with whom I have shared opinions some will agree with most of what I have written about them, others will not, but I am afraid that is the normal course of any ethnography.

Very often, the doctoral candidate in anthropology is asked about what he or she thinks that his or her work is going to serve for and what impact it will have upon those he or she has studied. I think that my work may have important implications in changing the way both the governmental authorities in particular and the public in general look at the existence of the 'immigrant' and 'ethnic communities': as bound and reified identities that can be easily traceable through fixed settings of 'culture' and 'race' or 'ethnicity'. I expect to have shown that multiculturalist policies in education may lead, through the entitlement to 'cultural' and 'educational' difference, to the continuing marginalisation of second-generation Cape Verdeans. Multiculturalism is nothing but the old pluralism in new clothes; a new form of cultural racism whose motto can be read as "for you're different you're entitled to continue different". Unfortunately, more often than not 'cultural' difference runs alongside with social inequality and poverty, and in sanctioning one we may be sanctioning the other.

I have tried to show that things are not always what they look like, and that the world of the Cape Verdeans is being determined by a past history as well as present-day circumstances, of which most are not even aware of. What is happening to them is determined from inside and outside, with and against their own will. I hope to have made clear that the 'racism' that affects the black Cape Verdeans, especially the second-generation descendants, is a social construction shared both by them and the host society, and that in embracing that way of understanding the organisation of the social world in which they have to live, they are more prone to poor integration and discrimination. Those who understand social difference in terms of 'class' and not 'race' are more likely to overcome their initial situation of social inferiority. I hope that my work shows that the difference between the 'elite' Cape Verdeans and the black immigrants is mostly one of values and not of skin colour, and that the notions of 'black' and 'white' count more in the peoples' minds than in their skins.

My work among the Cape Verdeans in Portugal is part of a wider project which involves a deeper and wider comparison with Cape Verdean migrants in other destinations in Europe and the U.S., as well as deeper comparison with the Caribbean migrants, whose migration history closely resembles that of the Cape Verdeans. I expect that my work is able to attract the interest of Portuguese and other scholars to the necessity of comparative studies which can match the Cape Verdeans with other similar examples of identity construction marked by cultural and geographical displacement.

Part I – In Cape Verde

Introduction

Despite this work being about the Cape Verdeans in Portugal, and most particularly in Lisbon metropolitan area, I begin by describing the Cape Verde Islands in the aspects that may be considered relevant both for the large-scale migration of the Cape Verdeans and for the development of their cultural identity.

Part of what they are in this postcolonial era has been and is being determined by the way Cape Verde was peopled, made a colony, and its society structured. Some of the social characteristics of the Cape Verdean colonial society were reproduced by Cape Verdean migrants in the receiving societies that have accommodated them during the last one hundred-fifty years. Wherever they went, for better or worse, they reproduced in part the differentiated social structure that was created during colonialism. This was particularly true in the U.S. and in Portugal.

Chapter one is a brief description of the geography, climate, history, economy, demography and political organisation of Cape Verde. I describe the trail of the archipelago from the 1460s, when it began to serve as an emporium for slave trade, to 1975, when it became an independent country, and thereafter to the present. Emphasis is given to the long colonial period which was, in part, responsible for the shaping of how it reached independence, almost five centuries after having been discovered and peopled with Europeans and African slaves. The slave trade deserves special attention as the most important shaping

force of Cape Verdean colonial society right from the beginning.

Chapter two is about the origin and transformation of the Cape Verdean colonial society. Although the local ideology of social differentiation denied the importance of notions of 'race', it seems they played an important role in the structuring of Cape Verdean colonial society. The Cape Verdeans always thought about themselves as 'racially' closer to the metropolitan Portuguese vis-à-vis the Africans from the continent. The interplay between 'race' and 'class' in the minds of the Cape Verdeans is dismantled together with the idea of 'lusotropicalism' borrowed from Freyre and re-invented by Cape Verdean intellectuals.

Chapter three is about the intellectual construction of the 'Cape Verdean man' put up by a half-dozen Cape Verdean intellectuals in the late 1930s. This construction emerged in the literary journal *Claridade*, published for the first time in 1936 and in the novels published thereafter by some Cape Verdean writers and essayists. The Cape Verdean men of literature sought identification with the Brazilian northeast and *sertão* (back-country). These Cape Verdean intellectuals drew a parallel between the harshness of their barren islands and that of the poorest areas of north-eastern Brazil; both plagued by drought and famine. The Cape Verdean man was given the image of someone who has to leave in order to escape famine but remains longing his homeland for the rest of his life, hoping to return one day.

1. The Cape Verde Islands

– The Cape Verde Islands are not well known to the world at large. There are only nine significant islands in this West African and Atlantic archipelago, and their combined population is only one-third of a million. Yet these islands are remarkably complex in their history and composition. Indeed, such a simple matter as conceptualising their location is more difficult than one might expect.

(Lobban 1985:1)

1.1. Introduction

The geography and climate are two of the main factors which have marked the history of Cape Verde. The populating of some of the islands, in the second-half of the fifteenth century, aimed at setting up an economy based on slave trade and plantation agriculture. But, as the climate and geography of the islands proved inadequate for the second, the first quickly became the single major economic activity in the archipelago. Cape Verde was the only Portuguese colony which did not have an autochthonous population. Its society was built from nought with African slaves and European settlers.

Plagued by draught and famine, most Cape Verdeans have seen in migration the only hope to escape death; in the nineteenth century to the U.S. and in the twentieth to Europe. Until the time of independence, in 1975, there were still Cape Verdeans starving and in the early 1970s there were still Cape Verdeans being indentured to the plantations of São Tomé and Príncipe.

After the independence, Cape Verde became one of the poorest countries in the world and has received substantial external aid ever since. Independence was achieved by Amílcar Cabral and his Cape Verdean comrades, together with the Africans of the continent also subject to the Portuguese rule, through a

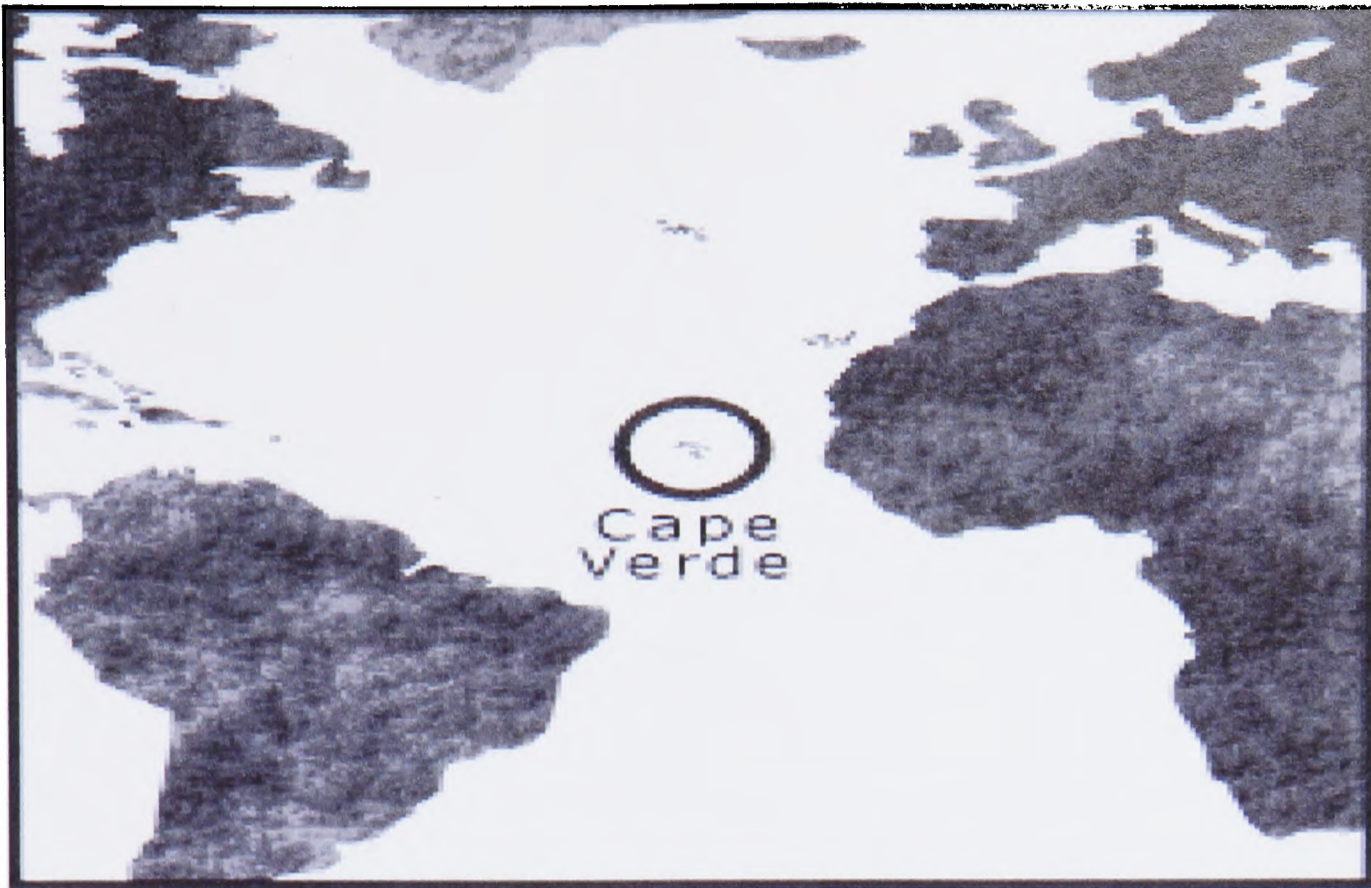
guerrilla movement which lasted for about thirteen years. However, in Cape Verde never a shot was fired or heard.

1.2. A Portuguese Colony

Cape Verde was a Portuguese colony until 1975, becoming then one of the poorest nations in the world. Until 1991 the country was ruled by a single political party of Marxist-Leninist ideology. Nevertheless, on the islands there was never political radicalism, and Cape Verdeans lived in a mild communist political version of what happened to Angola and Mozambique, the two other Portuguese former colonies where single-party Marxist-Leninist regimes ruled after independence. In 1991, the newly elected government chose the way into the progressive liberalisation and privatisation of the economy, and the country became definitively a multi-party democracy.

1.2.1. Geography and Climate

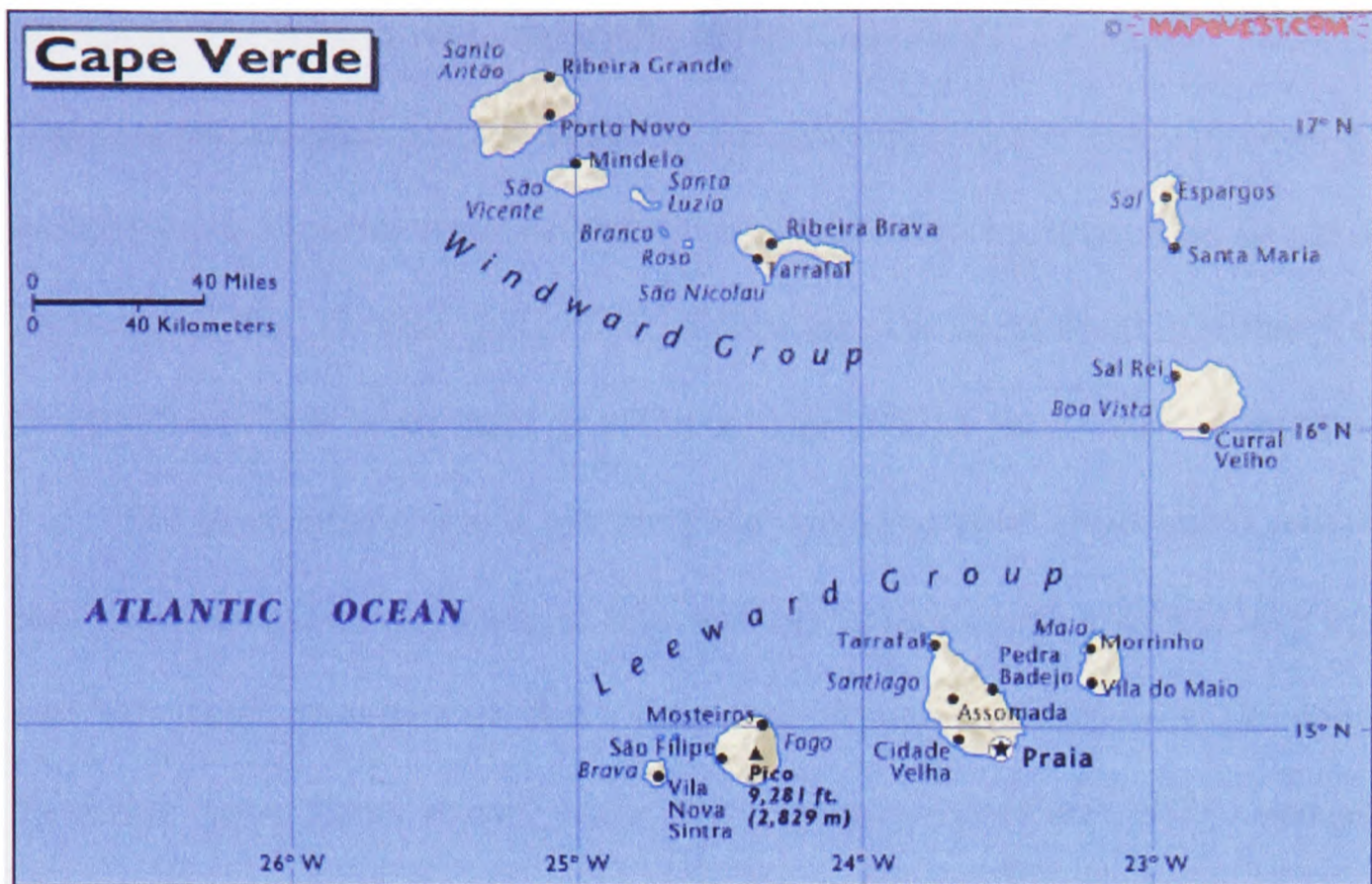
The Cape Verde archipelago is situated off the Southern Mid-Atlantic Ocean Ridge, about 630 km off Senegal. Its total area, 4,033 km², is approximately seven times the area of Singapore and four times that of Hong Kong. The archipelago comprises ten islands and eight islets of volcanic origin localised between the latitudes of 14° 23' and 17° 12' North, and the longitudes of 22° 40' and 25° 22' West.



(source: NASA's satellite view) Cape Verde relative position

The archipelago is divided into two main groups: *Barlavento* (northern windward), which consists of the islands of Boa Vista, Sal, Santo Antão, São Vicente, São Nicolau, and Santa Luzia, the smallest island (35 km²) and uninhabited; and *Sotavento* (southern leeward) consisting of the islands of Brava, Fogo, Maio, and Santiago, which is the largest island (991 km²) and harbours the capital city Praia. The main islets are Branco, Raso, Luís Carneiro, Grande, and Cima.

Situated about halfway between Europe and South America, Cape Verde has been a crucial stopover for ships on way across the Atlantic, as well as a hub for intercontinental cable communications. Its natural port in Mindelo, São Vicente, offered excellent sheltering conditions.



(source: Mapquest.com)

The Cape Verde Islands

The climate of Cape Verde is very dry and depends on the movement of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ). If the ITCZ does not move far enough northward, the result is the complete absence of rainfall for most part of the islands. Its annual temperature varies little (22-27°C) and, basically, there is a dry season (*as-brisa*), from November to July, and a wet season (*as-água*), from August to October, with 90 per cent of the rainfall occurring within the period of August-September (Amaral 1991:8).

However, when talking to the people in Cape Verde the impression one gets is that rain has become scarcer since the late 1960s (in fact there was a major drought during the period 1968-70). In popular opinion the *as-água* has been reduced to a shorter period, sometimes just one or two weeks in August. Nevertheless, in 1999 *as-água* were particularly copious with catastrophic consequences in some of the islands. In Praia, the capital city, in Santiago, there were serious floods, and in Tarrafal, northern Santiago, the brook overflowed

wiping out the bungalows in the tourist resort *Côco Verde*. For about a week the flights were cancelled. On the steeper slopes soil and crops were swept away. In Mindelo, São Vicente, where rainfall is very rare nowadays, there were floods in its lowland. Yet, in other parts of the archipelago the agricultural outcome was positive, and Cape Verde had one of the best agricultural years in many decades.

The predominant winds are the polar maritime wind (*invernada*), which may produce rain on the northern hills, and the tropical wind, which is very dry and lifts large quantities of dust¹, damaging the crops and eroding the soils. Droughts have been regular over the centuries (Carreira 1982), making agriculture and husbandry very hazardous activities. Furthermore, large quantities of rainfall after long periods of dryness sweep away the top-soil and essential nutrients making the land even less suitable for agriculture.

Cape Verde soils are of volcanic origin with a coarse texture (Freeman *et alii* 1978:59; Moran 1982:70, cited in Langworthy 1997:44), shallow and productivity is limited by the density of stones and the steepness of the slopes. Only a mere 1.65 per cent (52,688 hectares) of the land may be cultivated, and much of it remains uncultivated for long periods (Lobban & Lopes 1995:2; cf. Langworthy 1997:44).

Rainfall is almost absent on the flat islands as well as in the lower areas of the mountainous islands. In the highest areas rainfall can reach 580mm per year, but in the lowest can be as low as 131mm (Langworthy 1997:390).

Santiago, Santo Antão, Fogo, Brava, and São Nicolau are the most mountainous islands due to their more recent geological origin. Sal, Boavista, and Maio are almost flat and with a potential for tourism due to their long

¹ In São Vicente the locals call it *bruma seca* (dry haze). When it comes the flights have to be cancelled because it gets too risky.

beaches of white sand. São Vicente is in an intermediate position in terms of landscape, but its agricultural value is nil due to the scarcity of water. Until the second half of the twentieth century, and before they began to desalinise sea-water and to explore the scarce local subterranean water resources, water had to be brought in vessels from Santo Antão.



The volcanic cone of Fogo Island

The volcanic origin of the archipelago is particularly evident in the island of Fogo, with its many eruptions and earthquakes throughout history. The last two eruptions occurred in 1951 and 1995, and as a result part of the cultivable land on the eastern slope was wiped out by the outpourings of lava. According to Langworthy, the most extensive agricultural soils are brown to reddish-brown, sandy or clayey loam formed from rocks rich in calcium and found primarily

along the rolling *achadas*² (1997:44). The irrigable area, which is composed mainly of alluvial and coarse alluvial soil, is located in the beds of brooks (*ribeiras*) that accumulate sediment during normal rainfall years.

There are several elevations over 1,000 metres and the volcanic cone of Fogo is 2,831 metres high. This influences the rainfall, since the highest peaks draw moisture from passing clouds, creating micro-climates with small but permanent springs above certain heights. For example, in Santa Catarina, island of Santiago, the existence of the mountain range *Serra da Malagueta* and that of *Pico da Antónia* assures that there is rain every year. The problem is that this orographic rain only reaches a very small area. Just a few miles away people will have no rain at all. The same happens in the north-eastern part of Fogo, where rain occurs much more often than in the rest of the island, as well as in Santo Antão where the highlands get rainfall and the lowlands do not.



Desert-like landscape, Santiago Island

² *Achadas* are small plateaus formed by the outpouring lavas when they reach water at the island's foot level.

The flatter islands may go for several years without rainfall. Most of the landscape is lunar, with crags and volcanic cones, though the islands of Sal and Boa Vista are remarkably flat and smooth, very desert-like. Human settlement and the introduction of animals, especially goats, have almost entirely destroyed the vegetation. “Abusive farming and grazing practices added to soil degradation along with feudal and colonial land ownership patterns which cared little about long-term effects” (Lobban & Lopes 1995:2). The limited tolerance of the local ecosystems due to human settlement has been an important factor in emigration.

1.2.2. Discovery and Populating

There is no precise date for the discovery of the first islands of the archipelago and consensus is yet to be reached on this matter. Some authors say that some of the islands were first sighted in 1455-56, whereas others say in 1460 (cf. Albuquerque 1991; Amaral 1991; Lobban & Lopes 1995; Carreira 1983a, 1983b; Barata 1965). The Portuguese were probably not the first to reach the archipelago (cf. Feijóo 1815 IV:172; Chelmicki 1841:4; Pusich 1810:611). The Phoenicians may have been there as early as the fifth or fourth centuries B.C. A case can also be made for Moorish seafarers stopping at the islands for salt between the tenth and eleventh centuries. Wolof, Serer, and Lebu fishermen from West Africa could also have reached the archipelago before the fifteenth century, given the favourable wind conditions for sailing. Nonetheless, as Lobban and Lopes affirm: “irrespective of these claims, there can be no doubt that it was the Portuguese who were the first to settle there and begin a centuries-long pattern of colonialism, slavery, and trade” (1995:3).

The first reference to the islands is made in a Royal Charter that bestows

the ownership of the islands to Prince Fernando, on December 3, 1460, naming specifically São Jacobo (Santiago), São Filipe (Fogo), Maias (Maio), São Cristóvão (Boa Vista), and Lana (Sal) (Domingues 1991:42). That donation is confirmed in a Royal Charter, dated September 19, 1462, in which the islands are named as Santiago, São Filipe, Mayas, São Cristóvão and Sal, and its discovery is attributed to António da Noli. In that Charter the islands of Brava, São Nicolau, São Vicente, Santa Luzia, and the islets of Rasa, Branca and Santo António have also been added. Although some historians claim that the Africans had previously settled on some of the Cape Verde islands, it is almost certain that they were never inhabited before this date³.

It is quite certain that the archipelago did not offer advantageous conditions for the settlement of West Africans due to the drastic change in its climate and ecology that probably occurred in the mid-thirteenth century (Baleno 1991:129). Furthermore, it is difficult to conceive a good motivation for West African populations to sail across the circa 600 km that separate the coast from the islands. Some of the islands may have been visited sporadically, but they offered little incentive for permanent settlement.

Despite some controversy about who first discovered the archipelago, the credit usually goes to António da Noli and Diogo Gomes, who at the service of the Portuguese Crown are credited with the discovery of some of the islands in 1460 (cf. Lobban & Lopes 1995). However, Luís Cadamosto, Diogo Afonso, and Bartolomeo da Noli (brother of António) are also mentioned as possible discoverers (Albuquerque 1991:23-39). Nonetheless, King Afonso V attributed the discovery of the archipelago to António da Noli, later confirmed by King

³ For a better understanding of this point see Carreira (1983a).

Manuel. It is also possible that Diogo Gomes shared the discovery with António da Noli (Albuquerque 1991:38) and that Luís Cadamosto had discovered the islands without paying much importance to the fact, and only became aware of its importance when others claimed the discovery. In any case, it seems that in 1460 most of the archipelago had already been discovered.

Settlement began in 1462, but was initially faced with great difficulties due to the unattractiveness of the territory (Ribeiro 1962). Before settlement, cattle were placed on some of the islands to test the viability of the land as well as to be a source of meat when settlement began. The largest island, Santiago, was divided into two land grants, (*donatarias*), and António da Noli and Diogo Afonso were appointed as land grantees, (*capitães donatários*), respectively of the southern and northern parts of the island (Amaral 1964:170). Among the first Europeans to settle in Ribeira Grande (the first European city to be founded in the tropics and the capital of Santiago at the beginning of colonisation), there were Portuguese deportees and reprieved convicts, along with Genoese, Flemish, Sephardic Jews⁴, and Spaniards. In order to attract settlers, the Crown had to concede large privileges in terms of commerce and slave trade, which allowed the local nobility to become powerful. Judicial power was in the hands of the *capitães donatários*, whilst the bureaucracy was left for the local Crown staff.

The privileges chartered on June 12, 1466 had to be reduced a few years later, in 1472, because of the abusive Cape Verdean elite. Land tenure was organized in *donatarias* controlled by *capitães donatários*, who in turn rented land to *capitães* or *rendeiros* (tenants). Land estate was kept wholly within family networks. Property passed from father to son, according to the *morgadio*

⁴ About the Jewish presence in Cape Verde see Serels (1997).

system (rule of primogeniture), and when there was no son, the land went to a nephew. The power of the *capitães* was rivalled by the *câmara* (council of residents) of the residents (*vizinhos* and *moradores*).

The Cape Verdean society was almost identical to Portuguese feudal society at the time. The tendency was to reproduce the Portuguese society in the colonies. Progressively, the Crown tried to centralize and gain control over the administrative and economic activity of the archipelago. In 1564, legislation was passed which stated that the hereditary position of *capitão* of Santiago was due to end after the death of the last man to hold office at the time. Later, in 1576, the islands became Portuguese 'overseas provinces'⁵, reducing even further their administrative autonomy. Henceforth, the tendency was to reinforce the central authority of the Crown, a process which eventually replaced the *capitães'* authority with the Governor's. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the intense competition moved by the French, English, and Spaniards made the South Atlantic routes less attractive for Portuguese merchants, forcing the local elite of the archipelago to rely more upon local resources (Barata 1965:13). Furthermore, maritime commerce with the West African coast became a monopoly in the hands of colonial companies such as *Companhia do Cachéu e Rios da Guiné*, *Companhia de Cabo Verde e Cachéu*, and last but not least *Companhia Geral do Grão-Pará e Maranhão*, created in 1755 by Portuguese Prime Minister, Marquis de Pombal⁶.

⁵ Curiously, this designation was retaken by the Portuguese government in the twentieth century as a way to claim the indivisibility of Portuguese territory.

⁶ The first companies appeared in the second-half of the seventeenth century. The company of *Cachéu e Rios da Guiné* appeared in 1676 and was extinguished in 1682. *Cabo Verde e Cachéu* began to operate in 1690, and *Grão Pará e Maranhão* in 1775. The last company to be active was the *Sociedade Exclusiva do Comércio de Cabo Verde*, which operated between 1782 and 1785. The establishing of these companies aimed at fighting the power of local private merchants.

The difficulties in populating the archipelago continued throughout the seventeenth century, as confirmed by a decree issued in 1620 prescribing that the white women exiles, usually sent to Brazil, should instead embark to Cape Verde. On the one hand, there was a concern about the archipelago turning 'mulatto' due to intermarriage between white men and black slave women (Amaral 1991:11). On the other, slave women constituted a more docile and suitable labour force, especially for domestic work. In 1770, out of a total of 26,000 people roughly half were black. The *Notícia Corográfica e Cronológica do Bispado de Cabo Verde*⁷, by an anonymous author, dated 1784, gives a good picture of the evolution of Cape Verdean society since the early settlement:

Formerly, in the island there were many white men, locally born and descended from the first settlers, living in opulent houses by virtue of being the landlords of most part of the island. All that was due to favours granted by Prince Fernando and King Manuel (...) being very respected [the white men] and venerated by the blacks, who became their land tenants. They were so respectful that if they were riding a horse and came across a white, they would dismount and pull out of the way until the white had gone past (Amaral 1991:11, my translation).

As time went on, the white families diluted in the black mainstream; some had no descendants, others 'degenerated' into mulatto (*mestiços*). Miscegenation took over diluting the 'whiteness' of the early European settlers. The whites and the rich mulattos merged into the social category of *branco* (white), whereas the poor mulatto and the black merged into the social category of *preto* (black) (Amaral 1964:217).

The merging of the mulattos into the white category caused the gradual improvement of their status in society as well as the declining of racism on pure

⁷ Published by an anonymous author (1937) under the title 'Inéditos Coloniais', série A, III, Lisbon, pp. 126.

grounds of physical appearance. But the main reason for that was the fact that no one could prove beyond dispute his or her 'whiteness'. Every one could be tainted with a 'black drop' somewhere down the ancestral line. In this way, the so-called *sociedade crioula* (Creole society) was created. In Cape Verde everyone is potentially Creole, which makes it a 'common denominator' in the sense used by anthropologist T. H. Eriksen (1998). This ideology of the 'common denominator' is also present in other areas where there was intense contact between different 'races' and 'cultures'. For example, in Latin America, the emergence of a national identity, like in Colombia for instance, implied the development of an ideology of *blanqueamento* through which *todos son mestizos* (everybody is mixed) (see Wade 1993:11), while, at the same time, the categories at the bottom of the social ladder (black and Indian) were discriminated as inferior to the rest.

When the *Notícia Corográfica e Cronológica* was written, in 1784, the population of Cape Verde was about 50,000, a number maintained until 1834. Since then the population has grown at an accelerating rate, only slowed down by the periodic famines. Droughts have always been the main cause of famine in the archipelago, and food crises recurred regularly throughout history until as late as the early 1970s.

The many famines that occurred in Cape Verde have curbed the population 10 to 40 per cent. The statistics show that between 1747 and 1970 there have been fifty-eight years of famine and over 250,000 related deaths in twelve drought periods (Meintel 1984:55-72; Patterson 1988:303-309). Droughts continue to be a major problem for Cape Verde nowadays. Drought cycles have

also caused major economic disruption because of losses in crops and livestock⁸, and the lack of work has forced men to seek work elsewhere, causing the archipelago to become disproportionately populated with elderly, children and women.

The population tried to escape famine by moving from island to island or by emigrating to the Americas and Europe. This was the case, for example, during the 1902-1903 famine. On August 22, 1903, the governor Barjona de Freitas, at his first landing on Praia, wrote the following: “beyond the tail-coats and uniforms of the officials, stands a crowd of more than two thousand hungry people, naked and scrawny, showing life only in the brightness of their eyes” (Amaral 1991:14, my translation). However poetical the governor was being, there is no doubt that famine was a serious matter at the beginning of the twentieth century. Cape Verdean literature also reflects that concern. Baltazar Lopes da Silva, one of the most prestigious Cape Verdean writers, described in his novel *Chiquinho* (1947) how the main character experienced famine and drought in São Vicente:

The boys with the swollen bellies upon their skinny legs. (...) The gardens were red without a sign of crops. (...) The months passing by and carrying away all the hope with them. (...) Sickness affecting animals all over. Finally, at the height, the grasshoppers came eating the remains of the green leaves with their relentless jaws, and only one colour predominated everywhere, that was grey” (Silva 1993[1947]:265-9, my translation).

⁸ For instance, the drought of 1809-1811 in Boa Vista caused the goat population to fall from 50,000 to 1,200; the mules from 20,000 to 200; the cattle from 6,000 to 42; and the horses from 4,000 to 4 (Carreira 1983a:210).

1.2.3. A stronghold of slave trade

The history of Cape Verde is very much one of connections to other places. Human and natural resources circulated between the African coast and the islands and from there to Europe, the Americas, Brazil and the Caribbean Islands.

In 1466, some Portuguese settlers arriving from the Algarve, the most southern region of Portugal, petitioned the Crown for a trading licence on slaves, and received permission to do so. The first contract issued by the Crown for buying and trading slaves dates from 1469 (Carreira 1983a). In 1472 a royal warrant gave to the permanent residents (*moradores estantes*) of Santiago the privilege to own either male or female slaves working for them in order to facilitate their life. The slave traders were allowed to trade anywhere in West Africa except in Arguim (Mauritanian coast). The Crown tried to manage the situation in order to avoid the conflict of interests between the traders settled in the archipelago and the merchant bourgeoisie in Portugal. Nonetheless, commercial and fiscal incentives were given to the Cape Verdean white minority. The slaves were mainly Balanta, Papel, Bijago, and Mende, all from Guinea-Bissau⁹. The Cape Verdean colonists had to pay the Crown 25 per cent on all imports from the African coast and were restricted from selling arms, iron, ships, and any naval equipment to Africans.

Many of the white settlers were single men proscribed from Portugal for political or criminal reasons. Many left their families in Portugal, and others, despite having a family in Cape Verde, maintained extramarital liaisons with

⁹ For a detailed description of the origin and destination of the African slaves traded by the Portuguese and other Europeans in West Africa see Beltran (1946) and Rodney (1969).

black slave women¹⁰. The result was an increase of the mulatto population. Some of the male mulatto offspring went to upper Guinea to work as *lançados*¹¹ of the white slavers and tradesmen settled in Cape Verde. Those *lançados* constituted the first Cape Verdean native 'petty bourgeoisie', and their role in the development of the West African economy was important. Often they were active in the coastal trade of slaves, hides, ivory, dyes and wax. Some of them married West African women weaving thus a network of social and economic interests within West African coastal societies. Sometimes the political and economic interests of the *lançados* collided with those of the Portuguese. Nonetheless, they were an important link between the archipelago and the coast assuring the flow of goods between the African continent and the islands. Thereby, Cape Verde quickly became the Portuguese control centre of the Upper Guinea coast.

In 1469, Fernando Gomes, a Lisbon merchant, received exclusive rights for trading in slaves, gold and other valuables on the Guinea Coast. The conditions were that he should further explore one hundred leagues of West African coastline to the east of Sierra Leone and pay a fixed amount to the Crown for each five years of the contract duration. In 1472, Gomes managed to obtain from the Crown an authorisation for expanding the scope of his trading contract by way of limiting trade done by the Cape Verdeans only to Cape Verdean products. The Cape Verdeans were barred from making partnerships with foreigners. This situation was maintained until the mid-seventeenth century.

Treated as merchandise, slaves were divided into categories (Carreira 1983a). The least valuable were the *boçais* (ignorant in the manners of

¹⁰ A similar phenomenon happened in Brazil. For a good description of it see Freyre (1940, 1966).

¹¹ The *lançados* were blacks and mulattos used as middlemen on the West African coast.

civilization), a category applied to those who had been recently introduced in Santiago and only spoke their native language. The *ladinos* or *escravos de confissão* (christened or 'civilized') were those who had lived as captives for a longer period in Cape Verde and consequently could speak Creole. These had also learned the basic skills to perform the usual chores of slaves. The slaves were also distinguished ethnically according to their appropriateness. For example, Fula girls were favoured as domestic servants and concubines, whilst the Wolof were valued as cotton spinners. Finally, there were the *naturais* (those born in the archipelago). The slave population could also be divided into *escravos de comércio* (trading slaves) and *escravos de trabalho* (working slaves). After satisfying the labour necessities in households and plantations, all the remaining slaves were sold elsewhere. According to Lobban:

The limited scope of plantation agriculture meant that a labour force of 5,000 to 15,000 slaves for the entire archipelago was sufficient to handle domestic work; construction industry labour; the harvesting of sugar, cotton and coffee; dock work; salt and puzzolane¹² mining operations (1995:25).

Some 'free' slaves worked on the West African coast as local militia, negotiators and interpreters (*linguas*). The archipelago was used as a secure platform to control the activities on the African coast. When the plantation economies of the New World developed and the demand for slave labour increased, thousands of slaves were shipped in Cape Verde, destined for North America, the Caribbean, and Brazil. By the mid-seventeenth century, the *Companhia das Ilhas de Cabo Verde e da Guiné* was exporting some 20,000 slaves per year to Brazil, and between 1700-1820 approximately two million were exported to the New World for the growing of cotton and mining of gold

¹² A limestone-like rock used in the production of cement.

(Duncan 1972). Cape Verde functioned as a platform between the West African coast and the Americas. By 1756, the population of slaves in Rhode Island represented about 11.6 per cent of the total population of the state, the largest slave population in any of the northern states of the U.S. (Coughtry 1981:5-6). The slave trade spawned other economic activities in New England, such as ship-building, agriculture, and production of rum. This latter was used for bartering slaves in Africa.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, under the 'enlightened despotism' of the Prime Minister Marquis de Pombal, slave trade continued, but this time with Brazil as the main destination. The *Companhia Geral do Grão-Pará e Maranhão* was created to promote the development of northern Brazil. This company dominated the Cape Verdean economy for about a quarter of a century. Between 1756-1778, 28,167 slaves were shipped from Cape Verde and Guinea to Brazil. Orchil¹³ and *panos* (cloth) were also exported (Duncan 1972:221-22). By the mid-eighteenth century, the *Companhia* controlled forty-one vessels, which were used in the transport of slaves from West Africa as well as in the shipping of products to the New World and Europe (Lobban 1995:30).

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, more and more slaves were manumitted or just fled to the interior escaping the control of their owners. The descendants of those slaves became creolised sharecroppers, small tenant farmers, contract labourers, sailors, whalers, and migrants. Despite the actions of the American and British navy to curtail the slave trade in the area, the economic interests of some influential slavers postponed the definitive end of slave trade in Cape Verde.

¹³ A red or violet dye prepared from certain lichens, especially *Roccella tinctoria*.

In 1810, the Portuguese government agreed to limit the slave trade to Portuguese ports. In 1815, the slave trade was limited to the area south of the Equator, and in 1817, the British received the right to challenge any ship suspected of freighting slaves. Portugal finally abolished the slave trade on December 10, 1836, under increasing pressure from Britain. Nonetheless, according to records investigated by Carreira (1984:90-91), an average of 2,000 slaves per year were still being exported from Bissau to Cuba as late as 1840-41. According to Lucas (1993:297), neither the decree of December 10, 1836, abolishing slave trade nor the Anglo-Portuguese treaty of July 3, 1842, equating it to piracy and allowing the Royal Navy to inspect any ship bearing a Portuguese flag, were effective in ending the trafficking of slaves.

1.2.4. Other economic activities

As a colony the archipelago was never attractive or economically profitable, except for the period in which the slave trade was an important economic activity. The archipelago was poor in water and forests. Santiago and Fogo offered slightly better conditions in terms of water and soil, allowing agriculture and stockbreeding. The products were sent to the African and European markets. During the sixteenth century, plantation agriculture, cotton-weaving, and horse breeding, became important activities (Silva 1991:184). Pigs, chicken, cattle, sheep, goats, poultry, mules and donkeys were also important items in the household economy. The raising of livestock and horses represented a good business since they needed no significant investment. During the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, Cape Verdean horses were highly valued by African nobility and cavalries (Lobban 1995:25).

As the cattle were left to range freely, only the herding at slaughter time required manual labour. Apart from the meat and the skin, the fat had also important value. In the beginning, agriculture was essentially for the subsistence of residents and to supply ships in transit. The staple crops were African maize species and tubers. Only during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries was a more productive species of maize introduced (Carreira 1977:28). European fruits and vegetables suitable to the local ecosystems were introduced later. Sugar-cane plantations were introduced in Santiago and Fogo, and used to produce raw sugar and *grogue* (rum). The *litmus roccella* (urzela) and amber also played a part in the Cape Verdean economy. The handicraft textile industry (*panaria*¹⁴) produced cloth for the locals and for trading in West African markets at the time. Cotton was brought to the archipelago along with the first slaves and gave birth to the *panaria*.

In the late eighteenth century, due to the banning of non-Portuguese traders, the production of cotton began to decline. In the nineteenth century there was a further decline caused by the importation of American cotton and the development of plantations in the French African colonies (Bigman 1993:75-76). In the seventeenth century, salt brought many British and American ships to Cape Verde, particularly to the islands of Maio, Boa Vista, and Sal¹⁵. *Puzzolana*, coffee, bananas, orchil, and indigo were resources whose importance varied over the years. For decades before 1732, when a tariff was imposed on salt cargoes, ships would help themselves, paying labourers for transportation and loading

¹⁴ *Panaria* is the handicraft industry of *panos* (cloth) used mainly by African women in Guinea-Bissau and in Santiago Island. For a detailed description of this industry and its economic importance see Carreira (1981).

¹⁵ Salt was used to supply fish preserving enterprises in New England and Newfoundland as well as ballast to the ships. The calling of British ships at Maio and Boa Vista ports was so frequent that they were named Porto Inglês (English Port) (Bigman 1993:76).

with threadbare clothes. During the second half of the eighteenth century the *Companhia Geral do Grão-Pará e Maranhão* barred the payment for salt in cloth insisting that money should be used, even though the company itself continued to pay in cloth and other goods (Serra 1948:27-28 cited in Bigman 1993:76).

Although the slave trade certainly provided the original impetus for the development of the Cape Verdean economy, Carreira argues that until the mid-nineteenth century weaving and plant dyes were the basis of the economy (1983b:10). According to him, the *Companhia Geral* made much more profit exporting orchil than it made exporting slaves (Carreira 1981:8). Duncan (1972:192) says that in the nineteenth century orchil was sold in Lisbon for over ten times its purchasing price in Cape Verde.

Property was based on the principle of *morgadio* (primogeniture). The other children were excluded from estate inheritance. This system allowed for the property to be kept intact from one generation to the next, and therefore permitted the concentration of land in the hands of a few powerful families who owned several large estates (*morgados*) on different islands. In this way, those families could benefit from resources that were scattered across the archipelago. The remaining population had only *courelas* (small plots of cultivated land), where gardening for the consumption of the household itself was the rule. Although the Portuguese traditionally relied on fishing, this was never a crucial activity in the Cape Verdean economy (Silva 1991:225).

Notwithstanding the increasing difficulty to trade in slaves during the second half of the nineteenth century, the inflated prices and relative scarcity of such 'merchandise' made smuggling still more profitable. Subsequent to the end

of slavery new forms of relations of production developed in Cape Verde. Plantation ownership was replaced with new forms of land tenancy, such as the system of *parceiros* (sharecroppers) and *rendeiros* (tenant-farmers), and slave labour was superseded by *contratados* (indentured workers), *brigadas de estrada* (road gangs), and *frentes de trabalho* (unskilled labour force). These forms of organised labour, based on the recruitment of women, unemployed men and children, persisted until the last days of colonialism, in 1975.

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the major shipping companies began to use steam power, which consequently required coal and oil bunkers. As a result, the deep-water port of Mindelo became an important asset. The coming of the British Trans-Atlantic telegraph cable to Mindelo also contributed to some economic development in the area, so that by the end of the nineteenth century Mindelo was an important stop-over port. According to Gaitlin (1990:88), in 1898 the harbour was visited by 1,503 vessels, but after the Great Depression the shipping at Mindelo fell off significantly, and the situation created in the Atlantic by the Second World War curbed shipping even more.

Despite some economic development brought by these activities, Cape Verde continued to have a small-scale colonial economy. With the amount of arable land averaging just 0.12 hectares per person, and the agricultural yields providing only 10 per cent of the internal consumption, the situation was bleak indeed. Local life was viable only due to high expenditure on imported rice, flour, and manufactured goods. Between 1951 and 1971, the value of imports increased an eleven fold, whereas exports only increased threefold (Lobban 1995:42).

The nineteenth century saw the economic flourishing of Mindelo, São

Vicente, when a certain Lieutenant John Lewis foresaw the growing importance of steamboats across the Atlantic (Lyall 1938:78). In 1838, the British East India Company opened a coal station at Porto Grande in the city of Mindelo, São Vicente. By the mid-nineteenth century two more British companies, the Royal Mail Steam Packet (1850) and the Patent Fuel (1851) started to service ships navigating between England and Brazil. A few others followed, such as Visger & Miler (1853), Cory Brothers (1875), Wilson, Sons & Co (1885), and the Anglo-Portuguese Company of São Vicente started up in 1896 (Bigman 1993:78; Lopes 1959:8). In 1899, the port of Mindelo had 2.5 times as much the business volume of the port of Praia (Amaral 1964:206).

For those living on São Vicente port activities were the main source of livelihood, but when the Suez Canal opened in 1869 forcing the re-routing of the Atlantic liners, the traffic in the area fell off significantly. Also, other ports became more convenient than Mindelo, such as Las Palmas in the Canary Islands, and Dakar in Senegal. The coal and oil bunkering in Mindelo brought significant economic prosperity to Cape Verde, particularly to the island of São Vicente, but it did not last long. By the time of the First World War the decline had already been significant.

1.2.5. Fighting for independence

The harshness of life in the archipelago and Portuguese Guinea (now Guinea-Bissau) contributed to the development of a strong resistance movement against colonialism later transformed into a guerrilla movement. Whereas the Balanta, Fula, Papel, and Bijago populations of Guinea constituted the basis for the guerrilla movement that started in the early 1960s, Cape Verde provided the

intellectual leadership of the movement. As the number of educated Cape Verdeans grew larger, a political and intellectual resistance developed. This resistance was visible in *Claridade* (clarity), a literary movement that gave expression to *Crioulo* identity (see chap. 3, sec. 3.3.). The end of the Portuguese monarchy and the implementation of the Republic in 1910, as well as the Marxist movement in Europe, and the Russian Revolution, created some expectations of self-determination and even pan-African unity among the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite.

The arrival in office of António Oliveira Salazar in 1926 definitively put an end to any political aspirations of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite. Salazar tried his best to keep the Portuguese colonial empire intact for as long as possible. A secret police, the *Policia Internacional de Defesa do Estado* (PIDE), was created to watch the activities of the Communists and others who could undermine the colonial ideology. Due to the isolation and climatic harshness of the archipelago, a special camp for political prisoners was set up near Tarrafal, in Santiago, in 1949. Salazar tried to keep Cape Verde separate from the political aspirations to self-determination of continental Africa using Cape Verdeans as middlemen in the colonial administration. In this way, the other Africans would see the Cape Verdeans more as oppressors than oppressed. According to Lobban:

In the twentieth century, the political unity between Cape Verde and Africa was suspended by colonialism and reconfigured from 1956 to 1974 by mobilisation for national liberation. In the process, the long ties between Cape Verde and Guinea were renewed, the critical leadership role of Cape Verdeans was revived, and the Cape Verdean consciousness began to shift from Portuguese to African – or at least *Crioulo* (1995:44).

With the military aid of NATO and the financial support of the U.S. and Germany, Portugal was able to set back the nationalist movement for independence in its colonies. But as the guerrilla movement strengthened, Portugal was forced to allocate a larger and larger amount of its GNP to military expenditure. Before 1958, Portugal was allocating 3 to 4 per cent of its GNP to its military effort in the colonies, which was about the same amount that other much larger Western European nations were spending at the time.

In 1964 the national defence expenditure had reached 8 per cent of the GNP, indicating the commitment and effort of Portugal to curb the guerrilla activity. Portugal could only support such a war effort using military equipment given by NATO¹⁶. Between 1961 and 1970 Portugal was able to fight back the guerrilla movement, but when the Soviet Union began to supply the nationalist fighters with land-air missiles, which could be easily moved from one site to another, the Portuguese aircraft superiority ended. Thereafter, the triumph of the guerrilla became a mere question of time.

England and France began to give up their colonies in the 1950s and 1960s, leaving Portugal more and more isolated in relation to its colonial policy. During the 1950s, under strong international pressure, the Portuguese government tried a political manoeuvre changing the nomenclature of its 'colonies' to 'overseas provinces'. The idea was to argue that they were part of the Portuguese 'natural boundary'. But, on April 24, 1974, a group of mid-rank military officers overthrew the Portuguese government, at the time led by Marcello Caetano, Salazar's successor, and put an end to the colonial aspirations of Portugal. This was the opportunity for the colonies to negotiate independence,

¹⁶ A good account of the ties between the NATO and Portugal is given by Duffy (1961a, 1962) and Minter (1972).

which they achieved in 1975. Cape Verde became an independent state on July 5, 1975.

1.3. A newly independent country

At the time of its independence Cape Verde was a very poor and underdeveloped country, the sign of which was the very low life expectancy of its population. In 1975, life expectancy for men was only 48.3 years, and for women it 51.7 years. By 1989, the numbers had improved substantially and the average life expectancy for men was 57 years, and for women 61 years. While this is low compared to European standards, it is better than, for example, Guinea-Bissau, where life expectancy was a mere 43 years for men and 47 years for women. The gross death rate, while still high compared to European standards, also decreased significantly to 7.7 deaths per thousand in 1987. In 1975, infant death rate was 108.6 deaths per thousand, but in 1982 it had declined to 64.3 deaths per thousand. By 1987, it had declined to 54.6 deaths per thousand, still very high when compared to European standards but the lowest among West African countries (Lobban 1995:50).

1.3.1. Political organisation

After independence in 1975, there came a period of mild communism with PAIGC (*Partido Africano para a Independência da Guiné e Cabo Verde*) as the sole political party in power, a situation that would last until 1991. The government adopted a strategy of centrally planned development based on five-year plans. During this time the Cape Verde's political elite tried to get as much aid as they could from the Soviet Union and other communist countries, while at

the same time they never turned their back to the 'western capitalist world'. During the PAIGC/PAICV¹⁷ government there was a significant fall in the remittances sent home by the Cape Verdean immigrants in the U.S. As their concerns over further nationalisations grew, they became more reluctant in sending money back to the islands.

In 1991, the newly formed MPD (*Movimento para a Democracia*) won the elections and came into power as the new strong political force. For the first time there were multiparty legislative and presidential elections. As MpD took the power there was a shift towards privatisation and market economy; the central role of the state in the economy was progressively replaced with new private initiative. In the 1990s Portuguese economic interests returned to the archipelago through public investments in banking and telecommunications. Also, some Portuguese textile industries looking for low-wage labour were displaced to Cape Verde, particularly to the island of São Vicente.

The state machinery of Cape Verde is not very different from that of any other democratic country, indeed it is a very successful democracy compared to most African and Third World countries. The four main figures of the political apparatus are the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister, the Speaker of the National Assembly, and the President of the Supreme Court. The executive power emanates from the Cabinet of Ministers, headed by the Prime Minister.

The party that has the majority of the seats in the National Assembly nominates the Prime Minister, who in turn chooses the cabinet from among other

¹⁷ PAIGC was the sole political party that ruled in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau until the military coup of General Nino Vieira in November 14, 1980, which resulted in the exile to Cuba of Luís Cabral, brother of Amílcar Cabral, and the split up between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau as a one-nation one-flag political alliance. Thereafter, PAIGC became PAICV in Cape Verde (*Partido Africano para a Independência de Cabo Verde*) and PAIGC remained only in Guinea-Bissau.

members of his own party and from among 'independent' political figures. After his nomination by the party with the most votes the Prime Minister has to be appointed by the President, who usually limits himself to give formal assent. The political behaviour of the Government is scrutinized by the National Assembly, whose 72 deputies are elected for five-year terms according to the new Constitution ratified on September 25, 1992. All major legislation has to be approved by a simple majority in the National Assembly whose main functions are to implement and scrutinize the fundamental national and foreign policies of the country. Within the assembly there are permanent committees whose function is to seek for the best external help from governmental and non-governmental agencies.

Cape Verde is a constitutional multiparty democratic republic, allowing freedom of expression and political opposition to any government in power. Apart from the Government and the National Assembly there are sixteen administrative districts corresponding to municipalities, the representatives of which are also elected for five-year terms.

1.3.2. Religion

Roman Catholicism is the dominant faith in the archipelago; more than 90 per cent of the people claim to be Catholics. Until practically the beginning of the twentieth century the Catholic Church was the only church in Cape Verde.

During the twentieth century several other churches settled in the archipelago. The first church other than the Catholic Church to establish on the islands before the twentieth century was the Church of the Nazarene, beginning its activity in 1884 under the influence of Cape Verdean immigrants in the U.S.

The Nazarenes are today the second largest denomination after the Catholics, with about 5 per cent of followers (Stensvold 1999:337). In the 1980s, other religious denominations established in the archipelago. That has been the case of the Mormons and the Jehovah's Witnesses. In the 1990s, it was time for the Universal Church of the Kingdom of God, a Pentecostal church originated in Brazil, to begin proselytising on the islands, particularly in Santiago and São Vicente. In any case, the Cape Verdeans are still by and large faithful to the Catholic Church (cf. Stensvold 1999).

1.3.3. Economy

During the ten-year period under the rule of MpD, Cape Verde became a 'market' and 'liberal' economy. This new 'liberal politic' has attracted higher remittances and foreign investment. Immigrants are willing to put their money back on the islands whenever they see an opportunity for profit. However, this has also brought some tensions into Cape Verdean society, caused by the widening gap between the poorest and the richest. According to the IMF, real GDP has increased at rates higher than the population growth (1999:9), but due to the mounting deficit in the balance of payments growth has been decelerating since 1996. The new 'open economy', guided by 'economic liberalism', has turned the Cape Verdean economy very volatile.

Until recently, the country has been considered a role model in terms of the use of external aid to promote development, but as a consequence of that 'success' it is no longer considered a priority country for international financial support. This means fewer funds will be available to its government because Cape Verde is now considered a mid-range country in terms of financial need,

and consequently international support to its economy has fallen in the last years.

Agriculture is very erratic and even in the best production years Cape Verde cannot satisfy its internal food demand. Fishing is traditional and small scale, mostly carried in small rowing boats, and for self-consumption or sale in local markets. Tourism has some importance, but just in a few of the islands, and infrastructures are few and small-scale. The emigrants' remittances represent the main source of national income and investment capital to the country. As any person on the islands promptly agrees, if it were not for all the Cape Verdeans working abroad and sending back their money, people in the archipelago would have starved long ago. Emigration and external financial aid are the pillars of the economic survival of Cape Verde.

The fragilities of the Cape Verdean economy are made clear from the composition of its GDP. Agriculture, forestry and livestock, the construction industry, commerce, transport and communications, and public service account for the most part of it.

Table 1 – Cape Verde’s GDP by Sector (%)

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998
Agriculture, forestry, and livestock	11.4	10.3	11.8	10.8	11.8	11.2	11.4	10.7
Fishing	2.1	1.5	1.9	1.9	1.8	1.8	1.6	1.5
Industry and Energy	9.6	9.9	9.2	9.1	9.5	10.3	9.9	9.7
Construction industry	11.8	12.0	10.8	10.3	9.4	9.4	8.7	8.8
Commerce	17.2	16.7	15.2	16.1	16.0	15.7	15.5	15.6
Hotels	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.5	3.2	3.4
Transport and Communications	16.5	17.8	17.7	18.7	16.8	16.8	16.8	17.6
Banks and Insurance	1.6	1.3	2.6	2.2	3.7	4.4	5.4	5.4
Housing	7.7	7.8	6.6	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.4	6.4
Public Service	13.1	13.2	14.0	13.9	14.3	13.5	13.9	13.5
Other Services	7.7	8.2	8.2	8.9	8.7	8.8	6.6	6.8
New Industries	0.0	0.0	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.6
GDP	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

(Source: IMF 1999)

The way GDP is distributed by sectors shows among other things that Cape Verde has had no significant industrial development during the last decade. Commerce, transport and communications are the strongest sectors, which is in contradiction with the large number of people still working in agriculture. Public services remain the main source of employment for educated people, especially those who proceed to university abroad and return to the country. In the last few

years, the Cape Verdean government has made an effort to introduce university and polytechnic education in the archipelago and there is now a growing offer of university degrees, which will probably increase the local demand for professional jobs without the corresponding availability.

1.4. Population and demography

The origins of the Cape Verdean population are very diverse, as happens with other islands which were also at the crossroads of the ‘colonial encounter’ with Europe. As Lobban remarks: “[The Cape Verdean population] includes descendants of Spaniards, English, Italians, Brazilians, Sephardic Jews, Lebanese, Dutch, Germans, Americans, and even Japanese and Chinese” (Lobban 1995:1). Recently, Cape Verde began to receive a growing number of Africans, especially from Senegal, Gambia, and Mali, as well as Chinese and Koreans. Although the Asian migrants have not accounted much for the Cape Verdean ‘melting pot’, the presence of Chinese and Koreans has increased, and they are now taking retail commerce into their hands, much to the discontent of Cape Verdean business people.

Already in the mid-1980s, a few hundreds of Chinese workers and technicians were brought into Santiago for the construction of the Government’s Palace and the People’s National Assembly, the financing of which was supported by the Chinese government. Some of the workers stayed after the works had been concluded and started a new life as small shop-owners. One can even find one Chinese restaurant in Praia and another in Mindelo. Koreans are mostly present in the capital city Praia with small-scale import-export businesses.

1.4.1. Demographic evolution

In 1468, a mere six years after settlement had started, the resident population of Santiago and Fogo was about 8,000 inhabitants, free people and slaves altogether (Carreira 1977:26; Carreira 1982:6). At the time, and according to Carreira's sources, Ribeira Grande, then the capital of Santiago, had 162 inhabitants: 58 white resident men of whom 56 were Portuguese; 12 priests; 4 white unmarried women; 16 black men; and 16 black women. These figures deserve some comment because if there were only 162 people in the capital, the remainder would be mainly constituted by slaves working in the fields. Furthermore, if the total population of the archipelago was 15,700 in 1582, as Carreira suggests, then the doubling of the population took over 100 years; a very long period compared to what happened during the first six years after settlement began. Needless to say, these statistics are impossible to confirm and should not be given too much credit.

The statistics of 1513 and 1549 do not mention either *mestiços* or *pardos*¹⁸, meaning that at the time miscegenation had not yet taken place, or, better thought, was not being acknowledged for some reason. Statistics from 1582 mention 600 'white and *pardo* men'; 400 *pretos forros casados* (manumitted married slaves) living in the hinterland parishes of Santiago; and 300 residents on the island of Fogo. According to Brooks (1970), there was one resident for every five slaves in Santiago. Fogo had 2,000 slaves for 300 residents, which is about the same ratio. The small number of inhabitants in this earlier period has a twofold explanation. The white residents were few because the archipelago

¹⁸ *Mestiço* means mulatto as well as *pardo*, this last word is still used in Brazilian racial classification. But we could say that *mestiço* is closer to black, whilst *pardo* is closer to white.

offered few economic opportunities other than slave trade, plantation agriculture, and husbandry, which were handled by a few powerful men. The black slaves were initially taken to Europe (Lisbon, Seville, and Cadiz), but later they were sent to the West Indies and Brazil. The majority of the slaves entering Cape Verde were sold and dispatched to elsewhere. The islands were used as a temporary warehouse and shipment facility for handling the 'merchandise' in transit.

Cape Verde became a strategically secure base for trade with the West African coast, and it was also a stopover point for ships crossing the Atlantic to the Caribbean Islands or South America, as well as for those returning to Europe. No famous navigator or seafarer would cross the Atlantic without a stop in Santiago. One can point out names such as Vasco da Gama on his way to India, Bartolomeu Dias when he sailed past the Cape of Good Hope, Columbus in his westward travel to 'India'. Charles Darwin also set foot on the island of Santiago when the Beagle called at the port of Praia and ended up by spending several weeks collecting materials for his research. Owing to the strategic position of Cape Verde, the English, Dutch, French, and Spanish did their best to sever its link with the African coast and therefore enfeeble Portuguese commerce. Francis Drake¹⁹, John Hawkins, and John Lovell were among the many pirates and corsairs who used to raid the islands.

Although famines have taken a huge toll on the Cape Verdean population, the twentieth-century demographic trend has been progressive.

¹⁹ Francis Drake, taking advantage of the political crisis that had arisen from the death of King Sebastião, in Ksar Al Kebir in 1578, looted Praia, Santa Catarina, and Ribeira Grande on several occasions.

Table 2 – Population Growth

Year	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	2000*
Pop.	146,299	181,740	149,989	199,902	271,992	291,703	434,812
%	—	+24	-17.5	+33	+36	+7	+33

(Source: Amaral 1991:15 and UNFPA 2000) *Estimate

The decline registered in 1950 was caused by important famines in the 1940s, which reduced the population of some islands by half.

The preliminary results of the 2000 census show that Cape Verde's population rose from 341,491 in 1990 to 434,812 by June 2000, of which one third lives in Santiago, the largest island. Cape Verde has two demographic problems. One is the accelerated growth rate of its population, with an annual growth rate of 2.4 per cent for the period 1990-2000. The population is expected to double in the next 29 years. The other is the uneven distribution of the population, whose density varies from 298 inhabitants per sq. km in São Vicente to 7 inhabitants per sq. km on the island of Boa Vista. The recent increase in inter-island migration and the high urban growth rates imply that now 53 per cent of the population live in the three main cities of the country, of which two are in Santiago – Praia and Assomada. More than half of the urban population of the archipelago now lives in Praia and its shantytown-like suburbs.



Praia suburbs, island of Santiago

The Cape Verdean population is young, with 31 per cent belonging to the 4 to 14 year age group. In 1987, the gross birth rate was 37.25 per thousand, declining from the 33.84 per thousand in 1984. Due to a decreasing death rate and an increasing birth rate, the natural population growth has increased in the two decades post-independence. This population growth has been either drained by emigration or absorbed by some economic development brought by an increase in tourism-related economic activity. Otherwise famine would have limited that growth as it always did in the past.

Mindelo, in *Barlavento*, and Praia, in *Sotavento*, are the main urban centres. Both saw population increases over the last few decades, though Mindelo has decreased slightly due to the weakening of the shipping economy and the consequent fall in employment. According to the 1990 census statistics, only 32.3 per cent of the population lived in primary urban places, like Mindelo

and Praia, whereas 53.4 per cent still lived in rural areas. The remainder lived in secondary urban or semi-urban settlements (small towns and villages) scattered around the archipelago. The rural population is either poorly or not at all served by transportation and communication facilities.

About 25 per cent of the working population over ten years of age is involved in primary production, such as agriculture, fishing, and mineral extraction. Some 20 per cent work in undefined activities, and 18.6 per cent work in the construction industry²⁰.

In Cape Verde there is an unbalanced sex ratio, with women outnumbering men. Many men stay abroad for many years while their families remain in Cape Verde. The census data for the period 1936-1990 show that the lowest proportion of women during this period was 52.1 per cent, in 1990, and the highest was 54.7 per cent, in 1950. In 1990, contrary to the general trend, Santo Antão, Sal, and Boa Vista had a slightly larger number of men overall, the population of women ranged from 48.5 per cent to 53.6 per cent respectively in Sal and Maio. This unbalanced sex ratio is explained by the prevalent male migration pattern in the archipelago. Cape Verde's population is also very young; about 30 per cent is below 15 years, and only about 6 per cent is over 65 years.

1.4.2. Emigration

Emigration has been the escape valve for Cape Verdean demographic growth. Although Carreira (1977) states that emigration first began to the U.S. in the late 1700s, it only became significant in the late 1800s.

The Portuguese initiated whaling in the Atlantic with the technical

²⁰ Calculated according to the 1990 census.

supervision of fishermen from the Gulf of Biscay. The English and the Dutch started soon after (Ellis 1969). And in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the American whalers had already established their activity in the Azores, Madeira and Cape Verde islands (Stackpole 1972). As the activity grew, the competition between whalers grew also, and as a result the Crown started to grant licences for whaling in Cape Verde as well as in the Azores and Brazil. 'Fishes of unusual size such as whales and similar' were the property of the Royal Treasury. Therefore, whalers had to pay a royalty, which constituted a good source of income for the Crown.

North American captains began to hire Cape Verdeans as crewmembers²¹, therefore opening the gates of emigration, especially to the states of Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. According to Medina dos Santos (1964), who checked American sources, it was usual for American whalers, during the first decade of the nineteenth century, to stock up with water and food supplies at the islands of Brava and Fogo, and to hire Cape Verdean men as harpooners. According to his investigation, the first Cape Verdean to live in the U.S. was one José da Silva, born in Brava in 1794. He embarked on a whaling ship and became an American citizen in 1824.

During the nineteenth century American whaling ships continued to operate in Cape Verdean waters and to use the local facilities. Whale oil was in

²¹ In the beginning, the Quaker families of Nantucket who turned to the whale fishery as a livelihood used local Indian hands. But as alcohol and disease decimated the Indian crews, black African slaves were brought in. Later, black Cape Verdeans were brought in too as crewmembers, and were considered hard working and reliable men. For more detailed information about the composition of whaling crews it is worthwhile to see Farr (1983). The first Cape Verdean crews were taken on from the island of Brava, which had been settled by people escaping the 1680's volcano eruption in the nearby island of Fogo. In Brava there was never a plantation system run by a white elite, instead, there was a white and mixed population of small farmers, herdsman, fishermen, and artisans willing to take any opportunity to better their lives.

great demand for lighting before oil was discovered in Pennsylvania, U.S., in 1859. Between 1844 and 1891, 166 American whalers sailed and hunted in Cape Verdean waters, whereas there were only one French and one English ship in the same waters at that time. So, the first Cape Verdean migratory flow could only have been directed to America.

By the end of the nineteenth century there were notices about the first Cape Verdeans returning from the U.S. with important savings. In 1885, the American sailing-boat *Caribe* docked in Brava with an “important cargo and 17 passengers native from Brava carrying from 6 to 8,000 pesos in cash as a result of their wages” (BOCV 39:185, cited in Carreira 1977:70). The Cape Verdeans emigrated not only to escape the local poverty and to find a better livelihood in the U.S., but also to avoid military service in Guinea, to where they were recruited.

By the time cetaceans became extinct in Cape Verdean waters and oil began to replace whale-oil in lighting, Cape Verdean emigration to the U.S. was already running consistently and independently of the whaling industry. Throughout the nineteenth century Cape Verdean immigrant neighbourhoods could be found in the cities of Boston, New Bedford, Providence, Brooklyn, and on Nantucket Island. The first generation of emigrants was hired mainly as non-skilled workers in agriculture²² and industry. Some of them returned to the islands after retirement, living on their American pensions. These retired men, mostly long-time bachelors, often married *patricias jovens* (young local women). In addition to whaling and agricultural labour (cotton plantations and

²²When the whaling industry lost its lustre, the Cape Verdeans had to set foot on land and find alternative work. The main occupation was agriculture, and the cranberry bogs were the most important source of agricultural seasonal work. For a historical description of this activity see Briggs (1941), and Thomas (1990). For the involvement of the Cape Verdeans in the cranberry industry see Marilyn Halter (1984, 1990).

cranberry bogs in Cape Cod, Massachusetts), the Cape Verdeans have also been involved in other activities such as the Californian gold rush, or working as hands either in sailing boats or steam trains. They were also petty farmers, and cotton-mill workers, especially in New Bedford.

Carreira divides the Cape Verdean migratory flow of the twentieth century into several distinct phases. The first developed during the period 1900-20, and was mainly directed to the U.S. It is difficult to know exactly the number of migrants because many were undocumented migrants. That migratory flux was fuelled by the huge famine of 1903-1904, which resulted from a prolonged drought between 1890 and 1903. After 1911, the obligation for Cape Verdeans to possess a passport was abolished, which meant that the number of migrants could no longer be statistically controlled. In 1915, the American senate voted for a project to exclude black and illiterate immigrants. In spite of the U.S. President's veto, the colonial government of Cape Verdean showed some concern about the negative effects that such legislation could have in the archipelago. Immediately, a campaign was set forth to curb illiteracy among the Cape Verdean population. At the time, the prospect that migration to the U.S. could end echoed very loudly within Cape Verdean society. A letter addressed by the prominent writer Eugénio Tavares²³ to D. Alexandre d'Almeida clearly shows this concern: "To interdict Cape Verdean emigration to the U.S. is to tell the people to take their shoes and jackets off, to grab a hoe and jump into the fields of Santiago, Fogo, Santo Antão where hands are scarce" (cited in Carreira 1977:91, my translation).

In brief, Cape Verdean migration to the U.S. was set in motion by the

²³ *Noli me Tangere* (letter to D. Alexandre d'Almeida about the Cape Verdean migration to the U.S., Praia: Imprensa Nacional de Cabo-Verde, 1918).

necessity of escaping famine and by the prospect of finding a better living in the heralded 'promised land'. At the end of the 1920s, legal migration to the U.S. was virtually barred by the imposed literacy requirements. The Great Depression increased unemployment among the Cape Verdean immigrants and decreased the expectations of potential migrants in Cape Verde.

The second phase took place in the period 1927-45²⁴ and it was characterised by a reduction in migration to the U.S. due to more restrictive legislation and the implementation of a system of quotas, as well as by the search for new destinations such as Senegal, Guinea, Brazil (especially Rio and Santos) and Argentina. The system of quotas allowed little room for Cape Verdean migrants, since most of Portugal's quota was filled with Azoreans and Madeirans.

The third phase took place in the period 1946-73 and was virtually an exodus. Its main characteristic, besides the huge increase in the number of migrants, was the change of destination. The first European country to receive Cape Verdean immigrants was Holland, then Portugal, France, Luxembourg, Italy, and Switzerland. During this period, legal migration was made difficult by the excessive bureaucracy, and many people migrated undocumented. One of the internal reasons for the impediment of Cape Verdean migration to Europe and America was the urgent need of labour in the plantations of São Tomé and Príncipe, and in Portuguese Guinea. The Portuguese government felt that it would be difficult to maintain the African colonies without large-scale settlement. Consequently, the Portuguese authorities tried to curb Cape Verdean

²⁴ Carreira mentions a possible earlier second phase, in the period of 1921-26, but according to him there is no reliable statistics to sustain this hypothesis.

migration as much as possible by using the complexities of bureaucracy. However, at the same time migration seemed to be a good remedy for the cyclical crises caused by drought and famine. The result was a high degree of undocumented migration that makes it impossible to know exactly how many people left the archipelago during the twentieth century. It also means that there are more Cape Verdeans living abroad than within the archipelago.

According to statistics gathered by Carreira (1977:125) Cape Verdean migration during the first half of the twentieth century has been as follows:

Table 3 – Cape Verdean emigration (%)

Destination	1900-20	1927-45	1946-52
U.S.	62.7	13.9	7.9
Portuguese Guinea	8.1	11.8	13.2
Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Chile	7.1	11.9	1.3
São Tomé and Príncipe	5.5	—	—
Dakar	5.1	17.5	3.7
Lisbon, Azores, and Madeira	4.4	33	57.8
Other Countries	—	—	15.7

(Source: Carreira 1977:125)

Apart from free migration there was forced migration until at least as late as the 1960s. While free migration was directed towards Europe, South America and the U.S., indentured labour (considered by Carreira and others as forced migration) was the solution encountered by the plantation owners in such humid tropical areas as Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe to deal with the paucity of local labour. Forced migration was used to supply labour that could not

otherwise be found. The first compulsory movement of Cape Verdean labour occurred during the second half of the eighteenth century to Guinea, and it was run by the *Companhia Geral do Grão-Pará e Maranhão*, which then possessed the economic monopoly over Cape Verde and Guinea. Cape Verdean workers and slaves constructed the fortress of São José, in Bissau, built to defend the coast from French and English attacks.

In the second half of the nineteenth century there was further forced labour movements, this time to the plantations of São Tomé and Príncipe. This movement of workers was sanctioned by a law of December 1863 (Carreira 1977:149). Coffee and cacao plantations had been introduced in those islands, as well as in Cape Verde, in the early 1800s, as well as changes in the rights and duties related to property. The small native property was converted into large plantations to which first slaves and then indentured workers were brought in as labour force. The Cape Verdeans were also indentured as domestic servants. The government saw in this kind of forced migration a way to alleviate the consequences of famines in the archipelago, as well as a way to please plantation owners in demand for more hands.

Officially, these forced migrants were designated either as *colonos* (colonists), or *emigrados* (emigrants), or even as *emigrados livres* (free emigrants) (Carreira 1977:153), which means that they were supposed to have migrated voluntarily. But the truth was different. Many *libertos* (manumitted slaves) of Angola were also sent to São Tomé and Príncipe, and though they were referred to as manumitted slaves they had no other choice than to go where they were sent. A large number of Cape Verdeans, both slaves and *libertos*, were transferred to Angola, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe.

Portugal officially abolished slavery in 1858, but in practice the labour contract system practised until the early 1970s was not much different from the slavery system in terms of the working conditions. As Davidson says, “the ending of outright slavery, as in other Portuguese African territories, brought no real change. The system merely adjusted itself to new forms of misery” (1989:37). Nevertheless, it must be said that the large majority of either slaves or *libertos* sent to São Tomé and Príncipe were from Angola and Mozambique, not from Cape Verde.

Finally, there is the illegal migration, which undoubtedly accounts for the largest proportion of the Cape Verdeans living abroad. The first official account of illegal migration is a report written by the general secretary of the government of Cape Verde, Pinto Balsemão, dating from December 13, 1874 (BOCV, No. 42, 1874:260 referred in Carreira 1977:252) which mention the departure of an annual average of 100 people from the island of Brava. In another report, the administrator of Brava states that “the great proclivity to life in the sea and the true aversion to military recruitment that these people have, contributed greatly to clandestine emigration, which represents 10 per cent of the total population” (BOCV, No. 40, 1880:260, cited in Carreira 1977:252, my translation).

The main gate to migration was the fishing and whaling ships. By the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth centuries the American government intensified control in order to diminish illegal entry, as a result of the large increase in the number of Cape Verdean immigrants. A very common expedient to introduce undocumented migrants was to register them at the port authorities as hands and then smuggle them to the destination ports. After the

1940s, with the increasing vigilance of the PIDE²⁵ in the archipelago, illegal migration became much more difficult owing to the tight control of identity documents.

The large majority of Cape Verdean migrants never returned home, particularly the younger generations. Many come back one in a while to pay a visit to kin or to settle estate matters, but they rarely give up the economic welfare enjoyed in their host countries for the narrowness of the Cape Verdean economic and social horizons.

1.5. Conclusion

Cape Verde originated in the sixteen century as part of the then growing network of slave trade set up by the Portuguese in order to carry slaves, first to Europe, and then to the plantations of the Americas. Although slave trade allowed huge profits for the small number of traffickers, most of the population died of starvation caused by cyclic severe droughts. As the barren archipelago was never suitable for the development of large plantations, its inhabitants were doomed to poverty and starvation.

The Cape Verdeans sought remedy for their plight in migration. The first migration movement occurred in the late eighteen and early nineteenth centuries to the U.S. In the twentieth century, many Cape Verdeans went to the plantations of São Tomé as indentured labourers. Later, they began to migrate to Portugal and other European countries, while at the same time the flux to the U.S., interrupted in the early 1920s, restarted after the loosening of migration policy in

²⁵ The PIDE (*Polícia de Intervenção e Defesa do Estado*) was the secret police set up by President António Salazar in order to control the political activities of communists and other oppositionists.

the mid-1960s.

Poverty, migration, slavery, and large-scale miscegenation, in which the Portuguese and African components have played a crucial role, are the main ingredients of the Cape Verdean ethos. In the next chapter we will see how these ingredients combined to mould the Cape Verdean colonial society.

2. The Origin and Transformation of Cape Verdean Society

– I had many friends belonging to old Capverdian families who were no darker than if they had been Portuguese from Europe, but I never remember one of them claiming pure white descent (...). These mixed bloods call themselves Creoles.

(Lyll 1938:30)



2.1. Introduction

The Cape Verdean society started out as a slavery system where a minority of white Europeans ruled over a large majority of black slaves imported from the African continent. As in the Caribbean Islands, whites and blacks miscegenated largely, mostly through the sexual liaisons established between white dominant men and black slave women. The Cape Verde islands have been presented by most analysts, following the footsteps of Freyre, as the best example ever of interracial mixture. The colonial Cape Verdean society is supposed not to have been affected by an ideology of ‘racial’ differentiation and it is often equated with Brazil. Many ‘lusophone’ intellectuals say that it is even a better example

of the Portuguese inclination to mix with the 'natives' in a way that no other Europeans were able to do.

In Cape Verde, the wealth and high status of the individuals may whiten their colour. As in Brazil and in the Caribbean, in Cape Verde the aphorism 'money bleaches' stands rightly. Similarly to what Harris (1964) pointed out in relation to Brazil's system of racial classification, in Cape Verde many physical features and social factors other than the individual's skin colour are likely to influence his or her social classification. A darker individual may be depicted as lighter if he or she has wealth and prestige in his or her community, and a lighter individual may be depicted as darker if he or she has little wealth and low social status.

Despite being depicted as the most accomplished example of 'lusotropicalism', the fact is that on some islands a clear distinction between whites and blacks lasted until about the middle of the twentieth century. Such was the case of the islands of Fogo and Brava.

The Cape Verdean postcolonial society is undoubtedly marked by the racial ideology developed during colonialism, an ideology that established the difference between the Cape Verdeans and the continental Africans, whom the Cape Verdeans still see as blacks. The lighter mulattos make up most of the ruling elite, despite the growing number of blacks and dark mulattos now becoming part of the local elite. In this chapter we will see how notions of 'race' and 'class' interplayed as equivalents, and how the traditional 'white' elite lost its power to an emerging Creole elite which became the ruling power after the independence.

2.2. From black and white to creole

Perhaps the best words to describe what happened in Cape Verde in terms of 'racial mixture' are those of Lobban: "The simple bipolar system may have lasted as little as nine months before it began to be ambiguous" (1995:54).

Although Carreira (1982:19) says that little can be known about the social class formation of Cape Verde before the eighteenth century, it is not difficult to guess from the type of estate ownership what kind of social stratification one would find in Cape Verde during the first centuries of colonisation. The ownership of land was white and the labour force was black.

The Cape Verdean society began as an adaptation of the Portuguese feudal model to the particular conditions of small-scale plantation and slavery. The Portuguese Crown offered feudal land grants, (*capitanias* or *donatarias*), and judicial power to a few noble men upon whom the title of donee-captain (*capitão donatário*) was bestowed. The basic model of social relations was imported from Portugal, and the major difference was the use of slaves instead of serfs, and plantations instead of latifundia. Besides the *capitão* there were noblemen (*fidalgos*), served by noble-knights (*cavaleiros-fidalgos*). At the top level of the administration there were royal stewards and tax collectors (*almoxarifes*), and at the low level there were council servants, petty officers, manservants, as well as other minor personnel. These people, all white, made the top of the social pyramid.

The islands of Fogo and Santiago were the most suitable for plantation agriculture, though it never reached the size of the plantations in São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola or Mozambique. The two islands had the highest number of slaves in the archipelago. When abolition was drawing to a close, in 1869, the

combined slave holding of the two islands accounted for 3,175 of the 4,020 slaves in Cape Verde, or 78.9 per cent of the overall figure in the archipelago (Carreira 1983a:420). The law of primogeniture lasted until 1864, and thereafter the dominant white families used marriage between close relatives, for example 'first cousins'²⁶, in order to avoid the fractioning of land and the mixing with 'black blood'.

The first *donatarias*, those of António da Noli, Diniz Eanes and Ayres Tinoco, in fifteenth-century Santiago, were occupied by a few white people, including some married couples, but the clearing of the ground was done by black slaves. In the sixteenth century the system of primogeniture (*morgadio*) was already implanted in the largest islands, Santiago, Santo Antão, São Nicolau and Fogo, as well as the system of *capelas* and *ermidas*²⁷.

Compared to the large plantations of Brazil, Cape Verdean plantation holdings were very small and concentrated in only some of the islands. The island of Santiago was the most representative in terms of plantation agriculture followed by Fogo. According to Meintel (1984:76), masters and slaves were more closely bound in Cape Verde than elsewhere in the New World. The existence of an 'informal polygyny' (Finan and Henderson 1988) originated kinship ties between owners and slaves. Where the natural conditions did not allow the development of plantations, and where rural property was small, the proximity between masters and slaves was even greater (Carreira 1983a).

²⁶ 'First cousin' expresses the parental relationship between the children of siblings. Marriage between 'first cousins' was very common in Fogo Island, as documented by Teixeira de Sousa (1947, 1958).

²⁷ The *capelas* and *ermidas* were rural estates that bound their owners to civil and religious duties. The owners of *capelas* had the religious duty of ensuring divine worship to the patron saint. Many of the *capelas* ended up as *morgadios* when divine worship ceased to be assured by their owners. *Ermidas* were smaller properties, also bound to a patron saint, and subject to the communal rights of villagers; they represented places of folk religious cult.

The small scale of the islands and the close proximity between owners and slaves made unnecessary the repressive apparatus developed in the plantations of Brazil. As Meintel puts it, “in these islands [Cape Verde], the master-slave relationship was characterised by constant face-to-face interaction and proximity, for it was common for slaves to live under the same roof as their owners” (1984:76). This proximity and sharing of social space between owners and slaves is the base for the idea that slavery in Cape Verde was soft when compared to slavery in the New World.

Nevertheless, one could find in Cape Verde examples of the usual barbarities done to slaves elsewhere in the New World. For example, in Fogo some rural properties had dungeons, and poles to which slaves were tied and then whipped. According to Meintel’s sources, in Brava “one particularly brutal owner is reputed to have cut off the hands of offending slaves and to have had others thrown from cliffs into the sea” (1984:77). A description of the torture inflicted on some slaves can be found in Barcellos, as in the example of a pregnant woman who was tortured to death with burning embers placed on her belly (1900 II:230). Thus, the idea of the friendly master is more a myth than anything else. In any case, the myth has been the pillar of Freyre’s luso-tropicalism applied to Cape Verde, as we shall see later.

Ethnically and racially, Cape Verdean society emerged from the blend of two different stocks: European whites and African black slaves. At the top of the social pyramid there was the white population, while at the bottom there were the black slaves. The middle was filled with the mulattos and the few liberated blacks. It was not uncommon for the local elite to become rich by defrauding the Crown whose bureaucracy, based in Portugal, had no capacity to control their

economic activity on the islands and the African coast. With time, the 'aristocratic' white minority of the archipelago blended with the ascending bourgeoisie and petty noblesse enriched by commerce. Not only did the white population become more homogeneous but also miscegenation between whites and blacks increased throughout the centuries. The majority of the population became mixed. Carreira (1977:42), quoting an anonymous author of the late eighteenth century, writes that on the island of Santiago there existed a large majority of *pretos* (blacks) and *pardos* (mulattos), whereas 'pure whites' were more and more a small minority.

The large majority of the population were black slaves with the same social status, although domestic slaves were likely to have a better life than those working in the fields. Apart from the domestic and rural slaves, there were black *forros*²⁸ and born-free blacks, whose status was not significantly different from that of the former. The fact that the mulattos were begotten by white men gave them a social edge over blacks (it was white men who had sexual liaisons with black women, not the reverse). Usually, mulattos were above free blacks. Outside the boundaries of Cape Verdean society there were the runaway slaves (*escravos fujões*) who lived in the backcountry of Santiago and Fogo. Nonetheless, their number was probably small.

The majority of slaves were only in transit through Cape Verde on their way to the Americas. Within the islands ownership of slaves was the privilege of a small minority of wealthier and landed families, absentee landowners, and nobility. "Of those who owned slaves, about a third had only one or two to perform domestic chores. (...). If one includes all slaves held in Cape Verde at

²⁸ The *forros* were liberated slaves to whom enfranchisement had been conceded (*carta de alforria*).

this time [1856], the average slave staff was three or four.” (Lobban 1995:31).

2.2.1. The ‘colour’ of wealth

According to Boxer, “uninhibited sexual intercourse between black and white did result in the creation of a thoroughly Portuguese mulatto population, on the Cape Verde Islands and those of São Tomé and Príncipe in the Gulf of Guinea” (1963:13). But miscegenation did not mean the disappearance of the black-white social dichotomy. It meant that the divide had now to be traced upon factors other than simply physical traits. Nevertheless, a strong correlation between physical appearance and social position continued to exist despite large-scale miscegenation.

The coalescence of large-scale miscegenation with racial ideologies that use cultural and educational factors as the explanation for the lower position of people with darker looks is not exclusive of Cape Verde, it can be found in Latin and South American countries, such as Colombia and Brazil, where ‘race’ and ‘class’, either as local or sociological categories, are difficult to separate (see Wade 1985, 1993).

As the number of mulattos increased, and the gap between black and white became less acute, an intermediate ‘middle class’ appeared. However, despite the existence of that mulatto middle class, only in the nineteenth century did Cape Verde have its first locally born governor. During the second half of the nineteenth century, slavery in Cape Verde declined substantially. In 1856, the official number of slaves was 5,180, contrasting with the 13,700 of the sixteenth century (Lobban 1995:32). Most slaves were women, which means that the use of slaves in domestic services was more important than their use in plantations.

Among the slave population women outnumbered men. This facilitated the use of slave women as concubines by white men. As a Creole peasantry emerged out of the sexual liaisons between white men and black women, the demand for slave labour diminished and with it the number of imported slaves.

Cape Verdean landholders used, and abused, the generalised system of informal polygyny to grow a cheap and reliable labour force. Illegitimate children were far less expensive than slaves, and could also be used to establish social networks of power, which worked in favour of the wealthier landholders. The more children a man begot the more powerful he would become. Although the 'luso-tropicalists' have claimed that extended miscegenation has been the main distinction between the Portuguese colonisation and the colonisation of other European nations, the Cape Verdean case is not unique, though it may have been the first. In that Cape Verde is not much different from the Caribbean world, of which Jamaica is a good example of the upward mobility of coloured and black people in a society originally dominated by a small minority of whites (see Broom 1954).

The Cape Verdean society is undoubtedly marked by its colonial past. The social structure evolved from social and racial categories that were created in the early times of colonisation. "Under both feudalism and colonialism, Cape Verde experienced a racial stratification that was simultaneously blunt and subtle" (Lobban 1995:50-51). By this Lobban meant that whilst all Europeans were universally white, whether they were Portuguese, Italians, or Spanish, the African slaves were universally black, whether they were lighter-skinned Moorish or black Mandinka. In other words, "given the extreme diversity of the population, the social strata of Cape Verde were profoundly racist in their

configuration” (Lobban 1995:51). Although the actual stratification could be traced by a major divide between whites and blacks, the way Creole population perceived racial categories was not that simple. Most *crioulos* or *mestiços* viewed themselves as ‘pure’ Portuguese, whereas according to colonial taxonomy they were viewed as a sort of residual population with diverse socio-economic statuses and phenotypes.

As Lobban says, “in the *Crioulo* social strata, one finds sophisticated functionaries, civil servants, and professionals, as well as *contratados* [indentured] and *rendeiros* [tenant farmers]” (Lobban 1995:51). Despite the colonial racial ideology that emphasized ‘luso-tropicalism’ and ‘racial integration’²⁹, the Cape Verdean society was affected by important racial divides. However, it could not be compared to South Africa or the U.S., societies in which the racial divide was much more rigid and supported by a legal apparatus.

Although statistics from before the nineteenth century are not reliable, it seems that one hundred years after the populating of the islands had begun the majority of the population were already *mestiços* (mulattos). According to Lobban (1995:55), in 1550, there were 2 per cent of *brancos*, 69.6 per cent of *mestiços*, and 28.38 per cent of *pretos*. Four hundred years later, in 1950, the situation had changed little: 2 per cent were *brancos*, 69 per cent were *mestiços*, and 29 per cent were *pretos*. The statistics of the 1930-40s show some fluctuation in the ‘racial’ composition but that is probably caused by the subjectivity of the census enquirers and not by changes in the population. The category *branco* has included in the past such diverse people as *madeirenses*

²⁹ Among the several authors who have analysed Portuguese racial relations the following deserve special mention: Freyre (1946); Harris (1958, 1964, 1970); Wagley (1952); Bender (1978) Meintel (1984) and Boxer (1963).

(people from Madeira), *lançados* (mulatto middlemen), Jews, *degradados* (deportees), or any other Europeans. Whites were referred in Creole language as *nyambob*³⁰, a pejorative term supposedly derived from the Mandinka word for white, *tubob*. The *mestiços* were also known as *mulatos* or *mistos*, whereas *pretos* were those of indubitable African origin, such as Balanta, Banyun, Beafadas, Bijagos, Brames, Felupes, Fulas, Jalofas, Mandinkas, Manjacos, Papel, Serer, and Susu. And the list is probably not exhaustive.

As the number of *mestiços* increased the racial folk taxonomy became more diverse and complex. The strict black and white dichotomy gave way to 'brown', 'light tan', 'dark tan', and when skin colour was not sufficient for a neat distinction, the type of hair, face, and nose were also used. *Rosto comprido* (long-face), *rosto redondo* (round-face), *feições correctas* (correct features) were forms of defining facial morphology. In terms of hair types there were *cabeça seca* (dry or wiry headed), *cabo crespo* (frizzy hair), and *cabo encrespado* (curly hair) (Meintel 1984:98-105)³¹. Unlike in the U.S., or South Africa during the apartheid regime, where just one single tiny 'African' characteristic was sufficient to define an individual as black or coloured, in Cape Verde, as well as in Brazil, since the majority of the population was mixed other factors helped to

³⁰ In the south-eastern New England area of the U.S., Cape Verdean immigrants and their descendants used to call the Portuguese immigrants from the Azores islands *nhambobs*, which translates as "yam growers" (Halter 1993:147). Yams are a staple crop of the Azores. The Azoreans see themselves as 'white Portuguese' and consider Cape Verdeans as 'Negroes'. *Nyambob* and *nhambob* are probably different spellings of the same word.

³¹ In Caribbean colonial societies too, the racial classification of people was not restricted to 'black' and 'white' as in the U.S., for example. The categories revealed more the 'percentage' of black blood than the physical characteristics of the individuals. For example, in eighteenth-century Jamaica the gradations were 'black', 'mulatto', 'terceroon', 'quadroon', 'mustee', 'musteefino', and 'white'. More than marking the physical features, these categories marked 'blood distance' in relation to both ends of the scale: 'black' and 'white' (Broom 1954:117).

establish the distinction between people.

A higher level of wealth and education, or power, would whiten a person's racial status, whilst poverty, unrefined social behaviour, and illiteracy would certainly darken it. The 'whitening' in South American and Caribbean societies is the equivalent of 'passing' in the U.S., where people with black ancestry can 'pass' to white when their physical aspect is light enough for them to conceal their black origin and be perceived as white (Solaun & Kronus 1973). In Jamaica, for example, higher status became equated with lightness and lower with darkness. This could be seen from the way census takers classified people: "For example a phenotypically black civil servant of the upper categories is most likely to be classified as coloured. A dark coloured peasant is most likely to be classified black" (Broom 1954:117). As people cannot eye-measure different colour wavelengths, classifying through colour is a question of cultural perception and convention, not of objective measurement.

2.2.2. The *assimilado* status

The Colonial Act of 1930, conceived by Salazar during his period as Minister of the Colonies, formally recognized the status of 'assimilated' (*assimilado*) to the people resident in the colonies whose, education, financial resources, and other similar relevant attainments equated them with the Portuguese in the metropole. Those who had not such requisites were considered 'indigenous' (*indígenas*).

The condition of *assimilado* somehow represented a threat to the *crioulo* identity of Cape Verde; to become 'assimilated' signified a rejection of the African roots. The status of *indígena* was applied widely to black Africans

throughout the colonies making them wards of the colonial administration³². Even as late as 1954, the notion of *indígena* was still being used in the Portuguese Native Statutes:

Individuals of the Negro race or their descendants who were born or habitually reside in the said Provinces and who do not yet possess the learning and social and individual habits presupposed for the integral application of the public and private law of Portuguese citizens are considered to be 'natives' (Harris 1958:7).

The end of the *indigenato* policy coincided with the outbreak of the guerrilla movement in Angola, in 1961, when the Portuguese government tried to appease the huge mass of black Africans so far largely kept aside from education, health services and any labour rights. Although this issue was more important in Guinea, Angola and Mozambique, it also affected the creation of a Cape Verdean identity, because while the upper strata of Cape Verde were offered the opportunity to deny their African roots and to be assimilated, the people at the bottom of the society were treated as indigenous, though many of them thought themselves more Portuguese than the Africans of the other colonies.

The Cape Verdeans were encouraged by the colonial ideology to think that they had greater cultural similarity to the Portuguese and had little to gain in identifying with the African blacks of the other colonies. The status of *assimilado* entitled them to somewhat greater educational facilities and usually they received a better education than the other Portuguese Africans. And that

³² In the words of Marcello Caetano, the successor to Salazar in 1968, "the law regards as aborigines (*indígenas*) the members of the black race or those descending from it who continue to live in their traditional way of life and do not by education acquire the outlook or manner of life of civilized men" (1951:32). A good explanation of what the distinction between *assimilados* and *indígenas* meant in practice can be found in Duffy (1961b; 1962:160-66) and Bender (1978:149-55).

also allowed them to engage more in the colonial administration as civil servants throughout the other colonies.

The fact that Portuguese white men paired off freely with black African women did not mean that they had no racial prejudice against coloured people, as the Cape Verdean colonial ideology might make us believe. White has always been the preferred colour when it comes to socially relevant matters, such as marriage and family. Most of these sexual liaisons did not end in marriage and institutional family. On the contrary, they were kept outside the family boundary.

2.3. The luso-tropical Eden

Until very recently the Portuguese and Brazilian intellectual mainstream defended the position that Portuguese colonisation had been more humanistic and paternalistic towards the colonised 'natives' than other European colonisations. Portuguese colonialism was depicted as having been based on a closer relationship between the white master and the black slave. But as Ronald Seagal pointed out, "Portugal has been exceptional only in the success with which it has deceived itself and so much of the outside world, leaving to its subjects all the disenchantments of experience" (forward in Duffy 1962:9-10).

Contradicting the supposed Portuguese civilisational job in Africa, the National Institute of Statistics in Lisbon (INE), drawing from the 1950 census, published the following figures, in 1959, just sixteen years before the official end of colonialism: in Portuguese Guinea there were 502,457 'uncivilised' and 1,478 'civilised' Africans; in Angola 4,006,598 'uncivilised', and 30,089 'civilised'; in Mozambique 5,646,957 'uncivilised' and 25,149 'civilised'.

Although the situation in Cape Verde was much better than that of the African colonies, the Cape Verdean society was also strongly influenced by the same type of colonial ideology. In fact, the Cape Verdean society has always been represented as the ideal role model of 'luso-tropical civilisation' as defined by the Brazilian intellectual Gilberto Freyre³³. It was in Cape Verde and in the northeast of Brazil that Portuguese luso-tropicalism had supposedly attained its highest realisation.

The colonial ideology of 'luso-tropicalism' set forth by Freyre was based on the evidence of large-scale miscegenation in Cape Verde and Brazil, which were presented as examples of racial assimilation in opposition to what supposedly happened in the other European colonies, in which the rule was instead 'racial pluralism'. According to Freyre, Brazil, despite its imperfections, was the nearest approach to paradise in the world in terms of racial relations (1959:19), a view which had been echoed earlier by the North-American scholar Donald Pierson (1939). In Freyre's view, Portuguese colonisation was different. On the one hand because of the Catholic paternalistic influence that brought together masters and slaves in a sort of 'religious communion', and on the other hand because of the 'Moorish influence' embedded in Portuguese culture which predisposed men for sexual relations with non-white people (Freyre 1940).

In 1952, Freyre visited the Portuguese African colonies as a guest of the Portuguese government, then headed by António Salazar. In Cape Verde, Freyre was very impressed with the level of miscegenation and the absence of racial friction. His ideas about the Portuguese colonisation in Africa were later published in a special volume of essays commemorating the five-hundredth

³³ For a recent reappraisal of Freyre's ideas see Cleary (1999).

anniversary of the death of Prince Henry, the Navigator. For Freyre it was clear that luso-tropicalism was not only a characteristic of the past colonisation of Brazil, but could as well be encountered in the Portuguese African empire. The main characteristic of luso-tropicalism was its 'Christocentric' rather than 'ethnocentric' character, which, in Freyre's own words, was capable of "transmitting a set of values to non-Christian peoples, quite independently of the national civilisation of the transmitter" (1961:13). Portuguese colonisation was conducted in a way to promote integration between colonisers and colonised on an egalitarian basis. For Freyre, Portuguese colonisation went somewhat wrong because it was negatively influenced by the other European colonisations in Africa, especially by the negative examples given by France, Belgium and South Africa. These colonial powers taught the Portuguese the ways of segregation and pluralism and restrained their 'Christianity'.

Freyre's ideas exerted strong influence on other scholars who were responsible for feeding the myth of the 'Iberian' model of slavery in opposition to the 'Anglo' model. As pointed out by Meintel (1984:74), authors such as Tannenbaum (1947), Elkins (1959), Hoetink (1967), and Degler (1971) emphasised the contrast between Brazil's and the United States' slave systems. According to Tannenbaum, the Portuguese slave system was the mildest of all: "If one were forced to arrange these systems of slavery in order of severity, the Dutch would seem to stand as the hardest, the Portuguese as the mildest, and the French, in between, as having elements of both" (1947:65, cited in Wagley and Harris 1958:102).

The main characteristic of the Portuguese slave system was the proximity between masters and slaves, which allowed miscegenation and manumission

more often than in any other system. As a consequence, a large population of mulattos developed, shortening the social and cultural distance between the white masters and the black slaves. The Catholic Church played an important, though at times ambiguous, role. On the one hand it emphasised that slaves were also human beings like their masters, but on the other reaffirmed the social distance between owners and slaves sanctioning in that way the established social order.

The heat of the tropics was viewed by Freyre and his followers as one of the causes of miscegenation (Freyre 1959, 1966). Moral and scruples melted away in the tropical climate. To the hot climate, Hoetink (1967), a follower of Freyre's ideas, added the idea of a 'somatic norm image', which was responsible for the 'Iberian' male preference for darker phenotypes. As a consequence of that female 'image', intimacy and sexual contact between Portuguese men and African women was socially accepted.

However, one cannot objectively sustain that in the Portuguese colonies miscegenation was determined by climate or any psychological propensity for darker women, since official tolerance for racial mixture varied significantly throughout the Portuguese empire. For example, whereas in São Tomé unions of Portuguese colonists with black women were promoted (Boxer 1963:15), in Brazil Portuguese prostitutes were preferred to Indian women, despite the encouraging of white-Indian marriages by the Prime Minister Marquis of Pombal during his consulate (Mörner 1967:49, cited in Meintel). In some colonies, military officers could be dismissed or lowered in rank for marrying black women.

Because miscegenation in Cape Verde was greater than in the other

Portuguese colonies there were attempts to restrain it. In the early seventeenth century it was ordered that prostitutes and other ill-famed women, usually sent to Brazil, be sent to Cape Verde instead, in order to 'extinguish' the race of mulattos (Barcellos 1899 I:210). However, these and other similar measures aimed at impeding the mixture between white men and black women were to little avail and by the early nineteenth century the mulattos represented about 43 per cent of the whole population (Chelmiki and Varnhagen 1841:321). By the beginning of the twentieth century very few people would claim a purely white ancestry. The island of Fogo was an exception to this, as we shall see later.

Cape Verde presented the factors that Freyre considered determinant in the promotion of miscegenation: the scarcity of European women combined with the availability and vulnerability of African slave women. Although the predominance of male migration to Cape Verde continued for several centuries after the initial settlement, as a characteristic of colonial Portuguese migration in general, the main reason for extended miscegenation was the sexual freedom of men. Even when they had legitimate spouses, men used to engage in extra-marital liaisons with slave or servant women. This male chauvinistic ethos was sanctioned by both the civil code and the Portuguese cultural tradition (Degler 1971:324). Male infidelity was largely tolerated as long as men continued to provide for their institutional families. Infidelity was the exclusive privilege of men. A jealous wife could make life very difficult for any attractive domestic slave woman, as in the example described by Carreira of a jealous wife who used a fork to gouge out the eyes of an attractive slave girl, so that she could not look to her white master (1983a:459).

The Church went along with the moral of 'luso-tropicalism' and most of

the clergy adopted the behaviour of lay men. In 1581, the Bishop of Santiago was accused by the Pope of living dishonestly and being surrounded by prostitutes (Barcellos 1899 I:154). Laic people, such as governors and other powerful men, very often lived publicly with their mulatto mistresses. Some of the children born to those mistresses were allowed into the family and brought up almost as legitimate. As Meintel reported during her fieldwork in the 1970s, “this seems to have been the case in several modern instances observed during field work, where the children were brought to live in the paternal household alongside their lighter-complexion half-siblings, though generally not on completely equal footing” (1984:81).

Society allowed sexual freedom to men but demanded responsibility in turn. However, more often than not men did not recognise paternity. This is still true nowadays in Cape Verde as well as among Cape Verdean immigrants. It lasted as part of the luso-tropical colonial inheritance. For Duffy (1962:71), miscegenation in Portuguese Africa was the result of a spontaneous ‘erotic expediency’ turned later into colonial policy. For Harris (1964:68-69), the most distinctive aspect of Portuguese colonisation was not its extended miscegenation, which he sees as a common characteristic shared by New World slave systems, but the way mulattos were seen and treated in the Portuguese colonies.

It cannot be said that the mulattos were uniformly treated throughout the Portuguese colonial empire. For example, in São Tomé, as early as the sixteenth century, mulattos could be elected to the town council as long as they were married and wealthy (Boxer 1963:16). But in eighteenth-century Brazil the mulattos were still treated with discrimination in relation to marriage and public

office (Boxer 1963:116-177). The same was the case in Angola. Comparatively, Cape Verdean mulattos were much better treated. If Father António Vieira's account, in 1625, is to be trusted, one cannot say that mulattos fared badly in the archipelago. "There are here [in Santiago] clergy and canons as black as jet, but so well-bred, so authoritative, so learned, such great musicians, so discreet and so accomplished that they may be envied by those in our cathedrals at home" (cited in Boxer 1963:14).

Cape Verde cannot be viewed as a whole in terms of race relations and race perception. In Santiago and Fogo, the islands where the black population was the highest, the relationship between whites, blacks and mulattos has always been more problematic. The distinction between these three categories was also more acute. Some islands were only peopled in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, at a time when the Cape Verdean population was already highly mixed. For that reason, in the more recently peopled islands there were never distinctly separated groups of whites, blacks and mulattos; people were all mixed, though viewed as black or white according to their social status.

Freyre's model of luso-tropicalism has been criticised because of its almost exclusive reliance on 'culture' and the neglect of the economic structure (Harris 1974; Degler 1971; Mintz 1971a, 1971b). In the case of Cape Verde one can surely say that economic factors played an important role in explaining the differences in race relations between the different islands, particularly the type of landownership. Independently of what causes were the most important in shaping the Cape Verdean colonial society, one can agree with Meintel when she says that "if any slavery regime could qualify as mild, the Cape Verdean would merit the title even more readily than that of north-eastern Brazil" (1984:88).

2.4. Society after abolition

In 1858, subsequent to a treaty signed with the English, in 1842, Portugal abolished slavery all over its possessions (Andrade 1996:134), but a twenty-year gap was accorded before the treaty becoming effective. In 1869, all slaves were formally free in Cape Verde, but as *libertos* they continue to work for their previous masters in most cases. This situation lasted until 1874 in Cape Verde and until 1876 in the other colonies (Meintel 1984:87).

It seems that abolition was received in the archipelago in a peaceful manner. One of the reasons could be that it relieved the social tensions accumulated for centuries during the slavery system. The other could be economic, since the end of the slave trade and slavery made slaves useless as merchandise, and landholders in Cape Verde could fare better if they exploited sharecroppers and tenants who would pay rent than if they had the land tilled by slaves, whom they had to provide with a minimum subsistence level. Moreover, the several droughts along the nineteenth century caused a drastic decrease in agricultural production, ruining many *morgado* holders.

The *morgadio* system itself was abolished in 1864, at a time when many large landowners were already bankrupt. This was also the time when *Banco Nacional Ultramarino* ([BNU], National Overseas Bank) established itself in the city of Praia offering loans to broken landholders. Many of the former *morgados* were mortgaged to BNU and finally fell into its hands when their owners failed to redeem the mortgages. As Foy puts it, “with the world financial crisis of 1929 to 1933, whose effects lasted six years longer on the islands, the power of the old *morgados* was finished” (1988:13). In Angola and Mozambique, where plantation agriculture continued to be one of the main pillars of the colonial

economy, abolition originated discontent among plantation owners (Duffy 1962:96). Generally, the end of slavery in Cape Verde, as in many parts of the New World, did not mean the independence of slaves from their former masters. For example, in the north-eastern Brazil plantation owners even supported the abolition process, which they saw as the development of new and more profitable forms of exploitation of the labour force. As Genovese remarks, “the transition to ostensibly free labour was in fact a transition to various forms of dependency that had long before struck roots alongside slavery itself” (1969:91).

As Meintel affirmed, “the case for abolition as a form of economic relief for the slave owners is easier to make for Cape Verde than for most societies” (1984:88). The decline of cotton growing in Fogo, droughts and other economic problems undermined the ever-weak basis of plantation agriculture. Abolition came in the sequence of a long practice of manumission, which, according to Meintel, “enabled the landlords to surmount the contradictions between their seigneurial pretensions and their inadequate means of sustaining them” (1984:88.). And so, the end of slavery does not seem to have fundamentally changed the social and economic relations between the landholders and workers, or, in other words, between the social categories of ‘white’ and ‘black’.

Despite one hears frequently from Cape Verdean mouths, either abroad or at home, that in the islands there was never a racial classification similar to the one that exists in Brazil, where one can find dozens of racial categories running between black and white, the reality seems to contradict that view. The Cape Verdean system of racial classification can be compared to that of Brazil, despite its lesser elaboration. “In both cases the racial lexicon is extensive, comprising many different terms that are applied in various ways according to the

circumstances” (Meintel 1984:93). In Cape Verde people were classified using a combination of physical traits and genealogy on a scale in which the European features were preferred to the African ones. According to one colonial saying, a man should ‘marry a white woman, get a mulatto woman as mistress, and hire a black woman as maid’. This popular saying is revealing of the hierarchical order within Cape Verdean society not only in aesthetic but also in social terms. The colonial ideology of race was conveyed by way of cultural values such as those of body aesthetics.

2.4.1. ‘Masters’ and ‘slaves’ after abolition

Economic and social life in Cape Verde did not change much with the abolition of slavery. This was particularly true on the islands of Santiago and Fogo, where the land remained in the hands of a few families and the rest of the people had to work as sharecroppers. In many cases up to a half of the production had to be handed to the landholder, leaving the cultivators in a difficult economic situation. The land was usually in the hands of absentee landowners who never renounced to take a large share, even when the peasants were struck by serious drought. According to the law (*Decreto* No. 47314, and *Portaria* No. 7873), until 1969 rent could be exacted independently of the harvesting conditions (Meintel 1984:94).

Intimidation and violence were often used to exact the rent, with the consent of the colonial authorities, which were often connected by family ties to the landowners. Either the administrator or the village council were controlled by a few powerful families, which at the same time owned most of the land. According to Meintel’s fieldwork experience in the early 1970s, “the black or

mulatto peasant or labourer was as vulnerable to brutality from the police, under the direction of the administrator, as from the landlords (as I had several occasions to witness)” (1984:94).

The diet and life conditions for the majority of the Cape Verdeans did not change much with the end of slavery. People in Brava were more affluent because migrants sent back used clothes from the U.S. For most people the basic diet was the same staples eaten by slaves: yam, beans, maize, cassava and potatoes; meat and fish were only eaten occasionally. Fishing, in three-man rowboats, was subject to the same renting system as land: two thirds of the catch were to the owner of the boat, usually a local merchant, and one third to the fishermen. Many times the fishermen’s family sold the catch to buy more grain and better relieve hunger.

The habits of salute and courtesy that one could observe on the eve of independence, in 1975, revealed the same kind of social relations that characterised slavery. Following Meintel’s account, the stepping aside and tipping of hat by peasant men in deference was sign of little change since the end of slavery (1984:95). Women only kissed each other when they were of similar social condition. Whereas the white could call the attention of a black person by tapping his or her shoulder, the reverse was not tolerated. “In Fogo, where the social hierarchy had changed least since abolition, one elderly *fidalga* (noblewoman), now living in her crumbling *sobrado*, still adhered to the custom of her youth by washing her hands after any contact with an ‘inferior’” (Meintel 1984:95). Meintel’s view is that the overlapping of class and racial hierarchies meant that the different patterns of courtesy and social behaviour in general were the equivalent of a legal colour bar, as was the case in the U.S. In other words,

social hierarchies were not perceived as racially enforced, since there was a strict correlation between 'colour' and 'class'. Moreover, social differences were perceived by the locals as a question of 'status' and 'class' and not of 'race'. In fact, in Alentejo, a southern province of Portugal, there was a similar system of social hierarchy, distancing clearly the owners of the *latifundia* from the mass of peasants and sharecroppers (see Cutileiro 1971). However, as both groups belonged to the same 'race' there was never a question of race relations but one of class relations, and social differences were seen as emerging from achievement and not from 'race'.

During the colonial time travel and identity documents carried by people indicated their 'race', but racial identity was not rigidly defined by law as happened, for example, in Cuba during slavery, where a colour line was legally imposed (Stolcke 1974:71-76). The absence of a legally sanctioned system of racial relations that defined rigid colour lines, and the historically depicted bland nature of its slave system, contributed to the view that Cape Verde has been the mildest Portuguese colony in terms of racial divides.

2.4.2. The nature of 'race'

Despite the Cape Verdean society being frequently described as a black-mulatto-white tripartite system, there were many occasions in which people would use a more detailed system of 'racial' classification. As Davidson put it, "crudely there were three such gradations: white and brown and black; but in practice, as this society unwound its complexities of claim on power or privilege, there were many more gradations" (1989):11-12). Making use of the same test that Marvin Harris (1970) used in Brazil for eliciting racial categories, Meintel found, during

her fieldwork on the island of Brava, one hundred-forty different terms of physical types, which is considerably less than the 492 terms collected by Harris in Brazil. In any case, the number of categories found by Meintel denies the impression given by Cape Verdean informants in Lisbon when they say that in Cape Verde people did not pay much attention to 'racial' differences. According to Davidson, the census of 1856 shows that there were at least seventeen distinctions of skin colour ranging through various shades from 'very dark' to 'almost white', which were recognised by anyone as an indication of status (1989:30).

Meintel found that in Cape Verde the form of the hair and nose could be more important than skin colour in defining the 'racial' category of an individual (1984:97). This is a feature that one would find much earlier on in the French Antilles and which would probably extend to many other plantation colonial settings. In Martinique, on the eve of the French Revolution, slight nuances in complexion and hair texture were used as criteria for social classification among the free mulattos. A complex of categories set down by Moreau de Saint-Méry for Haiti in 1797-98 and transposed to Guadeloupe by Boyer de Peyreleau (1823:122-3 *n.*, cited in Wagley and Harris 1958:106-7) give us a good notion of the complexity of the racial distinctions throughout the Caribbean world³⁴.

In Cape Verde, Meintel reported twenty-one different types of hair, as well

³⁴ According to Moreau de Saint-Méry (1823:82-87), all men were composed of 128 parts. The 'Caucasoid' had all the 128 parts 'white', while the 'Negroes' had all the parts 'black'. From the various proportions in which 'black' and 'white' parts could mix, a large set of possible social categories resulted. Just above the 'Negro' there was the *saccatra*, said to have anywhere between 112 and 120 'black parts'. The offspring of a 'Negro' and a *saccatra* was a *griffe*, who carried from 96 to 104 'black parts'. Next down in the scale there was the *marabou*. And the last of the categories to be closer to 'black' than to 'white' was the *mulâtre*. The first category to be closer to 'white' than to 'black' was the *quarteron*. Above him there were the *métif*, the *mamelouc*, the *quarteronné*, and last and the closest to 'white' was the *sang-mêlé*, who was thought to have only a maximum of three 'black parts'.

as eleven different types of nose. She also heard from her informants the Creole word *bermedjo* (from the Portuguese *vermelho*, meaning red) usually applied to people of fair skin and frizzy hair. Some of the informants I have interviewed in Lisbon who had lived in Guinea-Bissau for years said that *bermedjo* was the designation, in Guinea-Bissau, for Cape Verdeans who could pass for white Portuguese.

As in other colonial societies, in Cape Verde the racial classification of individuals was flexible, and not only did the categories change according to individual subjectivity but also new categories emerged frequently. As Meintel herself acknowledged, “just as important as terminological variety and disagreement is the fact that twenty-five respondents used only three terms in the picture test, though which three and how they were applied could vary” (1984:98). This result reflects the strong influence of the tripartite category system (black-white-mulatto) which dominated in Santiago, Fogo and Brava. The island of Brava was peopled with families who fled from the volcanic eruptions in Fogo, and its plantation economy was dominated until the mid-eighteenth century by families from Fogo, who delegated the management of the rural estates to stewards (*feitores*) (Barcellos 1905 III:30). Particularly Fogo and Brava kept the tripartite ‘racial’ system until the 1930s (Sousa 1958; Monteiro 1960).

The social distance between families and individuals can also influence the way people classify each other. One episode occurred during Meintel’s fieldwork in Brava illustrates well this point:

A certain man was walking from the town of Nova Sintra to an upland hamlet called Mato. On his way he came upon two small boys who began to harass him, throwing stones at him. Furious, he shouted imprecations at the boys, calling them

pretos [blacks]. On arriving at his friend's house in Mato, the traveller learned that one of his young tormentors was the son of his host. 'I called your son preto', he declared, 'but for the sake of our friendship I take it back – he's mulatto *scuro!* [dark mulatto] (1984:99).

The Cape Verdeans usually avoid the use of *preto* and *negro*³⁵ (negro) when they are referring to others in their presence. But the use of these terms is relatively frequent when they are referring to absent people. The same does not happen with *branco* or *mulato*. These categories are used many times when friendship is involved or when people want to 'whiten' others. For example, in a bar I frequented in the city of Praia, Santiago Island, some of the usual patrons who liked to flirt with one of the black maids would say to her '*bu ka e preta, bu e mulata*' (you're not black, you're mulatto). This shows the preference for lighter looks, a characteristic that Cape Verde shares with other former colonial settings, like Brazil, the Caribbean, and the less frequently mentioned example of Macau, for example. In Macau the 'Luso-Chinese' tried to hold to their 'capital of Portugueseness'³⁶ by emphasising what made them look Portuguese and distancing from what could identify them as Chinese.

In this way, marriage to a Portuguese woman enhanced the capital of Portugueseness, while marriage to a Chinese woman's daughter or to the daughter of a family of New Christians [people newly converted to Christianity] diminished that capital (Pina-Cabral & Lourenço 1993:62).

Genealogy is also an important factor in defining one's racial category, and people will claim white ancestry as a way of whitening their physical aspect,

³⁵ Actually *negro* is rarely used by Cape Verdeans. They prefer the word *preto*.

³⁶ The idea of a 'capital of Portugueseness' (*capital de portugalidade*) is deployed by Pina-Cabral and Lourenço (1993:62-70, 103) in order to explain the manners, stance, and values that the early twentieth-century colonial elites of Macao adopted in order to be seen as Portuguese.

but the concern with 'race' and genealogy is not specific to colonial Cape Verde. For example, in Trinidad the members of the white Creole elite, especially those of French origin, made it very important to trace back their European ancestry (Brereton 1998:52-3) through their sonant family names. In Cape Verde, the island of Fogo was perhaps the best example of this type of concern with 'racial purity' and 'whiteness'. The Barbosa-Vicente and Sacramento-Monteiro families of Fogo played the same role as the Verteuil and Boissière of Trinidad. "Some descendants of the landlord class maintain a lively interest in their genealogies, though others mock and sometimes dispute their claims to 'pure' European descent" (Meintel 1984:99). Sometimes, when questioned about their 'race', women would try and convince others that their darker colour was the result of sun burning, raising their skirts or sleeves and showing lighter parts of their body. A flatter nose would prove that someone was not 'really white' but *morena clara* (light mulatto). People would prefer to explain their darker complexion with a Moorish-Portuguese than an African-Portuguese descent. Misunderstandings about self-categorisation were the cause of mocking, as in one story told by one of Meintel's informants:

A newly arrived Protestant clergyman was giving his first sermon in the town of São Filipe [Fogo] and began to expound on the love of God for all mankind, '*branco, preto and Moreno like myself*'. This provoked great hilarity among his audience, because the man was of very dark complexion. From then on, he was known as *Moreno-como-eu* [Moreno-like-myself] (1984:100).

Racial classification varies with the context and the purpose it serves on every occasion. The words *branco* and *preto*, for example, may be used either as descriptors of physical appearance or as descriptors of social position. The well-known expression in Cape Verde *mania di gente branco* (white people's

manners) is a good example of the use of *branco* as a descriptor of class position. Lack of consensus about an individual's classification is frequent. For some purposes one individual may be termed white while for other he or she may be termed mulatto or black. Classification varies also with the social status and personal subjectivity of the person who classifies. People in lower positions tend to see those above as lighter and those at the same level as darker. In the case of Cape Verde, it seems that for most purposes the tripartite classification white-mulatto-black is enough. But when a more precise distinction is needed people will choose from a wider set of racial terms.

Usually, racial terms associate phenotype with geographical origin. For example, *africano* (African) or *preto di Guiné* (black of Guinea) means a black African, whereas *tipo europeu* (European type) means white. Racial and geographical origins are related to certain physical features other than skin colour. For instance, bulky lips and frizzy hair are viewed as evidence of African origin, while thin lips and straight hair are viewed as evidence of European origin. In the colonial aesthetic ideology African-like features were considered ugly or 'incorrect' while European-like features were viewed as more beautiful and 'correct'. The episode observed by Meintel is significantly illustrative of the importance of the use of 'colour' as an identity marker:

In a household where I lived for a time, a small boy about four years old petulantly called his mother 'ugly... because you're brown' (*castanha*). His remarks evoked amusement because *castanha* is a colour term normally applied to objects, not people. Yet, even in his error, he revealed an understanding of the value attached to racial designations" (1984:101).

According to the local racial ideology, women of lighter complexion who married and bore children from darker men were told off for 'deteriorating the

race', while the marriage of a darker woman with a lighter man was seen as 'ameliorating the race'. However, in some occasions there might be some argument about what is best. For example, according to Meintel, not all informants agreed that *negro bermedjo* is better or worse than simply *preto* or *negro* (1984:102). *Morena*, a woman defined as having the combination of a tawny complexion and European-like features is the category that seemed to gather the most consensual approval in the archipelago.

The colonial body aesthetics and racial ideology clearly preferred European-like features and stigmatised those more evidently linked to an African origin. For example, students returning from the university in Lisbon and who had been influenced by the late 1960s Afro-style were criticised back in the islands by the 'white' mainstream culture and harassed by police. Colonial ideology saw the role of colonisation as that of 'assimilating the natives', as we can see from the words of Marcello Caetano, the last of the hardliners of colonialism: "although respecting the *modus vivendi* of the natives, the Portuguese have always endeavoured to impart their faith, their culture and their civilisation to them, thus calling them into the Lusitanian community" (1951:34). The same reasoning was put forth by former Overseas Minister Silva Cunha when, in the 1960s, he stated that Portuguese colonial expansion had been predominantly a 'crusade', while other colonising powers had made it a 'commercial enterprise' (1960:59-60).

Portuguese colonisation was sustained by an ideal of religious and civilising mission. In that Portugal was not different from the rest of Europe. The difference is that the Portuguese believed it for much longer than the others. Every cultural element relating to Africa was considered inferior and backward.

For example, the traditional pipe smoking by Cape Verdean women was seen as a cultural inheritance from the African slaves. The use of the traditional headscarf was also 'backward' and 'African'. For upper-class people, these traits were seen as signs of the cultural inferiority of the lower classes and as part of a unique Cape Verdean folkloric tradition, at the same time. The carrying of objects on the head by women, walking barefoot, and the belief in magic and witchcraft were also disparaged as 'African'. Yet, many of these customs were not exclusively African but of peasants in general. Peasant women in the Portuguese metropole also used headscarves, carried objects on top of their heads and walked barefoot.

The racialisation of the behaviour and manners of the Africans was necessary for the colonial ideology to establish the difference between the white metropolitan peasantry from which most of the colonists were drawn and the African mass. Class differentiation in Cape Verde assumed a racialised manner through the use of cultural distinctive markers. In a situation where there is a strong correlation between being 'black' and having 'low-culture', 'race' is easily equated with 'culture' making it very difficult for the observer to see which of the two is really working in the people's mind.

In Cape Verde, social classes were defined through a colour code that could be perceived as racist in some circumstances but not in others. The association of cultural inferiority to 'racial' groups is not exclusive of colonial situations. For example, Pitt-Rivers (1961, 1966) reported that gypsies were considered of a 'shameless' nature by the Andalusians, who also view them as their inferiors. The attribution of inferior cultural values to a particular group by others is a way of disempowerment, which in the case of gypsies, blacks or Jews

assumes a racialised character.

2.4.2. The social triumph of the Creole

The Cape Verdean society maintained its tripartite main division almost until the very end of colonialism. Yet, and despite the small scale of the islands, one cannot generalize about the nature of racial and class relations in its society. A distinction must be made between the first islands to be populated, where there was at least some plantation agriculture and larger rural estates, and the islands that were populated later and whose economic activities and rural estates were of a smaller scale. The islands of Santiago, Fogo, Santo Antão, São Nicolau, and Brava to a certain extent, all developed more rigid social systems where differences in 'race' and 'class' played an important role. The remainder of the islands developed a more flexible social structure due to the fact that they were populated later, their economic activities were less important and there were no *morgados*.

Of all the islands, Fogo has been considered the most representative of the survival of the old colonial social structure, originated from the existence of *morgados* and *sobrados*³⁷. According to Teixeira de Sousa, a prominent doctor and writer from Fogo, the old tripartite colonial structure could still be found almost untouched at the beginning of the twentieth century. In his first analysis of the social structure of Fogo, written in the 1940s, he considers the existence of four 'classes': *brancos* (whites); *mulatos* (people born by white father and mulatto or black mother), which he also call *mestiços* (mixed); proper *mulatos*

³⁷ Large colonial two-storey houses which were the characteristic dwelling of the *brancos* in the city of São Filipe, Fogo, and in some of the other islands.

(people born by mulatto father and mother); and at the very bottom the *povo* (the popular mass, mostly darker people) (1947:42). In Sousa's words, "this division is not purely ethnic, but by and large social" (1947:42, my translation). Although in Cape Verde both *mestiços* and *mulatos* could ascend to the category of *white*, according to Sousa Fogo was an exception to the largely flexible racial system of Cape Verde as portrayed by Freyre and others. In Fogo, the acceptance of *mulatos* and *mestiços* as members of the *branco* elite was difficult and rare.

The downward mobility of the elements of the *branco* class was more common, particularly after the 1930s. "Today one can find some white losers within the middle class" (Sousa 1947:42, my translation). This was the case of white families struck by several years in a row of bad harvests and failure in commerce. The economic and social power of the white elite emerged during the festivities, a time when the most powerful families disputed the capacity to show off among themselves, in a sort of *potlatch* of power display.

In the early twentieth century, *brancos*, *mulatos* and *mestiços* each had a specific role and place within the setting of the ceremonies, but the whites distinguished themselves from the others by riding on horses, a privilege that only they could afford. In the 1940s, one could already see *mestiços* and *mulatos* riding horses and seizing the saints' banners. According to Sousa's analysis, the *mulatos* had become the most influential class, more than the *mestiços*, whose main social capital was their father's family name, even if they were bastards. The whites had gone bankrupt, the mulattos were arriving at the top, and the *mestiços* spent their time longing for the time past of white supremacy and mourning the ascent of the mulattos to the top of the local society (Sousa 1947:42). For Sousa the *mestiços* represented a residual group without a say in

the new social order while the mulattos were the new rich merchants and landholders, most of them emigrants returned from the U.S. However, and according to his view, the *mestiços* were more easily accepted within the white families and as a result there were more mixed marriages between *mestiços* and whites than between mulattos and whites. As Sousa says, “since early childhood the *mestiços* are kicked out of their *mestiço* grandma’s yard to their *branco* grandma’s yard” (1947:43, my translation). Their place was among the whites and not with the mulattos. In other words, mixed people born of a white father tended to be incorporated within the father’s family.

Gradually, the mulattos, meanwhile involved in commerce, bought the *sobrados* and *morgados* from the traditional white families fallen from grace due to the downturn of the local economy. The interior rural areas represented the social universe of those who Teixeira de Sousa calls the ‘people’, a word he uses to avoid *preto*, which often carried demotion. Migration to the U.S. was mostly fed by this group of have-nots who later returned with savings and bought rural and urban property. According to Sousa’s own words, he could not remember one single white family that had migrated to America. The demise of the white families was followed by migration to the Portuguese metropole or to the other colonies.

In 1958, Teixeira de Sousa deepened his analysis in the *Claridade* journal with an article titled *Sobrados, Lojas and Funcos*, giving a more detailed account of the social structure of Fogo. In that article he made reference to a satire that illustrates the rank order in Cape Verdean colonial society. According to the satire, the *sancho* lived in the rock, the *preto* in the *funco*, the *mulatto* in

the *loja*, and the *branco* in the *sobrado*³⁸. One day would come when the *sancho* throws the *preto* out of the *funco*; the *preto* throws the *mulato* out of the *loja*, and the *mulato* throws the *branco* out of the *sobrado* (1958:2). According to Sousa, the causes for the tumbling down of the white families and the subversion of the social order on the island were various. Some of the most important agricultural products, such as maize, and leguminous, and oleaginous crops (physic-nut and ricinus)³⁹ had their market price cut down significantly. The export of maize, which brought good profit to the *morgados*, was banned in order to avoid its import from Angola at a price that poor people could not afford. Finally, the abolition of the *morgadio* system and the liquidation of the large estates and subsequent split between heirs knocked down the white rule on the island.

According to Sousa, those who around 1910 visited the island would still find in São Filipe, the capital city of the island, the old colonial styled two-storey houses roofed with French gutter tiles, the *sobrados*, where the traditional white elite lived. These *sobrado* owners were the descendants of the old European colonists. Below in the dwelling rank there were the ground-floor houses of the middle-class mulattos who worked for the white elite: clerks, salesmen, dressmakers, seamstresses, embroideresses and the like. On the outskirts of São Filipe there lived the lower class in the *funcos*. These were fishermen, servants, and carriers. The lower-class people were as mixed as the middle-class mulattos, but the groups above viewed them as blacks. Furthermore, as Teixeira de Sousa

³⁸ The *sancho* is a species of little monkey that can still be found in the northern part of the island of Santiago. *Funcos* are circular small dwellings built with stone blocks and covered by a thatch-roof. *Lojas* are retail shops formerly owned by the white elite who employed mulattos as shopkeepers. Later, these shops were bought by the mulatto middle-class from their insolvent white owners.

³⁹ Referred in the taxonomy as *curcas purgans* and *ricinus communis*.

remarks, the lower-class mulattos were humbly convinced of their blackness, they had so been inculcated by the colonial ideology.

In the countryside social stratification was the same as in the small town of São Filipe. There were the large rural estates of the whites and the small estates of the more affluent mulattos. The white families, both from the small town of São Filipe and from the countryside, used to send their sons to study medicine, law and engineering in Lisbon, Coimbra, or Oporto. Most of these children never returned to the island after graduation, instead they stayed in the metropole or accepted a position in the colonial administration of one of the other colonies, mainly Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. The daughters were educated in religious schools and rarely graduated from the university; secondary education was the top-limit for most (Sousa 1958:4).

With time, most of the white families vanished and the traditional social hierarchy enacted during the island's festivities faded away. Most of the *potlatch*-like nature of the older feasts was lost forever. The parade of the banners became almost unnoticed and banal. The 'large banner' of São Filipe, once carried exclusively by the white families, fell into the hands of the mulattos, who before could only aspire to the 'beach banner' (while the whites had their banner paraded in the town, the mulattos had to parade their on the beach). The use of horses, once an exclusive privilege of whites, was extended to mulattos and blacks⁴⁰. Some of the whites who remained on the island were assimilated into the mass of mulattos through marriage, while others narrowed the circle of endogamy in order to maintain the 'purity of race'. Marriage between the children of siblings and even between a man and his sister's

⁴⁰ For a detailed description of Fogo's festivities see Félix Monteiro, 'Bandeiras da Ilha do Fogo', *Claridade* 8:9-22, May 1958.

daughter was common practice for the best known 'white' families of Fogo⁴¹. Still today Fogo has a reputation for madness as the result of too much endogamy. Ironically, the white elite ended up by being overwhelmed by the mulattos born of the men's extra-conjugal liaisons with black women.

According to Teixeira de Sousa, from 1925 onward the social structure of Fogo underwent a drastic change and the social conflict between the old white elite and the newly promoted mulatto middle-class became insurmountable. Sousa undertook to write next about that crucial period, but he never did. Very little, if any, has been written about the Cape Verdean social structure between the time of Sousa's analysis and the time of the independence of Cape Verde. The exception is Meintel's ethnography, to which I shall now turn.

2.5. 'Class' and 'race' at the end of colonialism

The line between racial and class segregation is very difficult to trace in Cape Verde, since in most cases they mean the same, and people can always use one or the other to explain discrimination and difference. For those on top it is a question of class, for those at the bottom it is one of race. As Meintel observed:

Women of the upper classes, when asked why they did not give the customary kiss of greeting and farewell to certain women with whom they seemed friendly, replied that such behaviour is inappropriate for persons of different 'levels'. Those in the lower-status position in such situations were likely to offer such reasons as 'they don't like my colour' or 'they don't like to touch dark people' (1984:111-112).

At the time of Meintel's fieldwork, in the early 1970s, the Cape Verdean society still seemed to maintain its tripartite structure, though race and class did

⁴¹ For an interesting description of the marriage with the sister's daughter see Peter G. Rivière, *Marriage Among the Trio* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969).

not match each other as perfectly as before. According to Meintel, there was the bourgeoisie, *gente branco* (white people), as it is known in Creole, constituted by landowners who also commanded the market production and commerce. They had close ties abroad, either in the Portuguese metropole or the U.S. The top colonial bureaucrats also belonged to the bourgeoisie. Most of these people were of a very light complexion and therefore viewed as white. Their roots stemmed from the old 'plantocracy' (Meintel 1984:108). Many of the bourgeoisie people left the islands after the independence, in 1975. Below the bourgeoisie proper there was what Meintel calls the petty bourgeoisie constituted by shopkeepers, clerks, small bureaucrats and professionals, schoolteachers, and holders of small commercial enterprises entirely local. These people were mostly mulattos "lighter in colour than the general population" (Meintel 1984:108).

At the bottom of the social ladder there was 'the people' (*o povo*), or in Meintel's words the popular class. In this class we would find peasants, living either on their own plots of land or as renters and sharecroppers. Often, agriculture was complemented with the practice of a craft. This class also included agricultural labourers who did not own any land, fishermen, domestic servants, urban labourers, and all those who did not possess a definite livelihood. Most of the *povo* was black or dark mulatto. According to Meintel's description of the Cape Verdean social structure, based on fieldwork in Fogo and Brava, it seems that even towards the end of colonialism there was a strong correlation between complexion and social class in Cape Verde. People of lighter complexion would tend to be higher on the social ladder, whereas people with darker complexions would tend to be lower.

In the colonial society of Cape Verde there were occasions in which racial and class differentiation seemed non-existent, as for example in the case of gatherings motivated by serious illness or death. As Meintel describes: “death can be the stimulus for months of visits from persons of all social ‘levels’. The hosts are expected to provide occasional refreshments regardless of the caller’s social position, and all visitors are invited to sit in the main room” (1984:109).

These gatherings were major occasions for gossiping by which people of different walks in society exchanged information on the current affairs of the village. And “though conversational roles tend to reflect gradations of status, all present may take part, and there is an air of conspicuous equality about these occasions” (Meintel 1984:109). There were other occasions on which social restrictions between classes surfaced. Such was the case with dances and meals held privately during religious feasts, wedding and baptismal celebrations. Only people of the same level of the celebrants were allowed into the living and dining rooms. So, on those occasions people tended to group according to their social level, making different sub-groups in the different parts of the celebrants’ home. This pattern of social segregation was imported from Portuguese metropolitan society.

The participation of people belonging to the lower class was restricted to the kitchen and *quintal* (the enclosed backyard of the *sobrado*) These lower class guests might be invited to eat in the kitchen, but they would be expected to refuse if there were important guests in the house. In the past there had been occasions in which the ‘social geography’ would be subverted. This was the case with *canizade* in Fogo, a dance performed two evenings before São Filipe’s main feast. During slavery this performance seemed to have involved the ritual

reversal of roles between masters and slaves. The slaves would dress in white and whiten their faces with a chalklike powder. *Canizade* was the only occasion in which people of the lower ranks were allowed into the *sala* (living room), to perform their dances, while the ‘whites’ watched from a distance. In general, recreational gatherings implicated class segregation. This was particularly true when young people of marrying age were involved. The *Liceu* (high school) was the only social space where social differences were generally ignored, simply because education was seen as an important asset at a time when many of the former rich families had lost their wealth. The *Liceu* was the way up for middle-class people, and worked as a colour-mixer. But it was also a way-out for some of the ruined ‘rich families’, who saw in the *Liceu* an opportunity to marry their daughters to lower-class bright students with good perspectives of becoming professionals in the metropole.

In Brava, according to what Meintel collected from her respondents, unmarried girls used to hold parties at the New Year’s Eve and the Feast of the Three Kings to which the boys attended organised in clubs. These clubs went on from party to party and had to provide the music and fireworks. In the past the clubs were homogenous in terms of class and colour, but more recently “because of the depletion of the old landlord class and the ascent of some families from the popular class through remittances from America, the boys’ clubs came to vary considerably in composition” (1984:110). Upper-class girls would do everything to discourage boys with lower status from staying in their parties, and would do all they could to attract boys with the same or higher status.

This kind of social segregation and discrimination is viewed differently according to the participants. From the point of view of the excluders it is a

question of social and cultural background, but for the excluded is a question of colour and class prejudice. One of the best examples of exclusiveness was the *Grémio*, a club in Mindelo, São Vicente, to which admission was granted according to education and prestige in the community. According to some former club members the only criterion for admission was the cultural background of the candidates and no one would be excluded on a colour or class basis. However, the widely known story of a wealthy bakery owner who, because of his very dark mulatto complexion, saw his membership denied shows that colour could be an important matter. The person in question had become rich by way of his commercial activity, but according to the admission board of the club he lacked the necessary educational background to become one of them⁴².

Florestan Fernandes (1978) in his study of racial relations in São Paulo, Brazil, observed that racism was by far more likely to be perceived by darker individuals than by whites. Because on many occasions there is no contact restriction between individuals of different shades, it may seem that there is no racism. For example, in Cape Verde as well as in Brazil, it is possible to see the darker children of the servants playing with the master's children, but this egalitarianism is only apparent. Social distance only surfaces when the children grow old enough to become sexual partners or to perform the social role of the servant. "Only when the child-servant is old enough to do domestic chores, at about five to six years of age, does the distance between him or her and the employer's children begin to show itself" (Meintel 1984:112).

It is only when important matters such as marriage and courtship emerge

⁴² The story is well recounted in Davidson (1989:30-31), as well as by some of my informants.

that racial and class segregation become explicit. In Cape Verde, as many other 'patriarchal' societies such as nineteenth-century Cuba (see Stolcke 1974), men are expected to be involved sexually with women of inferior rank, such as servants, but they should only take for spouse a woman of the same rank or higher. In colonial Cape Verde it was assumed that both spouses should be of similar match in terms of religious, educational, and racial background. This is what Meintel termed the 'norm of homogamy' (1984:114), which was widely acknowledged and accepted in the Cape Verdean society as in many other societies around the world. The Church played an important role in sanctioning this norm, since it preached to individuals that they should accept their place in society and expect compensation in the afterlife. In Brava and Fogo, as late as at the turn of the twentieth century, white women of important families would rather remain spinsters than marry a 'non-pure' white groom. Marriage between 'first cousins' was a common expedient to maintain racial purity, though the most important reason was to keep the family wealth in the same hands. When the 'white' elite began to lose its economic power, mixed marriages were not considered to be as negative.

Migration and the consequent upward mobility of darker people progressively changed the original ideology of racial differentiation that used to rule social interaction in Cape Verde. However, in Brava, and shortly before independence, there was the case of marriages arranged by letter between locals and migrants. It was not uncommon for the parties to meet and discover that one of them or both were not as 'white' as shown in the photographs and refuse to marry. Racial difference, even if seen by the locals as difference in 'cultural background', was always present in the Cape Verdean society. When some

darker people began to move upward socially that was viewed as exceptions to the inferiority of blacks. When a mulatto or black person after having gained his or her status among the elite failed to succeed the explanation was that he or she had *falta de formação*⁴³ (lack of background). ‘There is nothing worse than a black with schooling’ was a common saying of ‘whites’ about the educational achievement of mulattos or blacks who had become prominent figures in the Cape Verdean society.

2.6. Conclusion

The Cape Verdean colonial society started from slavery with a small number of white landlords holding power over a population of black slaves brought from the African continent, particularly from the region between Sierra Leone and Senegal. The original plan was to transform Cape Verde into a plantation system like Azores and Madeira, however, the slave trade soon became the most important economic activity in the archipelago. The number of black slaves largely outnumbered the small white population. Right from the beginning of the populating of the islands, the sexual liaisons between white men of higher rank and slave women originated a large mixed population. Due to the large scale of miscegenation, Cape Verde, along with Brazil, has been seen by Portuguese and Brazilian scholars as an example of the mildness of Portuguese colonisation. This idea was perpetuated in the works of Brazilian scholar Gilberto Freyre. According to Freyre’s idea of luso-tropicalism, the paternalistic attitude of the masters toward the slaves, inspired by Catholicism, originated a society in which racial barriers were not as rigid as in the case of the colonisation by Protestant

⁴³ *Formação* had the ambiguous meaning of ‘ancestry’ and ‘upbringing’, reinforcing the usual confusion between biological determinism and enculturation.

nations. However, Cape Verde was a society in which folk ideas of race, along with the colonial racial ideology, played an important role in the way social relations were structured. In many cases 'race' and 'class' went along the same line making it more difficult, especially for the local people, to perceive the important role played by 'race'.

Because there was a strong positive correlation between social class and complexion, the Cape Verdeans at the top view social difference in terms of class and not of race. Although this view was extensive to all classes, it was particularly emphasised by upper-class people with lighter complexion, while those at the bottom more often saw it as racial.

Despite the fact that most analysts of the Cape Verdean society see it as a whole, we have to consider regional differences within the archipelago. Racial differentiation has been more important on the islands where there were small-scale plantations associated with larger rural estates. On the islands where rural property was smaller and the populating began at a later stage, racial differentiation has not been so important.

After abolition and until practically the independence of the archipelago, social and racial relations changed little. The return of emigrants from Europe and the U.S., along with the fading out of the local white elite were the major sources of social change during colonialism and after independence.

3. The Creation of ‘the Cape Verdean Man’

–Versifying comes as naturally to a Creole as eating or making love.–

Lyall (1938:92)

3.1. Introduction

During the last decades of colonialism, the educated elite of Cape Verde developed a Portuguese Cape Verdean identity based on the aggrandisement of their Portuguese cultural roots and on the belittlement of the African influence on Portuguese colonisation. A significant part of that identity has been conveyed by the literature and poetry produced by the last generations of Portuguese Cape Verdean intellectuals. It is an identity fated to disappear with the last of these Portuguese Cape Verdeans.

The Cape Verdean identity encompasses different aspects in opposition to each other. Despite corresponding to class differences, those aspects are more often seen by the Cape Verdeans as manifestations of cultural diversity within the archipelago. One aspect is the view that Cape Verdeans have of themselves as highly educated people, even more educated than the metropolitan Portuguese of the same generation. This view is mostly found among upper- and middle-class Portuguese Cape Verdeans and has contributed to the ‘literacy myth’⁴⁴. Together with this idea, ran the idea that the Cape Verdeans were a special product of Portuguese colonisation, as we can see from the words of Osório de Oliveira: “The high mental level of Cape Verdeans is, since long, one of the

⁴⁴ Contrary to the view of most of my middle- and upper class informants who affirmed there was almost no illiteracy in Cape Verde during colonial time, 1950 statistics show that only 13 per cent of the population in Santiago could read, and of those 13 per cent only 40 per cent could write (Amaral 1964:318). For more on the ‘literacy myth’ see Meintel (1984:134-38).

strongest proofs of the excellence of the Portuguese colonisation and of our civilising capacity” (1936:4, my translation).

Another aspect is the importance that Cape Verdeans give to music, dance, and food as markers of their identity. Again, there are differences that even though class-related are mainly perceived as regional. People from middle- and middle-upper class backgrounds tend to prefer musical genres, such as *morna* and *mazurca*, viewed as local versions of European genres, whereas the lower classes tend to prefer musical genres such as *funaná* and *batuque*, whose origins are viewed as African. However, it is not possible to trace a straight line in terms of class preferences, for some people among the upper class may also like the more ‘African-like’ facet of ‘Cape Verdean culture’, as some of the lower-class people may listen to the more ‘European-like’ genres. Food patterns seem to be shared by Cape Verdeans of all classes and preferences are more related to the island of origin than to class status. Although the names of the dishes seem not to change, its preparation and ingredients may vary according to social class, and some regional differences within Cape Verde corresponded, at least to a certain extent, to class differences.

But perhaps the most important aspect is that related to Santiago Island and the *badiu* identity of its rural hinterland population. *Badius* are viewed as the descendants of runaway slaves; the word seems to have come from the Portuguese *vadio*, (wanderer). During slavery *vadio* was applied to runaway slaves who escaped the rule of their masters and went to live their own life in isolated communities. *Badiu* culture saw a revival in the 1960s when the *rebelado* (rebellious) religious movement gained its momentum (see Monteiro 1974; Cabral 1980). The origins of the *rebelado* movement go back to the 1940s,

when Portuguese missionaries belonging to the Congregation of the Holy Spirit, a catholic religious order, arrived in Santiago Island and attempted to control and modify the religious practices of the rural population for long habituated to a great deal of autonomy. The *rebelados* refused to accept the rule of missionaries and priests and preferred to conduct the religious ceremonies themselves and in their own way. They also refused to accept sanitary measures such as the fumigation of their homes at the campaigns to eradicate malaria, in the 1950s. The movement assumed political importance in the 1960s when part of the Cape Verdean elite was involved in a guerrilla war against colonialism in Portuguese Guinea. The *rebelados* were then pointed out as a symbolic example of the refusing of colonialism.

After independence, the Cape Verdean political elite tried to construct a national identity based on '*badiu* culture' as a way of identification with the other African newly independent nations: Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Yet, it can be considered that *badiu* culture and identity represent the negative aspects of being Cape Verdean. *Badiu* identity is associated with black violence and rudeness; *badius* are feared for their use of the knife and for being quarrelsome. People originating on islands other than Santiago tend to attribute the derogative aspects of Cape Verdean identity to the *badius* of Santiago. Nonetheless, *badius* share some of the positive values ascribed to peasants in general, such as honesty, integrity and hardworking nature.

Badiu identity is opposed to the Cape Verdean 'trademark' of *morabeza* (kindness and openness), which is more associated with being *sampadjudo*. There are several folk theories explaining the origin of the Creole word

sampadjudo. Some say it originated in the Portuguese sentence ‘*são para ajuda*’ (they are for help), pronounced by the general governor of the archipelago in one particularly abundant agricultural year when people from the other islands had to be sent to Santiago in order to help with the harvesting. The governor-general then recommended that all the people sent to Santiago had to return to their islands. They were just ‘for the help’ and not for staying indefinitely. The other folk theory is also related to agriculture and says that *sampadjudo* came from the Portuguese ‘*sem palha*’ (without hay), alluding to the barrenness of the other islands in relation to Santiago.

The opposition between *badius* and *sampadjudos* represents a regional divide within the archipelago, which easily assumes a racial content, since *badius* tend to be darker, if not black, and *sampadjudos* lighter or even white. Nevertheless, all Cape Verdeans abroad, either *badiu* or *sampadjudo*, tend to appropriate the positive aspects of the Cape Verdean identity, independently of their island of origin.

Curiously, and despite the importance of race in Cape Verdean colonial society, Cape Verdean intellectuals successfully managed to construct an identity in which the regional and racial divides were kept aside, as we can see from the words of a prominent writer:

We did not see blacks and whites. We saw poor and rich and a lot of misery, and we were interested in Cape Verde and its people as being part of the whole Portuguese nation. We were all Cape Verdeans notwithstanding differences in skin colour, and in that sense we were all Portuguese, Portuguese Cape Verdeans (Portuguese Cape Verdean writer, male, age 93).

3.2. Identity in literature and poetry

The idea of a Cape Verdean distinct identity, neither African nor Portuguese but somewhere in the middle, may not be recent. However, its consolidation occurred in the twentieth century and it was mainly the work of a few dozen Portuguese Cape Verdean intellectuals. Schooling and literary education have been praised in the archipelago at least since the mid-nineteenth century, not only as a way of ascending the social ladder but also as a manifestation of cultural superiority at a time when illiteracy was very high both in the colonies and in the metropole.

The view of the elite was reinforced by the writings and words of some of the few foreigners who visited the islands, as we can see from those of Archibald Lyall, a British sojourner to the islands in the late 1920s:

I was introduced to a boy, not yet out of his teens, in a grocery store in Brava who showed me a large exercise book filled with his output for the current year. (It was then only the beginning of April). It consisted of over four hundred quatrains, all about love and black eyes and his breaking heart. (...) it was easy to realise that poetry to a Capverdian is quite as often an academic exercise as the burning expression of a lover's longing (1938:92-3).

Lyall's view matches the 'myth' that in Cape Verde every one could read and write, even a stevedore. It was in the mid-eighteenth century that the Portuguese government cared to send some teachers to Cape Verde in order to provide primary education. The Cape Verdeans had to seek secondary education in the metropole, and that was something only the more well-off families could afford.

Only in 1847 was the first primary school funded by the government established in Cape Verde, on the island of Brava (Oliveira 1998:69-70). For

many years after the establishing of that school in Brava, education continued to be more in the hands of the local private initiative than in those of the state. Sometimes, schooling was the work of local upper-class women who viewed it as a philanthropic obligation.

The first secondary school was established in Praia, in 1860, but it lasted only one year, and Praia had to wait a century until it had secondary education back again: the *Liceu Adriano Moreira*, inaugurated in 1960. Only in 1866 Cape Verde had its first successful experience in establishing a secondary school, the seminary (*Seminário-Lyceu*) in São Nicolau. The seminary was run by clergymen and its objective was to ordain local priests who would then be sent to the other islands. However, not all the students would become priests; many finished their studies without being ordained. In the seminary, students received a classic education: Latin, Greek, Mathematics, European literature and science. The first Cape Verdean intellectuals to become prominent were educated in the seminary of São Nicolau, the first cultural production centre to be established in Cape Verde.

The classical education given in the seminary had little or no relation to the local reality, and the first poets and writers educated in the seminary just tried to imitate the classic and romantic European authors. The men⁴⁵ who studied in the seminary were moulded by the same education standards followed in the metropole and tended to view themselves as bearers of a Portuguese metropolitan culture or, more generally, of the European tradition. They made

⁴⁵ The seminary, as an ecclesiastical school, accepted only men. This helps to explain why there were so few women among the nineteenth-century Cape Verdean educated elite. The situation changed slightly since the time of the seminary, and today we can find a few more women among the Cape Verdean intellectual elite. But among the last Portuguese Cape Verdean generation cultural production is still mostly a men's endeavour.

use of Portuguese in their writings and looked down on Creole as a lesser language that should be kept within the domestic and informal spheres of social life. They were not looking for the affirmation of a Cape Verdean distinct literary identity, but for the affirmation of the most genuine Portuguese tradition in Cape Verde. They wanted to be as Portuguese as those Portuguese living in the metropole. The first Cape Verdean literary men were mostly white or mulattos of light complexion. Despite differences in skin colour they all tended to see themselves as Portuguese. Even those of darker complexion did not see themselves as African. For them, Africans were those born in the African continent and out of entirely black ancestry. Despite men such as Pedro Cardoso and Juvenal Cabral, the father of PAIGC's founder Amílcar Cabral, sometimes making the defence of the 'African man', Cape Verdean literature and poetry remained mostly colour blind and bound to ideals of Portugueseness.

It is among the late generation to have been in the seminary that we find some of the men who broke up with the classical literary tradition.

3.3. The *Claridade* movement

Unlike other colonial elites, such as that of Trinidad, which did not like to speak much about science and literature for fear of being accused of showing off (see Brereton 1998:59), for the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite it was important to affirm its intellectualism.

The *Claridade* movement was launched by Baltazar Lopes da Silva, Jorge Barbosa and Manuel Lopes, in March 1936, when the first issue of the literary journal *Claridade* was published in Mindelo, São Vicente. What distinguishes these literary intellectuals from the previous generations is their emphasis on the

local life of the archipelago, particularly the harsh life of the poor. They wrote about the ‘Cape Verdean man’ and not about the distant European world depicted in the classic novels and poetry.



Mindelo, island of São Vicente

Baltazar Lopes da Silva and Manuel Lopes became the most acclaimed writers of the movement. They were very much influenced by Brazilian writers such as Jorge Amado, Jorge de Lima, Graciliano Ramos, José Lins do Rego, and Manuel Bandeira, as well as scholars Gilberto Freyre and Artur Ramos (see Manuel Lopes interviewed by Laban 1992 I:105). The neo-realist literature about the poor north-east Brazil and the *sertão* (backwoods) portrayed a geography and people which the Portuguese Cape Verdean writers found similar to those of Cape Verde. The north-eastern Brazilian man and the Cape Verdean man were united by the plague of drought and famine. Freyre also found a close similarity between Brazil's plantation society and Cape Verdean colonial

society. Brazil and Cape Verde appeared linked by the same historical process of colonisation: slavery and miscegenation.

Although there is some dispute over the origin of the movement's name, it seems it was taken after the novel of Henri Barbusse (1873-1935) titled *Clarté* (Light/Clarity) (1919), which coincided with the organisation of a group of intellectuals in a movement with the same name⁴⁶. But in practice, the work of the 'clarity' Cape Verdean writers bears little or no relation to the work of Barbusse and his colleagues.

The *Négritude* (darkness) movement has certainly played a more important influence in the choice of the *Claridade* movement's name. In 1935, Aimé Césaire, Léopold Senghor, and Léon Damas, created a newspaper entitled *L'étudiant noir*. It was in this newspaper that the word negritude was first used. Each of the three creators defines negritude in his own way. In 1959, Césaire said that his negritude is the "acknowledgment of a fact, revolt, and the acceptance of responsibility for the destiny of one's race" (Kesteloot 1974:119). Senghor, a Senegalese, found it to be "black Africa's patrimony, that is to say, the spirit of its civilization" (Kesteloot 1974:120). Damas, a French Guyanese, found the fight against assimilation to be the most important part of negritude.

Césaire was black and his movement was intended as an affirmation of

⁴⁶ The *Clarté* group of progressive writers and cultural workers was organized by Henri Barbusse in 1919 on the basis of *l'Association Républicaine des Anciens Combattants*. Similar groups were set up in other countries, and together they formed the War Veterans International, whose main motto was: War on war. The *Clarté* group included supporters of the Third International such as Henri Barbusse, Anatole France, Paul Vaillant-Couturier and pacifist writers such as Romain Rolland, Stefan Zweig, H. G. Wells, Thomas Hardy, Upton Sinclair, Jules Romain, and others. The group published a monthly magazine of the same name (in Paris, from October 1919 to January 1928), which in its first years was quite popular in France and abroad. However, the ideological disagreements within the group and its organisational weakness did not permit it to become a large and influential organization. Soon after Barbusse resigned as editor (in April 1924), the magazine lost its progressive significance and ceased publication in 1928 while the group disintegrated.

'blackness', and as the Cape Verdean 'clarity' intellectuals viewed themselves as white Portuguese, it seems they were playing on words with their French Caribbean counterparts. As the writer Manuel Lopes confessed: "For them it was a question of *negritude* [meaning blackness] but for us it was a question of *claridade* [meaning enlightenment]. It was a movement of *finca pé na tchón* [sticking the feet onto the ground]" (my interview, Lisbon 1999).

Whereas the Afro-Caribbean intellectuals were fighting for the recognition of their blackness as colonial subjects, the Cape Verdean intellectuals were fighting for their Portuguese whiteness as Portuguese subjects. *Claridade* emerged as an 'arts and letters journal' where poetry, both in Portuguese and Creole, short stories and novels, as well as views about Cape Verde and its people, were published. For example, in the first issue, only ten pages long, published on March 1936, apart from poems and a piece of a novel there is a short analysis by João Lopes on the influence of the colonial economic structure on the cultural differences between Santiago and the other islands.

The particular nature of *badiu* culture is explained as the result of the existence of larger rural estates in Santiago (Lopes 1936:9), which created a larger demand for slaves in Santiago than on the other islands. And in that way Santiago was more African-like than any other island in Cape Verde. From Lopes' words we understand that he sees two different 'cultures' in Cape Verde: one more European-like and another more African-like. This distinction corresponds to the regional divide between the *barlavento* (windward) and the *sotavento* (leeward) islands. In the same short analysis it is argued by Lopes that Portuguese colonisation allowed the black Africans to participate in the making of a hybrid culture, while the Anglo-Saxons oppressed blacks through a colour

line which did not permit them to do so.

This idea of the Portuguese humanity and tolerance against the inhumanity of Anglo-Saxon colonisation would be recurrent in the writings of Cape Verdean intellectuals. As we have seen before (subsection 2.3.), Gilberto Freyre was a pioneer in this view.

The second issue of *Claridade* came out on August 1936. Apart from a few poems and short stories, there are some considerations involving the ‘Cape Verdean identity’. In a two-column analysis there are some considerations about the new Cape Verdean literary elite, coming of age at the time, whose high intelligence and literary capacity “proved the excellence of Portuguese colonisation” (Oliveira 1936:4, my translation). A few lines below there is some ‘racial’ reference to the enthusiasm of the Cape Verdeans in relation to schooling, in which the author makes clear that the ‘Africans’ of Santiago are less intellectually developed due to their African ‘ethos’.

In another short analysis, Baltazar Lopes da Silva, who would later become the most influential Cape Verdean intellectual ever, defends the view that the Creole language of Cape Verde emerged from the simplification of the Portuguese by the ‘Afro-Negro’: “We know that the Portuguese brought his vocabulary and grammar, which the Afro-Negro simplified. In turn, this was responsible for the *pathologic* action which modified the language giving it new characteristics (Silva 1936:5, my translation and my emphasis).

But despite his view of Creole language as a sort of ‘pathological deviation’ from the Portuguese, Silva thinks that does not diminish its importance as a language. He, like many other Cape Verdean intellectuals, thought that Creole was more suitable for poetry, whereas Portuguese was more

appropriate for prose.

Between March 1937 and January 1947 there was no issue of *Claridade*. In the fifth issue, published on September 1947, we can see again some reference to the “social democracy that reigns in Cape Verde and which permits the close contact between the illiterate people and educated elite” (Silva 1947:9, my translation). The author argues that race and ethnicity do not determine social stratification and that the so-common expression *gente branca* (white people) applies to people according to their social position and independently of their skin colour. This view is still today the most common among Cape Verdeans and many outsiders as well. Freyre, in his time, also moulded his sociological view out of the locals’ folk view.

In the fifth issue there is also an analysis of the colonial society of Fogo in which the importance of race in terms of stratification and social relations is stated (Sousa 1947:42-4). The most commonly held view by the Cape Verdeans about the highly racial nature of the society of Fogo is that it was an exception to the general situation in Cape Verde. The typical example is the informant of mine below:

Fogo was different. There were white families who would only marry each other, and there were a lot of mad people because of marriage between cousins. People from there have told me they had one cemetery for whites only. But that was only in Fogo, and maybe in Brava. On the other islands we could see nothing of that, people were all mixed. Some of those families in Fogo thought themselves white, but they had mixed blood (Cape Verdean, female, 48 years).

Although the woman above has never visited Fogo, she expressed a view that is common among Cape Verdeans. Many of the analyses in *Claridade* conveyed what were then the local views about the life on the islands

The journal *Claridade* continued for another three issues, until December 1949, containing mostly poetry and short stories, as well as parts of longer works that the authors could not publish elsewhere owing to the scarce publishing resources on the islands. Almost ten years later, on May 1958, the eighth issue came out. It contains an analysis on the different social classes of Fogo and their different types of homes (Sousa 1958:8). This analysis was often referred to me by some Cape Verdeans more aware of the literary and cultural production in Cape Verde. In the same issue we can find a less known short ethnographic description of the traditional banner parades in Fogo, by Félix Monteiro (1958:9-22).

The last issue of *Claridade* came out on December 1960 and was almost entirely dedicated to poetry and short stories. Apart from that there is a short essay on the 'human originality' of Cape Verde by Pedro Lobo (1960:64-9), which contains some of the most common colonial clichés about Cape Verdean identity, such as the one which says that Portuguese colonisation was guided by the moral principles of Catholicism and that miscegenation had been the result of the inclination that the Portuguese had to mix with other 'races'. According to the author, the mixture was so overwhelming that, apart from the existing black population in the backcountry of Santiago, one could not distinguish a Portuguese born in the metropole from another born in Cape Verde.

Cape Verde was viewed as the most perfect example of a 'melting pot' of races and cultures. How and when was this view originated it is difficult to say, but the fact is that during the twentieth century it became the most commonly held sociological and popular view about the nature of Cape Verdean society. Many of the traits that are voiced by the colonial Portuguese Cape Verdean elite

as distinctive of their identity can be found in the journal *Claridade*.

3.4. *Chiquinho* as the imaginary Cape Verdean

As referred earlier, in the decades of 1940 and 1950 Cape Verdean literature was very much influenced by the works of Brazilian writers Graciliano Ramos, Jorge Amado, Manuel Bandeira, José Lins do Rego, among others. The so-called *literatura nordestina*⁴⁷ has influenced the works of Baltazar Lopes da Silva and Manuel Lopes. In 1947, Baltazar Lopes da Silva published *Chiquinho*, a novel that would become a reference used by educated Portuguese Cape Verdeans for defining the ‘Cape Verdean identity’. The main character, Chiquinho, who scourged by drought and famine dreams of escaping the narrowness and poverty of his island, represents the imaginary Cape Verdean who is forced out of his homeland because life has become unbearable. The novel contains most of the elements present in the Cape Verdean discourse about identity: drought, famine, poverty, and migration.

Although race is never overtly mentioned in the book, we can see that some names were viewed as proper only to *gentios* (unchristian blacks) or the ‘black race’ (Silva 1993[1947]:32). The words are put in the mouth of Cape Verdean characters and in contexts that cannot be taken as racist, but they allow the non-Cape Verdean reader to know that after all race had some importance in Cape Verde. In another passage, there is the description of an episode in which a black slave buried his master alive because he had slashed his face. But despite incidents like that, and according to the narrator’s words, “in a general manner

⁴⁷ The Brazilian literature that portrayed the harsh livelihood of the peasantry in the north-eastern Brazil, dominated and exploited by the power of the colonels (*coronéis*), and plagued by drought and famine. This kind of literature was a reference in the construction of Cape Verdean identity.

slaves were treated as family” (Silva 1993[1947]:37). In another instance, the narrator describes one episode in which black slaves brought from the African Coast were dancing and singing words that the locals could not understand. According to the author of *Chiquinho*, also a distinguished Cape Verdean linguist:

Judging from the way the Cape Verdeans speak, the *Creoles* [referring to the different Creole dialects spoken in the archipelago] of that archipelago are nothing else, in essence, than the Portuguese language deeply modified in the Negroes’ mouth, in terms of its phonetics, morphology, semantics, and syntax” (Silva 1984:12).

From the author’s words we can see how local folk views were given hegemonic character by its incorporation into the ‘science’ of linguistics. The African-European divide was sanctioned by linguistic studies which divided the spoken Creoles into two main types: the Creole of *Barlavento*, spoken on the islands where mixed people are the majority, and the Creole of *Sotavento*, spoken in Santiago, where blacks are the majority. Although the division is presented in geographic and regional terms, it corresponds in fact to some kind of ethnic distinction. This ethnic distinction is learned from childhood by way of the identity constructs of *badiu* and *sampadjudo*. People on every island have identity representations of the people on the other islands, even though the most important divide is between the islanders of Santiago (*badiu*) and those of São Vicente (*sampadjudo*).

In *Chiquinho* we can also find references to the looseness of sexual life and family structure on the islands. The characters usually initiate sexual life while still in the early teens, but while for men that is even a motive for pride, for women it usually means disgrace. Some *mães-de-filho* (single-mothers), after

failing to get to live with a man, had no choice but to become prostitutes. Marriage was only common among the upper-class. Most women and men never get to make a family by marriage or regular cohabitation. But while the reputation and status of Cape Verdean men was not affected by their erratic lives, the social value and status of women diminished with the number of liaisons and children born from different men.

Another idea that is present in the novel is the opposition between São Vicente, seen at the time as the cultural centre of the archipelago, and the remaining islands seen as backward and rural. While São Vicente is presented as the place of culture and feasting, Santo Antão and Santiago are the granaries of the archipelago. This opposition between 'culture' and 'nurture' cuts across the same line as *badiu/sampadjudo* and *barlavento/sotavento*. São Vicente is also depicted as the core of 'civilisation' in the archipelago. The only place where one could find shops full of beautiful goods and meet the foreigners who came ashore from the many ships that called at the port. São Vicente represents the 'civilised' *sampadjudo* Cape Verde in opposition to the 'primitive' Santiago, the stronghold of *badiu* culture.

But São Vicente had had its golden age, and Chiquinho like many other Cape Verdeans, after years of drought and famine was forced to migrate. Despite his secondary education, there were no jobs other than clerk or schoolteacher. America was his dream, and he finally gave up all hope and embarked to the U.S., where he had an uncle. The story of Chiquinho symbolises the fate and the dream of the Cape Verdeans. Those who migrate justify their abandonment of Cape Verde as an inescapable fate, and those who stay dream of leaving all the time. The example below typifies the most common discourse of those who

migrate for economic reasons:

We were many siblings and my father left my mother for another woman. I started to work in the fields when I was six and I couldn't finish school. Many times we didn't have enough to kill hunger. When I was 14 years an uncle arranged for me to stow away in a ship, and that's how I arrived in Lisbon. I would like to have stayed but I would have starved if I did. It's a shame that I had to leave in order to survive. I really like my country (Cape Verdean, male, 42 years).

In his view, this man only abandoned his country to escape starvation, and not to fulfil any ambitious dream. The case of those who have never experienced migration is different, as we can see in the following example:

I dream of leaving Cape Verde every day and I think one day I will do it. Here life is very hard, I work a lot and earn very little. My husband left me with three children. If it were not for them I would have left, but for us four it is very difficult, I don't have the money. Maybe when they grow older I can leave. I have some family in Portugal who could help me. They have a very good life; it is not like here (Cape Verdean, female, 26 years).

Although the novel *Chiquinho* is commonly used by elite Portuguese Cape Verdeans to illustrate Cape Verdean identity, there are other novels as well. As in the case of *Chuva Brava* (1956) and *Flagelados do Vento Leste* (1960) by Manuel Lopes. Both novels draw upon the difficult life of the Cape Verdean peasantry who had to stand drought and famine, and then the pouring rains that washed away the crops. In depicting the Cape Verdean poor as colourless peasants, Manuel Lopes identified them with the north-eastern Brazilian and Portuguese peasantries. One of the most distinctive characteristics of Manuel Lopes' novels is the absence of any reference to skin colour. If it were not for their Creole names, the characters of Manuel Lopes' novels could pass for Portuguese peasants in Alentejo or elsewhere in the metropole. Lopes saw Cape

Verde as a society where colour differences were not relevant. The mass of the Cape Verdeans was united by poverty. This view contrasts with that presented by some Caribbean writers about their own colonial societies, such as Capécia's work *Je Suis Martiniquaise* (1952), Fanon's *Peau Noire, Masques Blanc* (1952), or Lacrosil's *Sapotille et le Serin d'Argile* (1960). Whereas Lopes sees the colonial society as colourless and the metropole as the mother of all racial discrimination, these Caribbean intellectuals denounce racism in their colonial settings and expect metropolitan France to be free of colour prejudice.

The 'Cape Verdean' identity conveyed by the educated Portuguese Cape Verdeans is not shared universally by all Cape Verdeans. We find it mostly among those who have frequented the *Liceu*, in Mindelo, São Vicente, where they were exposed to the teaching and ideas of some of the main creators of that identity. Those Cape Verdeans who migrated to Portugal and live in shantytowns and council development projects, and who have had little or no education in Cape Verde, know very little about that 'Cape Verdean' identity. There are still many people among the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite now in Lisbon who were taught by Baltazar Lopes da Silva, Aurélio Gonçalves, and other main references of the *Liceu*. It is these people who convey the idea that the Cape Verdeans were all educated and intellectually brilliant and that Cape Verdean literature and poetry could rival any other in the world. The majority of the Cape Verdeans who migrated to Portugal in the 1960s and after are left out of this idea of 'Cape Verdean' because they are *badiu* and have little or no education. They represent the part of being 'Cape Verdean' that the educated elite do not like to talk or hear about, for that part is in contradiction with the image they have constructed of themselves and which they take as the general

sense of 'being Cape Verdean'.

3.5. Conclusion

At least since the mid-nineteenth century, education has been highly valued as a way of social promotion in Cape Verde. The Portuguese Cape Verdean educated elite emerged during the first decades of the twentieth century was responsible for the construction of a positive Cape Verdean identity. Literature and poetry were used in the construction of 'the Cape Verdean man', who was seen as a blending of African and European, in which the European elements were tempered by the African. Creole language was said to have the Portuguese lexicon but the African syntax and morphology. Although this idea is still in use by the more traditional scholars who study Creole, at the time it expressed the inadequacy of the Creole language vis-à-vis the Portuguese.

Whereas the first generation of Cape Verdean literary authors imitated the classics of European literature and did not pay attention to the local reality, the later generations created a Cape Verdean thematic around drought, famine, and migration. For them, the Cape Verdean peasants shared an identity with the poor peasants of north-eastern Brazil.

The publication of the literary journal *Claridade* and of some novels by Baltazar Lopes da Silva, Manuel Lopes, and António Aurélio Gonçalves, among others, constituted an important basis for the construction of the 'Cape Verdean man'. The fact that most of these authors taught at the only secondary school that existed then in the archipelago made it possible for them to influence a whole generation of students.

For the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite, 'the Cape Verdean man' was

neither European nor African, but a fortunate mixture of both. They view themselves as fully Portuguese despite being born in a colony and being perceived by the Portuguese in the metropole as Africans, for Cape Verde was viewed as part of Africa. The fact that the Cape Verdeans were not fully accepted as Portuguese placed them halfway between Portuguese and African, and that led them to develop an identity that distinguished them from the Africans of the other colonies. They wanted to be fully accepted as Portuguese and did not like to be taken as Africans. That explains in part why 'race' is almost absent in their writings.

The last Portuguese Cape Verdeans to have been educated during colonialism are the only and last bearers of a eulogistic construction of Cape Verdean identity, which they oppose to the image that emerged from the social life of the lower-class black Cape Verdeans who inhabit the shantytowns in the outskirts of Lisbon. They feel outraged when the 'Cape Verdean community' is depicted as made only of poor and uneducated blacks who live in shantytowns. The identity created and nourished by the Portuguese Cape Verdean educated elite is in conflict with the identity ascribed to Cape Verdeans by the Portuguese mainstream and the black Cape Verdean immigrants themselves.

In the following chapters we will see how the Cape Verdeans with different socio-economic backgrounds dealt with their conflicting identities in colonial and postcolonial Portugal.

Part II – In Portugal

Introduction

Although the Cape Verdeans in Portugal are often referred to as a ‘community’ (França 1992; Gomes 1999), one can find at least two different Cape Verdean social worlds which barely relate one to another.

One of these worlds is that of the middle- and upper-middle class of the few thousand Portuguese Cape Verdeans, born and bred during late colonialism, who kept Portuguese nationality after the independence of Cape Verde, in 1975, (see subsection 6.2.). Some of them left Cape Verde at an early age for the boarding schools and universities of the Portuguese metropole, and never returned to Cape Verde since they could not find there a position according to their education. For many, studying meant the possibility of getting a position in the ranks of the colonial administration in one of the Portuguese colonies. Some made their careers all round the colonies, from Portuguese Guinea to East Timor, without ever returning to Cape Verde.

The other world is that of the Cape Verdeans who have arrived as immigrants since the mid 1960s. Most of them were illiterate, while others only had incomplete elementary education. Cape Verdean migration to the metropole started in the mid-1960s, and intensified throughout the 1970s and 1980s. This influx was constituted mainly by unskilled men who came from the rural hinterland of Cape Verde, particularly from the island of Santiago. During the 1960s and early 1970s, a significant part of the Portuguese unskilled labour force was drained to the more industrialised European countries, where the demand

for unskilled labour was short of internal supply. At the same time, Portuguese economy was growing, making short its internal supply of unskilled labour. However, we cannot entirely explain the outset of Cape Verdean migration to the metropole solely on the premise of labour shortage. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Portuguese rural exodus was not yet complete (Barreto and Preto 1995; Lopes 1998). The rising demand of unskilled labour was driving up wages, and the solution encountered was to allow Cape Verdean unskilled peasants into the metropole, in order to fill in the gap created by Portuguese migration, which was making its way mostly to Germany, France, Switzerland, Luxemburg, and Belgium (see Franco 1971; Rocha-Trindade 1975, 1979; Porto 1977; Serrão 1977; Poinard 1979).

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, after several consecutive years of drought and famine, the economic situation in Cape Verde was gloomy. The indentureship of Cape Verdean peasants to the plantations of São Tomé and Príncipe, which had served as a cushion to the many agricultural crises in Cape Verde, ended in the early 1970s, and, consequently, the redundant agricultural labour force had to be drained elsewhere. For the Portuguese authorities, allowing Cape Verdean workers into the metropole represented the killing of two birds with one stone: it eased the pressure in Cape Verde, and satisfied the demand for labour in the metropolitan sectors of the construction industry and public works.

The declining situation of the Cape Verdean economy, together with the ending of indentureship to the plantations of São Tomé and Príncipe, and the significant growing of Portuguese economy in the late 1960s and early 1970s, triggered Cape Verdean migration to the metropole. When the Cape Verdean

migrants started to arrive in the metropole, there was only a small number of elite Cape Verdeans there. Most arrived as students, searching for the education they could not get in Cape Verde. Some got a job in the metropole after completing their studies and never returned to the archipelago. Others, such as Amílcar Cabral, refused the life of the assimilated with the corresponding position within the colonial system, and began fighting for independence. Yet, others assimilated perfectly within mainstream society adopting the ideals of colonialism, with which they felt perfectly identified. It is these Cape Verdeans who compromised with colonialism and the privileges associated with the condition of *assimilado* that make up the 'white' elite I came to meet in Lisbon during my research. It is their world that I shall describe in chapter four.

In chapter five I shall describe the life of the Cape Verdean immigrants and their descendants in the *bairros* and council housing projects in the municipalities within Lisbon metropolitan area. The first-generation Cape Verdean immigrants came from the rural hinterland of Cape Verde and had to adapt to urban life, changing from peasants to industrial workers. As a consequence, their worldview also had to adjust to the new setting, but they were never able to move apart from their original world. Whereas these first-generation Cape Verdeans tried to reproduce the world they had in Cape Verde, their descendants do not mirror themselves in that kind of world, which most of them completely ignore. Second-generation Cape Verdeans are in a sort of liminal world, for they do not fit in their parents' world but, at the same time, have not yet gained their place in the postcolonial mainstream. In that sense the *bairros* where they live are spaces of liminality. While a few are able to overcome the liminality of the *bairros* most are still entrapped in it. Education is

the main avenue for them to integrate in the mainstream world, but most of them fail at the early stages, leaving school with too low a qualification to get the jobs which would vouch them into the middle-class mainstream.

Chapter six is about the representations that the mainstream society has about the Cape Verdeans. A distinction is made between the people who interact directly with the Cape Verdeans in the workplace and in the *bairros* and the people who only know about the Cape Verdeans through media constructions. In the workplace, the Cape Verdeans are seen as honest and hardworking people, especially the men in the construction industry sites. The opinions about the women are more variable, probably due to the nature of their work, usually in cleaning, cooking and other domestic services. As they work in the homes of middle-class Portuguese, they have to adapt to hygienic and cleaning standards which are not their own. For the men, in the construction industry physical power and willingness to work long hours are more important than standards of hygiene and social manners.

The media as producers of identity have created a negative image of the Cape Verdeans, particularly of the second generation descendants. While the first migrants were depicted as good workers but hot-blooded, their descendants are seen as drop-outs and criminals, for they are only spoken of for these reasons. The Cape Verdean youths use the representations that the media convey about them, as 'disintegrated' and 'marginal', in order to blame the white mainstream for their situation, and to develop an oppositional identity which sees studying as a waste of time, and as something for *tugas* (a belittling word for Portuguese). This construction of their identity hampers their participation in school and makes most of them fail basic schooling.

The main unit of identity is the *bairro*, which they see as their social territory. The Cape Verdean youths' identity is not rooted in 'national' but in 'neighbourhood' boundaries. What they carry in their hearts is not the country where their parents came from but the *bairro* where they live. The importance of the *bairro* as an identity unit is made evident in the episode of the filming of *Outros Bairros*; a video documentary about the Cape Verdean youths in shantytowns and their creole rap. The question of the divide between who is 'Portuguese' and who is 'African' is also illustrated by the episode of the murder of police officer Felisberto; a black Portuguese who some media depicted as 'African'.

4. The Portuguese Cape Verdean 'Elite'

– Cape Verde was a region of Portugal, a province, like any other. The only difference was that we spoke Creole and many were darker, but that did not make any difference.

We were respected because we were intelligent and hard working.

(Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 72 years)

4.1. Introduction

Most of the old colonial 'middleman' elite completed high school and many got university degrees. Some reached important positions in the colonial administration, others became prominent professionals in the metropole: medical doctors, lawyers, university professors, judges, politicians, and journalists, among other professions.

Most of the white Portuguese Cape Verdean elite had to flee Cape Verde and the other colonies at the time of independence, in 1975. The reasons varied: some were not happy with the political turnover that overthrew Portuguese colonialism and placed PAIGC in power, a Marxist party that claimed land reform and nationalisations, clearly menacing the interests of the old colonial bourgeoisie; others feared that the archipelago would not survive independence because of its bleak economic situation; others still were simply shown they were not welcome under the new regime because of their involvement with colonialism.

The end of Portuguese colonialism and the climbing to power of a new elite of mulatto Cape Verdeans, who had been engaged in the fight for independence in Portuguese Guinea and in connection with the other African colonies, brought to the surface important questions of identity. This new ruling elite had been since long involved with the independentist elites of the other

African colonies, and the newly independent Cape Verde, suddenly turned into a nation, was supposed to align with the newly independent nations of Angola and Mozambique. Cape Verde was now changing its identity from 'Portuguese' to 'African' and the old elite of Cape Verdeans who had somehow been involved with colonialism felt the hostility of PAIGC rule. Many had no choice but to leave the country. Others left in fear that the socialist regime of PAIGC would menace their economic and social position in the archipelago. Moreover, independence brought to the surface matters of identity related to race. 'White' Cape Verdeans were seen as too 'Portuguese' to embrace the postcolonial political project: a 'brotherhood' of the newly independent African countries. There was little room for 'white' Cape Verdeans in the aftermath of independence, especially for those who had thrived under colonialism and not against it.

The Portuguese Cape Verdeans living today in Portugal are the descendents of the few families who could afford education in the *Liceu Infante D. Henrique*, founded in 1917, in Mindelo, São Vicente. In 1938, it was renamed Liceu Gil Eanes (hereafter *Liceu*, its most common designation), remaining the only high school in the archipelago until 1961. After completing secondary education, the offspring of the few middle- and upper-class local families were sent to the metropole to proceed with their studies at the university. Only the richest families could afford the boarding schools in the metropole, which were the most likely fate for elite Cape Verdean girls and boys. Girls were often sent off to religious schools run by nuns. Some of my female informants followed this course in life. However, the most common way was to send the youths to the *Liceu* and then to one of the universities in Lisbon, Oporto, or Coimbra. Those

who could not get a good job in the metropole after completing their studies headed on to the colonies and filled the ranks of the colonial administration. Others found a position in colonial companies such as the *Companhia União Fabril* (CUF)⁴⁸, which controlled much of the economy in the colonies.

The Portuguese Cape Verdeans live mainly in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area⁴⁹, though a few hundreds are scattered throughout the country. They reside in middle- and upper-middle class dwellings they bought or rented, in some cases more than twenty years ago, in Lisbon or the outskirts. They are a few thousands, and most of their descendents do not identify any longer with Cape Verde or 'being Cape Verdean'. The Portuguese Cape Verdeans regret that their descendents are not any longer interested in things related to Cape Verde. The younger generation is accused of not participating in the Cape Verdean social life, which takes place mostly in a club in Lisbon: *A Associação dos Antigos Alunos do Ensino Secundário de Cabo Verde* (AAAESCV) (Association of the Former Secondary Education Students of Cape Verde).

4.2. Defining the Portuguese Cape Verdean 'elite'

By Portuguese Cape Verdean elite or Portuguese Cape Verdeans I mean the few thousand people who possess at least secondary education and who were born in

⁴⁸ CUF was the most important private corporation for the whole period of Salazar and Caetano's regime. It was founded by Alfredo de Sousa with money he earned doing commerce in Portuguese Guinea, in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

⁴⁹ Lisbon Metropolitan Area includes several municipalities. In the case of my study it refers mostly to the municipalities of Lisbon, Amadora, Oeiras, Almada and Setúbal. The administrative organisation of the territory defines three geographical units: the 'freguesia' (parish), which is the smallest portion having an administrative status; the 'concelho', corresponding to the municipal area; and the 'distrito', under the rule of a nominated representative of the central government. The governing bodies of the *junta de freguesia* and *câmara municipal* are elected for four-year terms. In 1992, the Metropolitan Areas of Lisbon and Oporto were created, linking together for some administrative purposes the largest municipalities within each area.

Cape Verde while it was still a Portuguese colony and its inhabitants were considered Portuguese nationals. As mentioned earlier, Cape Verde enjoyed a privileged position in terms of citizenship; its locals were considered *assimilados* and therefore Portuguese nationals (cf. Carreira 1977:191). Moreover, colonial ideology instilled on these Portuguese Cape Verdeans the idea that they were European and shared no identity with the ‘indigenous’ Africans of the other colonies.

4.2.1. Betwixt and between

It may seem odd that I have chosen to call this group of people ‘the Portuguese Cape Verdeans’ when my work is about Cape Verdeans and not Portuguese. The fact is that these Portuguese Cape Verdeans consider themselves Cape Verdeans despite having chosen to be Portuguese nationals when Cape Verde became independent. Most of them never even bothered to ask for dual citizenship, which both Cape Verde and Portugal grant. Interestingly enough, during colonial time they battled for their ‘Portugueseness’, and now, in the postcolonial era, their final battle is for their ‘Capeverdeanness’.

In Cape Verde there was no statutory distinction between ‘Portuguese’ and ‘indigenous’ (cf. Carreira 1977:191). In the African colonies there was also a local Portuguese elite, but as miscegenation was not as common as in Cape Verde that elite was mostly white. In Guinea, Angola and Mozambique there was overt racism on the part of the white minority towards the black majority. Intermarriage was rare in those colonies and only happened at the lowest level of the social pyramid. The result was a highly segregated society established upon the distinction ‘colonist-indigenous’, or ‘black-white’ as expressed in a more

popular and less euphemistic manner. While in the African colonies the population was clearly divided into two groups, in Cape Verde the majority was mixed.

A great number of the Portuguese Cape Verdeans are of very light complexion or even white, which contributed further to enhance their self-perception of Portugueseness and to distance themselves from the African roots of Cape Verde. They do not constitute an elite in the political understanding of the word. Yet, they think of themselves and are viewed by others as such because they are a small group of people with a privileged position compared to the mass of non-educated Cape Verdeans. Moreover, the elite Cape Verdeans clearly had, in most cases, an European ancestry that gave them a superior social status in the colonies.

Those who spread throughout the 'empire' functioned, in some cases, as a sort of 'middlemen' between the metropolitan colonists and the local natives. However, as we shall see in the next subsection, the Portuguese Cape Verdeans cannot be viewed as a classical case of 'middlemen minority', such as those mentioned by Bonacich (1973). The role of 'middlemen' has been played by 'ethnic minorities' such as the Jews in Europe, Chinese in Southeast Asia, Asians in East Africa, Armenians in Turkey, Syrians in West Africa, Parsis in India, and Koreans in the U.S., among others. These 'ethnic minorities' specialise in certain activities, often trade and commerce, and work as intermediaries between a privileged minority and the underprivileged majority. Usually, 'middleman' groups develop their position in societies where there is a marked division between the dominant elite and the masses (Rinder 1958). This took place, for example, in colonial societies in which the gap between the

representatives of the colonial power and the 'natives' did not allow them to deal directly with each other.

Although they attracted the same kind of resentment on the part of the 'natives', in Angola and Portuguese Guinea for example, the Cape Verdean-born elite lacked most of the characteristics of the classic middleman minority cases. Middlemen minorities tend to act as sojourners without planning to settle permanently (Bonacich 1973:584), but for the Portuguese Cape Verdeans who were in the colonies at the time of independence it was a nuisance to have to flee along with most of the metropolitan Portuguese. It was not in their plans to leave the colonies, which they had learnt to view as part of Portugal. Moreover, the Cape Verdeans were never a homogenous group dedicated to a particular type of activity (e.g. commerce, trade, and laundry) as it is common among middleman minorities. They could be found in different activities, but mainly within mid-to-top qualified professions in the colonial administration or colonial companies. My informants who returned from the colonies in the 1970s range from bank clerks to medical doctors and magistrates.

4.2.2. Acting as 'middleman'

In the colonies, the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite usually took the jobs that were not sufficiently attractive to the educated Portuguese who lived in the metropole and which were, at the same time, beyond the reach of the local blacks and mulattos. The fact that they had at least secondary education, at a time when illiteracy was very high all over the 'empire', including the metropole, made them an elite of qualified people adequate for the colonial enterprise.

They did not have the social characteristics typical of 'middleman minorities', such as those pointed out by Bonacich (1973:586): endogamy, residential segregation, schools in their own language and culture, a distinctive religion, and lack of political involvement. Certainly, they formed a relatively homogenous group because of their Cape Verdean origin, whose main cultural trait is the speaking of Creole, but they mingled easily with the rest of the white Portuguese minority who was in the same class level.

As they can speak perfect Portuguese, they were never hindered by the linguistic barriers that Creole represents to non-elite Cape Verdeans. In the colonies the Cape Verdean elite constructed their identity as white Portuguese; being Cape Verdean came second and only when it meant some advantage over being perceived as metropolitan Portuguese. For example, due to the fact that Cape Verdeans were, generally speaking, more educated than the average metropolitan colonist, sometimes it was better to be identified as Cape Verdean.

However, the Cape Verdeans, particularly those of lighter complexion easily identifiable as Portuguese, were viewed by the new elite in power as traitors at the service of Portuguese colonialism. The colonial Cape Verdean elite was despised by the anti-colonial black and mulatto elite involved in the armed fight for independence. Some Cape Verdeans have had to play the 'middleman' role in the most difficult circumstances. For example, in 1959, a Portuguese Cape Verdean, acting as general administrator of CUF in Portuguese Guinea, had to take upon himself the decision to call the police force to curb the on-strike dockworkers of the Pidgiguiti port. They refused to take work before their wages were raised in accordance with a decree of law issued earlier that year. Throughout the 'empire', the Cape Verdeans in relatively high places of

the colonial administration had to play the role of the oppressor, attracting the ire of the new elite who took power after the independence and of the people at the low end of the social scale as well.

Although most of the Portuguese Cape Verdeans I met in Lisbon left the colonies at the time of the 'fall of the empire', around 1975, others came directly from Cape Verde to the metropole without ever setting foot in the other colonies. The main settings wherein I met the Portuguese Cape Verdeans were the *Associação dos Antigos Alunos do Ensino Secundário de Cabo Verde* (AAAESCV), and a restaurant in downtown Lisbon whose name *Adega Regional da Beira*⁵⁰ is highly symbolic. I also met them in cultural events, such as the launching of CDs of Cape Verdean music and exhibitions of Cape Verdean artists. Most of my elite informants spent a significant part of their lives in the colonies working at the service of the colonial administration or for private colonial businesses and companies. A small minority came directly from Cape Verde to the metropole, usually as students, and never returned to their homeland.

The fate of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite bears some resemblance with that of the Parsis (Kulke 1968; Luhrmann 1996) and Anglo-Indians⁵¹ in India (Gaikwad 1967), the Indians in East Africa (Tandon 1973, 1978; Rai 1979), and the 'returnee' *pieds-noirs* of the French colonies in North Africa (Palacio 1968; Leconte 1980; Michel-Chich 1990). As these minorities were used as intermediates by their colonial powers, so were the Cape Verdeans by

⁵⁰ The Adega is a sort of regional restaurant where people can eat food and drink wine from a particular region of Portugal.

⁵¹ The term Anglo-Indian came into use only after the community itself had discarded labels such as 'East-Indian', 'Indo-European', 'Indo-Briton' or 'Eurasian' (Gaikwad 1967:42). Only those born of a British father and an Indian mother were entitled to the status of Anglo-Indian. The others, born of an Indian father and a British mother, were considered Indian.

Portuguese colonialism. All people with Portuguese ancestry in the colonies viewed themselves as much Portuguese as if they were in the metropole. However, there are significant differences between the minorities mentioned above and the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite. For example, the Parsis lost their 'middleman' status when the British gave up India, but they could not abandon India along with the British because there was no place for them in Britain. They had to remain in a country where they could find no place, since postcolonial India was now dominated by Hindus and Muslims who looked on the Parsis as agents of British imperialism, or, even worse, as having failed in their attempt to become British. They could not 'return' to Britain where they had never had roots, and their Persian roots had faded away centuries ago. They remained stranded in postcolonial India and the only way out for many has been migration to the U.S., Canada and other similar destinations.

The Portuguese Cape Verdeans were not stranded in postcolonial Cape Verde. They faced the fall of the 'empire', retreating with it and assuming their Portuguese identity. Their Portuguese roots allowed them to find a place within the mainstream of metropolitan society. In this sense, their fate has been more like that of the French *pieds-noirs*, who have also been allowed a 'return' to the metropole. The Parsis could not do the same because they lacked an alternative homeland, a metropole.

Like the East Asians, who were expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin within a short span in 1972, and of whom some went to as far a destination as Sweden (see Westin 1997), the Portuguese Cape Verdeans had to abandon the colonies when the new local black and mulatto ruling elites showed discontent with their presence in the aftermath of decolonisation. When they arrived in the metropole

after being kicked out of the colonies by the African *pretos* they were labelled as *retornados*⁵² (returnees). Like the *pieds-noirs*, the Portuguese Cape Verdeans felt the resentment of local metropolitans, who saw them as potential takers of their jobs, and as 'exploiters of black labour' who were now being kicked out of Africa because of their wrong doings. A common thought expressed by metropolitans against returnees was this: 'now that you have exploited the *pretos* you have come to exploit us!'. Being put under the label of *retornado* and having to face a hostile atmosphere in the metropole did not make life easy for the Portuguese Cape Verdeans. Nevertheless, most of them, particularly those of lighter complexion and with higher education, did overcome the difficulties and ended up by integrating well into the mainstream of postcolonial society.

4.3. The *Associação* as a postcolonial survival

The small room was packed with mid-to-old age people, some of them in couples, dressing and behaving in an old-fashioned manner. The men in their old-fashioned yet tidy suits and the women with their huge brooches pinned to their old-fashioned cardigans, sometimes a fur coat or a stole around the neck. It could be one of those social evenings that the country bourgeoisie used to hold some forty years ago in a small provincial town. From the buzz of their chatter I could understand some words of Creole, but a Creole I could not recognise either from the Cape Verdean shantytowns in Lisbon or from my stay in Cape Verde. Hanging from the walls were several portraits of different student cohorts

⁵² It is estimated that around the time of the independence of the colonies, in 1975, a number between 500,000 and 700,000 people of Portuguese colonists fled to the metropole, sometimes hurrying for life. Many arrived with no possessions at all and had to count on family help, others were lodged in hotels and pensions and received dole from the authorities. An institute for the support of the national returnees was created (IARN). At the peak of the flux there was an 'air bridge' with aircrafts carrying people almost round the clock.

of *Liceu Gil Eanes* which spanned from the 1930s to the 1950s. At the centre of the main wall was a portrait of Senator Vera-Cruz, governor of the colony of Cape Verde and founder of the *Liceu*, and on the side a relief map of Cape Verde. Hanging from another wall were some pictures of *trapiches*⁵³ in Santo Antão and of the volcanic crater of the island of Fogo.

That Saturday, the special attraction that caused the room to be packed was the exhibition of John Ford's *Quiet Man* (1952), organised by a member who has a movie projector and is usually in charge of the evening movie sessions. As the movie projector began winding up and the figure of John Wayne animated the blank cloth hanging from the wall, people laughed and commented about past events which they could relate to the scenes. Sat next to me there was a man in his late sixties who, after a short while into the movie, turned to me and commented: "I watched this movie some forty years ago at the Eden movie-theatre in São Vicente. Have you been to that theatre?" This was my first journey into the world of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite.

4.3.1. The foundations of the *Associação*

The roots of the *Associação* go some thirty years back, still during colonial time, when the students of what was then the colony or, better said, the 'overseas province' of Cape Verde, together with Portuguese Cape Verdean colonial officials enjoying time off (*graciosas*) in the metropole, used to meet in one café in downtown Lisbon. After the independence of the colonies, many of those students and colonial officials found themselves living for good in Lisbon. They continued to gather in that downtown café, the Pic-Nic, where they discussed the

⁵³ *Trapiches* are the small distilleries where Cape Verdean peasants make *grogue*, the Cape Verdean national alcoholic beverage, made out of smashed and fermented sugar cane. The equivalent to the Caribbean rum.

political turmoil brought about by the 25th April revolution and decolonisation. In the mid-1980s some of them came up with the idea of founding the *Associação*.

As we can read in an introductory leaflet: “The *Associação dos Antigos Alunos do Ensino Secundário de Cabo Verde* originated from the necessity, felt by some of the former secondary education students in that colony or overseas province, of a venue for holding regular gatherings”. The *Associação* moved then to a rented ground floor granted by the municipality where it has been for the last years. In 1995 it was recognised as an institution of public utility by a decree-law (D.R II Série nº187 of 14/08/95).

Apart from me and some other ‘honorary’ members, membership to the *Associação* is granted by being born in Cape Verde and/or having been a student at the *Liceu Gil Eanes*. Some of the founding members wanted to designate the association as the ‘former students of Gil Eanes’, but they soon realised that not all people had been former students of Gil Eanes. Some of those who received secondary education after 1961 frequented the *Liceu Adriano Moreira*, in the city of Praia. Moreover, having been to Gil Eanes was viewed as a sign of elitism and exclusiveness, which did not please those who did not frequent that school. Another question was not to give the *Associação* too much of an old-fashioned character, but, instead, make it open to the new generations of postcolonial Cape Verdean students.

Some of the founding members wanted to designate the *Associação* as of the former students of *Gil Eanes*, but then the other persons who have not frequented that school would feel excluded and be resentful. And so, we chose this name in order that everybody who has studied in colonial Cape Verde could be included, and that the

younger students of the newly independent Cape Verde could also participate (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 70 years).

However, it seems that the vast majority of the members have indeed been students of *Liceu Gil Eanes*, and the *Associação* is informally known as the students of Gil Eanes. Every year, they commemorate the foundation of the *Liceu* in Cape Verde, which means the foundation of Gil Eanes, since for decades it was the only secondary school in the whole archipelago. As there was no university in Cape Verde, the highest educational degree one could achieve was the *7º ano*⁵⁴. To bear ‘the *7º ano* of the *Liceu*’ represented a very high social status either in Cape Verde or in the metropole, and granted immediate access to a good job, at a time when the number of *licenciados* and *doutores* was very low⁵⁵.

I first heard about the *Associação* from one of my students whose mother, together with an uncle, used to frequent it periodically. His family was a good example of the elite’s ‘diaspora’. His parents along with some of his uncles and aunts had moved from Cape Verde to Angola, where he was born. Most of his Cape Verdean family members in Angola had made a career in the colonial administration, some of them in the highest ranks. When I told him that I was interested in knowing more about the old ‘Cape Verdean elite’ he said he knew that his mother and an elderly uncle used to meet some other elderly Cape Verdeans in a club, of which he could not exactly remember the name or the place. Then he put me in contact with his uncle, who in turn told me the

⁵⁴ Completing the *7º ano* (eleventh grade today) represented an educational capital of the highest importance, at a time when most people would not even finish the fourth grade. The *7º ano* diploma conferred on its bearer an important social position; he would be second only to a *licenciado* (a person with a five-year university degree).

⁵⁵ In Britain and in the U.S., a *licenciado* would be the equivalent to a bachelor’s degree, and a *doutor* to a D. Phil.

whereabouts of the *Associação* and offered himself to meet me in one arranged visit. When I asked my student why he did not frequent the club his answer was: “It’s a bunch of old people, very conservative, some are even reactionary. They live in the past, still dreaming of the empire and blaming the 25th April for the loss of the colonies”. Only when I began to frequent the *Associação* was I able to understand exactly what his words meant.

The *Associação* is a threefold space on a ground floor. A sitting room, about 40 sq. meters large, with a couple of small sofas against the walls where people sit reading the newspapers or chatting. On the opposite side there is a small room, about 30 sq. meters large, used as restaurant, where members and guests can have lunch or dinner. Connecting the two rooms there is a small hall with a counter for the selling of drinks, pastries and cakes, among which we can find the highly appreciated *pastéis de diabo no ventre* (literally, rissoles with the Devil in the belly), a highly consensual marker of Cape Verdean identity among the members, and also a very spicy one.



Main room of the *Associação*, Lisbon

Although the *Associação* has about eight hundred associates, a large number of them do not pay the fee and have not paid a visit for years. Most associates only show up occasionally, when a guest speaker is announced or a special eating and dance evening is arranged. Feasts such as New Year's Eve, Carnival, and the anniversary of the *Liceu* usually attract the largest number of associates. The annual dinner of the *Associação*, held in March, in an old hotel itself a symbol of the 'good old times' when Portugal 'was rich and large', attracts the largest number of associates in a single evening. There are even a small number of associates who come from the U.S. and one or two European countries to attend that special evening. It is the moment for people who have not seen each other for a long time to meet and exchange family and friend's news (*mantenhas*). An even smaller number of people, less than one hundred, frequent the *Associação* on a regular basis. Of that hundred only about fifty come to the *Associação* every Saturday, the only opening day.

My first visit to the *Associação* was to meet the uncle of my student, one of the eldest members. After explaining to him on the phone the nature of my work with the Cape Verdeans, he agreed to meet me there and to introduce me to the president and some other members he thought could give me good hints for my work. Some of the members of the directing body suggested that I should make myself an associate. After paying an enrolment fee of 7,50 euros (about £4.5) and the annual membership of 30 euros (about £19), I was given the associate No. 809 and began then to frequent the *Associação* on a weekly basis.

The members come from various walks of life within Portuguese society. Among them we can find retired bank clerks, middle-class housewives, civil servants, university professors, judges, lawyers, chief executives, and doctors. Despite differences of class, the small group of regular frequenters socialise on a same-level basis and the social differences that might exist between them are left aside by the sharing of a Cape Verdean origin. They also share the same imagined identity, acquired in the context of colonial Cape Verde and marked by the use of a Creole language that is no longer in use on the islands, a Creole they have retained but rarely speak. For them the speaking of Portuguese was not only a practical question but also one of prestige. During colonial time, the speaking of Creole was viewed as backward and uncivilised. Creole was viewed as an imperfect language resulting from the incapacity of the slaves to imitate satisfactorily the language of their masters. Nineteenth-century Portuguese academics such as Adolfo Coelho echoed the dominant view of the time about Creole languages:

[...] It is the people of the lower race and lower civilisation, but at the same time with the stronger instincts and spontaneity which creates the new language using the

materials available in the language of the superior people, which refuses to lower its language to the standards of the barbarous and savage [...] (1880:194, my translation).

This kind of view continued well into the first half of the twentieth century. As for example in Bloomfield's 'baby-talk' hypothesis:

Speakers of a lower language may make so little progress in learning the dominant speech that the masters, in communicating with them, resort to 'baby-talk'... This 'baby-talk' is the masters' imitation of the subjects' incorrect speech. The subjects, in turn, deprived of the correct model, can do no better now than to acquire the simplified 'baby-talk' version of the upper language (Bloomfield 1933:472).

Or in Schuchardt's 'stripping' hypothesis:

To the master as well as the slave it was solely a matter of the one making himself understood to the other: the former stripped himself of everything specific to European Languages, while the latter restrained everything specific to his language... The white was teacher to the black; the latter repeated the former (Schuchardt 1979[1914]:74).

Or, from closer quarters, in the forward to Baltazar Lopes da Silva's *O Dialecto Crioulo de Cabo Verde* by Rodrigo de Sá Nogueira:

[...] In Cape Verde, the language of the metropole had to sustain a hard fight against the Negroes' languages. The outcome of that fight was the victory of the Portuguese language, though not unhurt. Struck by so many a hard blow it was left covered by deep wounds, with an almost unrecognisable personality [...] (Silva 1957:11, my translation).

The way the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite views the origin and use of Creole is no more than a reflex of the old linguistic theories about pidgins and Creoles. For them, a serious talk can only take place in Portuguese. Creole is not a serious language; it lacks the sophistication of the Portuguese language and is often associated with the idea of the 'uncivilised' African. Needless to say, these

misconceptions about the supposed ‘hierarchy’ of languages have been long denied by Sapir, amongst others:

[All] attempts to connect particular types of linguistic morphology with certain correlated stages of cultural development are vain. Rightly understood, such correlations are rubbish. Both simple and complex types of language of an indefinite number of varieties may be found spoken at any desired level of cultural advance (1921:219).

4.3.2. Enacting the past

The *Associação* is a refuge where the old Portuguese Cape Verdean elite can enact its past colonial identity and mourn the loss of the empire brought about by the end of colonialism and the independence of the colonies; it is a social space wherein they keep and revisit their memories of a past time of which they feel nostalgic. Being at the *Associação* allows me to imagine a past time through the words and enactments of my informants, a time when they felt powerful and legitimate in opposition to the decline associated with ageing and the loss of Cape Verde as a homeland.

The situation of the Portuguese Cape Verdeans who felt the necessity of setting up a club wherein they could interact in a ‘Cape Verdean’ manner and preserve their Cape Verdean identity is similar to that of the ‘French’ *pieds-noirs* expelled from Algeria at the independence. As Michel-Chich puts it, “the mourning leads inevitably to the mental reconstruction of a world often idyllic, reassuring and protecting. The miseries and mediocrities of a daily life are forgotten; only the good moments are kept in the memory” (1990:91, my translation).

Like the white Creoles of Trinidad (Brereton 1998:66), the Portuguese Cape Verdeans had a double self-identification: with their island and with

Portugal. Identification with the Portuguese metropolitan society conferred status to the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite. They viewed themselves as not socially and culturally inferior to the Portuguese arrived from the metropole. As referred earlier, they often considered themselves more educated and refined than the metropolitan Portuguese officials, teachers and army officers. Frequently, they felt resentment toward the metropolitans because these were given the best jobs and positions in the colonies.

As one informant puts it:

When I finished the *Liceu* I couldn't find a teaching position in a nearby primary school because they were all filled with the wives of Portuguese army officers and the like. The Cape Verdeans had to be content with the farthest and the worst paid jobs. We were white, but second-class whites. People from the metropole always took the best, even when they were less educated and more ignorant (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 61 years).

Or in the words of another:

When I finished my teaching degree in Viseu [in the metropole] I went back to Cape Verde and taught for two years in Santo Antão. I had to walk ten kilometres every day to get to the school. One day I arrived home and said to my father I wouldn't work any longer in those conditions. The best schools were always given to the wives of the army officers arrived from the continent (Portuguese Cape Verdean, female, 50 years).

As it became clear in the previous chapters, the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite was very proud of their 'literary tradition' and the supposed higher level of literacy in Cape Verde compared to the metropole. Although the high level of literacy does not correspond to the facts in Cape Verde (Meintel 1984:134-38; Amaral 1964:318), the truth is that most of the Portuguese Cape Verdeans I have found in the *Associação* are believers of the literacy myth.

In São Vicente it was common to see a shoeshine boy reading from a paper or a leaflet to an illiterate soldier arrived from the metropole. Any street child could read and write, and that was something amazing for the outsiders. They were not used to see skinny boys in threadbare cloths reading from newspapers. In Cape Verde everyone could read and write and the school was for all, not like in the metropole where many children could not go to school and stayed uneducated. Everybody in Cape Verde valued school because we knew it was the only way of moving up in the social ladder. Even the rich cared for education because in Cape Verde no one was rich enough to neglect it (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 93 years).

The high value placed on education is a common characteristic of all members. Everyone can talk about Baltazar Lopes, Gabriel Mariano, António Aurélio Gonçalves and other prominent figures of the colonial Cape Verdean literary elite, even though they do not know much about their works.

The women who frequent the *Associação* are mostly the wives of associates, though I have met several women with their own membership. The Cape Verdean elite families are very traditional in terms of gender segregation; wives tend to play the traditional role, always in the shadow of their husbands. They participate in feasting and dancing soirées but, for instance, rarely intervene in the debates arising from the talks of guest speakers. Men are usually the ones who know about Cape Verde and Cape Verdean things. The *Associação* is clearly dominated by men, and the only woman actively participating in the directive board is responsible for dealing with matters related to the kitchen and bar, for example, supervising the supplies and the personnel, which is reduced to a cook, her aide, and a waitress. For most women, their position within the *Associação* is determined by their husband's membership and status. Usually, women have less education than their husbands, and worked on less prestigious and worse paid jobs. In many cases women remained spouses and housewives,

without exercising any remunerated activity.

One of the major regrets of the associates is that their descendants are not interested in maintaining Cape Verdean identity alive. The elders fear that the *Associação* will disappear when they have passed away because there will be no continuators. To a certain extent, the Portuguese Cape Verdeans are haunted by the same fear of extinction that affects other postcolonial minorities like the Parsis (Luhrmann 1996) and *pieds-noirs* (Michel-Chich 1990), for example. They also resemble 'elites', such as the Krios of Sierra Leone (Spitzer 1974; Cohen 1981; Wyse 1989; Fyfe 1962; Wilson 1976; Last & Richard 1987), whose adopted British identity did not spare them the trouble of late nineteenth-century racism in Britain, as well as the hostility they suffered at home due to their 'Englishness'. Despite their fluent English and British manners they were nothing but 'niggers' in the eyes of the white British society.

Because there was some stigma associated with the condition of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite, for in the metropole, after the independence of the colonies, they were viewed as *brancos de segunda* (second-class whites) or returnees (*retornados*), they oriented their descendants toward a Portuguese metropolitan identity, refraining from the use of Creole and other identity markers which might hinder their complete integration in the Portuguese mainstream. Frequently, their offspring went to university and integrated in the mainstream society as upper middle-class professionals. In other words, the parents managed in order that their offspring were integrated through class criteria and not ethnicity, avoiding the stigma of the *retornado*, related to the colonies and images of blackness.

Besides the old movies by directors like John Ford, Stanley Donnen, and

Cecil B. DeMille, exhibited from time to time, the *Associação* promotes discussions about issues of the interest of the associates while carriers of a Cape Verdean identity, of which they felt dispossessed after the independence of Cape Verde. Through 1998 and 1999 the *Associação* hosted talks given by associates and guest speakers on topics such as the ‘question of dual citizenship’, the ‘convertibility of Cape Verdean currency’, the ‘insertion of the Cape Verdean immigrants into Portuguese society’, ‘the role of the diasporic Cape Verdean professionals towards the community’ and, of a more cultural sort, ‘Lisbon in the songs of Cape Verde’. Frequently, the lectures raise issues about Cape Verdean identity, as in the following case.

In the end of the above mentioned lecture on ‘the role of diasporic Cape Verdean professionals’, a man, usual frequenter of the *Associação*, decided to query the speaker, a distinguished Portuguese Cape Verdean professional, vice-president of a large Portuguese corporation, reminding him that he, along with many others who left Cape Verde before independence due to professional reasons or alike, were branded after the independence by the Prime Minister of Cape Verde as *estrangeirados* (as having adopted a foreigner stance). Then, showing some resentment the man in question uncovered his feelings:

I don’t feel more of a foreigner just because I left Cape Verde to earn my living. We, those who had to leave, are as much Cape Verdean as those who stayed there. It is not because they were fighting in the bushes of Guinea that they are more Cape Verdean than we are. Cape Verdeans are those born in Cape Verde, at any time and in any place. The country needs the whole of its people living abroad, but it seems they are afraid that we overturn them and take their jobs. We don’t want their positions, we just want to help and participate in the destiny of our country, for we are Cape Verdeans as well. PAIGC has done wrong branding us *estrangeirados*. I am no *estrangeirado*, I am Cape Verdean! (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 73 years).

At this point I should say that the man who questioned the speaker, as a young adult, left Cape Verde for Angola where he made his career in the colonial administration, returning to Cape Verde around 1974, when the colonies were going through the turmoil of independence. In Cape Verde he became an influential member in one of the political parties that tried to oppose the overruling power of PAIGC. When PAIGC clung to power after independence, in 1975, he fled to Portugal after becoming *persona non grata* in Cape Verde. For more than twenty years he did not return to his home country. He kept his Portuguese nationality and was given an equivalent position within the Portuguese civil service, where he worked until he retired on a full pension in 1992. To maintain the social benefits that he was entitled as an official of the colonial administration he had to keep his Portuguese nationality instead of taking up the newly created Cape Verdean nationality. Otherwise, he would have lost the social benefits of a lifetime career. Since he was more or less thrown out of Cape Verde the decision was easy; he had no alternative other than staying Portuguese and making his way in Portuguese metropolitan society.



During a talk. The writer Manuel Lopes appears at the centre

The members of the *Associação* use it as a space for recreating life as it was in Cape Verde or in the other colonies where they spent part of their lifetime. However, they are not all looking for the same memories. Some members go to the *Associação* to feed their childhood and teenage memories rooted in Cape Verde, along with other country mates from whom they separated many years ago only to reencounter them after fleeing to the metropole around the independence of the colonies. Others recreate the social life and cultural ambience they shared when they were together as Cape Verdeans in the colonies.

Once a week all of them have the opportunity to act Cape Verdean, a performance that only makes sense in that 'Cape Verdean context'. Outside the *Associação* there is no place for their outmoded Cape Verdean identity. They do not recognise themselves in postcolonial Cape Verdean identity, and postcolonial Cape Verdean identity does not comprehend them as legitimate Cape Verdeans. As a non-elite Cape Verdean put it, they are 'weekend Cape

Verdeans' longing for the time when the 'Portuguese' ruled over the colonies.

Those people are not Cape Verdean. Despite being born there, most of them left the islands as youths to Portugal and the colonies and never returned. They speak Portuguese, think and act Portuguese. Most of them spent more time in Angola and the other colonies than in Cape Verde. How can they say they are Cape Verdeans? At best they are *sampadjudos*. They are just a bunch of old fellows dreaming of Cape Verde as if it were still part of Portugal. But the only Cape Verde they have is their club. Ask them where they were when the Cape Verdean people were starving to death? They are as much Cape Verdean as I am Portuguese, which is not at all (Cape Verdean immigrant, male, 55 years).

4.4. 'We were all Portuguese, from Minho to East Timor'

When a man in the *Associação* first told me that he and some of his Cape Verdean friends used to gather likewise in a restaurant named *Adega Regional da Beira*⁵⁶, I wondered why a bunch of elderly Portuguese Cape Verdeans chose a restaurant which could serve any food but Cape Verdean.

The Adega is located in downtown Lisbon, amidst several other regional restaurants and eating-houses. Places like the Adega are the remainder of an epoch when eating and drinking businesses were markedly regional, following the countryside origin of their owners. Until some thirty years ago Portuguese urban identity was fragmented into several regional clusters, according to the urban migrants' origin. These regional identity clusters expressed themselves in many ways, of which the food and drink businesses were part. Restaurants, taverns, and such businesses carried countryside names and their owners made a point of selling their homeland's food and drink. As far as I know, there has never been a Cape Verdean restaurant in that part of the city.

In my first meeting at the Adega there were five men, all known to me

⁵⁶ Beira is a region in the Portuguese hinterland.

from the *Associação*. They used to gather at the place every Friday around five o'clock, usually before going home at the end of the day. Among them there was a retired seaman, who, many years ago, had also been the owner of a well-known Cape Verdean restaurant in another part of the city, which he had to close down when his *patrícios* (fellow countrymen) started not to pay the bills; a retired colonial official who after retiring read for a law degree and began to practice as a lawyer; a retired bank officer who had been working for many years in Angola; a civil engineer who came to the metropole to study and then went to Portuguese Guinea, where he spent about fifteen years, returning then to the metropole; and, finally, a high-rank colonial officer who had worked in Portuguese Guinea for seventeen years before coming to the metropole at the time of independence. All of them possess Portuguese nationality and have never required the Cape Verdean nationality under the statute of the dual nationality permitted by both the Portuguese and Cape Verdean states.

The possible reasons why these men chose to meet in a downtown restaurant that bears the name of a region which has no resemblance at all with Cape Verde, and not in a Cape Verdean restaurant, may be various: the good location of the place; its good wine and food; or its quietness on Friday evenings. The fact that some of these Cape Verdean patrons know the owner also allows them to sit and chat without having to order one drink after the other. Nevertheless, I think that one possible reason for these men to have chosen a place like the Adegas for their weekly gatherings has to do with the way they conceive their Cape Verdean identity, which is as a regional cluster belonging to a more global Portuguese identity. For them Cape Verde was a region of Portugal, and as such the Cape Verdean identity represented a particular

expression of a global Portuguese identity. This view is made clear in the words of one of them:

It is a pity that we don't have a Cape Verdean restaurant or tavern downtown nowadays. I still remember when downtown Lisbon was full of eating-houses from the different regions of Portugal, particularly from the up *norte* and *beiras*. We could go from door to door and taste the different foods and wines. It was like the different islands in Cape Verde. People came into my restaurant to get a flavour of *catchupa* [the national dish of Cape Verde] and the *manécon* [wine from Fogo Island]. Cape Verdean food and wine were highly appreciated by the metropolitan Portuguese, likewise that of *Trás-os-Montes* or any other of those regions.(...). I was a Portuguese from Cape Verde, and if I said I was Cape Verdean it was like saying I was *transmontano*, *beirão* or *algarvio*. Nowadays, the Portuguese think that all Cape Verdeans are black and live in shantytowns (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 72 years).

For this man, his dual identity is not a contradiction because he has learned in school that Portugal was divided into provinces and regions and each of them presented some particular traits of Portuguese identity. The colonial regime allowed differences of identity to be expressed in folkloric terms, as long as they did not lead to political claims for autonomy. As another Portuguese Cape Verdean reminds:

During my school years in Cape Verde I was taught that Portugal extended from *Minho* to *Timor*. In Cape Verde we felt Portuguese since in the school we had to speak and write Portuguese, and within the schoolyard we were forbidden to speak Creole. I had to learn the railways and rivers of the metropole, Angola and Mozambique. The history we learnt was that of Portugal. We had to learn the battles between the Portuguese and the Spaniards and the French, and so on, but we knew nothing about the discovery and populating of Cape Verde. Some teachers suggested that school should be more oriented towards the reality in Cape Verde, but as the PIDE and the government officials didn't like the idea, in the end some got into trouble (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 70 years).

As happened in the Caribbean colonial settings, where a Creole elite

emerged as well, the transposing of the metropolitan educational system to Cape Verde resulted in some maladjustment. As Madeleine Cottenet-Hage and Kevin Meehan pointed out in the case of the French Caribbean:

Colonial schools constitute points of uneasy contact where knowledge, codes, and values coming from *somewhere else* are transmitted, deliberately and forcibly, to a diverse local population. [...] School is the place where young colonised subjects face the difficult challenge of integrating western knowledge and values with indigenous or “criolising” knowledge and cultural values transmitted by another school, that of nature and familial/ancestral traditions (1992:76).

The transplantation of the metropolitan *Liceu* to Cape Verde produced two different kinds of ‘colonial subjects’: those who ended up not accepting colonial domain and ‘Portugueseness’, of whom some participated in the guerrilla fight against colonialism, and those who tried the hardest to show their ‘Portugueseness’ in a colonial environment sometimes hostile to them. For the latter, going through the *Liceu* meant the acquisition of the necessary ‘capital of Portugueseness’ to become accepted as Portuguese, though within certain limits.

The aspiration that the Cape Verdean elite had to ‘Portugueseness’ is of the type so well described by V. S. Naipaul in relation to the people of the West Indies:

Pursuing the Christian-Hellenic tradition, the West Indian accepted his blackness as his guilt, and divided people into the white, fusty, musty, dusty, tea, coffee, cocoa, light black, dark black. He never seriously doubted the validity of the culture to which he aspired. In the French territories he aimed at Frenchness; in the Dutch territories at Dutchness; in the English territories he aimed at simple whiteness and modernity, Englishness being impossible (1962:6).

For the Portuguese Cape Verdeans who still claim their Cape Verdean identity in some specific contexts places like the Adegas represent an ideal of a

past plural identity, expressed, for example, through different foods, ways of dressing and dancing, in which every one could show his or her Portugueseness in his or her own way. Paradoxically, their notion of identity, despite having a colonial origin, is extremely 'postmodern' in the sense that for them identity is perceived as fractionary and segmented. On the one hand, the fragmentary nature of identity in colonial time, allowed the Portuguese Cape Verdeans to claim their own regional identity, but on the other, as Cape Verde was an 'African colony', their regional identity was never fully accepted by those Portuguese in the metropole. For a Portuguese Cape Verdean to escape being linked to Africa and blackness, he would bring out as much as he could the Portugueseness of his Cape Verdean identity, which implied the rebuttal of stereotypes of Africaness applied to Cape Verdeans and Cape Verde.

4.5. Education as identity marker

Being a member of the educated Portuguese Cape Verdean elite represented an important social capital, in Cape Verde and in the other colonies. This was true not only for those at the top end of the social ladder but also for those in the middle who had the fortune of frequenting the *Liceu* and getting a secondary education diploma, at a time when a large number of the population was illiterate and most of the remainder could barely read and write.

In Cape Verde, education was the main avenue not only for upward social mobility but also a means for the old elite to maintain its social position at a time when the economic activities on the islands were on the wane. Until the 1940s, commerce and agriculture were sufficient for the white elite to keep its position without being toppled by a new mulatto elite arisen from return migration,

mainly from the U.S.

The first blow to the traditional Cape Verdean elite was stricken by the abolition of *morgadio* (the law of primogeniture) in the late nineteenth century, but the deathblow came with the droughts of the 1930s and 1940s, the time when the economic power of the old white elite began to decline irreversibly. The position of the traditional families began then to depend more on the education they could afford for their descendants than on their bankrupted small coffee plantations and sugar-mills.

With the intensification of Portuguese colonisation during the first half of the twentieth century, in the sequence of the *Ultimato Britânico*⁵⁷, in 1890, and the ensuing international pressure for Portugal to occupy its African territories, a number of opportunities emerged in the colonial administration for the Portuguese Cape Verdeans to seize.

4.5.1. Studying in the 'metropole'

In what concerns the education of its offspring, the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite adopted the same standards as the white Creole elites in the Caribbean, of which Trinidad is a good example. Boys and girls of the Caribbean white elites were sent off to the metropole at about ten, the time when they began to be prone to the 'corruptive' influence of the Tropics. As the Trinidadian children of the elite were sent off to schools in Britain, the children of the Cape Verdean elite families were sent off to schools in the Portuguese metropole. In both cases they looked for the best boarding schools. After about 1850, it became common

⁵⁷ The *Ultimato Britânico* (British Ultimatum) came in the sequence of scuffles between the Portuguese and the British over the 'protection' of some native peoples straddling Mozambique and Rhodesia. The British threatened to attack Lisbon with one of their war vessels if the Portuguese did not retire from the Chire and Niassa regions.

practice for Trinidadian French Creole elite families to send off the boys to Britain to attend English Catholic schools such as Stonyhurst, Ushaw, Oscott, and Beaumont College, while the girls attended preferably convent schools in England (Brereton 1998:48).

In the case of the Cape Verdean elite, the preference went for metropolitan boarding schools run by Catholic priests and nuns. The *Académico*, *Bom Sucesso*, *Padres Salesianos*, and *São João de Deus* were some of the schools, ruled by Catholic clerics, preferred by Cape Verdean elite families. However, only a few families could afford this type of education.

In Fogo it is said that the coffee plantations financed the education of many elite boys and girls in the metropole, particularly between the 1920s and the 1940s. The Barbosa-Vicente and Sacramento-Monteiro families are well represented among the elite Cape Verdeans of that time. Only the richest families of Fogo, Santiago, Santo Antão, and São Nicolau could afford a metropolitan education for their offspring from an early age. For those Cape Verdeans belonging to the lower segments of the elite, the coming to the metropole only happened when they were about to begin university degrees.

Schooling from an early age in the metropole offered social advantages compared to coming only at university age. One of the principal concerns of the elite was to assure that their offspring learned properly how to speak Portuguese without a marked Creole accent. Although the teaching at the *Liceu* in Cape Verde was of good standard and the pupils could learn how to read and write properly, with speaking it was more difficult. Despite the strict regulations of the *Liceu*, which prohibited the speaking of Creole within its walls, the youngsters had plenty of opportunities to speak it either in the courtyard or outside the

school confinement during their spare times. At home the strictest families banned the speaking of Creole, which was used only for speaking to the domestic servants, and tried to inculcate their children with the speaking of Portuguese from an early age.

The Cape Verdean elite, as many other colonial elites, believed in the linguistic superiority of the metropolitan language. Until the mid-twentieth century, Creole languages were viewed as low standard, and inadequate for the superior purposes of literature and science. It is not by chance that the main Cape Verdean writers and poets, until about the independence in 1975, chose Portuguese as their working language. The few who used Creole did it in poetry but not in novels or essays. The only novel ever written in Creole, *Odju d'Agu*, by Manuel Veiga, only came out in 1987. The question whether Creole was suitable for academic and scientific purposes was debated in the *Liceu* by the elder students.

During my 7^o ano [equivalent to eleventh grade today] a few of us started to discuss whether or not the Creole could be used for teaching philosophy, mathematics, and the other subjects. Some said that Creole was not a well-suited language for scientific reasoning, for there were no Creole words to explain the concepts and we would have to borrow from Portuguese anyway. But there were two or three of us who promptly tried to demonstrate that any subject matter within philosophy, mathematics, or even Greek and Latin could be taught in Creole without any loss of quality. *Nhô Balta*⁵⁸, always told us however good we thought that Creole was we should stick to Portuguese as much as we could, for it would give us a better chance once outside Cape Verde (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 69 years).

The families of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite had good reasons to try and force their offspring to speak Portuguese. During colonialism, the use of

⁵⁸ *Nhô Balta* was the nickname for Dr Baltazar Lopes da Silva, the most influential Cape Verdean intellectual of the twentieth century, who taught for years at the Liceu Gil Eanes, and of which he was rector at the final stage of his career.

Creole was considered backward and uncivilised, a sign of Africaness, a hindrance to the development of full-fledged Portuguese-European manners and skills. For any elite Cape Verdean with aspirations to a life outside the archipelago, fluency in Portuguese was a must. Creole was an accepted currency within the domestic sphere when informal talking was involved. It was also used to communicate with the servants and people of inferior social status. Portuguese was seen as the language of seriousness, used, for example, in administrative matters and things related to spheres outside the family and neighbourhood. Banks, schools, health centres, hospitals, government offices, and the like were places where the use of Creole was restricted.

4.5.2. Cultivating 'Europeanness'

In São Vicente, the elite was very much influenced by the presence of the British and emulated their habits, such as the practice of golf and tennis, the morning gin and tonic, instead of the more plebeian *grogue* (rum), and tea at five o'clock.

In our home, my father used to drink his gin and tonic at about eleven o'clock in the morning. My mother and the other women drank tea and ate little cookies. The drinking of alcohol was socially forbidden to women in our class. There were other traces of the English influence in our lives, like the house's furniture, which included a weight-driven clock bought from an English officer who worked for the English cable company, as well as the way we dressed. For example, I still remember wearing high socks and shorts like an English boy. We played golf, tennis and cricket, even though there was no grass and we had to play on arid land. We felt very English and superior compared to the barefooted rabble, or even to the elite of the other islands. Those families who exaggerated the imitation of British habits were said to have *manias de inglês* (as showing English manners and fancying things English) (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male 71 years).

Although this informant went happily about speaking of the social

proximity between the white Portuguese elite and the small British community, the truth is that the British had their own social life to which very few of the white Creole elite had access. As the white educated Cape Verdean elite felt superior to the mass of illiterate and barefoot, the British felt the same way toward the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite, even though most informants do not admit it because it diminishes their self-image and self-esteem.

The life of the elite women was more circumscribed to the domestic sphere in which private visits and parties played an important role. Their situation may be compared to that of the Trinidadian white women, who had less opportunities for education and whose main objective in life was to get a good marriage, preferably at quite an early age (Brereton 1998:60). The socialisation of the elite Cape Verdean women was oriented to the family and procreation, which cannot be seen as a particularity of colonial societies but as a reflex of the mainstream values of European society at the time.

If for Trinidadian elite women “the ‘finishing’ in England was essential to prepare a girl for a good catch, [and] so elite girls were usually sent to British or French boarding schools at around 13 or 14” (Brereton 1998:61), for the Cape Verdean elite girls there were the Catholic boarding schools of the metropole, usually run by nuns. In these schools, the girls learnt the proper etiquette of European ladies, which included playing the piano, speaking French, and how to attend guests and make conversation at parties. Of course there were exceptions and some women studied to a higher level of education and became professionals, but they rarely escaped family life and subordination to men.

At thirteen I came to the metropole to study at a Catholic boarding school run by Irish nuns, Mary’s Holy Heart School. Life was very strict: we were three or four Cape Verdean girls and we couldn’t speak Creole among us, otherwise punishment would

include beatings with a rod and cutting out weekend outings, which in my case served to visit my auntie in Lisbon. On top of the regular subjects of normal schools I had to learn some music, cooking and embroidery. When I finished secondary school with the nuns, I went to Mitelo School⁵⁹ and got my degree as social worker, starting then my career in the headquarters of the National Socialcare Services, in Lisbon, where I have been until now (Portuguese Cape Verdean, female, 51 years).

The fact that some women of the elite have got a professional life of their own allowed them to integrate into the mainstream metropolitan society without going through marriage, or at least without having to depend upon the social status of a husband. In the *Associação*, apart from those few women who gained their social independence out of a university degree, there are a few other women who became prestigious figures of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite after recording Cape Verdean music. Some had other professional activities before Cape Verdean music has become known enough for them to make a living out of it. Although they do not earn a living entirely from music recording and performing, their position within the Cape Verdean social milieu, as well as outside, has improved considerably.

These few women stand apart from the mainstream Cape Verdean music, performing 'old-fashioned' musical styles that younger Cape Verdean artists, both within and outside Cape Verde, are no longer aware of. Or, being aware, they refuse to embrace them due to their old-fashioned nature and connotation with colonialism. In some cases, it may be just the effect of the generation gap on the taste for music.

The following case is a good example of a woman who has become an

⁵⁹ Mitelo is a school, still in place, which gives its students the equivalent of a bachelor's degree in social work. It was one of the main avenues for Cape Verdean elite women looking for a profession in the metropole, along with jobs in healthcare and childcare centres.

influential figure of the Cape Verdean elite after embracing singing in a quasi-professional way.

My parents moved from the island of Boa Vista to the city of Mindelo, in São Vicente, the only place with a *Liceu*. They wanted us to study seriously. I frequented the *Liceu Gil Eanes* between 1957 and 1963, where I have had great teachers. Then, upon finishing the *Liceu*, I came to the metropole, to the city of Viseu, to study for primary school teacher. I and a female cousin of mine were the only African⁶⁰ students at the educational school, and though I cannot say that people were racist towards us, it was quite a shock to learn the meaning of colour difference in a place where the presence of coloured people was extremely rare. As my family was Protestant, I found solace within the local Protestant church, where I began to sing. Every body liked my singing at the church. There were other non-Cape Verdean youths and I got along with them pretty well. I think that was the beginning of my singing career. The Cape Verdean music was already being listened in the metropole by some people, given that Fernando Queijas already sang *mornas* in Portuguese since the 1940s(...). Between 1971 and 1973, I studied a perfecting course on news casting at the National Broadcasting Station while at the same time began to sing once in a while. Yet, I only started making money about five years ago, when Cape Verde's music finally gained artistic value. I had sung for many years but it never crossed my mind to make a living of it. Today, I only sing for free in humanitarian causes (Portuguese Cape Verdean, female, 55 years).

The position of the Cape Verdean elite was determined by the status of men. It was the men who provided for the family, and the women who cared after the children, particularly the girls. In the 1950s and 1960s, it was common for elite mothers to come to the metropole in support of their children while these were studying. For those Cape Verdean families which had to bear the brunt of humid and hot climates, such as those living in Portuguese Guinea and São Tomé and Príncipe, coming to the metropole served both the educational purpose and the necessary sick leave for the cure of tropical ills. This is

⁶⁰ She uses the word African in this context to express her mulatto complexion. In this case, African is a euphemism for black.

something that the Cape Verdean colonial elite had in common with their counterparts in other colonial settings, who used to travel periodically to their European metropolises in order to recover from the tropical climate and breathe the airs of 'civilisation'.

The life history that follows clearly illustrates a common life-path for members of the top segment of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite. His father was a schoolmaster and owner of a large extension of land on the island of Santiago, his mother a traditional housewife, whose main job was to care for the offspring and run the household. He and all of his eleven siblings studied, some of them went to the university and became top rank professionals in the metropole or the colonies. Not a single one has remained in Cape Verde. Today, the only relatives he still has in Santiago are a few 'second cousins' (the children of cousins) and some other remote kin. In the period of three generations, from his father to his children, the whole of his extended family left Cape Verde and scattered across three continents: Europe, Africa and America.

I was born in 1915 and lived in Santiago until I was ten. In school we were all equal, no child was discriminated because of his or her colour or wealth. There were descendants of metropolitan Portuguese families as well as of mixed African and European origin. As it was prohibited for shabby and barefooted children to frequent the school, my mother and other women from the more well-off families provided so that no children were deprived of the necessary clothing and footwear needed to be allowed in school(...). Upon completing primary school, I spent another year in Santiago studying Portuguese, French, Latin, History, Geography and Mathematics with my father and some other professors. Then, at ten, I was sent off to the metropole. My father told me I could choose between two schools: one in Viseu, where my cousins were, and another in Póvoa, where I had no relatives. I knew the whereabouts of Viseu, the capital city of the province of Beira Alta, from the geography lessons in primary school, but I had not heard of Póvoa, a small town. When I learnt that Póvoa was on the seashore it became immediately my choice(...). It was very hard to be separated from

my family and to be put in the Povoense [the boarding school's name]. We were only three or four Cape Verdean boys and we could not speak Creole in front of the teachers. For metropolitan boys listening to Creole was a spellbinding experience, and I, or any of my Cape Verdean mates, never felt discriminated due to our Cape Verdean origin. After completing secondary education I went on to the *Instituto Superior de Estudos Coloniais*⁶¹ where I took up my degree of licentiate in higher colonial studies.(...). I made the whole of my career in the metropole, from head of department to chief inspector of the colonial administration reporting directly to the Overseas Minister. Only for short periods was I in the colonies, such as the instance when I spent a year in Angola organising the local social security system (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 87 years).

As said earlier, among similar examples we can find medical doctors, lawyers, judges, professors, teachers, engineers, politicians, and a few other high-rank professionals. Not all the members of the elite were as highly educated as the few hundreds at the top, but for about one hundred years, between 1866 and the early 1970s, first the *Seminário-Lyceu*, in São Nicolau and then later the *Liceu Gil Eanes* were able to graduate tens of Cape Verdeans who spread throughout the 'empire' occupying positions in the colonial administration.

In Angola, at the time of independence, in 1974, there were around two hundred Portuguese Cape Verdeans in high-rank positions of the colonial administration. The names of the most important Cape Verdean families were all present at the top end of the colonial staff list in any of the colonies. In Angola, the public treasurer, the director of the postal services, and the director of the civil administration were all Cape Verdean, and so it was in Portuguese Guinea, São Tomé, or East Timor.

⁶¹ The Higher Institute of Colonial Studies, nowadays Instituto Superior de Ciências Sociais e Políticas (Higher Institute of Social and Political Sciences).

4.5.3. Dealing with racial prejudice

Although the Cape Verdean Portuguese dominated the ranks of the colonial administration all over the 'empire', the highest post in the colonies, that of general governor, was usually barred to officials not born in the metropole. In the army, the Cape Verdeans could only ascend to officership within the colonial forces, but were not allowed to become officers in the metropolitan army. Despite there being no legal hindrance, the command in the metropole used any available expedients to exclude the Cape Verdeans from officership.

My father was a lieutenant-colonel of the colonial army in Mozambique and I was destined to an army career. After completing the *Liceu* I tried to enter the military academy. After the medical examination they decided that I could not be enrolled owing to a deficient heart condition. Knowing they were just inventing some excuse to exclude me, my father decided to pay for a private full medical examination, which proved there was no problem with my heart whatsoever. Again, I tried to enter the academy offering them the medical examination results proving that I was in good health, but they refused me anyway. And so it is explained the reason I became a university professor, my second choice in life (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 78 years).

When asked about the possible reasons for being discriminated against, the elite Cape Verdeans tend to rule out racism and colour prejudice. It is the prejudice of having no prejudice, as Betances (1972; 1973) has shown among the Puerto Ricans. For the Portuguese Cape Verdeans, discrimination resulted from the fear that 'metropolitans' felt about their superior qualifications and capacity. However, the ways in which the elite Cape Verdeans felt discrimination are various. For example, Portuguese Cape Verdeans who could pass as a white metropolitan, owing to their very light complexion, would feel any kind of discrimination against them as not being racial but classist, while a black or mulatto elite Cape Verdean might in the same context perceive it as

racial. In any case, very few elite informants admit the existence of racial prejudice against Cape Verdeans, independently of their complexion. They usually perceive discrimination as the result of differences in education, wealth, family origin, and not as the result of differences in 'race'. As one of them puts it:

I was never affected by racial prejudice either in the colonies or in the metropole. What makes you different is not whether you are black or white, but whether you have or have not education and intelligence. I know some black Cape Verdeans who were more respected than some white Cape Verdeans, or even than metropolitan Portuguese. During my career as an official of the National Social Security Services in Lisbon, I had to compete several times against metropolitan Portuguese. I have always classified first and been given the position I was applying for, and, as you can see, I am not the best example of a white Portuguese. Nonetheless, I know some Cape Verdeans who feel some sort of inferiority towards the metropolitan Portuguese because of being darker. But that is only in their minds. If they feel inferior owing to their colour, then the Portuguese will see them as inferiors too. In my family there are darker people than me, but none of them ever felt diminished by being dark-skinned (Portuguese Cape Verdean, female, 56 years).

As seen from the words of this informant, the way elite Portuguese Cape Verdeans are affected by the potential racial content of their identity varies from individual to individual, and according to various things, like the level of self-esteem and self-confidence instilled by education and how they are perceived by the white metropolitan mainstream. For many elite Cape Verdeans, moving away from Cape Verde implied adjustments in their self-perception. The fact that an elite member is perceived as white in Cape Verde does not mean that he continues to be perceived as such once he or she moves to Europe or the U.S.

As said earlier, in Cape Verde there is a loose understanding of the categories 'black' and 'white', because they relate either to social status or to

skin colour, even though the categories '*preto*' and '*branco*' also represent the extreme ends of the colour scale that people use to physically identify one another. In the middle of that scale there are other categories, such as 'light' ('*claro*'), 'lighter than black' ('*clarinho*'), 'dark' ('*escuro*'), 'little dark' ('*escurinho*') (cf. Meintel 1984:98-9), which bear no correspondence with the individuals' social status. For example, when someone says '*el é um pretu claro*' (he is a light black) it does not mean that the person in question has more prestige or wealth than a black and less than a white. It simply means that he is too light to be black and too dark to be white. So, it is important to distinguish when a category means physical appearance and when it means position and status.

For the Cape Verdeans, as in the example below, the different manners in which they and the metropolitans perceived physical features was shocking and mind boggling at first.

On the second day of my arrival in Lisbon I was walking downtown with some of my Cape Verdean mates when one of them passed his arm over my shoulder and around my neck. Suddenly, a passing man shouted, "Hey you black, get your hands off and stay where you belong!" From that moment on I never looked at my colleague in the same manner. I had never seen him as different from me, for in Cape Verde we didn't pay attention to skin colour. It was in the metropole that I began to pay attention to racial differences. The metropolitans were very racist, and for me, being a blonde with pale skin and green eyes, it was a bit difficult walking along with my darker or black Cape Verdean mates, for I could see disapproval in the people's eyes. At the time metropolitan people were not accustomed to see coloured or black people mingling with whites. Sometimes, for example in dancing venues and cafés, I had to separate from my darker Cape Verdean mates in order to avoid trouble. Now things are a lot different; racism is not as blatant as it used to be, it became much more subtle (Portuguese Cape Verdean, female, 50 years).

This informant represents the case in which a white Cape Verdean feels

the segregating pressure of the white metropolitan mainstream, forcing her to define herself as white and to keep therefore a distance from coloured people in order to preserve her Portuguese identity. The woman in question has lived in Lisbon ever since she came to study languages and literature, in 1968. Despite having married to a metropolitan Portuguese, her children learnt Creole at home, even though they are not fluent. She has no physical features indicating her 'African' origin and her *sampadjudo* accent is only detectable by a well trained ear. In the workplace her Cape Verdean origin was never an issue, unless she wanted to talk about it. She made her life as a high school teacher, and later turned to politics becoming an MP in a major political party, which was very happy in having her as representative of the 'immigrant community'. In the parliament she acts either as 'Portuguese' representative or as representative of the 'immigrant community', particularly on behalf of the Cape Verdeans.

However, it is ironical that the only political representative of the Cape Verdean immigrants at parliamentary level is a white blonde Portuguese Cape Verdean who most of the thousands of black Cape Verdean immigrants would not identify at first sight as *patrícia* (fellow Cape Verdean). This does not mean that she is not accepted as Cape Verdean by the darker and black Cape Verdean immigrants. On the contrary, when she, for example, visits a Cape Verdean *bairro* asking questions about the people's life and problems in her *sampadjudo* Creole and telling about her roots in Cape Verde, people immediately accept her as *patrícia*. They congratulate themselves that one *patrícia* has reached such height within Portuguese society and is now in position to help and represent them before the Portuguese authorities. The fact that the darker and black Cape Verdeans in the *bairro* have no high-level black representatives before the

Portuguese authorities makes it easier for them to ignore any disagreement about identity. They are in no position to reject political representation whatever 'Cape Verdean' quarters it may come from.

The validation of this elite Cape Verdean woman as *patrícia* is given by her Cape Verdean origin, which she attests by speaking Creole. The fact that she is viewed by the darker and black *badiu* Cape Verdeans of Santiago, by and large the majority in Lisbon, as a *sampadjuda* could in other circumstances constitute an hindrance to her being accepted by them as a legitimate representative of the 'Cape Verdean community' (on the identity distinction between *badiu* and *sampadjudo* see section 3.1.). In Cape Verde, it would be more difficult for her to be accepted as representative of a larger majority of *badiu* Cape Verdeans. Outside the islands, the categories *badiu* and *sampadjudo* are in most contexts subsumed under the umbrella of 'Cape Verdean'. The non-existence of strict racial boundaries among Cape Verdeans makes it possible for them to reject and accept one another as Cape Verdean according to what is more convenient in every context.

Black and mulatto Portuguese Cape Verdeans are more vulnerable to racial ideologies, and though they usually do not admit to being the target of racialised attitudes by Portuguese metropolitans, the fact is that in some contexts, such as the workplace, they avoid being identified as Cape Verdeans, which could eventually lump them together with the image of the *preto caboverdiano* (black Cape Verdean) dweller of shantytowns and other run-down areas.

The case of the informant below shows the necessity that in some cases mulatto and black Portuguese Cape Verdeans feel to distance themselves from the negative image projected by the media about the black Cape Verdean

immigrants and their descendants.

Being coloured was never a problem for me. In Fogo, where I am from, there was some racism on the part of the whites toward the blacks and mulattos, but as I was the daughter of the administrator and belonged to one of the most important families on the island, people did not look to my colour but instead to my family name. When I came to the metropole to study in the late 1950s there were very few Cape Verdean immigrants, and the negative image they have today didn't exist at the time. Most of the blacks that one could see in Lisbon were students, and, as a black myself, I cannot say I was discriminated against in school or elsewhere. But in the 1970s, especially after the independence of the colonies, the metropolitans began to show some discontent towards what they called the *retornados* [returnees]. I know some mulatto and black Cape Verdean fellows who had a difficult time when, subsequent to the independence of the colonies and after the closure of the Ministry of Overseas and the other colonial services, came to the metropole and were integrated in the metropolitan public administration. Sometimes they were the target of racist comments. I am not saying that metropolitans were overtly racist toward them, but they commented behind their back about their being *retornados*. Before 1975 there were very few coloured people in the metropolitan public administration, but after that time a few thousands came in, sometimes occupying higher places than the metropolitans, and that created some resentment. In the workplace, I never spoke Creole and never told people I was Cape Verdean. I always said I was Portuguese born in Cape Verde and that most of my ancestors were of Portuguese origin. After the independence I avoided saying I was Cape Verdean owing to the negative image that metropolitans have got about the Cape Verdeans. They think that all Cape Verdeans are black immigrants living in shantytowns. Today the image of the Cape Verdeans is too negative for me to stand by. The children of the immigrants are making the headlines in the newspapers for robbing, mugging, drug trafficking and other misdemeanours. It is a shame that the image of Cape Verde and the Cape Verdeans is coupled with that kind of behaviour (Portuguese Cape Verdean, female, 53 years).

The regretting of the present image the media is passing out about the 'Cape Verdean community' is widespread among elite Cape Verdeans. They complain that the media only speaks of the Cape Verdeans when there has been some trouble (see chapter 6). In the 1970s and 1980s, it was the 'problem of the

knife', when the newspapers would make their headlines with 'Cape Verdean stabs wife to death' or 'builder stabbed by fellow Cape Verdean'. In the 1990s, it was the youths of the suburban *bairros* mugging people in the streets, buses and trains, even though these incidents have been sporadic.

The elite Cape Verdeans align with the opinions voiced by 'social analysts' and other opinion makers, who blame the misdemeanours of second-generation Cape Verdeans on their poor social integration resulting from ghettoisation in neighbourhoods predominantly inhabited by Cape Verdean immigrants and other likes.

4.6. Still 'culture' and 'race'

Most of the elite Cape Verdeans are bearers of a *sampadjudo* culture, which they cultivated during their passage at the *Liceu*, in São Vicente. Although the Cape Verdeans will say that the opposition between *sampadjudo* and *badiu* is merely a geographical one between the island of Santiago and the other islands, or, more specifically, a rivalry between the Santiago's *badius* and the São Vicente's *sampadjudos*, things seem to be a little more complex.

Indeed the main geographical opposition occurs between Santiago and São Vicente, traditionally the two economically and politically most important islands of the archipelago. But along with the economic and political opposition, there has been traditionally also a 'cultural' and 'racial' opposition.

The people of São Vicente have claimed cultural superiority over the other islands, for they had the only *Liceu* in the whole archipelago for decades. Whereas Santiago is seen as the granary and the 'African' stronghold of the archipelago, São Vicente is known for its carnival, singing and theatre festivals

as well as its literary activities and its more European-like ambience. Metaphorically, while Santiago is seen as the ‘agricultural performer’, São Vicente is seen as the ‘cultural performer’.

Despite most of the elite people being of mixed ancestry, a fact which most of them acknowledge, the majority are of light or very light complexion making strong the correlation between being lighter and *sampadjudo*. Being lighter and *sampadjudo* is also associated with being closer to the ideal of Portugueseness. *Sampadjudo* Creole is also seen as nearer to Portuguese, lexically, phonologically and syntactically, as opposed to *badiu* Creole, seen as nearer to its African roots⁶².

Being culturally and linguistically *sampadjudo* has allowed the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite to easily identify with being Portuguese, while at the same time facilitated the repudiation of their African cultural and linguistic inheritance. Curiously, a good many acknowledge and accept more easily their ‘African blood’ than their ‘African culture’, which indicates that for them ‘culture’ is more important than ‘race’. The predominance of the ‘cultural’ over the ‘racial’ emerges clearly in the discourse of some informants:

I use to say I have three different colours: the one you see in my face, the one you see beneath the strap of my wristwatch, and the one you cannot see at all, unless I tell you. The first is dependent upon the extent of my being exposed to sunlight and the high capacity of my melanin cells to produce a darker tan; when in Africa I am darker than here. The second, a much lighter one, is the one I have got by living in the metropole,

⁶² The question of which Creole is closer to Portuguese is controversial among elite informants. On the one hand, there are *sampadjudo* informants who argue that *badiu* Creole is closer to Portuguese, for the island of Santiago has remained more closed to external influence while the port of Mindelo in São Vicente represented a gateway ever since the populating of the island in the early nineteenth century, allowing the incorporation of foreign words into the local Creole. On the other hand, there are other *sampadjudo* informants who argue that *sampadjudo* Creole is the closest to Portuguese and comparable to the thick accents of Madeira and Azores.

where the sun is not as harsh as in the colonies. Finally, the third is the invisible black I carry in my blood, and which has manifested clearly in some of my relatives but not in myself. The fact that certain Cape Verdeans are white does not make them more Portuguese than those who are mulatto or black. What made me Portuguese is the fact that I chose to be one and was accepted as such because my language and my culture are Portuguese, despite being born in Cape Verde. Had I been black and it would have made no difference (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 87 years).

However, the way elite informants verbalise about the ‘racial’ and ‘cultural’ issues of being Cape Verdean is not always in accordance with the example above. While the informant above has never seen his Portuguese identity being questioned by the metropolitan white mainstream, owing to the fact that he is clearly perceived as white, in the case of mulatto and black Portuguese Cape Verdeans things are usually different. Whereas the elite informant in the example above never experienced the racism of white Portuguese metropolitans, other elite informants with dark-skinned complexions felt some sort of discrimination because they were seen as *pretos* or *africanos*. The following case illustrates this point:

The island of Fogo is probably where people reveal the greatest concern with social position, and though they speak of social prestige and position in terms of being white, whites are all those who have acquired wealth and prestige within Fogo’s society or elsewhere, independently of skin colour. For example, the story I am going to tell you happened to me during São Filipe’s annual feasts of the banner. There were some unoccupied seats right in the front row, which had been reserved for some outside guests, which included me, and some local important faces. Then, when some among the populace decided to take the vacant seats a policeman came in and said, ‘these seats are for whites only’. Despite many of those who were taking the seats were noticeably lighter than me, they promptly understood that the policeman’s warning meant, ‘these seats are for important people only’. Here in the metropole things would probably have been the other way round; the policeman would have had me warned and left the ‘populace’ alone, because here the first thing people perceive is my physical aspect and

not what I am. According to Portuguese standards I am black, dark mulatto at best, and my wife is white, though born in Cape Verde. In my professional activity I deal both with Portuguese and Cape Verdeans. But when the client in question is Portuguese my wife usually makes the first contact. If I show myself first most people will not call me a second time (Portuguese Cape Verdean, male, 49 years).

At the time of the independence of Cape Verde, the informant above did not keep his Portuguese nationality and became a Cape Verdean national. Only when he came to Lisbon, in the 1980s, did he realise the difference between being coloured in Cape Verde and in the metropole. Although he cannot be considered as one of the old colonial elite, some of the racial barriers he faced in the metropole are the same faced by dark-skinned Portuguese Cape Verdeans. While those Portuguese Cape Verdeans who are white have no trouble in being fully accepted as Portuguese, and easily become invisible as long as that is their wish, those who are not clearly white very often have to face the racial prejudice of the metropolitan Portuguese.

This is particularly true in contexts wherein the social position of coloured Cape Verdeans is not obvious for their white interlocutors. For example, in the early 1990s, a case involving a black professor and a policeman at a bus stop made the headlines of the major newspapers. The professor in question was asked for his identity papers by a police officer. He then began an argument with the policeman about why he had asked him when he was doing nothing wrong and there were other people in the bus stop exactly in the same circumstances. The police officer then became irritated and called him *preto*, not knowing he was talking to a university professor. Things spiralled up and the professor ended up beaten by the policeman, who had later to stand trial charged with aggression without motive and abuse of authority. This episode illustrates to

what extent the white metropolitan mainstream still associates blackness with being at the bottom of society. Had the policeman known that the man in question was a university professor he would probably have dealt with the situation in a totally different manner.

It is therefore understandable that Portuguese Cape Verdean elite people try to avoid anything connoting blackness, especially at a time when the African immigrants are conspicuous. Their case may be compared to that of a significant part of the 'white' Arab Americans, who have been labelled by some analysts of ethnicity as an 'invisible racial/ethnic group'⁶³. Despite being highly heterogeneous, Arab Americans are portrayed by the American media in a monolithic and negative fashion; as religious fanatic terrorists, oppressors of women, and the like. Moreover, despite many passing as white in American society, Arab Americans as a whole are perceived as non-white. A result of the negative image associated with 'being Arab' in America is that many Arab Americans who can pass as white hide their ethnic identity in order to avoid being harassed. As Naber puts it:

[The fact that] the diverse Arab American community is lumped together as a generic Arab-Middle Eastern Muslim contributes to the invisibility of the Arab American community. Anti-Arab imaging removes all trace of the diverse composition of the Arab American community. The resulting attacks against individuals and community organisations instil fear in Arab Americans and lead many Arab Americans to conceal their ethnic identity and avoid participation in Arab American community organisations, thereby halting the community's political development and silencing its voice within the larger American society (2000:50).

Like the 'white' Arab Americans who are afraid of being associated with the 'racialised' image of the Arab in general, the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite

⁶³ See for example Hentoff (1990), Awad (1981), Ohanian (1986), and Naber (2000).

do not wish to be linked to the negative image of the black Cape Verdean community passed on to the Portuguese white mainstream by the media, which is controlled by white upper middle-class professionals very little, or not at all, aware of the existing diversity within the 'Cape Verdean community'.

4.7. The integration of the elite's descendants

A quarter of a century after the fall of the 'empire', the Portuguese Cape Verdeans seem to have adapted fairly well to life in postcolonial time. Though they have shared some of the misfortune of other postcolonial elites equally with no place in the newly independent colonies, their story is overall one with a happy end. Like the now tiny community of Parsis settled in the rather old colonial quarters of Bombay, the Portuguese Cape Verdeans are also a small number settled mainly in Lisbon or in its suburbs, in what were once middle- and upper middle-class residences, now threatened by the urban sprawl of glittering high-rises and upper-class modern homes. They experienced the same kind of success during Portuguese colonialism that the Parsis experienced under the Raj, and like the Parsis they were more westernised than most other colonial elites. If the Parsis made a point in refusing things Indian, the elite Portuguese Cape Verdeans made a point in refusing things African. Yet, the parallel ends here, for the Parsis had to remain Parsis, while the elite Cape Verdeans were able to trim the Cape Verdean appendage of their Portuguese identity and find a place within the postcolonial mainstream.

While the Parsis, despite being still important in India, have developed an image of themselves as backward, unsophisticated, and, above all, emasculated (Luhmann 1996:2), the elite Cape Verdeans maintained the best of their

colonial image. Despite being no longer important in the colonies and having only a marginal role in influencing the destiny of Cape Verde, they continue to think of themselves as indispensable after the independence. This ideal image of themselves and their role in postcolonial world, along with the fact they had no inferiority complex in relation to the metropolitan Portuguese, facilitated the complete integration of their descendants in the postcolonial society.

The Portuguese Cape Verdeans have a wide age range, with the youngest of my informants being about fifty and the eldest about ninety-five, which makes it possible for the offspring of the eldest informants to be as old as the youngest members of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite. Some of the Portuguese Cape Verdean descendants were born in the colonies and others in the metropole, depending on the life trajectory of their parents, and that influenced the way they adapted to metropolitan life in the aftermath of the independence of the colonies. Nevertheless, independent of the particular circumstances affecting each family, they all have become remote from the Cape Verdean identity of their parents.

Either in the colonies or in the metropole the descendants of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite were enculturated as Portuguese. And even though some of them have had contact with Creole language during childhood, their main language has always been Portuguese. In fact, most of the elite's descendants born in the metropole never had any contact with Creole. Their parents were well aware of the importance of their children learning Portuguese very well in order to do well in school and become qualified professionals.

My father was born in Cape Verde and my mother is from here [Portugal]. At home we never spoke Creole; my father made a point that we only spoke Portuguese. I think he only spoke Creole with his Cape Verdean mates while he was a student here in

Lisbon. He used to associate with them in *A Casa dos Estudantes do Império*⁶⁴, where he would have spoken most of his Creole. I have done my primary and secondary education in the same schools that my father had been to. There were maybe two or three other students who also had a Cape Verdean relative, but we were not different from the other Portuguese students. You know, at the time, in the 1950s there were no Cape Verdean immigrants in Lisbon and I think my father and the others like him did not make a real distinction between being Cape Verdean or Portuguese. Then I went to the Faculty of Law, in 1963, where there were students from all over the colonies. One day I heard a bunch of students, some very light mulattos and others white, speaking a language I could not understand. When I later commented with my father he said: 'those are Cape Verdeans'. It was when my father began to explain me a few things about Cape Verde and Creole speaking. He also explained that he had not wanted me to speak it because most people thought it was *língua de pretos* (black's language) (Portuguese Cape Verdean descendant, male, 55 years).

As in this case, most children of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite were kept away from Cape Verdean culture and language by their parents in order to ensure they would be wholly enculturated as Portuguese. That was not a difficult task, for without Creole domestic servants, usual in Cape Verde, and without the necessary number of other Cape Verdean colleagues in school and other Cape Verdean families around the neighbourhood, there was no opportunity for children to contact with Cape Verdean culture. The elite's children were totally immersed in the Portuguese metropolitan cultural world. Most Portuguese Cape Verdean elite families followed a strategy of integration as Portuguese, which makes perfect sense in a society that has never been one of hyphenated citizenship. Contrary to what has happened in the U.S., where one can find

⁶⁴ *A Casa dos Estudantes do Império* (The House of the Students of the Empire) was created in the mid 1940s, in Lisbon, as a students' common house for those coming from the colonies to gather around. It represented an attempt by Salazar's government to frame colonial students within the ideology of the empire, at a time when the first independentist movements were emerging. Ironically, much of the conspiracy going on took place in *A Casa*, which functioned as a venue for future independentist leaders such as Amílcar Cabral and Agostinho Neto.

categories like Asian-American, Afro-American, Italian-American, Arab-American, and so on, in Portugal, as in Britain, France or Germany, there is no hyphenation available in the folk 'ethnic' classification. Either you are Portuguese or something else⁶⁵.

In some cases the descendants of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite had contact with Cape Verdean culture through Cape Verdean domestic servants or nannies. These Cape Verdean domestic servants and nannies were not fluent in Portuguese and had to speak Creole to the children most of the time. They also lulled them with Creole lullabies and fed them with some Creole recipes of baby food, such as *camoca*⁶⁶. Nonetheless, the influence of Cape Verdean nannies on the children was overcome either by the strict discipline of private boarding schools or by submersion later in the metropolitan mainstream. At the end of adolescence, the elite's children would show no trace of the Cape Verdean influence of their nannies.

In our home in Lisbon we had a Cape Verdean nanny. She had been with us since my grandfather and was practically part of the family. She had been the nanny to my father, and then to me and my siblings. *Nha Zepa* could understand Portuguese very well, but she barely spoke it. My father permitted that she spoke to us in Creole, but he wanted us to reply in Portuguese. It was with her that I learned Creole, for I was the eldest child and there were no siblings of similar age around who I could learn from. I never really spoke Creole with my siblings. We used some words and idioms as a kind of code, but to a very limited extent. My father was very strict on that, and if we were caught up speaking Creole, he would shame us by saying that Creole was the language of people like *Nha Zepa*, too simple-minded to learn Portuguese. By the time I was in the *Liceu* I had already forgotten the little Creole I had learnt in childhood. At the university I have had no contact with Cape Verdean scholarship-holders coming from

⁶⁵ On the question of 'hyphenated' and 'unhyphenated' identities in the U.S. see Lieberson (1985), and Lieberson and Waters (1980).

⁶⁶ *Camoca* is a coarse flour made of roasted corn, which mixed with sugar and milk or water makes a kind of porridge.

Cape Verde and thus have never had the opportunity to learn Creole properly (Portuguese Cape Verdean descendant, male, 35 years).

However difficult it may be to make a valuable generalisation about whether and in what terms the Cape Verdean culture has been passed on to the descendants of the elite, it seems that two main factors acted decisively. The first is whether or not the parents were both Portuguese Cape Verdeans and the second is complexion. In the first case, the fact that one of the parents was metropolitan Portuguese made sure that Portuguese would be the domestic language and that Creole would not be spoken in the home. In the second case, those descendants with darker complexion, perceived as black or mulatto by metropolitans, felt more difficulty in adopting a full-fledged metropolitan identity and sometimes inclined to a kind of 'Afro-Cape Verdean' identity. This happened particularly around the time of the independence of the colonies, from the mid-1970s to the early 1980s, when 'leftist' and 'anti-imperialist' ideals were common among the metropolitan youth.

However rare, these cases of 'Afro-Cape Verdean identity' constitute an example of what some social theorists have defined as the development of an 'oppositional identity' (Waters 1999, *passim*). Sometimes the opposition has been more against the parents, and what they represented in terms of 'colonialism' and 'imperialism', than against the metropolitan society as a whole.

The extent to which some of the elite's descendants developed an oppositional identity has also depended on the social status of their families within metropolitan society. The higher the status of the family the less likely the youths were to identify with 'pan-Africanism', 'Rastafarianism' and similar

ideologies of African identity in vogue during the 1970s and 1980s. Nevertheless, this only happened in two or three instances among the elite families I have been in contact with. And in those cases the offspring ended up by wholly integrating in the mainstream during early adulthood, as in the case below:

At primary school I had no contact with other Cape Verdean children, but in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the time I was in secondary school, there were already a lot of Cape Verdean children whose parents lived in shantytowns nearby my home. I had learned Creole at home with my father and mother. I can say I was bilingual. Most of the children were blacks whose parents had come from Santiago, and spoke the *badiu* Creole, which I found difficult to understand, for my parents are from São Vicente and speak *sampadjudo* Creole. As I was much lighter than most of them and spoke Creole differently, they tagged me as *sampadjudo*. But I was not alone; there were a few other kids whose parents had come from islands other than Santiago. So, we sided together, forming a sort of *sampadjudo* minority. At about eighteen, I was drawn into reggae and Rastafarianism and began to gather with youths who had come from the colonies after independence and to smoke some grass. Then, my father warned me that it would not do me any good to mingle with people of that sort, and that I was Portuguese, not Jamaican or African. Today I recognise that those have been tough times for my parents; they feared that I would become a drug addict and was unable to study and get a decent job and lifestyle. But in the end I went to university and graduated in physical education just like my father did (Portuguese Cape Verdean descendant, male, 38 years).

In this case, the fact that the informant in question is mulatto and has had some contact in school with black youths of Cape Verdean immigrant and returnee families may have accounted for his propensity to identify with Rastafarianism and to develop an oppositional identity in relation to what his parents expected from him. What may seem an opposition between the 'white Cape Verdean' identity professed by his parents and his teenage 'black Rastafarian' identity is more likely to have been the result of the generation gap between him and his parents. In other words, he made use of an identity, which

he knew that his parents did not like him to adopt, in order to negotiate his way through adolescence into adulthood. Cases such as this are nevertheless rare among the Portuguese Cape Verdean descendants, probably due to the upper middle-class status of most of their families. Their upper middle-class situation did not allow much room for the construction of an African identity, as well as the fact that these families tend to live in white mainstream neighbourhoods where models of 'Africaness' are not available.

In the case below, the contact of an elite's youth in school with Cape Verdean youths of the surrounding shantytowns caused him to perceive Cape Verdean identity negatively and to reject anything that could identify him as Cape Verdean. The fact that he belonged to an upper middle-class family, whose identity is in part affirmed in opposition to the social world of the shantytown, kept him off anything that could identify him as 'being Cape Verdean'. The image he formed about the shantytown Cape Verdeans was in sharp contrast to that of his father while Cape Verdean. Whereas his father represented what is best in the mainstream society, his unruly Cape Verdean school colleagues represented what is worst in the world of shantytowns.

From fifth to ninth grade I attended the school right in front of Pedreira⁶⁷. This was from mid- to late 1980s, a time when the Cape Verdean children from the *bairro* made by far the majority of the students. They were terribly unruly both in the classes and outside in the playground. They did not respect anyone, from the teachers to the porters or any other member of the staff. At one point in time there was a police officer permanently trying to exert some control at the gate. Some Cape Verdeans waited outside for us to come out and then asked for money or other valuables. My watch was stolen twice and other times my school materials. We could not do anything for they did

⁶⁷ At the time Pedreira was a shantytown with a majority of Cape Verdean immigrant dwellers, and with a notorious reputation built in part by media reports about drug trafficking, robbery and other misdemeanours attributed to Cape Verdean youths. This neighbourhood will be mentioned later in chapters 5 and 6.

not mind beating us, and their parents did not care the least for what they did. Those blacks were completely rowdy and uncivilized. They ruled the roost in school, I mean it, and the teachers could do nothing. In my class we were nine whites to twelve blacks, though some were girls and did not bother us. Many times, my father came to pick me up at the gate to avoid my being mugged and harassed by the blacks of Pedreira (Portuguese Cape Verdean descendant, male, 25 years).

The transcription above illustrates a common experience for Portuguese Cape Verdean descendants who interacted with the children of Cape Verdean immigrants in school. Because this second-generation Cape Verdeans define themselves and are defined by their schoolmates as 'Cape Verdean' or 'black', the informant above has constructed an utterly negative image of what it means to be a Cape Verdean. The image he created through his experience in school has been regularly reinforced by media reports about the unruliness of the youths in shantytowns, which frequently single out the black Cape Verdean youth segment as the perfect example of the 'lack of integration' of 'second-generation Africans'.

However we cannot say that this negative image arises strictly from racial prejudice, for informants like the above will blame the economic and social situation in which the immigrants and their descendants live as the cause of their social and cultural inadequacy in relation to the white mainstream society. There was not a single case in which an elite informant, or descendant, has emphasised 'Africaness' as the most salient aspect of Cape Verdean identity flowing out of shantytowns. The behaviour of the Cape Verdean youths in shantytowns is invariably seen as the result of cultural inadequacy caused by their economic poverty and poor social integration.

Most Portuguese Cape Verdean descendants have had no social contact with Cape Verdeans other than their parents and relatives. But that contact when

it has occurred has been in social contexts wherein no one was acting as Cape Verdean, but as Portuguese. The elite's descendants do not patronise the *Associação*, and its members complain about it. They fear, very reasonably, that in a few years there will be no one to carry on with the *Associação*, and the last one of them will have to close the door behind him.

Generally, the Portuguese Cape Verdean descendants have no interest in retaking the Cape Verdean identity that their parents and grandparents care so much about. And that is in part because being Cape Verdean today is associated with being African or black, and in part because their Cape Verdean parents are just a bunch of colonial revivalist old fellows trying to act out their past time in the colonies. As one member's teenager grandson said, answering a call on his mobile phone from his Saturday evening mates, after having been enticed to the *Associação* by his grandfather's promise of a nice evening of Cape Verdean music and food: "This is just a bunch of old folks. I wish I could join you but I'm stuck in here with my grandfather".

The Portuguese Cape Verdean descendants live in a different new world. For them the Cape Verdean facet of their parents and grandparents is like an old-fashioned idiosyncrasy related to a past time they have not experienced and of which they do not have the slightest memory. Portuguese postcolonial society has lost its system of regional clusters of identity, in which Cape Verde played a part. The Portuguese Cape Verdean descendants belong to the lot of the middle class, in which what counts is the job one has got, the house and the brand of one's car, but not the homeland of one's parents. This is especially true for those who do not bear any social markers, such as physical traits and strange accents, which might distinguish them from the mainstream.

However, despite the elite's descendants being invisible in terms of their social and cultural identity, there are cases in which the children and grandchildren of Portuguese Cape Verdeans once turned adults, have become interested in knowing more about Cape Verde and 'their' Cape Verdean origins, which are frequently rooted in the birthplace of a parent or grandparent. Sometimes a son or a daughter becomes interested in his or her origins and begins to ask questions.

In some cases a honeymoon has served as an excuse to spend time in Cape Verde digging out the family tree. However, these instances do not represent enough evidence to prove the 'sociological rule' which says that the third generation usually digs out what the first has buried. Lisón-Tolosana (1966:170-201), in his study about a small rural town in the province of Aragon, in Spain, shows in exemplary fashion how the worldview and social manners change from one generation to the next. In his analysis of what he called the 'declining', 'controlling' and 'emerging' generations of Belmonte de los Caballeros (the fictitious name for what was then a small Aragonese town), he explains how one generation, after the other, incorporate new ways and manners appropriate to their own time and repudiates the worldview and ways of the previous generation:

Generations succeed others, and in their turn meet and struggle with new situations. Each new situation is seen and experienced from a different angle by the contemporaneous generations and a single event holds very different significance for each one of them(...). Markedly distinct situations produce new generations with partially distinct sensibilities and interpretations of life. This freshness of ideas and attitudes is the prelude to a change in the social life (Lisón-Tolosana 1966: 200).

If in the case of the small Aragonese town described by Lisón-Tolosana

the changes were brought by the economic development occurred after the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War, in the case of the Portuguese Cape Verdeans the driving force was the end of Portuguese colonialism. The mental setting of the colonial time became no longer adjusted to the social necessities of the offspring of the old colonial Portuguese Cape Verdeans. The 'emerging' generation had to discard the old values of their parents and assimilate the new ones of the postcolonial era.

4.8. Conclusion

The Portuguese Cape Verdeans are part of the so-called 'Cape Verdean community' in Portugal. The majority of them represent the old colonial elite disempowered by the independence of the colonies and the Portuguese revolution of the 25th April 1974. Having had to flee from the colonies to the metropole as *retornados* (returnees), they used their capital of Portugueseness to achieve integration within postcolonial metropolitan society. This integration was facilitated by their excellent command of Portuguese language and culture, which distanced them from the image of 'Africaness' and 'indigenusness' associated with the African colonies in the minds of metropolitans. Since most of them are 'white' or 'light mulatto' they have not faced the 'racial' prejudice that affected others with darker phenotypes also 'returning' from the colonies.

The role of the Portuguese Cape Verdean colonial elite is comparable to some extent to other colonial elites and middleman minorities, such as the Macaoese during the Portuguese rule in Macao, the Parsis during the British rule in India, the French *pieds-noirs* during the French rule in North Africa, or the Asian middleman minorities in colonial Uganda and Kenya. All these

intermediary elites were at the service of colonialism and have suffered the political turmoil of the independences.

Unlike the Parsis who have had to stay in postcolonial India in a position of weakness, rejected by the British and refused by India's mainstream society, the Cape Verde-born Portuguese were able to 'return' right to the centre of their Portuguese homeland when the empire collapsed, keeping the positive aspects of their Cape Verdean identity as an appendix of their global Portuguese identity.

They kept only the folkloric and non-conflicting aspects of their Cape Verdean identity, which they enact through a club they founded in the mid-1980s. Despite claiming to be part of the Cape Verdean community in Portugal along with the mass of Cape Verdean immigrants, a status they saw recognised by the Portuguese government and the municipality of Lisbon, they have no contact with the world of the shantytowns and council housing where most Cape Verdean immigrants live. These immigrants, in turn, either do not know about these Portuguese Cape Verdeans or, when they know, they see them as Portuguese and not as Cape Verdean. This is due in part to social barriers of class reinforced by the remains of the old colonial ideology of 'race' through which 'white' is equated with 'Portuguese' and 'mulatto' and 'black' with African. Yet, those Portuguese Cape Verdeans with darker complexions were able to attenuate the effects of racial prejudice by way of their relatively high level of education and professional skills.

Many of the Portuguese Cape Verdeans married with Portuguese metropolitan women. This became the rule among second- and third-generation descendants, and not only eased integration as it contributed to their integration in the postcolonial mainstream. It seems that this particular form of Cape

Verdean identity, closely related to the role that the archipelago of Cape Verde played as an intermediary between the metropole and the colonies, will end when the last member of the *Associação* closes the door behind.

5. The Cape Verdean Labour Migrants

– I think most of the Cape Verdean children's problems in my generation were related to dwelling in Cape Verdean dominated neighbourhoods. Had I been to a school full of Cape Verdeans I would never have made it to the university.

(Second-generation Cape Verdean, male, 25 years)

5.1. Introduction

The major part of the so-called 'Cape Verdean Community' in Portugal consists of mulatto and black immigrants who have been arriving since the 1960s. Most of them are *badiu* Cape Verdeans who have come from the island of Santiago. In contrast with the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite, these immigrants have not become invisible in postcolonial society but have instead gained a visibility that they have never experienced in Cape Verde.

A conjunction of 'race', 'class' and 'culture' has worked to ghettoise and corner the Cape Verdean immigrants into the social world of shantytowns, and, lately, into the council housings and the now run-down suburbs increasingly deserted by Portuguese lower class families. It is these immigrants that the white mainstream society has in mind when it comes to the social image of the 'Cape Verdean community'. In the eyes of the white mainstream they are 'Cape Verdean', 'black', or 'African', but never 'Portuguese'. This holds true not only for first generation immigrants but also for most second- and third-generation descendants, who, despite being born in Portugal, and being Portuguese nationals in many cases, continue to be seen as Africans.

The fact that they are seen by the white mainstream as Africans makes their integration more difficult, for they see in their skin colour the reason for the rejection by the Portuguese and tend to interpret their relation to the mainstream

as a racial one. This in turn pushes them to develop an oppositional African identity, and to deny the values that they associate with the white middle-class, represented mostly by the white families who live in the surroundings of their *bairros*.

5.2. The beginnings

The migration of a mulatto and black Cape Verdean labour force to Lisbon began while Cape Verde was still a colony and Portugal was seen as the metropole. It was during the period that Carreira (1982:74) defined as the 'third phase' of Cape Verdean emigration that the Portuguese metropole became an important destination to the Cape Verdeans. The 'third phase', which Carreira also termed 'the great exodus', occurred between 1946 and 1973, a period during which Cape Verdean emigration oriented towards Europe, due to the highly restrictive quota immigration policy adopted by the U.S. between 1924 and 1965⁶⁸.

The Cape Verdeans began to migrate mostly to Portugal (internal migration since Cape Verde was part of Portugal), France, Netherlands, Belgium, Luxemburg, and Italy. Most of this migration was illegal, and the migrants who had primary education and some qualification headed to the most developed countries in Europe, where they could find better jobs and better wages than in the metropole. Some would come to Lisbon, where they stayed for some weeks or months, heading then to other countries in Europe. Portugal was

⁶⁸ With regard to the U.S immigration policy in the twentieth century see Joppke (1999:23-61). After the quota system was implemented, the Cape Verdeans had to enter under Portugal's quota, which was set at 438 immigrants per year, according to the proportion of the immigration stocks by country as described in the 1920 census (the numbers per country are quoted in the New York Times, 24 July, 1963, 12). One should say however that the huge majority of the Cape Verdeans who ever entered the U.S. did it illegally.

the most likely destination for illiterate and unqualified peasants coming from the rural hinterland, mainly from the island of Santiago.

Until as late as the early 1970s, the Portuguese government was not in favour of Cape Verdeans leaving the archipelago other than to the plantations of São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, and Mozambique, where they worked as *contratados* (indentured labourers) in very hard conditions. Salazar's government first and then Caetano's were afraid of admitting publicly that the situation in Cape Verde was bleak.

The lack of political will to promote the necessary infrastructural investments led to the worsening of the situation in the archipelago in the 1960s. Allowing Cape Verdean emigration would be, in their eyes, to admit that there were problems in the archipelago. Indentureship to the plantations was used by the colonial authorities in Cape Verde both as an escape valve to ease the tension caused by the death toll in times of drought and famine, which in some islands could take as much as half of the population, and as a way to satisfy the interests of local labour contractors and the plantation owners in São Tomé and the other colonies. The flux of indentured labour to the plantations of the 'southern colonies' started in the mid-1800s and lasted until the early 1970s, constituting a movement of forced migration in which the Cape Verdeans could choose between death by starvation in their homeland and death by overworking in the plantations⁶⁹.

When the opportunity to migrate to the metropole came about it was seen as a promising one compared to the hell of the plantations in the 'southern colonies'. According to an elderly Portuguese Cape Verdean informant, it was in

⁶⁹ For a good description of the overall historical process of Cape Verdean indentureship to the plantations in São Tomé and Príncipe see Carreira (1982:101-184).

the 1940s that the first Cape Verdean workers came to the metropole, to work for the municipality of Lisbon as street sweepers, gardeners and other similar occupations. But this small number of workers, sent off occasionally by the Cape Verdean colonial authorities in order to ease the consequences of famine in some of the islands, cannot be seen as the beginning of Cape Verdean migration to Portugal. This only began in the 1960s, when some Portuguese construction industry companies got contracts to build some of the public infrastructures in the archipelago, such as electrification, a plant for desalination of sea water, public fountains, roads, airfields, and docks. These companies began then to pick out the best workers and offer them employment in the metropole. These workers, once settled, passed word to other *patrícios* in the homeland when more workers were needed. This 'word of mouth' chain migration started in the 1960s and the number of immigrants rapidly increased, reaching its first peak in the early 1970s.

Without delving too much in the discussion of what are the causes of international migration and which theory explains best the Cape Verdean case, it seems nonetheless important to explain briefly what seem to be the most likely reasons why the Cape Verdean migration to the metropole only began in the 1960s and not before. Much of the discussion about migration revolves around the question of which factors play the most important role. One of the most commonly held approaches is that of the 'push-and-pull theory'⁷⁰, and in the case of the Cape Verdean immigration to Portugal it seems clear that it was a combination of both 'push' and 'pull' factors. The same combination that worked in the case of the Caribbean migration to Britain after the Second World

⁷⁰ For a critique of this theory see Portes & Böröcz (1989).

War, though the 'push' factor in the Caribbean islands was not as strong as in Cape Verde. According to Peach (1968:92), the Caribbean migration was not caused by local poverty, but by an increase in British labour demand after the Second World War. Whereas Caribbean migration took place at a time when the local conditions were improving, Cape Verdean migration occurred against a background of drought and famine. So, the 'push' factor played a more important role in Cape Verde than in the Caribbean.

The 'push' factor has always been present in Cape Verde under the form of famines, common practically until the early 1970s. The 'pull' factor in the metropole has only become significant in the 1960s, the time when Portugal began to experience considerable economic growth and industrialisation, as well as a growing urbanisation⁷¹. In the late 1950s European industrialised countries such as France, Germany, Belgium and Luxembourg began to attract Portuguese unskilled labour to the construction industry, cleaning, food catering and similar services.

Part of the Portuguese peasantry who was being drawn to the urban littoral until the 1950s and 1960s began to make for those countries, where they were offered better wages and better working conditions. Therefore, the Cape Verdeans came to Portugal as a replacement for Portuguese labour. There was a swapping of labour force going on in Portugal: the Portuguese workers were heading to Europe, while the Cape Verdeans were heading to the metropole. As Carreira says: "they were workforces of the same kind, both containing a high percentage of illiterates, and differentiated only by their skin colour" (1982:83).

Whereas at the end of 1962 there lived in France 70,000 Portuguese

⁷¹ For a detailed description of the development process underwent by Portugal since the 1960s see Barreto & Preto (1996).

immigrants, in the beginning of 1972 there lived about 750,000 (Barata 1975:39). In 1972, and according to German statistics, there lived in Germany about 69,000 Portuguese 'guest-workers'. Between 1950 and 1968, more than 900,000 people left Portugal to other European countries (Barata 1970:16). The demographic balance between 1961 and 1970 was negative by more than 1 million people. For the quinquennium (1966-70) the negative balance has been about 700,000 people, which almost doubled the 400,000 of the previous quinquennium (1961-65). Shortly before, in the period of 1950-57, more than 90 per cent of the Portuguese legal migration oriented to outside Europe. So, it was this statistically significant outflow of Portuguese labour force that created, in large measure, the conditions for the inflow of Cape Verdean migrants.

Gathering from Carreira's figures (1977:125-6) one can see that between 1900 and 1952 the number of Cape Verdeans who left Cape Verde for the metropole or the Atlantic islands of Azores, and Madeira, was only about 8,500, which is less than the 9,920 registered in the year 1971 (1972 was the peak year with 14,375). If we sum up the years between 1955 and 1973, the total number of Cape Verdeans who entered the metropole is about 87,000. Of course, not all these people were migrants; some were students, some transients to other destinations, others sojourners for short periods. It is not possible to know how many of the whole figure that Carreira gives were labour migrants. In the years after the independence of Cape Verde, the number of Cape Verdean immigrants in Portugal continued to grow steadily.

5.3. The first generation

The first Cape Verdeans who migrated to the Portuguese metropole did so to work in the construction industry and in public works. In the 1960s, the Portuguese economy was growing and its infrastructures were expanding. The Cape Verdeans were employed in the construction of the underground, roads, digging the ditches for electricity and telephone cables, and in the construction of housing in the suburbs of Lisbon. Some of my Cape Verdean elderly informants, who have worked as builders, use to say that Amadora, a satellite town located in the suburbs of Lisbon and emerged from what was forty years ago a small village, was built up by Cape Verdeans. The main employers of Cape Verdean labour were J. Pimenta, Pereira da Costa, and Pinto & Bentes, and the dockyards of the Margueira, but other less known contractors also employed Cape Verdean immigrants. J. Pimenta was responsible for the construction of Reboleira Sul, several quarters of high-rises for middle-class dwellers, which are incorporated in what is now called the city of Amadora. Pinto & Bentes employed Cape Verdeans to do the hard work of digging the ditches for water pipes and telephone cables, at a time when fewer and fewer Portuguese workers were willing to accept such hard work.

The large majority of the Cape Verdean workers were black or dark mulatto. Many of them were illiterate and others had only incomplete elementary education. Most did not speak Portuguese and never learned it properly. After a few years they were able to understand Portuguese in the context of their work, but outside of it their command of Portuguese was very limited with many not being able to speak it. The fact that they were black and could not speak Portuguese slotted them into the stereotype that the Portuguese

had of what a black person would be: someone who lived in the bush of Africa, unmannered, unreligious and to be mocked. Instead of being seen as ‘uncultured peasants’, the Cape Verdeans were seen as ‘uncultured blacks’. Many of them were not indeed familiar with all the gadgets that Portuguese metropolitan society could offer them, such as the small portable radio set, the kerosene cooker (later replaced with the gas stove), and the gas lamp, which represented some of the major achievements for the first Cape Verdean immigrants.

In Ribeirão Chiqueiro [Santiago Island] I had never seen a gas cooker or a kerosene lamp, let alone electricity. We did the cooking in a wood-burning stove and used lamps fuelled with the oil of *purgueira*⁷² for lighting. I was really astonished when I first saw a radio set soon after arriving, and was even more astonished when years later I saw a TV set flashing out from a shop-window (Cape Verdean, male, 65 years).

This informant is just an example of the many who came during the 1960s. For Cape Verdeans like him coming to the metropole represented a baffling experience full of surprises. In their homeland, most of them lived in small villages or hamlets and had never seen houses made of cement, roads covered with tar, railways, trains or cars. They had to learn the lot of ways essential to life in an urban context, including the judicious use of money.

The first immigrants were single men or men who had left their families in Cape Verde. They lived in barracks provided by their employers in the construction sites. Those willing to spend money on accommodation could rent a room in run-down boarding houses, but many would rather save the money and send it home. They could also find a room in private accommodation supplied by urban Portuguese lower-class families. These were more receptive to those

⁷² *Purgueira* is an oleaginous plant whose oil was used in illumination and for making soap.

Cape Verdean immigrants who adapted more easily to the Portuguese ways.

In the early 1970s, the large increase in the number of Cape Verdean arrivals led the Portuguese authorities to set up a department to deal with the situation. It was the *Centro de Apoio aos Trabalhadores Ultramarinos* (CATU) (Aid Centre for Overseas Workers). The word 'overseas' meant in fact Cape Verdeans, for they were by far the majority of the labour force coming from the colonies to the metropole at the time. The Portuguese regime did not want to admit that the large influx of Cape Verdean migrants was in part due to the abandonment to which the archipelago had been susceptible for decades. Although the influx of Cape Verdeans has never been comparable to that of the Caribbeans to Britain or the U.S. in the post-Second World War period, it was very significant since Portugal had never received so many 'foreigners' in so short a period of time, with the exception perhaps of the Second World War movement of refugees escaping nazism.

According to figures compiled by Carreira (1982:89), between 1969 and 1973 some 11,000 workers seeking employment either in the metropole or the other colonies registered with the CATU. However, these figures are far below the actual number of Cape Verdeans arriving in Lisbon in search of work at the time. According to Carreira (1982:89), at the time he was gathering his figures, in 1976, there were about 30,000 Cape Verdeans in Portugal, a far higher number than the 5,539 workers registered with the CATU. The press, alarmist as ever, claimed in the mid-1970s that the number of Cape Verdeans could be as high as 200,000. A number that one can easily dismiss since it almost matched the 272,000 Cape Verdeans living in the archipelago according to the 1970 census. As Carreira ironically says, referring to a particular report, "the author of

the report must have included in his 200,000 figure all the Cape Verdeans who had ever been to Portugal over the centuries” (1982:90).

The vast majority of the Cape Verdean workers stayed in Lisbon and the nearby municipalities of Amadora, Sintra, Oeiras, and Almada, where the labour demand was higher than elsewhere in the country, but some headed to the Algarve, where the construction industry was beginning to take off alongside with tourism. At first, the Cape Verdean workers were not welcome in the Algarve, where people were even less used to seeing black people around. Information gathered in the district of Faro by the CATU at the time shows that the Cape Verdean workers experienced problems in getting accepted by the local population, as well as by their employers.

[The] integration [of the Cape Verdean worker] in this district [Faro] was not easy, there having been many firms which, although they had to contend with a shortage of labour in the construction industry, would not take Cape Verdeans, alleging that they were unstable and caused trouble during and after work (Carreira 1982:91, citing a report of the CATU).

In general, the Cape Verdeans faced the same troubles in Lisbon and the Algarve. But in Lisbon their number was about eight times greater. According to the reports of the CATU cited by Carreira (1982:91-3), the Cape Verdean workers tended to live apart from their Portuguese co-workers, mainly in shacks built with materials provided by their employers and with their own work. Sometimes, they built their own quarters on waste lands, or else rented accommodation from the locals. But renting was rare at the beginning because the locals were reluctant toward ‘blacks’.

According to estimates from the Cape Verdean embassy in Lisbon (1999:61), there are about 5,000 Cape Verdeans in the Algarve. Yet, for the

Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) (Service of Foreigners and Frontiers) in 1998 there were 2,733 Cape Verdean residents in the Algarve. If we take into account undocumented Cape Verdeans and second-generation Cape Verdeans with Portuguese nationality, the number may be closer to the 5,000 given by the embassy. Nonetheless, the Cape Verdeans of Algarve are just a tiny part of the Cape Verdeans estimated to live in Portugal. Estimates vary between about 40,000 and 83,000, depending on the source.

Usually, the Portuguese authorities give the lower number while the Cape Verdean embassy or the Cape Verdean associations prefer the higher. While the Portuguese authorities are interested in minimising the number of undocumented immigrants, the Cape Verdean representatives are interested in inflating it in order to pressure the Portuguese authorities and ease the legalisation process.

According to SEF, in 1998 there were about 40,000 Cape Verdean residents in Portugal, but this figure takes only into account the Cape Verdean nationals who hold an authorisation of residence. However, the number of those who consider themselves Cape Verdeans is much higher than the number of Cape Verdean nationals. It includes Cape Verdean immigrants who have acquired Portuguese nationality but continue to identify themselves more as Cape Verdean than Portuguese, as well as second-generation Cape Verdeans who despite being Portuguese nationals identify as Cape Verdeans, not to speak of the difficulty in estimating the number of undocumented Cape Verdean immigrants. Additionally, there are the Portuguese Cape Verdeans described in the previous chapter, who do not exist statistically as Cape Verdeans, for they have always been Portuguese nationals and identify as Portuguese in the census.

As the number of Cape Verdean immigrants increased, they began to settle

in the shantytowns of Lisbon and neighbouring municipalities. Some stayed in rented rooms in some run-down areas of Lisbon that in some cases have become small Cape Verdean ghettos. Of the Cape Verdeans in inner-city rented accommodation some have good remembrances of their Portuguese landlords.

I lived in a rented bed in the house of a Portuguese family, in Benfica [Lisbon]. They were really nice and good people. They even let me share a room with their son. Usually, I left in the early morning and returned only in the evening, after all day long digging ditches for Pereira da Costa. In the evening I used to have tea with them. They treated me really well. I paid 500 escudos [2,5 euros] for the rent and a couple more for the laundry (Cape Verdean, male, 57 years).

But others have not so nice a remembrance:

I paid 350 escudos [1,75 euros] for a small room in Campo de Ourique [Lisbon]; it was more a cubicle than a room. A pair of sheets, a blanket, and a mattress filled with straw lying on an old iron bedstead. The bed linens were changed every fortnight. I was not allowed to use the kitchen or the toilet and had to do my bodily functions in a shack outside in the yard. I think they treated me like that because I was black and did not speak Portuguese, and they thought that where I came from people did not know how to live in houses. But I think that my life was not much different from the life of any Portuguese peasant newly arrived from the backwoods. (Cape Verdean, male, 52 years).

Although it is not possible to generalise about the experiences that Cape Verdean immigrants have had as tenants, it seems undoubted that 'race' played an important role. Their contact with Portuguese society was mainly with the lower classes, either as tenants or as workers. In the 1960s, *preto* was synonymous with 'turra' (terrorist or guerrilla fighter), for many metropolitans did not know much about the African colonies, except that they were originally populated by 'uncivilised blacks' to whom the Portuguese missionaries and colonisers had brought the lights of Christianity and civilisation. The guerrilla

movements were seen as the proof that 'blacks' were not to be trusted, since many metropolitans saw in them a sign of ingratitude on the part of the Africans. In some cases, black Cape Verdeans worked side by side with Portuguese who had been soldiers in the colonies and who, for that reason, were not very fond of 'blacks'. Being seen as 'treacherous' and 'ignorant', the black Cape Verdean workers were considered by their Portuguese co-workers, as well as by their landlords, as inferiors.

As well as in Portugal, in Britain the housing of black Caribbeans was also problematic, for if the Caribbean workforce was acceptable to perform the jobs that the British were not any longer willing to perform, the housing shortage made the Caribbean immigrants undesirable. On the one hand, they overcrowded houses because there were not sufficient landlords willing to accept blacks, on the other, they were refused by many landlords who feared 'coloured' overcrowding (Peach 1968:100). So the more they grew in number the more they concentrated and the more difficult it became for them to escape the logic of ethnic and racial enclosure. As Byron remarks:

[The] appalling housing conditions constituted a major challenge for Caribbean migrants (...). [And] as the prospects of an early return faded, migrants sought actively to improve their housing situation (1994:200).

5.3.1. Settling in the *bairros*

The Cape Verdean immigrants also suffered the social effects of overcrowding and concentration in certain areas. The housing conditions in Portugal were even worse than in Britain. Most of the Cape Verdean immigrants, after leaving the shacks that their employers had put up for them, began to accommodate themselves in *bairros clandestinos* (unlicensed construction), put up by

Portuguese internal migrants in the 1950s. The reasons why the Cape Verdeans began moving to shantytowns are various and not necessarily related to the scarcity of rental accommodation accessible to their income or to the racism of landlords. It was also because they could more easily stay together in shantytowns than in rented accommodation, where they had to be dispersed. Not only was accommodation in shantytowns free of charge (once they built their own shack), but they could more easily reproduce the cultural life and physical environment they had in Cape Verde.

Whereas in Britain the Caribbean immigrants occupied residential areas in which the white local population had been in decline after the Second World War, especially in London and Birmingham (Peach 1968:92), in Portugal the Cape Verdean immigrants did not have the corresponding neighbourhoods. In order to stay together in large numbers they had to move to shantytown neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods were started by Portuguese rural migrants who had been attracted by the urban development of the 1950s and 1960s and driven out of the fields by the progressive modernisation of Portuguese agriculture, which relied less and less on labour. The use of tractors and combine harvesters made most of the peasantry redundant, originating migration to other countries, and to Lisbon and other coastal areas. There was also a minority of gipsies in the shantytowns, usually clustered together in separate quarters because of their being mistrusted by the remainder of shantytown dwellers and because of their own interest in staying apart. It was these urban 'minorities' that the first Cape Verdean immigrants had to live with.

Most of the first Cape Verdean immigrants did not speak Portuguese and a good many could not even understand it properly. Without the protective social

environment of shantytown neighbourhoods life would have been much more difficult for them. As they ended up by living in shantytowns where they were the majority, they could easily reproduce a cultural and environmental setting close to the one they had in Cape Verde. And so they did not need to speak or act as Portuguese. In fact, they were the majority in most of the shantytowns where they lived and acted in the way majorities act, setting the pace. The other dwellers who lived close quarters with them had to adapt to the Cape Verdean way and not the other way around. This point is well illustrated in the following and relatively common situation described by a Portuguese shantytown dweller:

I was brought up amongst blacks [Cape Verdeans]. Most of my mates were black and I learned Creole from childhood, for it was the language heard in the *bairro*. The fact that I was Portuguese [white] did not make any difference, for we ganged up as being from the Pedreira [his neighbourhood's name]. The only ones who stayed apart were the gipsies; neither Portuguese nor blacks mingled with them. The black children of Pedreira would support me in a fight against children from Gato Preto [a rival neighbourhood], it did not matter whether they were Portuguese or black, as long as they were from a different neighbourhood we would stick together. Race did not matter to us. For example, when we played soccer against other neighbourhoods and things went wrong, we sided together and chased them all independently of skin-colour. Sometimes the blacks called me *dego* [Portuguese] just to tease me, but I replied calling them black, and so things were even. Despite mocking each other about race, we were never angry about it. It was just the usual teasing between children who share the same neighbourhood (Portuguese, male, 25 years).

As in the case of other migration fluxes, in its beginning Cape Verdean migration to the metropole was mainly of single or married men who left their families behind on the islands. The women only started to come a few years later when the men had already guaranteed their living and had good prospects that they were going to stay for a longer while than they had thought at first. As they moved into shantytowns, the problem of accommodating the women and other

family members waiting in Cape Verde disappeared, since they could always add an annexe to the shack they lived in or build a new one. However, not all the Cape Verdean immigrant workers moved into shantytowns, a small number of men and families managed to get housing in urban and suburban quarters, usually in the more run-down areas. Some of these families occupied rooms, sometimes an entire floor in the boroughs of Campo de Ourique, Estrela, and São Bento, areas which are now going through a process of gentrification.

5.3.2. The men: ‘good workers but quarrelsome’

The overwhelming majority of the first Cape Verdean immigrants were men and worked in the construction industry, in the shipyards of *Margueira*, and the whole industrial complex located on the south bank of the Tagus River. The construction of some of the largest infrastructures in the 1960s and 1970s employed a large number of Cape Verdeans. The first underground network, some of the largest hotels in Lisbon, Estoril and Cascais, as well as the main suburbs of Lisbon, nowadays turned into cities larger than Lisbon itself, not to speak of the whole networks of water supply, electricity and telephone woven and buried in deep soil, were in large measure the work of Cape Verdeans.

The early Cape Verdean immigrants rapidly built up a reputation as good workers, but quarrelsome. The harsh life in the islands prepared them for the hard work in the construction industry. They were used to working hard and long hours, frequently for no yields. Their quarrelsomeness and perseverance derived from the traditional rural values they lived under in Cape Verde, which were, in many respects, similar to those of the Portuguese peasantry: hardworking, honesty, honour and pride for the family name. Among working

class people language usually considered offensive loses its offensiveness in the context of work camaraderie. For example, workers call each other displeasing names, such as *filho da puta* (son of a bitch) or *cabrão* (cuckold), but no one takes it too seriously. But when Cape Verdeans were involved things turned differently; often, the remarks were taken too seriously and fights burst out between Cape Verdean and Portuguese workers. As the Cape Verdeans were used to carrying around a knife, which along with the hoe constituted the main tools they used in Cape Verde in their agricultural work, the fights often ended with stab wounds or even death.

Therefore, the reputation that the black *badiu* Cape Verdean had on the islands, as rough and rowdy, and as someone who always carried some kind of blade, accompanied the Cape Verdean immigrant worker to the metropole. The newspapers did the rest making headlines each time a Cape Verdean was involved in a stabbing incident. Nonetheless, the stabbing incidents were mostly between the Cape Verdeans themselves. Frequently, the motive was disputes over women, adultery cases, or about property. Most of the stabbing incidents involved only Cape Verdeans.

In the early 1970s, the black Cape Verdean immigrants had already a strong reputation as treacherous knife handlers. In a certain way, they inherited the reputation that gypsies had had in the past. It was what João Lopes Filho (1995:75) has called the 'knife stigma', by which the Cape Verdeans became associated with the kind of violence that Portuguese mainstream society feared the most: that of stabbing. Whereas the gypsies' violence was associated with shooting, the Cape Verdeans' was associated with knifing.

The reports produced on behalf of the CATU in the early 1970s referred

problems of integration on the part of the Cape Verdean workers, which in part were seen as the result of their inadequate behaviour. They were said to be kept apart by their white co-workers due to their hot-bloodedness and susceptibility (Carreira 1982:92). However, this reputation was more a myth propelled in the media and for the consumption of those who in the white mainstream did not have any contact with the Cape Verdeans.

Among their white co-workers, the Cape Verdeans had a reputation of good workers but who should stay away from drinking. I cannot say whether the Cape Verdeans had more drinking problems than the workers in general, but the fact is that drinking has been the main cause of disgrace for some of the families I came to know during my fieldwork. It is also true that many violent episodes among the Cape Verdeans were fuelled by drinking, as happens with people in general. In the words of a Portuguese worker who during his working life has had many Cape Verdean workmates:

The Cape Verdeans are hardworking and honest people. They are the best of all the blacks who came from the colonies. The Cape Verdean is a friend of his friend. Once you become friends you can count on them for anything. I had Cape Verdean workmates who would sacrifice their sending of savings to their family in Cape Verde if they knew that I was in need of money. When I look back I realise that I could get from them what I could not get from Portuguese mates. Only when they indulged in hard drinking did they lose their footing and fell in disgrace. One of my Cape Verdean mates began to drink heavily and one day arrived in his shack and stabbed his wife, almost killing her, for he had thoughts that she was two-timing him with a fellow countryman. He was convicted and spent some years in jail, and when he was set free he never got his bearings again and ended up miserably (Portuguese worker, 65).

The above transcription illustrates a commonly held opinion about the first Cape Verdean immigrant workers by those who worked or were put in direct contact with them. Nonetheless, I have found different and more negative

opinions about the Cape Verdean temperament, as in the following case:

Although good workers, the Cape Verdeans were treacherous and vindictive. Most of them could not easily follow a conversation in Portuguese and sometimes misinterpreted our jokes about them. If a Cape Verdean thought that you were insulting him or his family, even if it was just teasing, he would react violently, often using a blade. Blacks were vindictive and one had to watch out and not tease them too much, otherwise there would be trouble (Portuguese worker, 68).

The perception of the Cape Verdean worker as potentially vengeful and inclined to violence when challenged by bad language referring to him or his family is also common among the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite described in the previous chapter. Some members of the Portuguese Cape Verdean elite explain the hot-blooded nature of the Cape Verdean worker with the code of honour and shame in force in the rural society of the islands. The social code governing the use of language in Cape Verde was still as strict as it had been in Portuguese rural society a few decades before the Cape Verdeans had begun emigrating to the metropole. Some words and expressions that the Cape Verdeans still found offensive were no longer interpreted as such in the metropole of the 1960s and 1970s.

Despite the contribution of the media to a certain construction of the Cape Verdean as a resentful and violent person, the fact seems to be that for most people in the white mainstream society the Cape Verdeans continued to be ignored as a separate category. They belonged to the larger category of 'blacks' or 'Africans'; words that most metropolitans used interchangeably referring to people who were too dark to be perceived as white. Moreover, as referred earlier, the white mainstream society did not have direct contact with the Cape Verdean community, which is mainly circumscribed to shantytowns. So, the

scope of the image of the Cape Verdean as hot-blooded and violent was rather limited to the social spheres of work interaction and the shantytowns where they lived. It was only in the 1980s and 1990s that the media contributed to a more widely diffused image of the Cape Verdeans (and the Africans in general) as the bearers of a culture of marginality, violence and crime.

To a certain extent, the Cape Verdeans have a similar image to that of the Jamaicans in Britain, where the media use the word 'Yardies' referring to black Jamaicans who are involved in drug-dealing and other illicit activities. Although the Cape Verdeans are not depicted as notoriously as the 'Yardies' in Britain, they tend to represent a similar role in the white mainstream imaginary construction of marginality. Nonetheless, this image is mostly about second and third generation descendants.

If the first Cape Verdean immigrants were mainly single men, or men who had left their women and children behind on the islands, as soon as they felt secure enough they sent for the women and children. In the shantytown neighbourhoods, men, women and children forming whole families were able to reproduce a social world quite similar to that of the islands, based on the speaking of Creole and everything else Cape Verdean they were able to reproduce.

5.3.3. The women: from peddling to cleaning

Whereas there was a strong demand for male labour in the construction industry, one cannot say there was a specific demand for Cape Verdean female labour in any particular sector of the Portuguese economy. During the first years of Cape Verdean immigration it was mainly the men who came, but as the Cape

Verdeans began moving into shantytowns the women started to join the men, especially in the 1970s and 1980s. The women in Cape Verde did agricultural and domestic work, as was customary in any rural society. In Portugal they began peddling fish in the streets or pulling crates of fish in the wholesale markets of Lisbon (as for instance the *Doca Pesca*). In the 1970s and 1980s the demand for domestic services was not as high as it turned to be in the 1990s, for most middle class families could not yet afford to pay a maid or a cleaner. The few middle class families that could afford a maid relied on Portuguese women from the urban lower class originated from the rural exodus of the 1950s and 1960s.

In the beginning, the Cape Verdean women worked in the *arrasto*⁷³, of wooden crates of fish sold to retailers in the wholesale markets of Lisbon. Once the deal is made, the buyer has to carry the crates to his lorry or van, and that is when the women come in as *arrastas* dragging the crates to the trolleys and wheeling them to the parking lot where the lorries and vans are waiting to be loaded. Nowadays, the women are paid about 25 centimes (about 15 pence) per crate, but in the early 1970s they were paid 1 escudo per crate (half a centime or fifty times less).

Some of these Cape Verdean women began bidding for their own fish in the wholesale market, which they then peddled at strategic locations, such as bus and train terminals. They walked miles from the market to the strategic places where they peddled their fish to buyers with the least purchasing power, such as the elderly and retired, as well as their own Cape Verdean country fellows. In

⁷³ In the wholesale fish market, the *arrastas* are the workers (mostly women) who drag the wooden crates of fish from the market to the lorries and vans that will carry it away to the retail markets. *Arrasta* comes from *arrastar*, which means 'to drag'.

their activity, they competed with the traditional Portuguese *varinas*⁷⁴, who at the time were already on the wane, due to the imposition of vending stalls by the municipal authority. As the number of Cape Verdean women involved in the peddling of fish increased some Cape Verdean men began to organise their transportation to the vending places. Some men, usually those with primary education, got driving licences and bought second-hand vans, which they used to transport the women and their fish load.

As Fikes (1998) has observed, the vending of fish empowered the Cape Verdean women vis-à-vis the men, whose wages in the construction industry did not match the money that their wives could make by peddling fish. With the integration of Portugal in the E.U. (then EEC), in 1986, the undocumented peddling became subject of tighter control by police and municipal officers. In the 1980s, a municipal police force was created to deal in particular with illegal vending and other similar municipal urban affairs. Directives issued by the E.U. made more difficult the selling of fish in the streets without the necessary sanitary requisites. Also, as the traditional *varinas* adapted to the vending at market stalls and covered markets made available by the municipalities in exchange for an affordable fee, the peddling of the Cape Verdean women became less and less acceptable. In the 1990s, most of the Cape Verdean women had to give up the peddling of fish and turn to cleaning. Only the few who had accumulated enough capital to rent or buy vending places in the newly created facilities were able to stay in business. However, sometimes it was the men who began to sell in the stalls. As in the case below:

⁷⁴ The *varinas* (fishmongers) were women who peddled from door to door, carrying fish in large and low-brimmed baskets, which they carried on a cloth ring on top of their heads in order to get the load balanced. These women were also named *peixeiras*, and were noticed for their loud cries announcing the content of their baskets, as well as for their ready use of strong-language.

I came to the metropole in 1970, at the age of twelve. My father had come first and then sent for me and my brother, and later for my mother. We did not have the money or the conditions to come all together. I had to sleep in a barrack at my father's workplace. Later we moved into a boarding house that received mainly Cape Verdeans. I began working with my father in the construction industry, but as I grew up I moved into the *Doca Pesca* working as a dockworker, unloading fish from the ships to the freezers. For eighteen years I worked there, then I broke a leg and was forced to retire. After retiring I set up a small fish-shop in *bairro* Santos Martas [the neighbourhood he lived in], but I was not successful. Finally, I got two stalls in the covered market of Buraca [within the municipality of Amadora], where I have been for the last two years. In the beginning there was little clientele, but now it is okay. I knew a lot of black fellows in the *bairro* Zambujal [a close by neighbourhood], and they all now buy from me. Lately, some white ladies have also been buying from me. I do not complain; there is no other trade wherein I could make a better living (Cape Verdean, male, 44 years).

Although the informant above initially intended to dedicate himself to the transportation of the *peixeiras* from the wholesale market to their vending spots, in the end he opted for doing himself the selling, for he realised that there was much more money to be made in the selling than in the transporting. Nevertheless, the selling of fish is mainly a woman's business and cases like the above are rare.

The two main activities for the first Cape Verdean immigrants were the construction industry for men and the *arrasto* and peddling of fish for women. As the women earned more money than the men there was a subversion of what was the traditional role of men in Cape Verde. With a stable and reliable income of their own, the women were not as willing to stand problematic and lazy men in Portugal as they were in Cape Verde. Hence, the already fragile Cape Verdean family was even further strained by the growing tension between the women's and the men's interests. Many women became successful breadwinners, dispensing with the presence of a man in the household. They prefer to be left

alone with their children than having to share a livelihood with an unreliable man. The Cape Verdean men easily abandon their household, leaving the women alone with the responsibility of providing for themselves and the children. It is common for a woman to have several children from different men and to have to provide alone for the household. The selling of fish allowed Cape Verdean women a much larger freedom to stay on their own and men a less powerful position within the household.

From the mid-1980s, as the unlicensed peddling of fish in the streets became more and more difficult, the Cape Verdean women began moving into the janitorial and domestic cleaning services. This was possible due to the large suburban expansion of Lisbon metropolitan area, which saw the emergence of a larger middle and upper class, which in turn increased the demand for cleaning and other domestic services.

With the significant economic growth of the country from 1986 onward, the time when Portugal began to benefit from the E.U. funding, a significant number of suburban families could now afford maids and cleaners. This provided working opportunities for 'African' women in general and Cape Verdeans in particular, who are preferred to Angolans, Guineans and the rest of the 'Africans'. As one elite Portuguese Cape Verdean female informant put it, "there was a time, not long ago, when it was fashionable to have a Cape Verdean daily cleaner or an ironing-maid, a *pretinha* [little black] as they say". The Cape Verdean cleaners and maids seemed to be preferred to other 'African' women due to their image of being hardworking, a situation similar to that of the Cape Verdean men earlier in the construction industry.

In the 1990s, the anthropologist Kesha Fikes did fieldwork among *badia*⁷⁵ women who peddled fish in the streets of Lisbon. According to her, there is a “national racialised public conflict” (Fikes 2000:6) between the Portuguese state and the black *badia peixeiras*, through which the Portuguese white mainstream society was trying to disempower the black Cape Verdean women, preventing them from peddling in the streets and consequently throwing them into *limpeza* (cleaning services). Fikes’ argument is that:

Though working-poor, urban and rural white women remain active in the domestic labour force, still constituting its majority, domestic servitude and white womanhood are not functioning as signs of each other, at least not in the waged, professional sense. Black womanhood, however, is discursively linked to the idea of domestic servitude, and this study is an inquiry into its production (2000:2).

An idea she had expressed earlier on:

In considering the significance of Portuguese demographic and economic transformations, coupled with homogenizing representations that ‘sensibilize’ links between black femininity and *limpeza*, this paper asserts that the racialization of *limpeza* is a process integral to Portugal’s new image as a developed society and contributing partner to the European Economic Community (1998:7).

For Fikes, it is as if there were a sort of national racial conspiracy aimed at cornering black Cape Verdean women in the janitorial and cleaning services, which, according to her, are seen by the white postcolonial mainstream as the proper trades for black women. Furthermore, according to her, the police played an important part in the process since its persecutory actions were biased against the black *peixeiras*, while at the same time they were shutting their eyes to the

⁷⁵ *Badia* are the women who originated from the island of Santiago. Most of them are black or very dark-skinned, which makes them more likely to be targeted by the racism of metropolitans and light-skinned Cape Verdeans.

white vendors peddling clothes, flowers, bric-a-brac and such, as well as to the white *peixeiras*. If it is true that police action was biased against the black *peixeiras* for a lot of reasons, of which some were pointed out by Fikes herself, it is more difficult to believe that the police action was part of a social conspiracy of a racial nature in order to make black women fit their 'proper' place within the white mainstream society.

What Fikes seems to ignore is that the main reasons why the Cape Verdean women have moved from peddling fish to cleaning are to be found in the dynamics of the job market, which only recently created the conditions for black women to enter the domestic and janitorial services. As Fikes recognizes, the supply of cleaning and other domestic services has been mainly of Portuguese women, but these are becoming more and more scarce due to two main reasons. First, the Portuguese women of the urban lower classes who supplied the cleaning and other domestic services are moving up more and more to other jobs available in the services sector, such as sales, sales assistance, cashiers, and so forth, in the many shopping malls which have sprouted in Lisbon and nearby areas.

The middle and upper classes complain that lower-class Portuguese women are no longer willing to do cleaning and other domestic services, which are now seen as much less prestigious than two or three decades ago. Portuguese women prefer to earn less behind a supermarket counter or as salesperson in a shopping mall than doing cleaning or playing the maid, which are more and more seen as the least prestigious jobs in the urban world. Furthermore, as the Portuguese female population got 'overqualified' by the extension of compulsory education, it is more and more difficult to find young women whose

education and expectations are compatible with janitorial work.

The African women, along with the newly arrived Eastern European women, are more and more the replacement force for the Portuguese female labour force drained from the rural world by internal migration, which is getting more and more scarce. The transition from peddling fish to the cleaning services represents to the black Cape Verdean women an upward movement in the social ladder, since the peddling of fish was already seen in the 1980s as one of the least prestigious activities, and the Portuguese *peixeiras* were disappearing off the streets and being replaced by the vendors on municipal markets with proper stalls and cold-storage rooms.

The black Cape Verdean women who peddle fish usually come from rural areas in their homeland, which makes it difficult for them to easily adapt to jobs in the services. They are mostly first-generation immigrants who in most cases can hardly speak Portuguese. Second-generation women are more likely to find jobs in the cleaning services, or, if they have enough education, as cashiers in supermarkets. Some also find work in the gardening services of the municipalities where they live.

According to Fikes, the Portuguese state is 'racialising' the job market of cleaning services, forcing black Cape Verdean women out of peddling fish and throwing them into the domestic and janitorial services, which are becoming more and more the only work 'allowed' to black women. The main problem with Fikes' 'theory' is that there is no evidence supporting the idea that the cleaning jobs are being taken exclusively by black women, either Cape Verdean or 'African' in general. Actually, in the last few years there has been a significant increase in the number of white women employed in the cleaning

services, namely from Eastern European countries (Ukraine, Moldavia, Romania, Russia), and Brazil. Furthermore, the recruitment of black women to the cleaning and janitorial services is practically circumscribed to the largest urban centres around Lisbon and in the Algarve.

In the towns of the Portuguese hinterland the number of blacks is insignificant. Fikes' idea of "the black female body as the nation's trope for *limpeza*" (2000:11) is misrepresentative of what is going on in the world of cleaning and janitorial services, wherein the number of women other than black is growing day by day. For example, in the condominium I live there is not a single black woman doing domestic cleaning; they are all white, despite one of the largest black neighbourhood being just a few yards away. When asked about whom they prefer to hire as cleaners or maids, most Portuguese housewives prefer Portuguese cleaners (cf. Fikes 1998:7) when they are available at low wage. They consider them more reliable as we can see in the words of a Portuguese lady who has had several different 'African' cleaners until she finally got a Portuguese one:

I have had several 'African' women doing the cleaning and ironing, but most of them failed to come on the appointed days and did not even bothered to justify their failure. Most had problems at home with their men and children. Sometimes, they worked until they got paid and then failed for weeks in a row, then, when they ran short of money they showed up again for work as if nothing had happened before. Some of them had trouble in doing the cleaning properly since they did not understand, for example, the necessity of dusting books and other like items. I know that some people say that the Cape Verdean women make good and reliable cleaners and maids, but it never happened that way with me. I finally had to rely on Portuguese women to do the cleaning and ironing (Portuguese, female, 35 years).

Although some Cape Verdean women admit that a few years ago the

vending of fish provided an income that no other activity available for them would provide, in many cases higher than that of their men, they now consider the cleaning and domestic services a good job. They prize the fact they work normal daytime hours, do not have to get up before dawn in order to be at *Doca Pesca*, do not have to smell of fish, and do not have to dodge the police officers in the streets.

As a Cape Verdean woman who formerly worked in the *arrasto* herself admits:

For about eighteen years I worked at Doca Pesca dragging crates of fish and piling them on trolleys, which I then pulled to the waiting vans. It was a backbreaking job and the pay was not that much. We had to work long hours to make a living. The more crates I piled and carried the more money I made. On a Saturday I could make up to 60 euros (£38). Those who peddled in the streets could make even more money, but they had to dodge the police and municipal officers, and had to stand their harassment and abuse. They also depended on others to whom they had to pay to be carpooled to the vending spots. I always did the *arrasto* and never ventured into peddling. Now that my two elder sons have grown up I prefer to work for a company cleaning railway stations. I work four-hour shifts and have two free days a week. Moreover, now I am entitled to social security and health care, something I have never had for the eighteen years I spent at Doca Pesca (Cape Verdean, female, 48 years).

Working eight hours a day and five or six days a week (some work on Saturdays), they make about 350 euros (£222) a month, which is more or less the minimum wage for industry and services. This is very little money when compared to the 650 euros (£412) they made in the *arrasto*. Not to mention those women who did the peddling instead, whose income, according to what is commonly said by most of my informants, could reach 750 euros (£476) or even more per month. To earn that much in cleaning a woman must work for private households, where she can be paid as much as 5 euros (£3) per hour. But in most

cases she will have to do it on the black market, without contract and social security.

Fikes (1998, 2000) is right in affirming that the transfer of Cape Verdean women from fish-vending related activities to the job market of the domestic cleaning and janitorial services has disempowered them. However, and in my opinion, that happened not because their national image is now 'routed into limpeza', but because their income has diminished drastically while at the same time men in the construction industry saw their wages climbing up significantly, something that Fikes herself observed (1998:13). An unskilled builder earns about 650 euros (£412) without doing extra hours or working on Saturdays. Thus, the men earn now about twice as much as the women, which means the power of men (when they are present) within the household has increased compared to before.

However, if on the one hand the Cape Verdean women lost economic power and consequently part of their domestic independence vis-à-vis the men, on the other hand they found their way into the domestic sphere of the 'white' middle class. While the vending of fish is connoted with the disagreeable smell of fish, being a domestic cleaner or maid gave lower-class Cape Verdean women access to the 'perfumed' world of the middle-class women. Many Cape Verdean women began to imitate their 'mistresses' in terms of dressing and perfuming. This kind of behaviour is reinforced by the social models conveyed by Brazilian and Mexican soap operas, which are the most popular television programs both in Cape Verde and Portugal.

In the 1960s and 1970s there has been a similar example of adoption of 'white' middle-class manners when some Cape Verdean women began

migrating to Rome in Italy (see Monteiro 1997:340-345). The Cape Verdean women were taken to Italy by crew members of the air carrier Alitalia, which at the time flew regularly to the island of Sal. Those crew members began to employ them as domestic maids. In a few years' time these women began returning to their homeland for holidays, showing the urban middle-class manners they had acquired through contact with their Italian middle-class employers and by marrying Italian men.

Although the women may sometimes give voice against the 'white ways', the fact seems to be that most of them seek identification with the representations of white middle-class people conveyed by family soaps and the like. However, there is a considerable difference between the expectations of the first Cape Verdean women who peddled fish in the 1970s and those who come directly into the cleaning and janitorial jobs today. While the role of the *peixeiras* demanded 'roughness', that of the cleaners and maids demands 'softness', which is expressed in the proper outfit to do the cleaning and domestic work. In the past, one of the things that attracted peasants to the city life was the glamour of the professional garments, be they the maid's or the chauffeur's. Although the allure exerted by the maid's or the chauffeur's garment has waned, the private domestic sphere of work is still by far the best that Cape Verdean women can access. Cleaning shopping malls, railway stations, bus terminals or airports is not as attractive, for the pay is much lower and the cleaning outfits identify them as lower-class shantytown or council housing dwellers.

5.4. Parents in a strange world

It is a common thought both among the elder generation of Cape Verdean immigrants and the Portuguese that something went wrong in the transition from the first-generation Cape Verdeans to their Portuguese-born descendants. Whereas first-generation Cape Verdeans see themselves as hardworking, honest and good Christians, a view that is shared with the Portuguese who interact with them, their descendants are seen as the misfits of postcolonial society.

The problem with naming the first descendants of the immigrants the 'second generation' is that we may thus be ignoring the fact that there are indeed second- and third-generation immigrants. For example, the Cape Verdeans who migrated to Lisbon in the 1960s are now seeing the coming of other Cape Verdeans who by age could have been their children or even grandchildren. And in fact there are 'generational' differences between those who came in the 1960s and 1970s and those who came in the 1990s and continue to come now. In one case the 'generation gap' originated in two different societies (Cape Verde and Portugal), whereas in the other case the gap originated in the very same society, that of postcolonial Portugal.

The most commonly held view is that the so-called second-generation Cape Verdeans have not integrated in the Portuguese mainstream and that they have somehow abandoned the lower-class expectations of their parents. The argument is that their lack of social integration, combined with their loss of the values characteristic of the Cape Verdean society, without acquiring the proper values of the Portuguese society, has produced a generation of misfits thrown into unemployment and delinquency. The common view is that the second-generation Cape Verdeans are unsuccessful in school and consequently unable to

move up professionally and, maintaining thus the lower-class status of their parents or even going downward in some cases. Yet, this is true not only for second-generation Cape Verdeans but for the children of the lower classes in general. There is not a single study, to my knowledge, demonstrating that the children of Cape Verdean families are less successful than the children of the other shantytown inhabitants, be they 'Portuguese', 'Africans', 'gypsies' or whoever.

5.4.1. Language barriers

The Cape Verdean youths of shantytowns show high rates of school failure. Many of them do not complete compulsory education, which for a student with a clean sheet should be completed by the age of fifteen. Others, despite completing obligatory schooling, stay longer in school until they are able to complete all the training, and yet when they finish schooling they are 'functional illiterates'. However, one cannot say that this is a particular situation to the Cape Verdean descendants; it is rather a situation that is now affecting the Portuguese society in general. It affects not only the families in shantytowns and council housing developments but also the lower and middle classes in general. Thus, the Cape Verdean youths are being affected by factors which are not specific to them but common to a growing number of Portuguese families, particularly those living in the margins of a newly created 'affluent society', which include not only shantytowns and council housing projects but also a growing number of suburban areas nearby Lisbon, Oeiras, and Amadora.

By saying that most of the youths are mainly affected by economic and social factors which commonly affect lower-class families in general, I do not

want to deny the importance of some factors specific to the Cape Verdean immigrants, which have played an important role in the beginning of their migration. The most important was the language barrier. Contrary to the myth of high literacy in Cape Verde (see chapter 3), among the pioneering Cape Verdeans of the 1960s and 1970s many did not speak or understand Portuguese properly and even more were illiterate. In their homeland, the Cape Verdeans use Creole as their household language and Portuguese as a second language.

The first children of the Cape Verdean immigrants, mainly those who went through school in the 1970s and 1980s had accrued difficulties in learning, beyond those generally common to shantytown children. The fact that their first contact with the Portuguese language only occurred when they entered school, at the age of six or seven, further hampered the learning of subject matters that were already by their nature distant from their social world. This situation continued until the early 1990s, though it has improved since the first nurseries were introduced in the *bairros*, in the late 1980s. As Eaton noticed:

The Cape Verdean children struggle to understand and to be understood and the same goes for their Portuguese teachers. There is also a danger with the children living in an isolated community that they may become alienated from the wider society and so lack spirit or motivation when faced with the difficulties of school-leaving or getting a job (1993:550).

At the time Eaton did his research he could see there had been already some new initiatives put into practice to help the children of immigrants, such as classes being made smaller to allow closer teaching, the targeting of children under five years of age in terms of their learning of Portuguese language, as well as the creation of extra and out-of-school help in order for them to catch up (1993:551). However, as he noted, “many more children fall behind in their

studies and others lose interest and this can quickly become the first step on the road to educational deprivation” (1993:551).

Nonetheless, the situation was much worse in the beginning of the Cape Verdean migration, as the following episode described by an elementary school teacher demonstrates:

It was the late 1970s and I, still fresh in the profession, had been placed in one of the elementary schools of Algés [in the municipality of Oeiras] which, by that time, was beginning to receive a growing number of children born from Cape Verdean parents who had migrated in the late 1960s and early 1970s. A few weeks into the school year I began to realise that the Cape Verdean children did not understand what I was saying in the class. At first I believed it was due to the cultural gap between them and us; for example, they had no habits of personal hygiene and were much rougher than the Portuguese children, or even the gypsies. But as I began to pay more attention to them I understood that the reason why they were not paying attention to my words was that they did not understand Portuguese. At home they had only been taught Creole, which at the time I did not even know was the language of Cape Verdeans. It was then that I and some colleagues in other schools within the municipality which also received a high number of Cape Verdean children, began to ask for special support. But it took a few years to implement the first measures to help out Cape Verdean children with language problems (Portuguese elementary school teacher, female, 48 years).

The case of this elementary school teacher put in contact with Cape Verdean children is only one among several others within the municipalities of Oeiras and Amadora, where the majority of the Cape Verdeans live. When the Cape Verdeans began their migration to the metropole they were officially Portuguese, and since there had never been an ‘indigenous’ population in Cape Verde they were all supposed to speak Portuguese. Creole was an unknown language to the Portuguese in the metropole. It was only when the first Cape Verdeans arrived that the metropolitan Portuguese began to have contact with Creole language. But this contact, for reasons explained earlier, was limited to

the small fraction of the metropolitan population who worked in close contact with the Cape Verdeans. As for the Portuguese authorities, they add not even a plan to deal with the basic necessities of the immigrants, such as work and housing, let alone their language problems.

The shantytowns sprawled because the immigrants were left free to find by themselves the most affordable solution to their housing problem. The Portuguese authorities planned nothing in terms of their reception. The 'philosophy' was 'what we cannot foresee we cannot prevent', and the problems would be dealt with as they unfolded.

If schooling tends to be seen by shantytown children as a non-rewarding activity, for many of the parents are illiterate and most can only barely read and write, this is even more so when the children in question are taught in a language code strange to them, the school's code, things that do not belong to their social world. So, the Cape Verdean children had to cope not only with their lower-class status as shantytown dwellers but also with their language handicap.

Because the first Cape Verdean immigrants were not knowledgeable in Portuguese language and culture they could not help their children with school matters. Furthermore, most of the immigrants prefer that their children first learn Creole at home and then Portuguese in school. Many parents were afraid that the children would lose their Cape Verdean identity and escape their control. As one informant put it:

If my children would learn Portuguese better than Creole how could we understand one another? A Cape Verdean must learn Creole from birth because it is our language and there are things a Cape Verdean can only know in Creole. Then, when they are six or seven they can learn Portuguese at school because then it will not make them forget they are Cape Verdean. It is not a good thing to allow your children to get

wiser, for then you lose control of the situation. When they go to school and begin to speak Portuguese better than their parents, they think they are wiser and do not pay us respect anymore. They think they are going to be better than the parents and do not want to work in the construction industry as them. They think they are going to be ‘doctors’ with a briefcase under their arm (Cape Verdean, male, 58 years).

The fear that many Cape Verdeans show about losing control of their children is the same that many Portuguese rural migrants suffered when their children got better educated and distanced themselves from the values and life-style of their parents. There is an aphorism that says: ‘the peasant’s son wants to be a factory worker, the factory worker’s wants to be a clerk, and the clerk’s wants to be a doctor’. So, the fear that many of the pioneering Cape Verdeans expressed was typical of a peasant’s mentality, not prone to easily accept abrupt changes from one generation to the next.

5.4.2. The school: ‘We cannot control them anymore’

In the early 1980s, the schools near the shantytowns in the areas of Algés, Linda-a-Velha, and Miraflores, all in the municipality of Oeiras, saw the composition of their students change significantly. This was the case of a basic school⁷⁶ built in the late 1970s to cater for the middle and upper middle classes of the growing suburban area of Miraflores. However, as the number of youths in the nearby shantytowns rose, the school began to receive more and more of them, and in the mid-1980s there were more children from the nearby shantytowns than from the white middle class suburbs. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, the school had more than 2,000 students, of which the Cape Verdeans were a great deal. The school board had to reduce the number of

⁷⁶ A basic school is a school that caters for students from the fifth to the ninth grade, at which time compulsory education ends.

students per class in order to cope with learning problems and discipline. In a class of about twenty students, fourteen would be from the shantytowns, and among these the majority were Cape Verdean.

As the number of students from shantytowns increased, the white middle class families began to send their children to other schools where there were no children from the shantytowns. Consequently, in a few years the school began to cater almost exclusively for the children of the surrounding shantytowns and run-down neighbourhoods, becoming thus a school for lower-class children. This process of segregation turned the school into an educational ghetto for the children of the *bairros degradados* (run-down neighbourhoods).

The white middle class teachers soon realised that they had two main problems on their hands. The first was how to teach the children of the shantytowns the skills usual to the average middle-class child who serves as the model for educational planners. The second was how to maintain the necessary discipline so that the school could be run properly. According to the teachers, the Cape Verdean students presented additional problems other those presented by the children in general; they had greater language difficulties, were more undisciplined and used more violence towards the colleagues, the teachers and staff. A former teacher, voicing what is a common view among teachers who deal with Cape Verdean children, says:

In the beginning of the 1980s the majority of the pupils were still coming from the white middle class families who lived within the school's area, but soon after a large number of blacks, mostly Cape Verdeans, from the shantytown just across the street began joining the school. Among the Africans, the Cape Verdeans were those who had more language problems, since they spoke Creole the whole time, even in the classes. We had to keep reminding them all the time that they should speak Portuguese, but they seemed not to realise the importance of that. The use of Creole worked as a sort of

language code they used to communicate among themselves without being grasped by others. In terms of discipline they were very difficult to handle, for they did not mind talking loudly in the classes, as well as coming in and going out as they pleased. I really had a difficult time during my years in that school. There were also a few incidents with knives, mostly between the Cape Verdeans themselves. Some of them used their reputation to frighten other children and rob them or ask them money in the school yard or at the gate. We could not count on their parents, for most of them were from single parent families headed by a mother or grandmother, or sometimes other female relative. When there was a father, the only thing he did was to beat them up every time that the school complained about their behaviour. The Cape Verdean children grow up among familial violence and absence of proper role models (teacher, female, 53 years).

This view is shared by other teachers and staff at the school above, and may be taken as the commonly held view by the middle-class mainstream about the Cape Verdean children who live in the *bairros*. In this case, the teachers and staff ended up by adjusting the functioning of the school to what they interpreted as the 'needs' and 'demands' of the children of the shantytowns. The school had to make a lot of concessions to the children of *bairros* in order to cope with the high rates of failure. The consequence was that the teaching and assessment standards fell, making these students more unprepared than those of the middle-class families.

I had the opportunity to be present in several classes where the majority of the students were Cape Verdean. The teachers had a hard time in keeping the students quiet and silent in the class-room. In the school yard, the staff responsible for watching the students, mostly women, had a difficult time trying to maintain a minimum of discipline. The incidents between the students themselves and between them and the staff were frequent. In general, this is the situation in many of the schools that receive a large number of children from the shantytowns.

Most of the first-generation Cape Verdeans were not prepared to educate their children in a society where the use of physical coercion against youths in school and at home was seen as immoral and illegal. The parents felt that their hands were tied:

As parents, we can do nothing. I cannot even smack my children because they can go to the school or the police and tell them about it, in which case I would go to jail. Sometimes what they need most is a good beating so that they know what they can and cannot do. The teachers do nothing and the children do whatever they please, then they get surprised when the children step over the line. It is not wise that the school condemns the beatings at home and then the staff gets beaten up by the students. And we are talking of twelve- and thirteen-year old children (Cape Verdean, female, 48 years).

Without the repressing power they had in Cape Verde, many Cape Verdean parents became unable to exert social control over their offspring born in the metropole. These children soon became empowered by having a better command of Portuguese and a higher level of education than their parents.

The loss of power on the part of the parents also affected the white mainstream society, in the postcolonial period. This was due to the extension of the 'democratic' values of society to the sphere of the family. So, the relations within the family became more even and the children gained more rights, which they use to disempower the parents and the teachers. The first-generation Cape Verdeans felt this disempowerment more acutely because they were moving from a much more conservative society to a more liberal one. While in Cape Verde they still had a strong power over their children, in Portugal they had little because their authority was undermined from without. As said earlier, most of the Cape Verdean parents were just peasants trying to adapt to the conditions of urban life.

Therefore, the gap between the Cape Verdean parents and their children widened by their coming to the metropole, and as the children began to adhere to the values of the Portuguese urban lower class. In most cases the parents remained bound to the traditional values of the rural Cape Verdean society.

The loose nature of the Cape Verdean family and the working conditions that the immigrants faced made it possible for the children to easily escape the socialisation restraints which had been effective in Cape Verde. In many cases, the women are the only providers to the family and have, therefore, to work long hours, leaving the children to grow loosely in the *bairro* without the restraints usually imposed by parents. Usually, in two-parented families both parents work long hours and the children spend most of the time unattended, playing by themselves in the neighbourhood.

As a Cape Verdean mother tells us, her experience of raising three children in a shantytown neighbourhood has not been easy:

I was left on my own with two girls and a boy. My man left me when my boy was still a toddler and I had to work long hours in the *arrasto* and, later, in the *limpeza* to make a living for the four of us and to send some money to my mother in Santiago. My first two children have grown up quite by themselves, except for the time they were in school. They would come from school and play in the neighbourhood until I came home from work. Oftentimes, I came late and tired, without enough patience to satisfy their demands for attention and care. In the beginning, there were no kindergartens where one could leave the children. There were some women who worked as nannies but I didn't have the money to pay. My first two children were taken care of by a Cape Verdean woman who worked as a seamstress for the *bairro*. When my boy was born, he was the last to come and could have gone to the nursery in the *bairro*, for at the time the residents association had already set one up with the help of the parish, but it was my elder girl who took care of him in my absence. I had a hard time then, especially with the boy, now fourteen. If you do not take good care of them and give them discipline and education, then they are lost. I fear for my boy, because he doesn't like school and I cannot foresee him working in the construction industry either. My daughters didn't

proceed in school but they have found work; one is behind a counter in a supermarket, and the other is doing *limpeza* in a shopping mall. Things have bettered in the new *bairros*, but in the beginning life was difficult for us who had to work and leave the children by themselves in the *bairro* (Cape Verdean, female, 50 years).

Although the discourse of this Cape Verdean mother represents a level of social awareness well above the majority of the Cape Verdean women who had to deal with the same situation in the original *bairros*, it is, in any case, illustrative of the challenge originally faced by the Cape Verdean families.

Most of the original Cape Verdean immigrants felt they were losing ground to their children and that they could do little to protect them from being lured into the ways of urban life. This was what has happened with other immigrants elsewhere, like the Caribbeans in America and Britain, who blamed the metropolitan society for being too lenient with youths. In Britain, and according to Fitzherbert (1967:74-5), Caribbean children took benefit from the way British society viewed the relationship between parents and children. Whereas in the West Indies children were beaten and repressed and taught to obey their parents blindly, in England the children quickly learned that they had 'rights' and that the adults could not use beatings as punishment. In the words of Fitzherbert: "One way of stating this culture conflict is to say that West Indians hold the Victorian view that children owe a debt to their parents, while the modern English view is that parents have obligations to their children (1967:71).

The same happened with the Cape Verdeans, who saw their family authority undermined by the mainstream middle-class educational values conveyed in school. The youths quickly became aware that they could complain about the beatings given by their parents and bring them trouble before the school and the police. Yet, things were not that simple and none of my

informants has ever been to a court for beating his or her children. Of course, the idea that they could run into trouble by using physical punishment as an 'educational' tool may have deterred many parents from doing it, or at least it worked as an excuse for their sense of powerlessness in relation to their children's ways. Frequently, the parents and the school were at odds:

If the teachers don't want me to properly discipline my boys, then let them have the trouble to bear with them and don't come back complaining they did this and that, or that they are disrespectful in the class. It seems that the students are ruling the school and not the teachers. In Cape Verde it was never like that; you would be smacked on the back of the head just for not rising in time when the teacher was coming in the class. Now, I have heard of stories about teachers being insulted and menaced in the class and having to ask for the security personnel's help. It is a topsy-turvy world we live in now (Cape Verdean, male, 58 years).

There is a general agreement on the idea that it is the livelihood of the Cape Verdean families in the shantytowns that explains the failure of integration of the second-generation Cape Verdeans in the mainstream of postcolonial society. Yet, the question is: are they less successful than other non-immigrant working-class youths who live in shantytowns and housing development projects? In the next section I will try to show what I think is happening to the second-generation Cape Verdeans in terms of their social integration.

5.5. Second-generation 'misfits'?

It has become current view that second-generation 'Africans' are irremediably affected by the deplorable economic and social conditions they live in, and that they do not get proper education because schools do not cater properly for their especial needs. Although this is basically true, it is more important to recognise that second-generation blacks are being affected by the same economic and

social circumstances that are affecting the whole of the new urban underclass to which they belong. They are not the sole to be affected as some tend to think.

It is true, for instance, that Cape Verdean children have a high dropout rate and many abandon school before completing the nine-year period of compulsory education. It is true that most of the Cape Verdean youths have discarded the values of their parents and are setting their goals by middle-class values and life style. But it is also true that they have not enough drive to get the social passport into that social world. They always try the easiest, less-boring and less time-consuming way to achieve their goals. They do not want to work as hard as their parents for such a low prestige, yet, they do not realise that the most secure avenue for escaping lower-class status is the school.

Thus, the situation of the Cape Verdean youth is both determined by a set of factors related to the social class of their parents in metropolitan society and the cultural specificity related to the ethos of being 'Cape Verdean', 'black' or 'African'.

5.5.1. Deficient schooling

Elementary school teachers and helping staff complain that Cape Verdean children are more difficult to deal with than the other children, as a sociological survey conducted in 1992 showed:

The interviewed teachers unanimously stated that the Cape Verdean children are troublemakers and accept discipline and authority with difficulty. Some of the teachers see the Cape Verdean children's behaviour as the result of a common 'aggressive tendency'. Others attribute it to their sense of revolt caused by the marginalisation they suffer by their Portuguese colleagues and the parents of these, by the teachers themselves and the educational system in general (França 1992:87, my translation).

The survey also revealed the following:

There is also unanimity in the affirmation that the Cape Verdean children are fully devoted to their teachers (maybe because they are in need of affection) and that they fully obey and respect them, rejecting however the authority of any teacher other than their (França 1992:87, my translation).

The report also revealed that during the first cycle of compulsory education⁷⁷ the third and fourth grades are the most problematic in terms of discipline, while failure is more common in the first and second grades. Failure usually affects children when they are still trying to adapt, and is the result of their not seeing school as a working place but as a playground instead. When parents have trouble with their children they usually frighten them with the prospect of school: 'you'll see when you begin school, it'll straighten you up'. By the third grade, if not before, the children have already realised that school is pretty soft and there is no beating rod.

According to Barreto (1988), only one out of every ten students entering primary school will enter university. Two out of ten will not finish compulsory education. And seven out of ten will leave school with no qualification.

The children brought up in shantytowns tend to be more familiar with outright violence than upper middle class children, whose social environment is softer and in which violence assumes more subtle forms. This means that the children of the shantytowns tend to be more boisterous and violent in school.

⁷⁷ Schooling in Portugal is now organised in the following manner: there is basic (compulsory) and secondary education (optional). Basic education has three cycles. The first has four years and runs from the age of six to ten. The second has two years and runs from the age of eleven to twelve. The third has three years and runs from the age of thirteen to fifteen. Secondary education is a three-year period that runs from the age of sixteen to eighteen. After completing basic education, students can follow technical education instead of humanistic and scientific education that leads into the university and become professionals in electricity, plumbing, gardening or whatever from a set of available trades.

Yet, this applies to the *bairros* in general and not to the Cape Verdeans in particular. Almost everything that the survey pointed out could be said of shantytown children in general. As to the learning difficulties pointed out by the survey and related to the absence of nurseries, once more these are difficulties experienced by all shantytown families in general and not the Cape Verdean families in particular. The only thing that makes Cape Verdean children different is the fact that many of them have to learn Portuguese in school as a second language without ever being properly taught as foreigners (because the mainstream thinks of them as natural Portuguese speakers).

When the children of immigrants are properly taught Portuguese language in school they can easily learn it and become bilingual at an early age without problem. With the Cape Verdeans, as with the shantytown children in general, the question is how well they are taught in school and how much their social environment develops in them a drive for learning. Most shantytown dwellers do not see the need for education because they came from families who in many cases did not even go through elementary education. Many Cape Verdean parents are illiterate, particularly those who came from the Cape Verdean hinterland, and simply do not see the importance of education (though there are exceptions). This is particularly true after their children having completed the first cycle of basic education. Many parents do not see why their children should carry on studying after being able to read and write properly.

In the survey, the teachers and the social workers say that the Cape Verdean parents care for their children's education and participate in the school's life (França 1992:89). Yet, it is hard to believe that, in general, lower-class Cape Verdean parents care for their children's education and school when

there is evidence that a significant part of the middle-class mainstream does not. For instance, in my daughter's school, which is typically middle-class, very few parents turn up at the class meetings of their children, and the teachers are always complaining about the lack of interest on the parents' side. Moreover, there is a nation-wide concern that the parents are taking little interest in the school life of their children and that is why the educational system is crumbling.

In one paragraph of the survey it is said that because many Cape Verdean parents are illiterate and not fluent in Portuguese they avoid class meetings in order not to be embarrassed before the teachers. To this I can add that many among the first Cape Verdean immigrants are very humble and shy and still feel inferior by being 'uncultured' and 'black', which does not ease contact with the 'Portuguese' teachers.

Apart from the language problem, Cape Verdean children are affected by factors inherent to life in the *bairros* and not specific to themselves. However, as in some schools the Cape Verdean children make as much as 90 percent of the students, 'being Cape Verdean' can easily be taken as the reason for failure, instead of 'being from the *bairro*'. The speaking of Creole at home is frequently pointed out as one of the main causes of school failure among the Cape Verdeans (e.g. Monteiro 1995:57). Many Cape Verdeans, as well as many Portuguese, tend to think that the speaking of Creole at home hinders the learning and development of the Portuguese, but the problem is of a different sort. What hinders the learning of Portuguese is not their first learning of Creole instead of Portuguese; it is the absence of an educational programme that considers Portuguese as a foreign language for Cape Verdean children whose mother tongue is Creole. It is the insufficient exposure to Portuguese, especially

in the written form, and not the use of Creole that makes Cape Verdean children incompetent users of Portuguese.

Nonetheless, in the Portuguese hinterland where many children are equally deprived of the necessary economic and social resources to achieve success in school, and where there is not a single 'African' child, drop-out rates are similar, or even greater, to those in the suburban schools that cater to 'Africans'. In the district of Lisbon, in 1996/97, the overall drop-out rate for 'Cape Verdeans' was 5.9 per cent, while for 'Lusos' it was 4.6 per cent⁷⁸. In the district of Setúbal, the rates were 4.7 per cent for 'Cape Verdeans' and 15.2 per cent for 'Lusos'. However, for the whole country, the drop-out rates are 7 per cent for 'Lusos' and 8.2 per cent for 'Cape Verdeans, only a slight difference. Furthermore, in some municipalities, the drop-out rate among 'Lusos' is substantially higher than among 'Cape Verdeans'. For instance, in the municipality of Barreiro, district of Setúbal, the drop-out rate for 'Lusos' was 23.5 per cent while for 'Cape Verdeans' it was 15.4 per cent. In the municipality of Serpa, district of Beja, the drop-out rate for 'Lusos' was 29.5 per cent. In Albufeira, district of Faro, the same rate for 'Lusos' was 35.8 per cent (SEC 1997). So, in any of these examples, 'Portuguese' students show drop-out rates considerably higher than those of the 'Cape Verdeans' in the districts where they concentrate in few schools, such as the districts of Lisbon and Setúbal.

However, the statistics of SEC are not to be trusted, since there is no effective verification of the criteria used by the schools to distribute the students according to the different 'ethnic' and 'national' categories. Moreover, if in

⁷⁸ The *Secretariado Entreculturas*, responsible for classifying the students in terms of 'ethnic' and 'national' origin uses a set of categories which comprehend 'Luso', 'African origin', 'Cape Verde', 'Guinea-Bissau', 'S. Tomé and Príncipe', 'Angola', and 'Mozambique'. For a more detailed explanation of the use of these categories as a form of 'ethnic' classification see subsection 6.2.

some schools the number of students enrolled in one year is greater than the number of drop-outs in the same year, then the drop-out rate is negative (!). For instance, in the district of Oporto, the drop-out rate for 'Cape Verdeans' was, in 1997, -65.6 per cent. What these negative numbers contribute to our understanding of drop-out rates is yet to be explained by SEC.

When we look to the case of the Cape Verdean children, educational success seems to be more a matter of class than one of 'ethnicity'. There are basically two types of situation for Cape Verdean students. Either they are in schools where they form the large majority of the students, or are at least a large proportion, or they are in schools where they form a small minority, scattered across classes and not concentrated in a few. The first situation is typical of schools which cater exclusively for shantytown neighbourhoods or council housing development areas. The second occurs with Cape Verdean families who live scattered in areas where the majority of the population is 'Portuguese'. As most Cape Verdean families live concentrated in shantytowns and in council housing projects, most of their children frequent the same schools, which turns these schools predominantly 'black' and 'Cape Verdean' environments. In some *bairros*, in the districts of Lisbon and Setúbal, the Cape Verdean youths make the mainstream and the remainder children tend to follow the lead. In those *bairros* it is common to see mixed groups (and gangs as well) of Cape Verdean and Portuguese youths. These end up speaking Creole and adopting a 'black style'.

5.5.2. Residential and educational segregation

As mentioned earlier, the middle-class families that live in the vicinity of shantytowns place their children in private schools in order to avoid social contact with the *gente das barracas* (people of the shacks). The alternative to private schools, which are expensive, is to give an address in the proximity of a school which does not cater for children of the surrounding shantytowns. For example, if a family lives in Linda-a-Velha, but wants to send its children to a school in Carnaxide (both localities are in the municipality of Oeiras) which they know does not cater for shantytowns or council housing projects, the strategy is then to find some relative or close friend in the area who allows his or her address to be used in the application form. This is possible because in the state-funded school system the children are allocated according to their residential area and the parents have no choice other than place them in the local state school or send them to a private school⁷⁹.

On the one side, the upper and middle class families are consciously collaborating in the social process of school segregation, since they want their children in a predominantly middle-class environment. On the other, many Cape Verdean parents prefer that their children attend the schools that cater exclusively for the *bairros* because they are at close quarters. As a result, both groups are contributing to the emergence of an educational system based on social and residential segregation. Although the situation serves both the Cape Verdean and the middle-class parents, it works to the disadvantage of second-generation Cape Verdeans.

⁷⁹ The organisation of school attendance based on the residential area of students has been commonly used by authorities in other European countries; such has been the case of Britain as reported by Williamson & Byrne (1979) and Vaughan Robinson (1984) in relation to Asian immigrants.

Yet, one cannot clearly see racism in this process, since it cuts mostly across class lines and the number of black middle-class families that compete for places in middle-class schools is still negligible. Usually, black middle-class families are not barred from placing their children in schools that cater mostly for white middle-class families. The urban lower class has now a significant proportion of black people and has acquired a coloured status it did not have three decades ago, when the number of blacks in the metropole was negligible. Today, class segregation is often perceived as racism by black and white people alike. However, the perception of the process of social segregation as racism obscures its real nature, which I believe is deeply rooted in wealth and status, not in skin colour. As Wallman referred, colour symbolises status, but does not determine it: “where dark skin pigment goes with low economic status, colour and money are congruent; one boundary is superimposed on the other. In time, they become associated in meaning, symbolically as well empirically linked” (1978:213).

The integrated school⁸⁰ Sophia de Mello Breyner, which caters for the *bairros* of Portela and Outorela, is a very good example of how segregation is organised by the authorities themselves, though sometimes with the best of intentions. The school was created in 1992 with the intent of catering for an area of new council housing projects built under the PER (Economic Plan of Re-accommodation). The idea is to eradicate all shantytowns using the substantial amount of money allocated by the E.U. The result has been that the Cape Verdeans who were once scattered across a number of shantytowns are now concentrated in few council housing projects.

⁸⁰ An integrated school is a school that caters for children from nursery to the ninth grade. The students who are not able to finish compulsory education by the age of fifteen are forced to leave day-school and find a place in night-school.

In the municipality of Oeiras, the newly built *bairros* of Outorela and Portela set up in the early to mid-1990s, and planned to house hundreds of families moved from several shantytowns in the municipality of Oeiras, give us probably the best case in point of the way people from the shantytowns are being concentrated in small single areas. The school Sophia de Mello Breyner caters almost exclusively for the population of the two *bairros*. The *bairros* are a world apart in themselves, with their own schools included.



The Outorela *bairro* (easily identifiable by its blue roofs)

People only leave the neighbourhoods when they go to work or need something from the outside world. The children are enculturated in a predominantly working class environment in which the Cape Verdeans are the largest group. In the school yard, Creole is the most commonly heard language, which many of the Portuguese children also speak. The Cape Verdean children are reasonably bilingual, in contrast to what happened fifteen or twenty years

ago, when the Cape Verdean neighbourhoods were deprived of nursery care.

The teachers say that the Cape Verdean children use Portuguese in the classes, but immediately resort to Creole whenever they want to tease each other or insult the teacher. They also complain about the lack of discipline of the Cape Verdeans, though admitting that the other children are disobedient as well; especially the children who have not frequented the nurseries. The school has about forty-five nursery places, but applications are tens more. There are other nurseries within the area of the two *bairros*, but most parents cannot or are not willing to pay for it. Even if they could or were willing to pay, the overall number of places would not be enough.

The lack of educational infrastructures is a problem for the whole population of the *bairros* and not only for the Cape Verdeans in particular. According to the teachers at Sophia de Mello Breyner School, the problem of failure is not something that affects Cape Verdean students in particular but all students equally. They even say that some of the most successful students are from Cape Verdean background. They recognize that Portuguese upper- and middle-class families do not send their children to the school in question. Just a few hundred metres to the north of Outorela and Portela there is an area of large one-family homes with large gardens and garages. Another few hundred metres to the south, there is a growing area of high-rises aimed at middle class families. But, as one teacher says:

I have never seen a child from those neighbourhoods in this school. The parents care to send them to private schools no matter how much that is going to cost them. I wish they would send them to our school, then we would have a simpler task and the pass rate would be much higher, I am sure (teacher, female, 50 years).

Whilst many Cape Verdean children will continue to grow in an environment predominantly culturally Cape Verdean, the school conveys to them middle-class values since the teaching is given by middle-class teachers and the national curriculum has been conceived by middle-class educators and pedagogues. As many of the teachers recognise, apart from the language problem that Cape Verdean children face when they are not perfectly bilingual, the main problem is their socio-economic status. It is the children's economic and social environment that is responsible for their noticeable lack of success.

At Sophia de Mello Breyner School, about 30 per cent of the students fail to complete the nine-year period of compulsory education. Overall, the failure rates per year and class are high. This is particularly so at the end of each cycle, when students have to pass the so-called global exams. Failure is thus higher in the fourth, six and ninth grades. Many Cape Verdeans in this school do not go beyond the ninth grade, and a considerable number are not able to complete it successfully before the age of sixteen. In those cases, the students have to move into a school that accepts them as repeaters.

In a general manner, the state-funded educational system, which caters largely not only for the families of immigrants but also to a significant part of Portuguese middle-class and working-class families, has hit the bottom and is producing more failure than success. So, it is no wonder that the second-generation Cape Verdeans are affected by the downturn of the system, independently of their own problems.

The state-funded educational system has been under pressure owing to both the extension of compulsory education and the increase in the number of admissions. Until the late 1960s compulsory education was only four years.

Only in 1973 was it extended to six years. And it was only in the 1990s that it was extended to the current nine-year period. From 1961 to 1991, the Portuguese student population increased by about 96 per cent, which represents 1.1 million more students. Secondary education has grown at an astonishing yearly average of 7.1 per cent since 1980 (Carreira 1996:60). This considerable growth of the educational system was accompanied by a decrease in the quality of the teaching, since the training of the teachers and other staff did not follow the increase in the number of schools and students.

The quality of the teaching is worse in areas near shantytowns and run-down neighbourhoods, since the best qualified teachers and staff prefer to apply for positions in middle-class areas.

5.5.3. The expectations

The main social problem among the second-generation Cape Verdeans is the high number of youths who complete compulsory education without being prepared to follow any particular trade, but who have nonetheless been fed with expectations of a middle-class style. This is something that they have in common with other second generations, of which the Caribbeans in Britain and in the Netherlands are a good example. As some have pointed out:

It appears under both the British and Dutch educational systems there is failure to achieve even a parity performance with indigenous children and young people, let alone the greater success that would be required to match the ambitions and aspirations that the descendants of migrants typically display (Cross and Entzinger 1988:24-5).

Second-generation Cape Verdeans have grown up watching daily the consumerism of their middle-class 'neighbours'. Television and other media are also aimed at increasing upper middle-class and middle-class consumerism,

without being concerned whether the people in the council housing projects will have the means to fulfil those consumerist ideals. Very few students in shantytowns are able to go beyond the limit of compulsory education, even if more and more of them are now able to complete secondary education. The university is still the most secure way up into a middle-class position. However, only very few second-generation Cape Verdeans are able to complete a university degree. The family below is a case in point of how educational success varies within the family unit itself.

Ezequiel and his wife Eduarda have four children, all of them boys. Ezequiel is a retired bus driver of a large public transport company in Lisbon. After retirement he has done some odd jobs, like driving a van for a Cape Verdean *sub-empregado* (a construction industry sub-contractor) and running errands in Lisbon. Eduarda has worked for years in the *arrasto* and lately as a cleaner. For more than twenty years they lived and raised four children in a small *barraca de cimento* (concrete shack) roofed with corrugated iron. Their eldest son, now 29, is the only Cape Verdean, to my knowledge, in his neighbourhood to have entered a faculty of sciences and finished a *bacharelato* (B.Sc.) in telecommunications engineering. Although he has not been to one of the main faculties that grant five-year engineering degrees that allow professionals to be fully titled engineers (he is not allowed to sign his own projects), he was able to a B.Sc. which allowed him to promptly find work.

He is now working for a large telecommunications company on a good salary and with reasonable fringe benefits. By the time he was finishing his *bacharelato*, the faculty was planning to extend its degrees to the five-year period usual in the main faculties, but as he wanted to set about his own life and

help his parents with his two younger brothers, he decided to look for a job. Consequently, he has not completed the two complementary years so far, which would give him a full-title degree and even better chances in his profession. In any case, he was able to overcome the barrier of secondary education, by which most Cape Verdean descendants are stopped. According to himself, his success has a perfectly reasonable explanation.

The primary school I attended did have a majority of 'Portuguese' children. There were a few Cape Verdeans like me, from the same neighbourhood and other neighbourhoods around, and two or three gypsies. I could not speak Creole except with my Cape Verdean mates, for the rest did not understand it. At home, though we speak Creole until today, my parents, and particularly my father, made a point that I should learn Portuguese very well in order not to have difficulties in school. My parents participated in the school meetings and always watched attentively my course. In the secondary school the Cape Verdeans were even fewer, and the more I progressed in school the fewer they were. Most of my Cape Verdean mates stopped studying in the sixth grade, and by the time I got to ISEL [Higher Institute of Engineering of Lisbon] the only other Cape Verdeans I met were those who came from Cape Verde on scholarships. I think most of the Cape Verdean children's problems in my generation were related to dwelling in Cape Verdean dominated neighbourhoods. Had I been to a school full of Cape Verdeans and I would never have made it to the university. I would be working in the construction industry like my brother, or, worse, doing wrong and serving time in prison as some of my Cape Verdean schoolmates who left school early and did not find a suitable job (Cape Verdean, male, 29 years).

In order to succeed in school, this young Cape Verdean man had to fight against the dominant ideology in the *bairro*, which conveys that studying is for the 'Portuguese' children who live in the surrounding middle-class high-rise neighbourhoods. The dominant mentality in the *bairro* is that studying is a waste of time, because the good jobs will always be taken by the 'Portuguese'. They have good reasons to believe that only 'Portuguese' families with connections in high places can get the professional jobs.

Alejandro Portes has remarked in relation to the Haitian immigrants in the U.S. a similar sentiment of uselessness in relation to studying and being educated:

An adversarial stance toward the white mainstream is common among inner-city minority youths who, while attacking the newcomers' ways, instil in them a consciousness of American-style discrimination. A common message is the devaluation of education as a vehicle for advancement of all black youths... (1993:81).

The second eldest son of Ezequiel is the typical example of what happens to the vast majority of Cape Verdean youths raised in the social environment of the *bairro*. He dropped out of school by the end of sixth grade, which is enough for obtaining a driving licence and work as motorist or getting a low-end job in the service economy, but not for getting a position in the police force or to begin a professional carrier in the army after completing the compulsory military service. With his level of education the highest he can get is a position as security guard in a shopping centre or in some private company. Otherwise he will have to work as a builder, which he is not inclined to accept, since he considers it hard work and with very low prestige. As a security man he is likely to earn the national minimum wage, about 350 euros (£221), on which he can only afford a living far below his expectations.

As a youngster he nourished the expectation of becoming a professional football player, but as he aged the chances got slighter and slighter and he ended up playing for a third-league team, which pays him about 250 euros (£159) a month. The money he earns as a footballer is a complement to the salary he receives as a security man. He has also worked occasionally in the construction industry either as a builder or as a van driver to a *patrício* who is a sub-

contractor. Today he regrets not having studied further, since he now looks to his brother's situation and eventually understands how much it would have paid if he had studied:

When I was in primary school and later in the fifth and sixth grades I did not care about studying despite what my parents were telling me the whole time. I failed a few times and was about fourteen years of age when I left school. None of my schoolmates went much further. Most children in the *bairro* do not like studying; they think that if you study it is because you are trying to please the teachers. They also think that nice jobs behind office desks are not for blacks, even when blacks succeed in their studies. So, it is not worthwhile because in the end blacks only find work in the construction industry or as watchmen. The worse is that I was fool enough to believe that foolishness. Now I look at my brother's life and regret not to have carried my studies further. At 27 it is a bit late, but if I want to have a decent living I have at least to complete compulsory education, without which I am nothing (Cape Verdean, male, 25 years).

Like many Cape Verdean youths in the *bairros* this son of Ezequiel was affected by an oppositional stance towards school and what it represents. This is seen more as a territory on which to confront the authority of grown-up outsiders, such as teachers. Education is disdained by youths, for they see no immediate gain in studying and their parents lack the means (and the example) to convince them of the contrary. This kind of situation has been identified in other immigrant communities worldwide, particularly those of Caribbean and African origin.

5.5.4. Deficient assimilation and integration

In the U.S., for example, second-generation black youths, such as the Haitians, in Miami, tend to assimilate into the 'black' sector of the American society, which dominates the lower-class inner-city life. According to Portes and Zhou

(1993:81), even outstanding Haitian students have to cloak their Haitian ethnic identity in black American cultural forms, like rap music, for instance, in order to escape the stigma of being a black Haitian. Haitians are seen by black Americans as too docile and too subservient to whites, and their French Creole is seen as a sign of effeminacy.

In the case of the Cape Verdean youths of the *bairro*, assimilation is made into the *bairro*'s dominant lower-class culture. This culture is older than the presence of the Cape Verdeans, but they have added to it a new language, Creole, which has more the character of a neighbourhood than a national language. The present-day working-class culture of the *bairro* is the contribution of several different groups of migrants which came to the shantytowns and urban slums at different times. Firstly there were the lower-class Portuguese migrants and the gypsies and then, later, the Africans and their 'African' descendants. It is with the *bairro*'s culture that the Cape Verdean youths are affiliated, a culture to which they contribute and from which they take.

Contrary to what many Portuguese believe, their ways were not brought from Africa; they emerged within the social context of the shantytowns and council housing projects, and were as much the work of Cape Verdean as of Portuguese youths. Nonetheless, the black Cape Verdean youths tend to draw more from black influences. These may be as far apart as black American *rap* style, *kudur* from Angola, *funaná* from Santiago, or *zouk* from the French Antilles. Their dress and behaviour codes are rooted into these musical styles. Their culture is bound to music not listened by the mainstream middle-class youth. The black Cape Verdeans despise white boys' bands and *pimba* styles which are now among the most consumed styles by white middle-class youths.

Although most *bairros* are not strictly black or Cape Verdean, what comes out in terms of youth culture is mostly 'American black culture'. Or, *gueto cultura* (ghetto culture) as some black Cape Verdean rappers say.

If in the U.S. second-generation blacks have been assimilated into black inner-city culture, in Portugal the assimilation has been into the culture of the *bairro*, a culture not necessarily dominated by blacks, but one that is shared equally by whites and blacks along class lines, at least in many contexts. If we are to use the line of reasoning of Portes and Zhou, we can say that integration into the social universe of the *bairro* is the most common path for second-generation Cape Verdeans in Portugal. The other paths that lead outside the shantytowns and council housing projects are less likely to be followed, though available. As Portes and Zhou pointed out in relation to the American immigrants, assimilation is segmented and not uniform:

Instead of a relatively uniform mainstream whose mores and prejudices dictate a common path of integration, we observe today several distinct forms of adaptation. One of them replicates the time-honoured portrayal of growing acculturation and parallel integration into the white middle-class; a second leads straight in the opposite direction to permanent poverty and assimilation onto the underclass; still a third associates rapid economic advancement with deliberate preservation of the immigrant community's values and tight solidarity (1993:82).

Although this schema of integration cannot be entirely transposed to the Cape Verdean case, it seems at least that some of its features are present in the integration of the second-generation Cape Verdeans. A small number of them are leaving the Cape Verdean dominated neighbourhoods and establishing residence in 'Portuguese' dominated neighbourhoods.

A greater number will continue to group together in the newly developed

council housing projects, living in a social environment that is relatively marginal to the middle-class mainstream. A few others are following the path of their parents, working in the construction industry as builders or as small entrepreneurs involved in the recruitment of Cape Verdean and other immigrant workmen, such as the newly arrived Eastern Europeans. The main divides among the second generation are traced by how far they can go in education and how much their families are immersed in the Cape Verdean dominated social world of the *bairro*.

Similarly to what happens in the U.S., the main factors that condition the immigrants' incorporation into the Portuguese society are colour, location, and the kind of social mobility allowed by their jobs (Portes & Zhou 1993:83). Although these three factors may be working together in the case of the Cape Verdeans, it seems to me that the most important are location and the type of job. Colour by itself is not a determinant of position in the Portuguese society. As a black Cape Verdean puts it:

Racism is inside your head. If you feel inferior because you are black, then the white Portuguese will also see you as an inferior. It is your attitude that is going to determine whether the Portuguese are going to look down upon you or not. Not for a single moment have I felt inferior because of my colour. I have even married a 'Portuguese' woman (Cape Verdean, male, 46 years).

Social mobility is more a question of what you do than what your colour is. As Portes and Zhou remarked:

(...) New immigrants may form the backbone of what remains of labour-intensive manufacturing in the cities as well as in their growing personal services sector, but these are niches that seldom offer channels for upward mobility (1993:83).

In order to rise above the social position of their parents and match the

expectations acquired in the host society, second-generation Cape Verdeans need to gain the necessary training in school and be able to compete with Portuguese children of middle-class background. As the Portuguese society gets more and more 'developed' and turns into a service economy, the job market gets polarised between the few highly qualified and well paid jobs and the growing number of lowly jobs that require very little qualification. It is to these low-end jobs that most second-generation Cape Verdeans are fated. However, many Cape Verdean youths, particularly young men, are not willing to take on the low-end jobs in the construction industry and the services. They are conscious that if they accept those jobs they will never be able to match their life-style expectations.

The dreams of any Cape Verdean youth are not different from those of any other working-class youths. They dream of being either a famous football player or a music star. Since football players and music stars are not usually known for having dedicated much time to school, the youths in the *bairro* find in them a good example of how to be very successful without boring themselves with school. And, indeed, the best examples of success that Cape Verdean youths can find in their shantytown neighbourhoods are those few football players and musicians who have achieved relatively prominent positions in their trades. For example, in one of the neighbourhoods I have worked, the Cape Verdean youths always pointed to a couple of football players who had been able to make it in *Sport Lisboa e Benfica*⁸¹, like Eusébio⁸² did in the 1960s. A group of rappers, of which some were Cape Verdean, was also pointed out as an example of how well the youths of the *bairro* were able to fare, not being just the bunch of

⁸¹ Benfica is one of the few internationally known Portuguese football clubs.

⁸² A football legend of the 1960s and 1970s and the most famous Portuguese player until recently.

muggers and dealers that the 'Portuguese' think they are.

The prejudice that whites have against blacks affects the integration of second-generation blacks in Europe and America alike. In Britain, the Caribbean are a good example of that, as Hennessy has pointed out:

(...) The belief that blacks were heavily involved in crime, especially drug trafficking and immoral earnings, was encouraged [by government's labour agencies] and widely assumed although evidence did not support this view (1988:44).

Commenting on an incident in which some Cape Verdean youths were involved, a Cape Verdean youngster said the following:

People in neighbourhoods around the *bairro* think we are all muggers and drug-dealers just because they have read in the papers or seen in the news that some Cape Verdeans held up a couple of petrol stations and robbed a few motorists on a highway⁸³. If they were white Portuguese the journalists wouldn't have made such a fuss about it, but as they were black Cape Verdeans it went on and on in the news. Even if some of them were as Portuguese as any white youth, for they were born here, the news have always referred to them as Cape Verdeans or Africans. You may say I am black, but I am not African, because I have never even been to Africa. My parents are Cape Verdean, but I was born here and my nationality is Portuguese. But I feel like being Cape Verdean because in my neighbourhood most of us are from Cape Verdean parents and we all speak Creole, though I have never been to Cape Verde. So, you can say that I am both Portuguese and Cape Verdean. And in my neighbourhood I see no difference between whites and blacks, Portuguese and Cape Verdeans. It is the people outside who know nothing about our lives that make distinctions based on skin colour. But they should remember there are more white than black muggers (Cape Verdean, male, 17 years).

This Cape Verdean youth seems to have some grudge against the Portuguese who live in the middle-class neighbourhoods because of their

⁸³ This comment came about the recent fuss made by the media about the criminal activities of a gang of youths whose members were identified interchangeably as 'Negroes', 'Africans', or 'Cape Verdeans'. The case is described in subsection 6.6.1.

ignorance about the shantytown world, particularly the world of Cape Verdeans. This kind of sentiment is common to many youths in the shantytowns, who, for some reason, developed an adversarial stance towards what they see as the world of the *abonados* (rich). A world that the least successful and integrated Cape Verdean youths tend to see as divided by colour. The *malta* (people) of the *bairro* stands in opposition to the 'Portuguese' in the surrounding high-rises and fancy houses.

Because Cape Verdean youths think that studying is not worthwhile, they are unmotivated and failure becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. They do not study because they do not believe in meritocracy, and since they do not study they remain at the bottom of the social ladder. This sort of negative ideology about school and education is not particular to Cape Verdean youths. Some authors have pointed out that, for example in the U.S., that Afro-Americans and second-generation Hispanics (Cubans excluded) are more likely to be dropouts than others, such as Asians for instance. Eriksen, in his work on Mauritius, has remarked on the existence among the local Creole elite of the idea that a kind of 'malaise' prevents Creole youths from obtaining higher education (1998:84). However, the Mauritian Creole malaise cannot be compared to that of second-generation Cape Verdeans, since in the Mauritian case more than a third of the children proceed to secondary education after completing the compulsory part, whereas in the case of the Cape Verdeans just a small minority proceeds to secondary education.

This negative relationship with school and education is common to many of the immigrant communities around the world, not because of their ethnic nature but because of their inferior social position as late-comers and strangers

to the dominant ways in the host society. Sometimes, representations of 'race' and 'ethnicity', either among the immigrants or the hosts, help to perpetuate the social inferiority of the future generations.

5.6. Comparing experiences

The way the first-generation Cape Verdeans have been perceived by the Portuguese is similar to the way the British perceived the Caribbeans who migrated to Britain in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s. The same applies to the way the children of both the Cape Verdeans and the Caribbeans have been perceived by their educators in the respective host societies.

As Channer (1995:13) has pointed out, mainstream literature on education usually considers that African-Caribbean children suffer from underachievement in school. Despite the Plowden Report of 1976 arguing that black and white children living under the same circumstances were equally deprived, and that the Caribbeans were just one more group of 'poor' children, according to Brittan (1976) and Giles (1977) the teachers perceived African-Caribbean children to be of low ability and to have behavioural problems. Rex and Tomlinson (1979) have demonstrated that teachers tended to view the Caribbean children as slow and suffering from lack of concentration as well as being boisterous and less keen on education than Asians. In Portuguese schools, teachers do not have the opportunity to compare 'Africans' with 'Asians', since Asian and African families do not share the same residential areas and, therefore, their children do not frequent the same schools. Furthermore, the 'Asian' children are still too few to be noted in schools.

Like the Cape Verdean immigrants, the Caribbeans maintain a certain

ambivalence towards Creole language. They prize it as their mother tongue and as part of their non-African identity, but at the same time they are conditioned by the long-existing colonial prejudice by which Creole is viewed as a language associated with poverty, lack of education and cultural limitation. On the contrary, the language of the metropole is seen as that of education and success. Like the Caribbeans in Britain, many Cape Verdeans entered the metropole as nationals and remained so until the independence of Cape Verde was declared, in 1975. In the case of the Caribbeans, the vast majority of primary migration occurred during the 1950s and was over when the Commonwealth Immigration Act was passed, in 1962 (Cross and Entzinger 1988).

Although both the Cape Verdeans in Portugal and the Caribbeans in Britain were used as a replacement work force for the jobs that the locals spurned, the Cape Verdeans were offered even less prestigious jobs than their Caribbean counterparts. The range of activities in which one could find Caribbean immigrants in a city like London was considerable in terms of the necessary skills. There were guards on the trains, porters and ticket collectors at the railway stations and the underground, street cleaners, refuse collectors, nurses, and cleaning ladies. In the words of Hennessy, “anyone arriving at a London railway terminus in the early hours of the morning could be excused for assuming that London, like Washington DC, is a predominantly black city” (1988:36).

The Cape Verdeans were mostly seen digging trenches and moving around in scaffolding leaning against high-rises. Only a few were employed in transport and services. When compared, the experiences of the Caribbean immigrants in Britain and in the Netherlands show important differences. While the Caribbean

flow to Britain was mainly of labour migrants, to the Netherlands it was not. The Caribbeans migrated to the Netherlands mainly for educational purposes.

In the 1950s- and 1960s-Netherlands the low-end jobs were being performed by Mediterranean guest-workers (Cross and Entzinger 1988:10), as happened in Germany. Moreover, whereas the ethnic composition of the Caribbean population who migrated to Britain was fairly homogeneous, that of the Caribbeans who migrated to the Netherlands was more diverse. The Cape Verdeans who migrated to the Netherlands throughout the 1960s and 1970s also found better jobs than their counterparts who migrated to Portugal during the same period. The Cape Verdeans in the Netherlands were mainly from the islands of São Vicente and Santo Antão, whereas those in Lisbon were mainly from the island of Santiago.

In Britain, the existence of immigrants with different traditions and habits was seen as disruptive of an imagined 'British way of life', whose construction was affected by ideas of 'racial inferiority' and 'cultural incompatibility'. In the Netherlands the presence of different 'races' and 'cultures' was never seen as threatening to the 'Dutch way of life' (Cross and Entzinger 1988:15). So, in the Netherlands the overall situation of the Cape Verdeans and the Caribbeans tends to be better than in Portugal or Britain respectively.

In Britain, people of African origin are seen as not bearing a proper culture; they are thought to have been dispossessed of their original cultures by slavery. On the contrary, people of Asian origin are seen as having a rich cultural past and a variety of cultural repertoires highly valued. The same happens to some extent with the Cape Verdeans, and other immigrants of 'African origin' in general, in Portugal, where locals tend to view African

'racial' and 'cultural' attributes as more distant from 'Portuguese' culture than those of Asiatic societies.

While in Portugal there was never an official discourse voicing the fear that the 'black tide' would tarnish the matrix of Portuguese 'culture' and 'race', in Britain politicians such as Enoch Powell, in the late 1960s, and Margaret Thatcher, in the 1970s, stirred racial sentiments among Britain's white population by brandishing respectively the menace of the 'alien wedge' and the danger of being 'swamped by minority cultures'.

In the Netherlands immigrants are aligned according to major religious blocs that account for the 'pillarisation' of Dutch society. This 'pillarisation' represents a form of cultural pluralism as opposed to what happens in Britain, where class lines are more important in defining the immigrants' position within British society than their religious background (this of course in relation to the white mainstream and not between the immigrants themselves). As described by Cross and Entzinger:

Thus since the beginning of this century and sometimes even longer, each 'pillar' in the Netherlands has had its own schools, hospitals, housing corporations, trade unions, social work agencies, political parties, sports clubs, broadcasting associations, and so forth. Within each pillar there was a strong sense of solidarity that cut right across class lines. Inter-pillar contacts were virtually absent in the private sphere. In the public sphere they took place only between the elites, hence the metaphor of pillars jointly carrying their roof. The major function of the system was to guarantee each cultural or religious grouping a substantial degree of autonomy (1988:16).

In Britain, the prevailing logic until recently has been precisely the opposite: classes should prevail over ethnic affiliation. However, in the last decade the social doctrine of multiculturalism has gained more ground, both among the white mainstream and the ethnic minorities. These have learned to

negotiate more and more with the state and the local authorities based on their 'ethnic identity'. Because Britain's authorities now recognise the existence of minority cultures, immigrants and their descendants can apply for educational and social services which were previously allocated on class-based criteria. Moreover, as pointed out by Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992:738), there has been a shift from racial to cultural discrimination. In other words, social differences that were accounted for by 'race' are now accounted for by 'culture'.

Like the second-generation Caribbeans in Britain, the Cape Verdeans have also seen their expectations of upward mobility fail, even if in the Cape Verdean case they have always been lower. The Caribbeans who went to Britain were generally more educated than the Cape Verdeans who came to Portugal, and they expected to achieve a higher position than the one they really got. But this is mostly true for those who had higher education, and they were certainly not the majority. The mass of the immigrants, in both cases, have had their lives significantly improved in relation to their homeland, although in the host societies they stayed at the bottom of the social ladder. As Cross and Entzinger refer:

Migration has not been followed by upward mobility as most migrants expected. On the contrary, immediately after migration the average person of Caribbean origin holds a job of somewhat lower skill level than before departure. If one considers the fact that the overall skill level in Western Europe is much higher than in the Caribbean, the relative drop in position becomes enormous. British research findings also show that in the longer run intra-generational mobility tends to be downward rather than upward (1988:22).

It is hard to believe that the situation of the Caribbean migrants in Britain

was worse than at home and yet the migration flux could have continued for more than one decade. If the overall situation had really gotten worse people would have stopped coming as they began to know the situation of their relatives in Britain. It is true that for many migrants the host country ended up not being the *El Dorado* they had imagined in their homeland. And it is also true that migrants often conceal the real difficulties they face in their destinations. For example, in Cape Verde people with little contact with the outside world still do not know, after more than thirty years, that most of the Cape Verdean immigrants in Lisbon and nearby areas have been living in shantytowns, and that their homes are not much better than those they had in Cape Verde.

The Cape Verdeans, in Cape Verde, think that the immigrants sleep on a bed of roses and ignore the fact that their livelihood is rather thorny. The immigrants, in turn, brag to their *patrícios* about the living conditions in their destination countries. They appear in their home village with a rental car, showing off and capitalising status. This has also happened with the pioneering Portuguese migrants who went to France, Germany, and other European countries, in the 1960s and 1970s. They used to return on holidays driving second-hand Mercedes, despite dwelling in slums and other run-down quarters.

Whereas the Caribbeans in Britain concentrated mainly in inner-city areas, the Cape Verdeans in Portugal concentrated mainly in shantytowns, and more recently, in the 1990s, in the new council housing development areas. According to Cross and Entzinger (1988:23), more than four out of five black Britons live in areas officially designated as inner city, whereas fewer than one in eight of the whole population does. As 'black' is not a category that shows up in Portuguese statistics, we cannot figure out a number for Portugal. Nonetheless, one can

surely say that the majority of the people of 'African' or 'black' origin either lives in the still remaining shantytowns or in the new council housing projects. Only recently, did people of 'African' origin begin to move out to working and lower middle-class suburbs. This has been the case in the municipalities of Amadora, Sintra, Oeiras, Almada, and Setúbal. But so far the number of 'Africans' who have moved to those suburbs is small if compared to the number of those who still remain concentrated in shantytowns.

In the Netherlands, the Caribbean settlement pattern has been quite different due to a policy of dispersion. This policy was put forward in the 1970s, when the government faced immigration peaks of Surinamese. However, since the Dutch government's policy was based upon the immigrants' willingness to disperse, it did not prevent the concentration of Caribbeans in Amsterdam and Hindustanis in The Hague.

Nevertheless, and according to Cross and Entzinger, "contrary to what is the case in Britain, however, segregation appears to be decreasing again in the Netherlands at the national as well as the local level" (1988:24).

In Portugal, a growing number of families, conscious that the problems with youths and their education are higher in the shantytowns and council housing projects, have begun to move out to working and lower middle-class suburbs where the children can go to better schools and where interaction with other Cape Verdean children is reduced or even absent, as we can see from the words of one parent:

I never wanted to live in a *bairro* because I knew that it would be more difficult for my children to learn Portuguese properly, and that they would be badly influenced by children who are not properly taken care of by their parents, and who misbehave in school upsetting the rest of the class. If my children are to stay here and integrate they

have to behave like Portuguese children. In the *bairros* it is more difficult for children to have good marks, since most of them do not care for school, nor do their parents (Cape Verdean, female, 44 years).

Or from the words of another:

In the *bairro*, the children do not want to study and they get involved in drug-dealing and other wrong-doing. The schools around the *bairros* are full of naughty children who are a bad influence on the others. Most parents do not care. Living in a *bairro* is never a good visiting card, for if you say 'I am from *Pedreira*' people will run away from you. I am glad I have never had to live in one of those *bairros* with very bad reputation. My two daughters were able to study to the eleventh grade and find a job as shop assistants in a shopping centre (Cape Verdean, female, 47 years).

5.7. Upward mobility

Despite the efforts of some families, most of the Cape Verdean immigrants and descendants are still at the bottom of the social pyramid. Most of the first- and second-generation Cape Verdeans still live clustered in council housing projects, making difficult their upward mobility. Some researchers find that the slow moving up of the second generation is a function of the cultural distance between the children's background and that of the mainstream society.

According to Cross and Entzinger (1988:25), it was a radical version of this view that gave rise to the 'multicultural' curricula proposals in British and Dutch schools, by suggesting that the educational experience available contained implicitly derogatory and undermining messages for children of ethnic minorities. However, no definite research evidence has supported entirely this idea. In Portugal, only in the late 1980s did 'multiculturalism' begin to make part of the political and educational agendas.

Like in Britain, the Portuguese policy tends to treat 'ethnic minorities' in

the same way it treats the 'poor' and 'underprivileged'. In Portugal, the instrumentalisation of ethnicity is still rather incipient among the immigrant communities, Cape Verdeans included. The 'ethnic organisation' of the immigrant communities is practically non-existent as a way of political and social mobilisation. For example, there are about 5,000 Sikhs in Lisbon and nearby areas. However, despite having some religious and communitarian organisation they are still largely invisible to the rest of the society.

According to Sheila Patterson (1963, 1968, 1969), the adaptation of the Caribbean migrants to British society has not been different than the adaptation of all other working-class economic migrants. This was the case of the East European Jews and the Irish in London in the nineteenth century, or the Italians in Canada, the Puerto Ricans in New York, or the migration of the southern rural American negroes to the industrial northern cities of the U.S.

Many social analysts portray the experience of the Caribbean migrants in Britain as a negative one, and even more negative when compared to that of their country fellows in the U.S.:

[The] Caribbean people came to work, to save, and to study, and thereby to achieve occupational mobility and security. Instead they have been faced with an endless succession of barriers and disappointments. Initially their occupational skills were not recognised and, like other migrant labourers they were forced to take on unskilled and menial work (Cross and Entzinger 1988:73).

In the case of the Cape Verdean labour migrants who came to the Portuguese metropole, one cannot say their experience has been a negative one. Most of them have achieved living standards which would be unattainable in Cape Verde. The average Cape Verdean immigrant in Lisbon can afford consumption patterns which in Cape Verde are only possible for the social elite.

An immigrant working as a builder in Lisbon can earn five to seven times the salary of a primary school teacher in Cape Verde, and in some cases almost as much as a minister. And, as the cost of living in Portugal is less expensive than in Cape Verde the difference is even greater. There are Cape Verdean contractors in Portugal driving cars that the President of Cape Verde can only dream of. There are people among my informants who traded clerical work on the islands for a job in the construction industry in Portugal, not minding to trade prestige for money.

Like the Caribbeans in Britain, the success of the second-generation Cape Verdeans depends on the educational and cultural capital they are able to achieve in the host societies:

Where educational performance permits occupational mobility then migrants will not be denied that opportunity. The problem they face is gaining the linguistic, educational, and cultural 'capital' with which to invest in future job success (Cross and Entzinger 1988:75).

5.7.1. The importance of education

The Cape Verdeans and the Caribbeans, like other immigrant communities in Europe and America, remain mostly at the bottom of the social ladder, since they have not been able to achieve the necessary education to move upward. Second-generation Cape Verdeans are not alone in their disinclination for studying; this affects other immigrant communities in Europe and the U.S. Second-generation Mexicans and Mexican-Americans in the U.S. illustrate well the lack of success in education. A study carried out in 1986 at a high school in a small community of central California (Matute-Bianchi 1986, referred in Portes and Zhou 1993)

showed that the majority of the cohort who bore Spanish surnames of Mexican origin, and who entered the school in 1981, dropped out by their senior year.

The students of Mexican origin classified into different identity categories. The recently arrived Mexican immigrants were at one extreme, claiming their identity as Mexican and considering Mexico their permanent home. Among them, those who were more proficient in Spanish, due to the higher level of previous education, were the most academically successful.

Example like this contradict the commonly held idea by the elite Portuguese Cape Verdeans (see chapter four) that the use of Creole at home hinders success in school. As the Jamaican linguist Hubert Devonish has said:

The language variety spoken as the language of everyday communication by the ordinary members of a community is the most effective language medium for releasing creativity, initiative and productivity among the members of such community (1986:35, cited in DeGraff 2001:104).

The Mexican students in the example above were commonly classified as with 'limited English proficiency' (LEP), yet, this has not hampered their success in school. Indeed, only 35 per cent of these LEP students dropped out compared to 40 per cent among the native white students who frequented the same school.

The next group was the Mexican-oriented students. They spoke Spanish at home and were classified as 'fluent English proficient' (FEP). They were culturally affiliated both with Mexico and the U.S., for most were born in Mexico but had been living in the U.S. for more than five years. Despite being proud of their Mexican heritage they distinguished themselves from the first group, which they called the *recién llegados* (recently arrived). They also

distinguished themselves from the Chicanos and Cholos, who were disdained for having lost their Mexican roots. Practically, all Mexican-descent students who graduated in the top 10 per cent of the 1981 cohort belonged to this group of Mexican-oriented students.

The Chicanos were the largest group of Mexican-descent students at the school in question. They were principally second- and third-generation Mexicans. Their social affiliation was mainly to their peer-group, which they viewed as locked in conflict with the white mainstream American society. They disdained successful Mexican students as 'schoolboys' and 'schoolgirls', or 'wannabes':

To be a Chicano meant in practice to hang out by the science wing... not eating lunch in the quad where all the 'gringos' and 'schoolboys' hang out... cutting classes by faking a call slip so you can be with your friends at the 7-11... sitting in the back of classes and not participating... not carrying your books to class... not taking the difficult classes... doing the minimum to get by (Matute-Bianchi 1986:253).

At the bottom end of the 'Mexican immigrant scale' there were the Cholos, a category into which the Chicanos were imperceptibly merging. Cholos are also U.S.-born Mexican-Americans, easily identifiable by their dressing ways, language and other cultural markers, such as body language. Teachers generally see Chicanos and Cholos as 'irresponsible', 'disrespectful', 'mistrusting', 'sullen', 'apathetic', and 'less motivated', and they consider these behaviour traits as the cause of their poor school performance. As Matute-Bianchi remarks, Chicanos and Cholos are faced with the dilemma between doing well in school or continuing to be real Chicanos and Cholos, for the 'ethic' of being Chicano or Cholo is not compatible with that being a good student.

As the children of the Mexican immigrants develop a reactive subculture

of rejection of the values associated with the white American middle-class mainstream, their chance of performing well in school and getting the necessary skills to fulfil their parents' expectations of upward mobility remain low. The same happens to a significant part of the Cape Verdeans, particularly to those who praise the 'black' or 'Cape Verdean' ethos above all.

The Cape Verdeans who succeed in school, like Ezequiel's eldest son, though seen as examples of Cape Verdean achievement, are also viewed as betraying the anti-school ethos of the *bairro*. Well-succeeded second-generation Cape Verdeans like him tend to distance themselves from the dominant mentality of the *bairro* and to refuse the aspects of Cape Verdean identity that make integration more difficult. For example, second-generation parents are more willing to accept that their children learn only Portuguese, while first-generation parents generally view the learning of Creole as an essential element to the maintaining of Cape Verdean identity.

5.7.2. Cape Verdean identity in the U.S.

The Cape Verdeans' experience in Portugal can also be compared to that of their country fellows in the U.S. The problems of integration are similar in both countries. The main difference is that in the U.S. the Cape Verdeans faced a society whose structure based on 'ethnic' and 'racial' lines presented many examples from which the Cape Verdeans could draw a model for constructing their ethnic identity.

Sidney Greenfield, one of the few anthropologists to have written on Cape Verdean American identity, has pointed out four different strategies of social identification followed by the Cape Verdeans in the U.S.:

Based on research conducted in the early 1970s I outlined four strategies upon which Cape Verdeans in New Bedford appeared to base their transactions with outsiders in the larger society: (1) the Cape Verdean-Portuguese strategy; (2) the Cape Verdean-Black strategy; (3) the Cape Verdean-African strategy; (4) the Cape Verdean-American strategy (1985:226).

The Cape Verdean-Portuguese strategy was followed mostly by the Cape Verdeans from the islands of Brava and Fogo, whose skin complexion was in many cases sufficiently light for them to pass as white Portuguese. They did everything they could to avoid being taken as 'African', for that would equate them with black Americans.

Assimilation into black Americans was particularly undesirable, considering that Cape Verdean migration from Brava and Fogo began at a time when slavery was still in practice. On the one hand, the last thing that these light-skinned Cape Verdeans of Fogo and Brava wanted was to be associated with black slaves. On the other, the Portuguese coming from Madeira and Azores were not willing to accept that the Cape Verdeans presented themselves as Portuguese, since Madeirans and Azoreans viewed the Cape Verdeans as African or black. The ethnic view of the Cape Verdeans about themselves and the view that the Madeirans and Azoreans had about them did not match at all. The Azoreans and Madeirans feared that by accepting the Cape Verdeans within their social communitarian sphere they would jeopardize their chances of upward mobility in a society where the colour line was very strict.

The result was that the Cape Verdeans had to set up their own social clubs, churches, and other social institutions necessary to their life. Their success in presenting themselves to the American society as Portuguese has been limited:

Cape Verdeans therefore could project a Portuguese identity, but especially in New England, where there were large numbers of other Portuguese-Americans to oppose their inclusion in the identity category, they have not been able to attain much success in being identified as Portuguese-Americans. Still, however, individuals try in the hope that the other Portuguese-Americans will forget the colour factor and stop resisting the efforts of Cape Verdeans to have themselves defined as Portuguese-American by American society (Greenfield 1976:10).

In the 1950s and 1960s, the development of the Civil Rights Movement opened an avenue for what Greenfield has called the emergence of a Cape Verdean-Black identity.

The supporters of this position rejected their Capeverdean heritage, choosing instead to define themselves as Black Americans working to improve their position in common cause with all other peoples of colour. They joined the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) and later more militant civil rights groups (1976:11).

Many of these Cape Verdeans 'turned' black Americans left their Cape Verdean neighbourhoods and moved to the 'black ghetto' of New Bedford in order to demonstrate their allegiance to the cause of the black American people. They replaced Cape Verdean identity markers with those of black Americans by speaking Black English and dressing and growing the hair in their fashion. Some of them even married black Americans, breaking the 'rule' of Cape Verdean endogamy, widely practised by the Capeverdean-Americans until that time. The adoption of a black American identity by a significant part of the Capeverdean-Americans created a profound divide within the community. Frequently, the two sides opposed each other, with the younger Capeverdean-American generations trying to proselytise for the cause of black Americans among those who thought that the Cape Verdeans should keep a distinct identity instead of merging with

black Americans.

The third strategy emerged at the time of the independence of Cape Verde and the other Portuguese colonies, in 1975. In order to gain the support of the African colonies for the cause of the independence of Cape Verde, the Cape Verdean leader Amílcar Cabral had put up a political strategy that emphasised the unity between the Cape Verdean people and its 'African brothers' of the other Portuguese African colonies. He knew that the unity of all 'African peoples' was decisive for achieving independence from Portugal. When Cape Verde finally became independent, part of the Capeverdean-American community adopted an African identity and embraced the global struggle of all blacks in order to escape the political oppression imposed by the 'white power':

In New Bedford, Capeverdeans to adopt this militant African identity joined the PAIGC. Through the party they disseminated information emphasizing the close historical and cultural ties between the peoples of the Cape Verde Islands and the peoples of West Africa(...). The flag of the PAIGC and posters of Cabral, the party's Cape Verdean founder, who had been assassinated by the Portuguese, served as symbols of the new Capeverdean-African identity (Greenfield 1976:13).

Many Cape Verdeans were opposed to this identity strategy, since they did not want to be seen either as blacks or Africans. For them there was no difference between being taken as black American or as African Cape Verdean. The white American mainstream could not differentiate between black Americans and the other blacks, it could only differentiate between blacks and whites. It was equally bad for the Cape Verdean mainstream to be taken as either.

Finally, the fourth identity strategy emerged from the rebirth of ethnicity in America in the 1970s and 1980s. A significant part of the more recent

American-born Cape Verdeans began to claim a Capeverdean-American ethnicity using Creole language and culture as banners. They demanded that bilingual educational programs be made available for Capeverdean-American children. The teaching of Creole was introduced in the curricula of the schools that catered for the community. This revival of Cape Verdean ethnicity took off in the early 1970s:

The relatively recent rebirth of ethnicity in America, but now as a characteristic to be respected and valued, has led to the development of what has been referred to in this paper as a Capeverdean-American strategy of ethnic identity projection. Its advocates in New England seek to gain from Americans the recognition of Capeverdeans as a distinct ethnic group. To attain this end the achievements and successes of Capeverdeans, both individually and collectively, within the competitive milieu of American culture are stressed. A major tactic at present is to sponsor pageants, plays and other social events to show Capeverdeans as a culturally unique ethnic population successfully adapted to life in America (Greenfield 1976:13).

Part of the Cape Verdeans tried to gain acceptance by Americans as an ethnic group separate from stigmatised black Americans. However, most Cape Verdeans of the later generations were already too distant from their cultural roots in Cape Verde to reinvent their Cape Verdean identity; the use of Creole language had already intensely declined. Younger Cape Verdeans could no longer trace where in Cape Verde their ancestors were from, a major drawback for people who want to claim a distinct ethnic identity.

5.7.3. Reconciling ethnicity and class

The more educated sector of the Cape Verdean-American community has always tried to reach a compromise between moving upward in the social ladder and keep their Cape Verdean ethnic identity. In this aspect, the educated Cape

Verdean Americans are similar to the Portuguese Cape Verdeans of the *Associação* (see chapter five). Yet, the way the two groups call themselves reveals different priorities in terms of identity. Whilst the Cape Verdeans in the U.S. call themselves 'Cape Verdean American', the Portuguese Cape Verdeans call themselves 'Portuguese Cape Verdean'. The compromise between staying Cape Verdean and becoming American among the Cape Verdeans of the elite in the U.S is well expressed by Tyak:

[Cape Verdean lawyers, doctors and businessmen] realised the necessity of maintaining a lasting group consciousness among Capeverdeans. These leaders, gaining sophistication in understanding American ways of thinking, saw by their own experience that Capeverdeans could rise within and outside the colony by taking advantage of the educational possibilities here; but they also saw that Capeverdeans would ultimately lose their group identity and become part of the mass of American coloured (1952:71-2, cited in Greenfield 1976:13-4).

In 1976, the Smithsonian Institution invited the Cape Verdean community to participate in the Africa Diaspora program of the Festival of American Folklife. A group of Cape Verdeans would perform in an area adjacent to a group of visiting Senegalese dancers. At the pre-Festival orientation meeting, the Smithsonian staff introduced the Cape Verdean group, coming from New Bedford, as 'Cape Verdean American'. The meeting would prove to be crucial to the issue of Cape Verdean identity, as shown by the words of one of the Cape Verdean participants:

We didn't know anyone of the other people in the program so we were all very surprised when Buli, the leader of the Senegalese dancers, jumped up and began singing a Creole song to us.... They knew who Cape Verdeans were.... Buli said that Creole was still spoken in a lot of places in West Africa.... From then on our group was together with their group every night (Lillian Ramos, Acushnet, Massachusetts, cited in Almeida 1995).

The planning for the Bicentennial celebrations and the festival experience, in 1976, often evoked intense discussions about Cape Verdean cultural identity and proved essential to the questioning of Cape Verdean identity in the U.S. Were the Cape Verde Islands 'Atlantic' or 'African'? Should the Cape Verdeans call themselves Cape Verdean, Portuguese, or Cape Verdean American? These were questions arisen from the Cape Verdean participation in the Festival.

Wherever in Massachusetts and Rhode Island the Cape Verdeans have tried to establish their own African identity, they have faced the opposition of black Americans in general. To the black Americans, the Cape Verdeans are simply trying to deny that they are simply black people like the rest of the blacks in the U.S. Even some of the Cape Verdean community leaders agreed that emphasising a separate African identity would put at risk the alliance between all communities of black people in the U.S. Therefore, Capeverdean-Americans face a difficult negotiation of their identity being cornered between the white Portuguese and the black Americans.

In Portugal, the black Cape Verdeans claim their own identity against the Portuguese and the other black immigrants. They consider themselves closer to the Portuguese than any other immigrant community for cultural, 'racial' and linguistic reasons. They think of themselves as more European-like and see their Creole language as a derivation of Portuguese. Nevertheless, among the younger generations there is a growing number of youths who are incorporating ideals of a 'pan-African' identity into their Cape Verdean identity. They prefer listening to rap, hip-hop, zouk, kudur and other musical styles emerging from outside of the Cape Verdean world, than listen to Cape Verdean music made in Cape Verde, which they view as backward. These youths want to affirm themselves as

blacks but they do not want to be treated as *pretos*, like their parents are. They want to have the image of black Americans, not the image of their parents, who are simple workers at the bottom rung of the social ladder.

The situation of the elder Cape Verdeans in America and in Portugal is quite similar to that of the Caribbean immigrants in the U.S., which has been very well described by Mary Waters (1990, 1999). These go to great pains not to be merged into the large category of 'blacks', by which the American mainstream society classifies all people of African origin. As the episode reported below elucidates, the American society, generally, does not distinguish between the different origins of black people:

The Crown Heights riots[New York]⁸⁴ were reported in the press and perceived by many residents as growing out of black and Jewish relations. However, Crown Heights is an unusual neighbourhood composed of about 90,000 Caribbean immigrants as well as 35,000 African Americans. While press reports at the time went to great lengths to identify the Hasidic sect of Judaism as the ethnicity of the Jewish people involved, the West Indian immigrants involved were usually referred to as "blacks" (Waters 1999:3).

Like the Caribbeans, the Cape Verdeans are frequently merged into the general category of 'blacks' instead of being perceived through their own specific identity. Most Portuguese cannot tell the difference between the Cape Verdeans and other blacks originated from the other former Portuguese colonies. As Robert K. Merton has remarked (1967), in the U.S. 'race' works as a master status defining category overriding other identity markers. Moreover, non-black Americans tend to see 'race' and 'ethnicity' as interchangeable categories applicable to black Americans, which makes them fail to recognise the 'ethnic'

⁸⁴ These riots were triggered by an incident involving a black child from Guyana and a Hasidic Jewish driver. In the sequence of the incident and among tens of injured people a 29-year-old Australian rabbinical student was stabbed to death.

heterogeneity of the black American population (Waters 1999:5).

In the U.S., Caribbean social networks are distinct from the networks of other black immigrants, since they do not mix with black Americans or other immigrant communities viewed as black. The Caribbeans are more sympathetic to the Cape Verdeans, for instance, than to Nigerians or other 'African' immigrants.

Until quite recently, African-Americans were enculturated with the idea that they had no culture of their own since their ancestors had been uprooted from Africa and severed from their African cultures. Although Herskovits (1947) has long demonstrated the fallacy of this idea, the American mainstream still thinks of the black people in terms of 'race' and not 'culture'. For Caribbeans and Cape Verdeans it is easier to make others believe their cultural tradition, since both have century-old traditions situated outside Africa. Their 'tradition' was enriched by the crossing between African and European 'cultures' and 'races'.

The Cape Verdean immigrants in Portugal are in a different position since they were the first blacks whom the metropolitan Portuguese contacted. As previously said, the metropolitan Portuguese were not used to contact with blacks before migration from Cape Verde became intense, in the early 1970s. When the Cape Verdeans began to arrive there was no memory of black people in the metropole. However, the collective representation of the *preto* (black) was not a favourable one, and the black Cape Verdeans faced the same challenges that the black Caribbeans and others faced in their destinations. As Waters points out:

Persistent and obvious racial discrimination undermines the openness toward whites the immigrants have when they first arrive. Low wages and poor working conditions are no longer attractive to the children of the immigrants, who use American, not Caribbean, yardsticks to measure how good a job is. Racial discrimination in housing channels the immigrants into neighbourhoods with inadequate city services and high crime rates. Inadequate public schools undermine their hopes for their children's future. Over time the distinct elements of West Indian culture the immigrants are most proud of – a willingness to work hard, lack of attention to racism, a high value on education, and strong interests in saving for the future – are undermined by the realities of life in the United States (1999:7-8).

Not only the values that worked as pillars of the Caribbean and Cape Verdean American communities have been long undermined in America, as well as these values are already being undermined in their homelands by the development of economic capitalism⁸⁵. Nonetheless, the economic development and social transformation that Cape Verde has suffered is much less significant than that of most Caribbean nations, and many of the Cape Verdeans who come to Portugal nowadays are still guided by more traditional values. For example, a girl who was my informant complained that when she arrived in Portugal she had difficulty in understanding why the Cape Verdean youths born in Portugal behaved so badly in school, while the youths in Cape Verde were so much more respectful.

The Cape Verdeans and the Caribbeans have entered similar processes of integration in their host societies. Both are losing their distinctiveness and merging into the mass of 'blacks' or 'Africans'. Residential and educational segregation have been the main causes for the cornering of both groups in their

⁸⁵ Many of those values, which were present in either the Caribbean or Cape Verdean peasant societies, are being weakened by the capitalistic development of those countries' economies. In relation to what is happening in the new emerging Caribbean societies see Hamid (1990:31-78), Richardson (1992), Patterson (1989:476-486), Gordon et al (1997:190-226).

respective host societies into the large category of blacks and for diminishing the prospects of future generations:

Living in an all-black neighbourhood can increase the pressures on West Indian families – exposing them to crime, declining private investment, and a declining tax base for city services. Yet perhaps the most important consequence of living in these neighbourhoods for West Indian families is the exposure it brings to the neighbourhood schools. The hopes of these immigrant parents for a better future for their children hinge on the children doing well in school. Schooling has always been seen as the path to upward mobility for the children of immigrants, but one can argue that the stakes are even higher now because of changes in the economy (Waters 1999:253).

In the U.S., while the success of second- and third-generation European descendants was shaped by decades of economic growth after the Second World War, the failure of second- and third-generation Caribbeans and Cape Verdeans relates to the drastic changes in the American economy, which have wiped out well-paying blue-collar jobs for people with little education. The immigrants' children have now to reach the top half of the educational system in order to achieve socioeconomic mobility, which in turn is becoming more and more difficult because the schools in the neighbourhoods where they live are turning worse and worse. This is the challenge that second-generation Cape Verdeans in Portugal are also facing.

5.8. Conclusion

The major part of the 'Cape Verdean community' in Portugal is constituted by black and mulatto immigrants and their second- and third-generation descendants. These Cape Verdeans live mainly in shantytowns and council housing projects and do not interact with the elite Portuguese Cape Verdeans. The immigrants are mainly *badius*, whereas the elite Cape Verdeans are mainly

sampadjudos. Both groups are separated by 'class' and 'race'. While the Portuguese Cape Verdeans tend to perceive themselves as Portuguese but with a Cape Verdean cultural background, the Cape Verdean immigrants and their offspring tend to perceive themselves as black, though they like to distinguish themselves from the Africans of Africa, such as the Guineans of Guinea-Bissau, who they call *manjacos di Guiné* (*manjaco* are one of the many 'tribal' groups said to exist in Guinea-Bissau). The immigrants and the elite Cape Verdeans are divided by a class line: while most of the immigrants belong to the urban underclass of the shantytowns and council housing, the Portuguese Cape Verdeans belong to the middle and upper-middle classes.

While the Cape Verdean men came to work in the construction industry, the women began to peddle fish in the streets and to pull crates of fish in wholesale markets. In the 1980s, when the peddling of fish became illegal, the women moved into the cleaning work. The men continue to work mainly in the construction industry, and some of them have become small sub-contractors.

The life of the Cape Verdean immigrants is quite circumscribed to the world of shantytowns and council housing projects. The *bairro* is the main unit of the Cape Verdean world. Their daily routine, apart from work, runs mostly within the *bairros*. The children are raised within the world of the *bairro* and usually frequent schools that cater almost exclusively for the *bairros*, turning them lower-class ghettos in which second-generation Cape Verdeans are trapped.

The segregation process that affects the Cape Verdean immigrants also affects the people of the lower classes in general, whether they are Portuguese or other. Segregation also seems to affect people independently of differences in

skin colour. Within the *bairros* people tend to override 'racial' difference. Their common class position superimposes on the rest of their identities. The people in the *bairros* tend to construct their identity in opposition (even when sometimes that opposition takes the form of imitation) to the surrounding world of the middle and upper classes.

While the first immigrants accepted their position at the bottom end of the social scale, since their living in Portugal, though not abundant, was much better than the one they had in Cape Verde, their descendants are not willing to accept the position of their parents. They view themselves vis-à-vis the Portuguese white middle-class mainstream and not vis-à-vis their parents or the people in Cape Verde, where most of them have never been.

Progressively, the Cape Verdeans are merging into the large category of 'pretos', losing the cultural capital that allowed their parents to be considered hard-working and honest people. A large part of the Cape Verdean youths dropout from school too early and lack the professional qualification that would allow them to move upward. Some of the dropouts become specialised workers in the construction industry, but others become involved in illicit activities, such as drug trafficking and robbery. The best alternative to studying is to become a successful footballer or a rapper, but this only within the reach of very few.

Generally, second-generation girls perform better than boys in school, as happens to the generality of the Portuguese population. This allows young Cape Verdean women to get better jobs than young Cape Verdean men. Also, young women are not involved in marginal activities as often as young men and have a better understanding of what they need to do in order to escape the underclass of their parents. Young Cape Verdean women also use education as a way out of

the Cape Verdean male-supremacist world. Education is often their passport to emancipation, both economic and cultural.

Because Cape Verdeans in their new council housing continue to live more to themselves than to the outside, and to be mostly endogamous, it is likely that it will take a few more generations for them to integrate in the mainstream society. 'Interracial' marriages are still uncommon in Portugal, though they are now more common than two or three decades ago. These marriages are probably still rarer in Portugal than in Britain, where interracial marriages account only for about 1 per cent of all marriages (Coleman 1985, referred by Tizard and Phoenix 1993:1). In the late 1980s, in Britain, data gathered on 'interracial' marriage showed that nearly 30 per cent of people of West Indian origin, under the age of thirty, who were married, or living in co-habitation, had a 'white' partner (Tizard and Phoenix 1993:13). Although 'black' and 'white' attitudes to intermarriage are more sympathetic today than two or three decades ago, the fact is that very few people marry across 'racial' borders. In general, people still hold very much to notions of 'race' derived from the old nineteenth-century theories of 'scientific racism' (even if they do not know what that was). Although in Portugal there are no specific data on 'racial' intermarriage, we can conclude by sheer observation that the number of mixed couples in shantytown and council housing neighbourhoods is still very small.

The fact that most black Cape Verdean youths perceive their relation to the mainstream society as a racialised one does not ease their integration. On the contrary, it reinforces their identity as 'black' or 'African'. Those who are 'class' conscious instead of 'race' conscious are more likely to overcome their social condition, for they realise that education is the only thing that will help

them to move upward in the social ladder. However, as the schools they frequent do not offer them the best of educational quality, most are doomed failure.

6. The Cape Verdeans: Views from Without

Officer Felisberto Silva, 25, married and father of a 16-month old son, belonged to the police force of Damaia since July 1999. The young officer was African and lived in the *bairro* of Cova da Moura, in Amadora. (*Diário Digital*, 5 Feb. 2002, my translation)

6.1. Introduction

The above quotation from a digital newspaper, about the murdering of a black Portuguese police officer whose parents are Cape Verdean, is somehow symbolic of the way the Portuguese continue to refer to the descendants of black immigrants. The white mainstream tends to view second-generation blacks as the 'other', the 'African', forgetting that these young 'Africans' are Portuguese-born and therefore entitled to feel Portuguese (as long as they want). Although there has been a growing effort by the media to give out only representations of the 'other' which are politically correct nowadays, they are still affected by old ideas of 'race' and 'colour' which lurk in the back of the Portuguese mind.

This chapter is about how the outsiders view the Cape Verdeans in Portugal. When we analyse the construction and presentation of a social identity, perhaps the most important and problematic thing is the identification and definition of our standpoint. Frequently, the categories of the analyst and of the analysed mix-up making it difficult to distinguish between the insider's and the outsider's view⁸⁶. Social identities are constructs in which both insiders and outsiders participate in variable degrees. In other words, the process of identity construction is partly conducted from within and partly from without. Partly

⁸⁶ For a fairly complete review of the different views on the differences between the 'insider's' and the 'outsider's' perspective on the interpretation of cultural systems see Pike (1954), Harris (1969:568-604), Harris (1976), Geertz (1976), Headland, Pike and Harris (1990).

achieved and accepted by the insiders and partly imposed by the outsiders (see Jenkins 1996, 1997). And, very often, identity from within does not match identity from without.

In the Cape Verdean case, like in many others, the identity representations that the Cape Verdeans have about themselves do not always coincide with those that the Portuguese and other immigrant minorities have about them. In the following pages I will try to describe and explain how some representations produced outside the social world of the Cape Verdeans may be driving the construction of Cape Verdean identity in a way not desired by the Cape Verdeans themselves, or, at least, by the elder generation. In some cases the Cape Verdeans are themselves instrumentalising the representation that the outside mainstream has of them for their own advantage.

The two previous chapters have been about how two different groups of Cape Verdeans view themselves in postcolonial Portugal. Those chapters presented mostly, though not exclusively, views emerging from within the groups themselves. As Jenkins (1997:72-3) remarked, social anthropologists have been biased towards viewing identity more in terms of categorisation from within than from without. Yet, anthropologists like Fredrik Barth (1969) and Sandra Wallman (1978), for example, have been concerned with the distinction between 'group identification' and 'social categorisation'. 'Social categorisation' means the process through which identity is ascribed and imposed from without. This is what this chapter is about: the outside agency in the construction and imposition of a social identity to the Cape Verdean immigrants and their second-generation descendants, as well as the role that these play in accepting or rejecting it.

6.2. 'Place of birth' and 'nationality'

There are several different ways of belonging to the 'Cape Verdean' category, as Saint-Maurice (1997:65-7) has noticed in her work about the identity of the Cape Verdeans in Portugal. When we cross birth-place and nationality three meaningful categories of Cape Verdeans emerge: a) those who were born in Cape Verde and have Cape Verdean nationality; b) those who were born in Cape Verde but have Portuguese nationality; and c) those who were born in Portugal and have Portuguese nationality. According to Saint-Maurice, the a) category represents about 66 per cent of the overall population of Cape Verdeans in Portugal, the b) about 33 per cent, and the c) about 1 per cent.

The Cape Verdeans who were born in Cape Verde and have Cape Verdean nationality are mostly immigrants who came after the late 1960s. They are the first-generation immigrants who began their migration journey as Portuguese nationals and ended up as foreigners. Many only realised that they were no longer Portuguese nationals years after the independence of Cape Verde. The Portuguese parliament had passed legislation that obliged those born in Cape Verde and the other colonies to declare their preference for continuing Portuguese, otherwise they would turn nationals of the newly independent countries.

Before, and according to the law of nationality (Law No. 2098, 29 July 1959), people born in Cape Verde were considered Portuguese nationals with equal rights to the Portuguese citizens born in the metropole. Between the time of independence, July 5, 1975 and October 3, 1981, all Cape Verdeans who fled from the ex-colonies to the Portuguese metropole were accepted as Portuguese citizens without any reservation. Yet, as the influx of 'returnees' grew larger and

larger, the Portuguese government decided to restrain it issuing a new law of nationality in 1981 (Law No. 37, 3 October 1981). According to this new law, people born in the ex-colonies were only considered Portuguese if born from a Portuguese father or mother.

The new law of nationality came as an expedient to exclude 'pure Africans' from adopting Portuguese nationality after independence just by being born in territories that had been under Portuguese law and administration. The principle of *jus soli* was replaced with that of *jus consanguinis*. To claim Portuguese nationality, a person born in one of the former colonies had to present a birth certificate of one of parent (either father or mother) showing that he or her was a Portuguese national. This made it impossible for those Africans whose parents had been born under Portuguese administration but had never achieved the status of *assimilado* to claim Portuguese nationality.

In fact, the Cape Verdeans were not directly affected by this change, except those whose Portuguese ancestors had gone to Cape Verde two or three generations ago, since the people born in Cape Verde were always considered Portuguese nationals, and the segregation between 'colonials' and 'indigenous' was never effective in the colony of Cape Verde. However, this shift in the law of nationality helped to reinforce the distance that the Portuguese Cape Verdeans described in chapter four felt in relation to the 'Africans' of the other colonies. Among the Cape Verdeans themselves, those who were black and had no recognised Portuguese ancestry could also lose their Portuguese nationality, as it happened with some of the Cape Verdean immigrants described in chapter five.

The second group mentioned by Saint-Maurice is that of the Cape Verdeans who kept their Portuguese nationality. These are mostly people who

served in the colonial administration throughout the 'empire'. Most of them are white or have light-skinned complexions. Most of these Cape Verdeans were at odds with the PAIGC's (later PAICV's) rule in Cape Verde and have never returned to their homeland after the independence.

The third group are the second-generation Cape Verdeans, who never set foot in Cape Verde and were born in Portugal, though not being necessarily Portuguese nationals. These second-generation Cape Verdeans are mostly the descendants of the black Cape Verdean immigrants who live in shantytowns and in the new council housing projects.

A fourth group, not mentioned by Saint-Maurice, are those who have dual nationality. They are few and tend mostly those who are more aware of the advantages of being Cape Verdean and Portuguese at the same time. One of the advantages is to be able to move within the E.U. with a Portuguese passport. This is important for those Cape Verdeans who have family in other E.U. countries, for they can thus move around. Others have dual nationality in order to be able to vote on the elections of both countries and thus better defend their interests. Cape Verde has a very open policy towards dual nationality, allowing people with a past history connected to the country or people who have lived for a significant period there and have played an important economic or cultural role to apply for Cape Verdean nationality, without having to renounce any of the previously held nationalities.

In one case I know, a Portuguese Cape Verdean who works as an executive in Lisbon for a multinational which has also a business interest in Cape Verde, has applied for Cape Verdean nationality a few years after independence in order to have all the privileges of Cape Verdean citizenship

while doing business in Cape Verde, and to avoid all the bureaucratic hindrances that the Portuguese and other foreigners are obliged to go through when they go to Cape Verde. He has two passports and two identity cards which he can use according to his best convenience.

As we saw earlier, in the case of the Cape Verdeans nationality and ethnic identity do not necessarily coincide, especially in the case of second-generation black Cape Verdeans, who, despite most being Portuguese nationals, continue to be perceived by the mainstream as 'Africans'. Quite often, they are described by the media and the educated mainstream as *jovens de origem africana* (youths of African origin), which reveals that they are not yet seen as Portuguese. The boundary based on 'race' is still quite active and is pushing these black Cape Verdean youths into the category of *preto* or *africano*, which are used by the mainstream as synonyms.

The mainstream tends to homogenise the identity of black people, ignoring the specific identities of each group that constitutes the whole category of 'African origin'. White people usually say *os pretos são todos iguais* (blacks are all the same), contributing thus to the blurring of a specific Cape Verdean identity.

6.3. School and the 'multicultural society'

A revealing way of how ethnic difference is officially constructed from without is the form that teachers have to fill in order to report the results of students by 'nationality' and 'ethnicity'. The report-form contains a grid which is primarily divided by continents and then by a mixture of 'ethnic' and 'national' categories. The main divisions are: 'African origin', 'Asiatic origin' and 'European origin'.

Then each of those is divided according to the home country of the students' parents. For example, the Cape Verdean students belong to the main group 'African origin' and then to the category 'Cape Verde'. The gypsies, who cannot be precisely defined in terms of national origin, are put within the main group 'European origin' and then simply labelled 'gypsies'. We should not forget that many of these students labelled as ethnic and national 'others' are in fact Portuguese nationals. Such is the case of the gypsies, who have been living in Portugal for centuries, not to speak of second-generation Cape Verdeans and other second generations of 'African origin' who are Portuguese nationals.

6.3.1. 'Ethnic' labelling

To the several categories of 'other' opposes the category of 'lusos', which refers to the 'Portuguese' students without any known ethnic background. The 'lusos' stand to other categories within Portuguese society as the 'English' stand to the 'West Indians', 'Pakistanis', 'Indians', and the other categories of non-English people within British society. The 'lusos' are the primeval Portuguese. Finally, there is the category of the 'other non-lusos', aimed at shelving those who do not fit in any of the previous categories.

If one student is born from a Portuguese parent and a Cape Verdean parent, he or she will be placed in the category of 'non-luso'. The classification criterion is a mixture of 'culture' and 'nationality'. So, in the case in point, the student, despite being a Portuguese national, is viewed as 'non-luso', since he carries the 'otherness' of his or her Cape Verdean parent. This is a common situation among second-generation 'Cape Verdeans'. Nonetheless, this is consented to by their parents and the youths themselves, who instead of refusing

being categorised as 'others' accept it.

This sort of ethnic grid was put into practice in 1991, the time when the government created the *Secretariado Coordenador dos Programas de Educação Multicultural* (Executive Order N°63/91, 18 February 1991) (Co-ordination Secretariat for Multicultural Educational Programmes) with the intention of gathering information on how the different ethnic minorities were faring in school. This project came up at a time when Portuguese immigration had begun to grow fast, and Portugal was turning quickly into an immigration country. Recently, this cabinet was transformed into *Secretariado Entreculturas* (SEC) (Executive Order N° 5/2001, 1 February 2001) (Secretariat of Intercultures), which is continuing the work of its predecessor.

Along with this initiative, the government created, in 1995, the position of *Alto Comissário para a Imigração e Minorias Étnicas* (ACIME) (High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities) (Decree-Law 296-A/95, 17 November 1995), whose objective is to promote the end of racial discrimination within Portuguese society in housing, education, employment, and to contribute to the construction of a 'multicultural society'. The ACIME acts as a government's interlocutor to the representatives of immigrants and ethnic minorities. Its creation represents the assumption on the part of the government that immigration is now a main 'problem' to the country.

The words 'immigrant' and 'ethnic minority' first entered the government's programme in 1995-96. The recognition by the Portuguese state that it should begin take into account its growing immigrant population created the conditions for the associations representative of the immigrant and ethnic minorities to better organise in terms of their social and political claims. As

Horta (2000:88) has remarked, whereas in the 1970s and 1980s immigrant associations were mainly providing welfare, educational, cultural and recreational services, in the 1990s they became more and more politicised and institutionalised.

Yet, the public discourse on 'ethnicity' and 'minorities' is still in its infancy when compared to the development it has reached in other European countries, like Britain, France or Germany. Most of the immigrant and ethnic minority associations have not gone beyond the level of the *bairro* organisation. In the case of the Cape Verdeans, there are only two or three associations that act on a non-*bairro* basis. This is the case, for example, of the *Associação Caboverdiana de Lisboa* (Cape Verdean Association of Lisbon), which has played an important role in negotiating with the Portuguese authorities and the government of Cape Verde funding and actions for the improvement of the Cape Verdean immigrants' living conditions. In some cases, those associations have also acted at shantytown level, for example, promoting schooling for adult illiterate Cape Verdeans.

Contrary to what happens in other European countries where the discourse of 'ethnicity' has entered the public domain at large, in Portugal 'race' is still more important than 'ethnicity' in terms of categorisation, either from within or from without the world of ethnic and immigrant minorities. Despite Banton (1983:106) saying that ethnicity is generally more related to the identification of 'us' from within, while 'racial' differentiation is more related to ascription from without and categorisation and imposition by 'others', people in the mainstream society, and the Cape Verdeans themselves, still organise cultural and physical differences more in terms of *raça* (race) than *etnicidade* (ethnicity).

The use of 'ethnicity' to organise social difference has not yet entered the public sphere and it is still very much confined to the discourse of academia. Nonetheless, the politicians are quickly incorporating 'ethnic difference' and 'multiculturalism' into their rhetoric, in order to get the vote of immigrant communities and to pace up with the international mainstream. The construction of the Cape Verdeans as 'black' by the white mainstream society is seen by social analysts and politicians as racist, while its construction as an 'ethnic minority' represents the 'politically correct' discourse about cultural difference. So, Portugal is becoming ideologically multicultural, a change that runs from the top to the bottom, and from the more to the less educated people.

The school is the quintessential arena to observe the emergence of new ways of constructing social difference between 'us' and 'them' – to use the words of anthropologist Thomas Eriksen (1992). A few decades ago, the Portuguese society was still dominated by a small elite of landowners who owned latifundia in the metropole and plantations in the colonies. The few existing industries were also in their hands. The mass of Portuguese population were peasants. In the colonies a small white elite ruled over the 'indigenous' mass. The construction of social difference was made mostly through the categories of 'rich' and 'poor' in the metropole and 'black and white' in the colonies. The metropolitan middle class was almost inexistent.

For decades, in the twentieth century, the Portuguese population was mostly white. During the Second World War a number of war refugees came to Portugal, but being white and European they integrated and became indistinguishable within the Portuguese mainstream. In most cases, these refugees entered the category of the 'rich'. The 'gypsies' were for a long time

the only significant 'other' that the Portuguese had to face. They were the only racialised 'poor', since people would refer to them as a different 'race'. In fact, people defined the gypsies as *raça cigana* (gypsy race).

Until the revolution of the 25th April 1974 there were two types of schools: the *liceu*, which prepared students for the university, and the *escola industrial e comercial* (commercial and industrial school), which prepared students for semi-qualified and qualified work in the industry and services. This differentiation in the educational system made the backbone of the Portuguese social class system. After the revolution, the ideology of 'democracy' became dominant (though there were several different and conflicting interpretations), and the 'official' abolition of social classes was declared. The former system of *liceus* and *escolas comerciais e industriais* was discarded in order to promote the abolition of social classes. Priority was given to the type of education that could lead the highest possible number of students into the university. All former commercial and technical schools turned into secondary schools. This ideology of 'class-less' education lasted for about a decade after the revolution.

Before the revolution, different schools catered for different social classes, but there was no 'ethnic' differentiation within Portuguese society. Social difference was constructed by way of 'class', based on wealth and status. During the last quarter of a century, with the coming of *pretos* (black) and *mulatos* (mulattos) from the former African colonies, Portuguese society quickly became 'racially' diverse. As the number of 'African' children frequenting school grew, urban schools became a space for the encounter between the 'Portuguese' and the 'other'. If during the first decade or so those who planned education ignored more or less the existence of a significant number of 'non-Portuguese' children,

with time they began to realise that Portugal was no longer an all-white country. This opened the way for a 'multicultural' view of education. Curiously, the introduction of multicultural education represents the return of a multi-class view on education. This multicultural view is nothing but a way of recognising and institutionalising class differences under the guise of 'culture'. Categories such as 'Cape Verdeans', 'gypsies', or 'Africans' are nothing but new labels to classify people who before were seen as 'poor', 'barefooted', 'people of the shacks', 'rural' or 'peasant'. These new categories represent simply new forms of constructing social difference recently incorporated by Portuguese society and related to increasing urbanisation and immigration.

6.3.2. The paradox of 'multiculturalism'

Based on the argument that 'we' must accept cultural difference, politicians and education policy planners are promoting social discrimination through education. As Bhikhu Parekh has affirmed, the multiculturalist discourse may contribute to the further marginalisation of minorities:

It confines minority cultures to the private realm and hands over the public realm of common culture to the majority. The minorities are free to cherish their differences, but as far as the shared public realm is concerned they are required to accept it as is. The liberal response thus does little more than carve out a precarious area of diversity on the margins of a predominately assimilationist structure (1990:67, cited in Vertovec 1999:xxxii).

Vertovec himself has clearly enunciated one of the problems emerged from 'multicultural policies':

In the name of multiculturalism, Western societies have witnessed since the 1980s a proliferation of discourses concerning the general place of minorities,

programmes designed to foster equality, institutional structures created to provide better social services, and resources extended to ethnic minority organisations. Despite much goodwill and not inconsiderable evidence of progress in local and national initiatives concerning minorities, however, such developments have often in effect excluded minorities from, rather than facilitated their engagement with, the majority public domain. In significant ways this has been because many public policies and wider political discourses surrounding multiculturalism tend to employ ill-defined ideas and implicit notions – particularly regarding ‘culture’ – which, when operationalised, function socially and politically to separate and distance members of given minorities. These ‘culturalist’ underpinnings found in a variety of multiculturalist initiatives can be seen to echo or to parallel views espoused in the so-called ‘new cultural racism’ (1996:49).

In the metropolitan area of Lisbon, the schools are more and more segregated, with those offering multicultural education being also those which cater almost exclusively to the new urban underclass wherein the new immigrant minorities locate. For the children of Cape Verdean immigrant families, frequenting the school within their *bairro* means that they will be treated as ‘Cape Verdean’. They will be given a taste of ‘their own’ culture, which may include the history of Cape Verde, a country they will never visit and about which they do not care the least, since their ‘Capeverdeanness’ is a *bairro* construct and oriented to it, not to the supposed Cape Verdean ‘nation’.

The ‘paradox of multiculturalism’ (Eriksen 1993:143) is that in encouraging ‘cultural diversity’ it makes room for certain groups of citizens to have ‘their own culture’, with or without their consent. And, based on the existence of different ‘cultures’, the state denies equal treatment to those groups of citizens. In the case of the ‘Cape Verdeans’, they are given a different educational programme, which may contribute to the educational isolation of the Cape Verdean youths in the *bairros*, distancing them even further from the

outside middle-class mainstream. The institutionalisation of 'ethnic' labels of social differentiation may override the 'class system', which should be the backbone of the social structure in a democratic society, and chain the immigrant minorities to perpetual notions of 'culture', 'race', and 'national origin'. The perpetuation of 'cultural difference' proposed by multiculturalism may well be the perpetuation of second-class citizenship, discrimination, and social inequality.

Multiculturalism may also be a euphemism for 'racial' differentiation. As Christian Joppke recognises when describing the situation in the U.S.: "multicultural claims-making flourished exactly when the use of racial distinctions became increasingly questioned in the legal and political spheres" (1999:170). For example, in the U.S., in 1981, the words 'multiculturalism' and 'multicultural' appeared only in 40 articles in all major American newspapers, but in 1992 the same words appeared in 2000 articles (Bernstein 1995:4, cited in Joppke 1999:170). Multiculturalism is becoming fast and worldwide (or at least Europe- and America-wide) the new orthodoxy in terms of education.

Portugal is just following the international main trend. The introduction of curricula that teach the history of Cape Verde, and eventually the teaching of Cape Verdean Creole, is nothing but the glossing by Portuguese educators of the solution proposed by multiculturalists in other European countries and in the U.S. This, in turn, responds to the growing demand by immigrant minorities of educational programmes that teach the cultural specificity of their 'communities'. As Joppke points out:

Much like affirmative action, multiculturalism is at first a proposal to solve the race problem, and it has only subsequently been adopted by claims-making immigrant

groups. Its most extreme form is the advocacy of an Afrocentric curriculum, which denies the possibility of a shared culture of nationhood (1999:170).

For example, in the U.S. the demanding by Afro-Americans of an 'Afrocentric' curriculum represents a good example of what multiculturalism can lead into. The 'Afrocentrists' claim that there is no such thing as a common American culture, and that this is just a misrepresentation used by those who have the hegemonic cultural power in order to keep their position. Multiculturalism is not based on new ideas, but on old ones dressed up in new clothes. As Vertovec says, it is now "ubiquitous in popular discourse and government policies around the world" (1999:xxiv). In the past, 'cultural pluralism' has been the pretext for a similar cultural and political agenda, which at the time was viewed as a good alternative to 'assimilation'.

In Britain, in early 1960s, education aimed at the assimilation of the immigrants. In 1963, a report of the Commonwealth Immigrant Advisory Council defended that the system could not perpetuate the different values of the immigrants (Rose 1969:266, cited in Joppke 1999:235), and sooner or later they would integrate into the British mainstream. A decade later, in 1973, the British authorities began to assume that the children of the immigrants could not be treated as the 'British' children who lived in deprived areas. A special treatment was required for the immigrants' children. In 1979, when a committee ruled by Anthony Rampton began to study the problem of the Caribbeans' underachievement, the government had no qualms about using the expression 'ethnic minorities' when referring to the children of immigrants.

By that time, the acceptance of a 'multiracial' and 'multicultural' society had been officially assumed by the British educational authorities. In the early

1980s, many Local Education Authorities had written policy statements on multicultural education (Tomlinson 1986:193, cited in Joppke 1999:236). Following the 'Caribbean problem' of underachievement, the concern of the educational authorities shifted to the 'integration problem' of Asian students with very diverse cultures. Lord Swan in his report *Education for All* (1985) speaks of a 'pluralistic' but at the same time cohesive Great Britain. It envisages individuals primarily as members of 'ethnic groups' and secondarily as part of the wider society. He saw the task of the government's policy not only as tolerating but as assisting the 'ethnic minorities' in the construction of their distinct identities.

In the 1990s, Portugal began to try and apply what other countries, like Britain, had done a few decades earlier.

6.4. Portuguese *patroas* and Cape Verdean *empregadas*

The contact between the Portuguese middle-class mainstream and the Cape Verdeans is rare. The most common form of contact is through the employment of black Cape Verdean women as cleaners or maids. So, the contact happens mainly between women: the *patroa* (mistress) and the *empregada* (employee).

The other way through which the white mainstream knows about the Cape Verdeans is the media. Almost invariably, these only tell the bad news such as: the youths who robbed the gas station; the clash between the police force and the youths who stole a car and sought sanctuary in the black neighbourhood; or the social problems and poor living conditions in the Cape Verdean neighbourhoods. The good news are rare and usually refer to the set up of new infrastructures in the neighbourhoods, such as kindergartens, sports teams, workshops, or

recreational and cultural associations. But the white mainstream usually remembers the worst news and forgets the best.

We cannot say that there is a uniform view on the part of the white mainstream society about the Cape Verdeans or Africans in general. The different cases illustrate different experiences of contact. In the following paragraphs I will present a few instances which exemplify some of the outcomes when the Cape Verdean immigrants meet other people. These encounters sometimes produce positive outcomes other times negative ones. The following situation is an example of the positive construction of the identity of Cape Verdean women by white Portuguese *patroas*:

During the last ten years I have had three Cape Verdean *mulher-a-dias*⁸⁷. They were all very good and I have never had any complaint about them. The first two I lost when they went to live in another *bairro*. The third is still working for me. One of them took care of my little children until they were three. She would come in the morning and leave in the evening when I came home from work. The first one, I remember, had trouble at home with her husband. He became an alcoholic and started to beat her up. She had three children, of which two were of a previous relationship with a man who left her at some point. She lived in the *Pedreira* [the *bairro* can be seen from the *patroa*'s window]. One day she came and told me that she had decided to leave the *bairro* and get rid of her man. She told me that if I wanted she could send another Cape Verdean to replace her. She was a good worker. I never found any reason to complain about her work. She never touched drinks, perfumes, food or anything else, as some of my friends' maids do. The only thing I do not like in the Cape Verdeans is when they miss their schedule without a warning. Sometimes they miss a day and do not care to call you just to tell that they will not come that day. But with the kind of living they have in the *bairro* I imagine it is difficult to do better (Portuguese *patroa*, 37 years).

In this example, the image that the Portuguese *patroa* has of her Cape Verdean *empregadas* is positive, though I could feel some kind of paternalism in

⁸⁷ A maid who does the cleaning, cooking, and may take care of children, but who does not stay overnight.

her words. She depicts her Cape Verdean employees as women who have troubled lives and have to cope with the harsh conditions of shantytown life. She sees the Cape Verdean women as reliable workers, capable of performing up to the expected cleaning standards, and not being lazy and sloppy. She thinks that Cape Verdean women are hardworking and reliable, but often have troublesome and uncooperative men at home.

Yet, not all Portuguese *patroas* report the same positive experience with their Cape Verdean cleaners and maids, as we can see from the following example:

The Cape Verdean *pretas* are not good cleaners. They are not used to our [Portuguese] cleaning standards. I had to tell them the whole time what to do and how to do it. Once I had one who did not know how to use the vacuum cleaner, and she did not know which cleaning product to use in each task. Besides, if they are left alone they drink from the cellaret, and use items from the toilet, like perfumes and deodorants. They also miss appointments and skip days in a row. One time, a *preta* who has worked for me did not show up for two weeks and then popped in as if nothing had happened. Now I only choose Portuguese cleaners, though is more and more difficult to get them. In these days, cleaning is almost for *pretas* (Portuguese *patroa*, 57 years).

The *patroa* in question illustrates how part of the white mainstream tends to merge all people of African origin within the single category of *pretos(as)* (blacks). We can see from her words that she tends to use 'Cape Verdean' and *preta* as synonyms. In fact, one of the cleaners she had had was *preta* but not Cape Verdean. However, some Portuguese *patroas* make clear the distinction between the black Cape Verdean cleaners and the other black cleaners from Angola, Guinea, or Mozambique. Some of them voiced dissatisfaction with the work of the other black cleaners. In one case, a Portuguese *patroa* complained about the sluggishness of the Angolan and Guinean cleaners when compared to

the Cape Verdean:

I have never liked Angolans and Mozambicans. They make sloppy and untidy cleaners. I think they do not like the job. Most times they come to work with make-up on their faces, acting as if they are the *patroa* and not the *empregada*. The Cape Verdeans are more unassuming and accept better the fact that they have to do cleaning for a living. They seem also less racist towards the Portuguese (Portuguese *patroa*, 48 years).

It seems that the 'Portuguese' who have contact with people of different African origins have the opportunity to construct different 'national' black identities. But in some cases this construction is made out of information got from individuals of one immigrant group only. For instance, a Portuguese *patroa* may be voicing out what her Cape Verdean cleaner has told her about the other 'African' cleaners. As we have seen before, the Cape Verdeans tend to assert themselves as more hardworking and reliable people than the Angolans or Mozambicans, for example. As Fikes observed in her fieldwork among the Cape Verdean women in Lisbon:

'Cape Verdeans are Very Hard Workers'! It is a saying that labouring class Cape Verdeans exchange among themselves. And curiously it is one of the 'few' status related references that elder Santiaguense [from Santiago] used that did not discern Cape Verdean particularity by island (2000:132).

The reputation of men as being hardworking was carried by women to the *limpeza*. The Cape Verdeans in general, both black and white, also claim to be 'racially' and 'culturally' closer to the Portuguese than the blacks of the former African Portuguese colonies. The diffusion of this idea among Portuguese *patroas* may contribute to their preference for Cape Verdean cleaners. However, this preference cannot be generalised, since I know Portuguese middle-class

patroas who choose their African cleaners according to their level of social awareness, independently of their 'national' origin. For example, they prefer a black cleaner recently arrived from Angola who is none the wiser in what a *patroa* may or may not demand from an *empregada*, than a Cape Verdean who knows all about it and promptly refuses to perform the most unpleasant tasks. As a Portuguese *patroa* said, 'I prefer them blindfold'.

This principle of recruitment applied to the *criadas*⁸⁸ brought from the Portuguese hinterland to work in the households of the urban middle and upper classes until two or three decades ago. After the revolution, the word was at odds with the ideal of the 'abolition of social classes' and was replaced with *empregada* (employee), a term that does not denote the servility and subservience associated with *criada*. The *empregadas* have thus gained social rights that the former *criadas* never dreamed of. The fact that some domestic servants now use their cars to go to work illustrates how drastically the status of domestic work has changed in Portugal over the last decades.

Recently, the coming of Eastern European women in large numbers is challenging the preponderance of black women in cleaning and domestic services. In the last few years, a large number of Eastern European women have come either to join their husbands or on their own. Since these women are mostly Ukrainian, Russian, Moldavian, and Romanian, and in many cases have higher education, Portuguese families are beginning to prefer them as domestic cleaners and carers of children and elderly people. According to a leading

⁸⁸ *Criada(s)* means maid and was the word used before the revolution to refer to women who worked as domestic servants for the middle and upper classes. These women were brought from rural families at an early age and were raised in the house of their employers. Many became 'members' of their employers' family and stayed with it until death. In some cases they were even passed from one generation of employers to the next.

member of *Solidariedade Imigrante*, a NGO that caters for immigrants, he now receives several calls a week from families looking for Eastern European women for working as cleaners or as day carers of children and elderly people. In his words:

They prefer Eastern European women because they are white and educated. Portuguese families are racist: they do not want contact with blacks, especially if these are to take care of children, for they fear a negative influence upon them. Sometimes, the elderly also prefer to be cared by white people like them. I think that the Portuguese will look more and more for Eastern European women and that they will only accept Africans if left with no alternative (Portuguese, male, 47 years).

This new preference for Eastern European cleaners, especially within the sphere of private households, is seen by many as evidence of racism within Portuguese society. This view is often associated with people from the 'political left', as opposed to the view of the 'political right' which continues to depict Portugal as a nation of *brandos costumes* (bland customs). Many black immigrant women are also beginning to interpret in 'racial' terms the competition with Eastern European women for domestic services and cleaning jobs. Before, they thought the Portuguese were racist because they left the worst jobs for black people, now they think the Portuguese are racist because they prefer white European women to black women:

Not long ago the Portuguese liked blacks to do the cleaning because they could not find enough Portuguese women to do the work; these do not want to spoil their finger-nails. Now that the Ukrainians and Russians are here they prefer them. They are white and prettier (laughing). (Cape Verdean, female, 38 years).

The growing competition brought in by the coming of Eastern Europeans is also felt by black male workers in the construction industry sites all over the

country, as we will see next.

6.5. The construction industry site

The construction industry site has been the main arena for Cape Verdean male immigrant workers to interact with the non-Cape Verdean social world. Until recently, Cape Verdean workers were preferred by their employers due to their higher malleability, but this preference is quickly ending with the arrival of an Eastern European labour force willing to accept work in conditions that the Cape Verdeans and the Portuguese workers no longer accept.

6.5.1. The preference for Cape Verdeans

The first male Cape Verdean immigrants worked and lived in the construction industry sites. They were lone men who had left their families in Cape Verde. The first people to have social contact with them were their white Portuguese co-workers and the few other blacks coming from the other colonies, but the latter represented a small number until the independence of the colonies, in 1975.

As showed in chapter five, the Cape Verdeans quickly gained a reputation as good workers but hot-blooded. In the 1970s and 1980s, they accepted to work in conditions that many Portuguese workers were not accepting any longer. They worked long hours under very harsh weather with rather old-fashioned equipment and techniques, such as digging trenches with pickaxes and shovels or handling the pneumatic drill. Soon after the first arrivals, the construction industry companies began to prefer Cape Verdean workers instead of Portuguese. The Cape Verdeans worked longer hours for a lesser pay and were not unionised, which made them more vulnerable than the Portuguese workers.

Most Cape Verdeans had not the slightest idea of what the expression 'labour rights' meant.

As we can see from the words of a retired Portuguese overseer who has worked his entire life in the construction industry, the Cape Verdean workers were preferred to any other black workers:

I have worked as an overseer for J. Pimenta and Pinto & Bentes. Both employed a lot of black Cape Verdeans, especially from 1971-72 onwards. For about fifteen years I managed mixed crews of Cape Verdeans and Portuguese. In all those years I have only witnessed a couple of brawls between Cape Verdeans and Portuguese. They brawled more amongst themselves than with the Portuguese. I have made good friends among the Cape Verdeans. Even today, when I occasionally meet one of my old Cape Verdean mates, we go for a drink and have a long chat. They are really good people: friends of their friends. During my working life I have met other black workers, from Angola and Guinea, for example, but none of them were like the Cape Verdeans. I have had a Guinean worker who had two wives in his shanty and was not ashamed of it. The Cape Verdeans are religious men who like to visit the Church on Sundays. I was told that in Cape Verde everyone listens to the mass on Sundays. J. Pimenta and Pinto & Bentes, as other construction industry companies, preferred Cape Verdean workers because they were humble and worked hard. They rarely complained about the working conditions or the pay. Because of that, sometimes they were harshly exploited by their employers (Portuguese overseer, male, 68 years).

To a certain extent, there was some class identification between the Portuguese workers and the Cape Verdean workers, notwithstanding the fact that 'racial' differences surfaced in certain contexts, as, for example, in joking and teasing relationships. The Portuguese workers thought of the Cape Verdeans as honest and serious workers but at the same time as simple-minded *pretos* who were easily fooled by their employers and co-workers. In the 1970s, the black workers were subjected to the very same working conditions that the Portuguese rural migrants had found two decades earlier when they were escaping rural

poverty to find work in the construction industry in the littoral areas.

Some Portuguese workers saw the coming of the Cape Verdeans as a menace to their labour rights and wage. As a representative of a construction industry union who has been a worker himself for about fifteen years remarks:

The Portuguese construction industry employers have been the main responsible for the coming of the Cape Verdean *pretos*. They wanted a larger labour supply so that they could keep the wages low. Also, they wanted the *pretos* to perform the harder work that the Portuguese were no longer willing to perform. Although this has created some resentment among Portuguese workers, it has never been a problem since we understood their situation. They were poorer than us and were trying to escape poverty in their homeland. However, in the mines of *Panasqueira*, for example, there was a serious confrontation between the Portuguese and the Cape Verdean workers. I would say that we would be better off now if they had never come to this country, or if they had come but not accepted the working conditions they were given at the time and that the Portuguese workers were already refusing. But it is always the same, when someone refuses to do the work, someone else in an even worse situation comes forward and accept it. Look what is happening now with the Ukrainians and others who come from those poorer Eastern European countries. It is happening with them what happened with the *pretos* some thirty years ago (Portuguese union representative, male, 55 years).

Although there was some ill-will against the black Cape Verdeans among the Portuguese workers, especially among those more politicised and unionised, most of those who contacted with the Cape Verdeans in the construction industry sites were more friendly than unfriendly to them.

The Cape Verdeans were also catholic, while, for instance, many Guineans were Muslims, whose habits were not always understood and accepted by the Portuguese. Because most of them were darker they were also seen as more African than the Cape Verdeans. The Angolans were seen as lazy and volatile, since they would work until the first wage was paid and then would not turn up for work until they had spent all the money.

In the late 1980s and the 1990s, the number of blacks coming from African countries other than the PALOP (African Portuguese Speaking Countries) increased. Although their number is low when compared to those coming from the PALOP⁸⁹, there is a growing number of non-PALOP Africans, such as Senegalese, Malian, Tanzanian, Kenyan, Zairian, and Moroccan. Some of these are probably en route to elsewhere within the E.U., but some have come to stay. Some work in the construction industry while others look to street peddling. For example, the Moroccans peddle rugs, while the Malian and Zairian peddle African handicrafts, but there is a growing number in the construction industry, which is the main source of employment for the labour migrants who demand Portugal.

Traditionally, the Cape Verdeans had to set their boundary against Angolans and Guineans, the two second-largest black groups after them⁹⁰, to maintain a separate identity and to keep their reputation of being better workers. However, as the number of immigrants working in the construction industry increased and their origins diversified in the 1990s, the Cape Verdeans' reputation for hardworking is being overridden by the new immigrant labour force. Today, the employers are showing a preference for Eastern European labour migrants instead of Africans.

⁸⁹ In 1998, the Africans of the PALOP alone represented 94 per cent of the total number of Africans resident in Portugal.

⁹⁰ In 1998, and according to SEF (Service of Foreigners and Frontiers), there were 40,093 Cape Verdean residents in Portugal; 16,487 Angolans; 12,894 Guineans; 4,429 Mozambicans; and 4,388 of São Tomé and Príncipe. These five categories represent the whole PALOP group.

6.5.2. The coming of Eastern Europeans

During the 1990s the routes of Portuguese immigration changed drastically. Until then most of the immigrants were black and came from the PALOP. The 1990s saw the coming of Eastern European labour migrants in large number. There has also been immigration from the Asian subcontinent and from China, though the numbers are not comparable to those of Eastern European immigration. In 1998, the Asian immigrants totalled about 7,000, while during the special period of legalisation that lasted between January and May 2001 another approximately 8,000 were added. Among these, the Pakistanis (2,326), the Chinese (1,880), and the Indians (1,875) account for the largest part.

The last report on immigration issued by the SEF, in 1998, shows that there were only 100 Ukrainian residents in Portugal. This figure accounts only for people who have a residence permit and only proves that official statistics account for only a small portion of the real number of foreign residents. It is likely that most of the labour migrants arriving in Portugal are staying as undocumented workers, at least during the first months. The Ukrainian case is paradigmatic of what is happening with the new immigration fluxes. Between the time of the publication of the SEF's report and today tens of thousands of Ukrainians have entered Portugal as labour migrants. Considering only the period between January and June 2001, about 22,000 Ukrainians obtained temporary residence permits (*Público*, 13 June 2001). Until January 2000 there were only 2,379 documented Eastern European immigrants, but in June 2001 their number had mounted to about 29,000.

Most of the new labour migrants are coming to work in the construction industry, performing the same tasks that the Cape Verdeans have performed in

the past. These new labour migrants from Eastern Europe and Asia, willing to accept work at low pay, have quickly ended the preference of the Portuguese construction industry employers for black immigrants. The newcomers work longer hours and for a lesser pay than the Cape Verdeans and others who have been around for longer and have learned how to claim their rights.

Furthermore, whereas the Cape Verdean workers were illiterate and came from the lowest ranks within the Cape Verdean society, many Eastern Europeans are people with technical skills or even academic degrees who, in many cases, could not stand the economic and social collapse of their countries in the aftermath of the communist regime. They can earn in the construction industry as much as twenty times what they earned at home in their trades. Whilst the Cape Verdeans are seen by the white mainstream as black uneducated workers, the Eastern Europeans are seen by the Portuguese as highly qualified professionals – they tend to think that they are all doctors and engineers – who bravely left their countries willing to accept unqualified work in Portugal and other E.U. countries in order to provide for their families at home. The African immigrants are seen as social inferiors, while the Eastern Europeans are seen as equals, if not superiors, as we can see from the words of a Portuguese overseer:

The Eastern Europeans, especially the Ukrainians, are not like the Africans. Some of them are doctors and engineers who never performed manual work. For example, in my gang there are two engineers: one qualified in electronics and the other in mechanics. They told me that in Portugal they earn in a week what they could not earn in a month in the Ukraine. Moldavia is even worse, for the salaries are even lower than in the Ukraine. These people are educated and intelligent. They learn quickly how to perform their tasks, even if they do not know the language right from the beginning. They are quick on picking up the language. Some, after three or four months of work already know the basics of Portuguese language. And in one or two years they will become as fluent as me. On the contrary, I know *pretos* who have been here for about

twenty years and have never learned how to speak Portuguese properly. In the workplace, only the older Cape Verdeans can match the Eastern Europeans. The younger *pretos* are not as hardworking as the older generations, and many of them do not want to work as assistants, they want to work as masons right away. They are also more difficult to instruct, less malleable and less adjustable. Today, any construction industry employer will tell you about his preference for Eastern Europeans instead of blacks. Even if these are Cape Verdean. I think the tendency is to have more and more Eastern Europeans and less and less blacks in the construction industry (Portuguese overseer, male, 56 years).

The coming of Eastern Europeans and Asians represents a new source of labour ready for exploitation by small-scale subcontractors. As a Cape Verdean sub-contractor puts it:

Sometimes it is better to work with *russos* [meaning Eastern Europeans in general] and *indianos* [meaning people of the Indian subcontinent in general] than with *patrícios* [fellow countrymen]. They work harder and complain less. *Patrícios* do not like to be exploited by their own kind [laughing] (Cape Verdean sub-contractor, 48 years).

One should say, however, that the number of blacks working as intermediaries between the larger contractors and the newly arrived Eastern European and Asian immigrants is very small. Moreover, between the African contractors and the large construction industry companies there is another intermediate level occupied by Portuguese contractors.

6.6. The media as producers of identity

The media are generally the great producers of the way the mainstream views immigrants and other minorities. The Cape Verdeans are no exception to that. Even the identity constructs emerging from within the Cape Verdean community are strongly influenced by the way the media circulate them to the public in

general. As said earlier, only a small fraction of the mainstream has direct contact with Cape Verdean immigrants. For most people, the only things they know about the Cape Verdeans are those that come out in the newspapers and on television.

Apart from the mass media production, there is also the small-scale production of 'cultural identities', served by producers of 'elite culture' to the upper middle-class 'cultural elite'. In Portugal, the production and instrumentalisation of cultural and social identities is still incipient as compared to Britain, where there has been a longer experience of contact between the white mainstream and the 'other' cultures. Whereas in Portugal the 'ethnicisation' of the social relations between different groups is still unusual, in Britain it is a main factor in organising social difference.

In the following paragraphs I will describe and compare the way in which the identity of the Cape Verdeans, and blacks in general, is constructed in the 'information' realm of mass media (papers and television) and in the 'artistic' realm, exemplified by a movie documentary. In the case of the newspapers and television, I have chosen one case in which the media have decided to identify the people involved by the 'racial' or 'ethnic' content of their identities, and another in which that content was simply ignored.

6.6.1. The 'CREL case'

On the early hours of July 20, 2000, a group of underage youths of Cape Verdean descent entered the Lisbon orbital (CREL) in a stolen car and committed a series of hold-ups, which included gas stations and motorists on the way. However, and to their misfortune, one of the cars was driven by a well

known Portuguese actress. In the morning, both the papers and the television were making headlines of the incident, especially when the actress accused the youths of attempting to rape her and of stealing the jewels she had been using in the shooting of a television family soap.

The youths were described in the media as 'black youths', or 'youths of African origin'. In some instances, both categories mixed and the result was 'black youths of African origin'. The media had not been using this type of 'racial' markers lately, and it seems that this journalistic incident came out within a context of growing concern with urban insecurity, supposedly caused by the actions of gangs in which second-generation youths descending from African immigrants are said to play an important role. During the following weeks, the incident became a national topic for conversation, identified as the 'CREL case' or, when more emphasis was put on the actors than on the incident, the 'CREL gang'. As the youths were all black, the incident contributed to the reinforcement within the white mainstream of the idea that most youth criminals are black. The incident also reinforced black identity among the marginal fringes of black youths. Most of these 'gangs' are occasionally formed by youths escaped from 'correctional' and 're-educational' centres. As many of these centres are distant from the urban neighbourhoods where the youths live, the first thing they do is to steal a car and try to reach their neighbourhoods, where they can brag about their deeds. Then, as they need money, petrol, and clothes, the robbery of gas stations and shops follows on.

Incidents like this, while contributing to the reinforcement of the white mainstream's view of black youths as delinquents, also contribute to the reinforcement of a black marginal identity among black youths, since they in

these incidents a challenge to the supremacy of the 'Portuguese'.

Most prison inmates are white Portuguese, since blacks are still a small percentage of the overall population (about 1 per cent). Nonetheless, in 2000, from about 1,500 foreigner inmates, those from the PALOP represented about 64 per cent (*Público*, 4 July 2000). The inmates from the PALOP are mostly Angolan, Cape Verdean, and Guinean. The Cape Verdeans represent the highest number of foreigner inmates involved in drug trafficking. As the black population is mostly concentrated within few districts, blacks are more visible for better and worse. A rough estimate will tell us that while Portuguese inmates represent about 0.13 per cent of the total Portuguese population, Cape Verdean inmates represent about 0.75 per cent of the resident Cape Verdean population, and the overall number of inmates from the PALOP represent about 11 per cent of the total number of inmates in Portugal. The proportion of blacks in prison is far greater than the proportion of blacks among the population.

Despite statistics showing that there are only a few hundred blacks in prison, the white mainstream tends to think that the black immigrants and their descendants are the main responsible for the growth of urban crime. The media just voice out loud the concerns of the white middle-class mainstream, to which most media professionals belong. In turn, this voicing out feeds back into the concern of the white mainstream reinforcing the racialised perception of urban crime.

6.6.2. The murder of officer Felisberto

On the February 4, 2002, a Portuguese black officer of Cape Verdean descent was murdered on duty when he tried to sort out a minor car accident. When the

officer approached the car that had caused the accident, the driver refused to obey his orders and fought him back. In the middle of the fight the driver produced a gun and shot the officer in the head and chest killing him. The driver and the other passenger, both black Cape Verdeans, escaped jostling through the crowd, probably seeking refuge in the very same neighbourhood the officer and they lived in. The neighbourhood has become notorious for the frequent clashes between the police and the youths, such as the one in December 2001 just after the death of a Cape Verdean youth caused by police fire. The clash was broadcast live on several television channels, thrusting the neighbourhood into the limelight of public opinion, and the youths were described as second-generation descendants of immigrants.

What is of interest in this incident is the fact that both the victim and the perpetrators were black and seen as Cape Verdean in their neighbourhood. All of them lived in the same neighbourhood or in close quarters. But, while officer Felisberto represents a successful case of second-generation integration, the perpetrators typify the lack of integration of most second-generation Cape Verdeans. The incident was reported by the media mostly without resorting to racial markers, such as 'African' or 'black'. One of the few exceptions was a report published in *Diário Digital* (January 6, 2002), which identified the murdered officer as a 'young African police officer'. From most of the media reports one could not figure out the 'ethnic' or 'racial' identity of the actors.

Contrary to what happened in the 'CREL case', the fact that Felisberto was black and of Cape Verdean extraction did not emerge in the main lines. He was mostly presented as a 'police officer'. Although the word 'Portuguese' has not been used, for the common newsreader it was likely that Felisberto was

perceived as a white Portuguese and the perpetrators as black.

This case shows how the media act selectively, picking up racial and ethnic markers when the actors are perceived as marginal and noxious to the mainstream and hiding those markers when the actors are perceived as part of the mainstream, as one of 'us'. In other words: while the Portuguese black officer was portrayed as a 'police officer', the Portuguese black youths of the 'CREL gang' were portrayed as 'youths of African origin'. The message contains a moral: be good and you will be 'Portuguese', be bad and you will remain 'African'.

6.6.3. *Pedreira na nha korason*

In 1999, Kiluange Liberdade, a young black Angolan video maker, who had already produced in 1995 the 30-minute film *O Rap é Uma Arma* (Rap is a Weapon), featuring black rappers of some notorious *bairros*, together with two Portuguese media artists (a photographer and a movie director) produced a video film about the daily life of second-generation youths in the *bairros*. All youths were second-generation descendants of African immigrants, most of them of Cape Verdean descent. The main idea of the film was to show the new Portuguese black urban culture, which draws largely from Afro-American rap and hip-hop. A large part of the film was shot in *Pedreira dos Húngaros* (hereafter *Pedreira*), a notorious *bairro* in the municipality of Oeiras. At the time, the shantytown-like neighbourhood had begun to be dismantled and its dwellers were being moved to newly developed council housing projects.

The 50-minute film was titled *Outros Bairros* (Other Neighbourhoods), and the film-maker's intention was to show that there are *bairros* other than

those of the lower-class Portuguese internal migrants who came to Lisbon and its suburbs in the 1950s and 1960s, or other than those of the white middle-class mainstream.

The film begins with a dispute between police officers and a group of youths in *Pedreira* caused by the presence of the filming crew. The police officers were trying to prevent the crew from taking images of their action within the neighbourhood. The camera moves erratically showing that the cameraperson is also involved in the dispute with the officers and presenting the neighbourhood like a war-zone in which black youths and police officers compete to take control of the territory.

After this initial scene, the film goes on to show a series of images in which a dozen black youths appear. In one set of images we see them gathered in a shack, or what is left from it after the passage of the bulldozers, smoking cannabis and making comments about their lifestyle and identity. As the camera travels into the *bairro*, we see a youth riding a powerful motorbike up and down the yard and lifting the front wheel in a challenging manner, while, at the same time, a group of youths in a corner across the yard is singing a rap song that talks about 'immigration and its problems'. The way the youths pose for the camera, both nonchalant and defiant, clearly affirms their 'black marginal identity' vis-à-vis the 'white mainstream', whose main representatives are the teachers and the police officers (and the spectators of the movie).

Other images focus on the youths' marginal activities, of which the most challenging is car-stealing. In one scene, we see a 13-year-old youth driving a stolen car and talking about the thrill of it. At a certain point, he tells that one day he will kill those police officers who beat him up every time he goes to the

police station. Then, the camera travels into one of the remaining shacks where we see a group of youths being asked questions about their neighbourhood and their ways. In a corner of the small room, a young child watches one episode of the Dragon Ball series. When asked about the existence of youth gangs in the *bairro*, one of the youths answers: “The only existing gang in the *bairro* is the police! There are no gangs in here, just normal men and women”. Although some of the youths confess to have been involved in mugging and other similar activities, they see them as irrelevant compared to the white-collar crimes committed by the *pulas* (Portuguese), who always escape prison because they are ‘Portuguese’.

These black youths from the *bairros* have developed an oppositional identity highly racialised. They see themselves as marginal not because they are poor but because they are black and will never be accepted as Portuguese. Nonetheless, we can see in the movie a few white youths amidst the majority of blacks. Their identity is defined in territorial and not racial terms and their exclusion is also perceived in terms of social territory – the *bairro*.



The remains of *Pedreira*

As one of the youths puts it in the film: “*Pedreira* is not the homes, it is the people. They think they will destroy the *bairro* by bulldozing it, but wherever we go *Pedreira* will be there with us”. Another youth adds: “If this is an island [sometimes the *bairros* with African dwellers are referred to as ‘cultural islands’], then let them pluck it out and place it side by side with one of Cape Verde islands”.

When asked about their identity by the narrator’s voice in the film, the youths claim that their identity is neither Portuguese nor Cape Verdean, Angolan, or Guinean. As Kiluange Liberdade, the young black Angolan videomaker, who knew most of the youths, has said in an interview:

In Portugal there are boys and girls who do not have a fatherland. They are neither Cape Verdean, for they have never been to Cape Verde, nor Portuguese, for they speak another language and their families do not follow the customs of the Portuguese. They do not want to be Portuguese. Maybe they will want to be Cape Verdean some day. As to now, they just belong to their neighbourhood, be it Pontinha, *Pedreira*,

Arrentela, Miratejo, or Cova da Moura. They are from the *zona* [zone], *bairro*, or simply *niggas*. They have their own frontiers, laws, language, hymns, ideas, and codes. For the first time, in 500 years, the Africans are developing an affirmative and avant-garde culture of their own. And they are doing it fiercely (interview collected from <http://www.diwan.net/packs/lisbonne/casting-kilu.htm> [created in April 9, 1999, consulted in June 15, 2001], my translation).

One of the youths, when asked what he thought about the dismantlement of *Pedreira* and re-accommodation in the new housing developments, answered promptly in Creole: ‘*Pedreira ba ser tudu dia na nha korason*’ (Pedreira will be forever in my heart). Their identity is bound to their neighbourhood. Somehow, the neighbourhood is their nation. They are not only *niggas*, they are the *niggas* from this or that *bairro*. The *bairro* is part of their identity. This kind of territorial identity has some resemblance to what Back (1996:49-72) has described as ‘neighbourhood nationalism’. In some of areas of London, where people of different ‘racial’ or ‘ethnic’ origin share the same neighbourhoods, youths develop a sense of local belonging which may override national and racial differences. The neighbourhood becomes their nation:

In Riverview [London] this led to a racially inclusive notion that I have referred to as “neighbourhood nationalism”. Here the definition of who belonged in the national community was shrunk to the size of the neighbourhood. “Belonging” was thus determined by length of residence and commitment to the area. Particularly important here was the assertion that black and white young people had grown up together in this area. As a result, it was asserted that “we are all the same” (Back 1996:240).

The main difference between neighbourhoods like Riverview and *Pedreira* is that while in the first case black youths are not the majority, and have thus to accept incorporation in a wider urban culture, in the second case black Cape Verdean youths are the major group and it is the others who incorporate their

culture.

When I first watched the film, as its premiere, some of the youths had been invited by the film-makers and were in the room. They cheered as the scenes went past, pointing out to the screen and mentioning each other's names. They were overjoyed by being in a movie. For the first time in their lives, their 'culture' had been recognised by the world without. They were feeling like movie stars.

It is almost certain that the film will not have any significant impact in the general public, for there will be only a few non-commercial copies to be seen by the very few people interested. The black youths who starred in the video had their moments of glory and probably gained an extra edge in their neighbourhoods, but their 'black identity' will remain mostly for their own consumption.

When I talk to people who have watched the video, the main idea that emerges is that they see these black youths as liminal beings: neither Portuguese nor African, and that their liminality entitles them to revolt and causes their social inadequacy and poor integration within the mainstream.

6.7. Conclusion

The views that the Cape Verdeans have about themselves are very often different from the views that the people outside of the Cape Verdean world have about them. From the outside, views vary significantly according to whether the people in question have interacted directly with Cape Verdeans or not. Generally, the non-Cape Verdeans who interact with Cape Verdeans in the workplace or *bairro* tend to develop more favourable views about them.

Categories like 'place of birth', 'nationality', and 'country of origin' play an important role in defining who is or is not Cape Verdean. The school plays an important role in the reification of the 'Cape Verdean' identity of second-generation Cape Verdeans, since the students are grouped by a mixture of 'ethnic' and 'national' origin. A child is considered Cape Verdean if both parents are Cape Verdean, even if the child is born in Portugal and has Portuguese nationality. In the 1990s, the implementation of 'multicultural' education came to reify 'ethnic' difference in school. The schools are instructed to group their students in terms of ethnic origin and to present the results by 'ethnic' group. In the minds of the educators and policy makers, it seems that Portuguese society is organised more and more around the opposition between the white middle-class mainstream and the new 'ethnic' and 'poor' urban underclass.

The workplace and the *bairro* are the main arenas wherein interaction between Cape Verdeans and non-Cape Verdeans take place. For men, the construction industry site is the principal arena to interact socially with people from the outside of the Cape Verdean world. For women, interaction with non-Cape Verdeans occurs mainly in the middle-class households where they work as cleaners and maids. Generally, and until recently, the employers showed a preference for Cape Verdean workers; the men were preferred in the construction industry sites and the women in domestic cleaning. However, the influx of a large number of Eastern Europeans and other immigrants is ending the preference of Portuguese employers for Cape Verdean workers. Moreover, the second-generation Cape Verdeans tend to be less compliant than their parents in relation to their employers. The employers, in turn, search for

alternatives among the newly arrived labour force.

The media are the main creators of Cape Verdean identity for consumption by the outside world, since most Portuguese do not interact directly with the Cape Verdeans. Generally, the newspapers and television tend to emphasise events that contribute for a negative construction of the Cape Verdean image among outsiders, such as the muggings in trains and robberies of petrol stations in which there is participation of black Cape Verdean youths. So, the image that the Portuguese mainstream has about second-generation Cape Verdeans is generally negative and racialised.

Contrary to the mass media, the elite's media have contributed, though with very few examples so far, to the creation of a new black urban identity centred on rap and hip-hop, in which Cape Verdean youths play a central role. The fact that Cape Verdean youths are able to rap in Creole gives them an extra edge and contributes to the reinforcement of their identity as black Cape Verdeans, instead of just black. The films *Outros Bairros* and *O Rap é Uma Arma* are the better examples, to my knowledge, of exercises from the outside aiming at presenting black and Cape Verdean identities as entitled new urban identities.

This may contribute to the reinforcement of a black identity among second-generation Cape Verdeans, and therefore to the further racialisation of the Cape Verdean youths vis-à-vis the white mainstream society. The Cape Verdeans will feel more and more black and the mainstream will see them more and more as such.

Final Conclusion

The main conclusion of my work is that one cannot speak of a single Cape Verdean community. The Cape Verdeans are divided by 'class' and 'race' and two distinct groups can be found in Lisbon Metropolitan Area: one are the 'elite' Portuguese Cape Verdeans, of whom most only went to Portugal after the independence of Cape Verde and the other Portuguese colonies, and the other are the black Cape Verdean labour migrants who have been coming since the 1960s.

The first group is constituted mostly by people who despite their physical complexion tend to see themselves as white Portuguese, though this view often does not match the view that the postcolonial mainstream has of them. They generally have secondary or college education and are bilingual, commanding equally well Portuguese and Creole. The second group is constituted mostly by black or mulatto Cape Verdeans whom the economic difficulties in Cape Verde and the economic expansion of Portugal have driven to the 'metropole'. This migrant labour movement started before the independence of Cape Verde but accentuated in its aftermath.

The Cape Verde Islands were initially peopled with the intent of planting sugar cane as the Portuguese had done before on the island Madeira, but, as the attempt to introduce plantation agriculture proved unavailing due to the adverse conditions and competition from the Netherlands and other European countries in the international markets, the archipelago rapidly turned into a slave trading centre, exporting thousands of black slaves first to Europe and then to the Americas. Slavery and the racial divide between the white landlords and the

black slaves marked the origin of the Cape Verdean colonial society. With time, the whites were replaced by the mulattos and blacks, and by the middle of the twentieth century the Cape Verdean society was already in the hands of the mulattos. When the independence came, in 1975, the mulattos extended their dominion to politics and the whites were definitely ousted from power in Cape Verde. Although the Cape Verdeans tend to play down the importance of 'race' and 'racism' in the structuring of the Cape Verdean colonial and postcolonial society, in the same fashion of the Brazilians, the truth is that skin colour affects their lives to a greater extent than what they acknowledge.

In Portugal, the Cape Verdeans were forced to incorporate 'race' more deeply in their system of organising social difference and to take into account colour differences which would not have mattered in Cape Verde. Also, some Cape Verdeans were more affected by racism than others, depending on their origin in Cape Verde. For example, people from the islands of Santiago, Fogo, and Brava tended to be more 'race'-conscious than people from the other islands, where the local racial ideology was more of 'mixing' than 'purity'.

The Portuguese Cape Verdeans and the Cape Verdean labour migrants followed different paths of integration in the Portuguese postcolonial society. While the first group has fared relatively well in terms of professional and social integration, the second has occupied the bottom rungs of the social ladder, living in shantytowns and taking the low-end jobs that the Portuguese working class rejected. The 'elite' Portuguese Cape Verdeans were able to compensate the fact that they were not born in the 'metropole' and were not 'racially' pure with their relatively high level of education. The same cannot be said of the Cape Verdean immigrants, whose darker complexion, in general, and lack of professional skills

and formal education led to integration in the lowest level of the metropolitan society.

The descendants of the Portuguese Cape Verdeans were able to integrate fairly well in the postcolonial mainstream, since the strategy followed by their parents was to get rid of the elements of 'Cape Verdean' identity that could hinder their complete acceptance as 'Portuguese'. Most of the elite families promoted vividly the use of Portuguese at home instead of Creole, causing that in many cases their descendants are no longer able to speak Cape Verdean Creole. Many descendants of the elite went to university and were never subjected to the cultural ghettoisation that has affected the children of the immigrants, for they have never lived in predominantly Cape Verdean neighbourhoods. The fact that the Portuguese Cape Verdeans highly praised formal education gave their children an extra edge in terms of schooling and made them to succeed more often than not.

The Cape Verdean immigrants are in the opposite end of the scale of social values: they accord little or no value to education and tend to see it more as a way for their children to escape their hold than as an avenue for their social betterment. They cannot not give their children either the educational capital or the past example necessary for social mobility. Because they tend to live in segregated areas where the educational resources tend to be less and poorer, their children are more or less doomed to failure. Only a few can make it through secondary education and university.

Many black youths tend to develop an adversarial and oppositional stance towards what they perceive as the 'Portuguese'. This adversarial stance may be seen both as the manifestation of their fear of being rejected by the white

mainstream because of their skin colour and their belonging to the social world of the *bairros*, and as their deliberate choice for a black that gives them an extra edge both in the social world of the *bairro* and in the outside world of the white mainstream. They know, for example, that the white mainstream fear the 'black youths of the *bairros*', and that gives them a sense of power that may compensate for their lack of success in school or employment.

Recently, the Portuguese authorities have committed themselves to the clearing of shantytown areas and to the promotion of a multicultural education policy. However, the clear up of most shantytowns has not resolved the problem of the ghettoisation to which most Cape Verdeans and the rest of the new urban underclass are subjected. The authorities have been lodging the Cape Verdeans and other minorities in new housing projects. Some of these projects were built in isolated areas, making their neighbourhoods spaces apart. In some cases integrated schools were built nearby or even within the neighbourhoods, catering thus exclusively for the children of those *bairros*. Most children live exclusively within those urban lower class neighbourhoods without any physical and social contact with the outside world of the white middle-class mainstream. In many cases the only outsiders who they have contact with are the teachers. Frequently, when the youths from the *bairro* venture outside their boundary into the white mainstream territory they face prejudice, for middle class people see them as predators of their safety and wealth.

Thus, the clear-out of shantytowns has not, in any way, attenuated the degree of segregation that minorities like the Cape Verdeans suffer from, especially in the case of the second generations. As many youth informants told me: "If you want to get a job and are as black as me, you cannot say that you are

from *Azinhaga dos Bezouros* [the same happens with the other notorious neighbourhoods], otherwise they will not give it to you". Taxi drivers refuse to take people to the most notorious *bairros*, for they are afraid of being robbed. This negative image that grows larger and larger within the white mainstream is not going to ease the life of those who live in the *bairros* and are willing to get out by way of educational and professional betterment.

One cannot say that the ghettoisation that the Cape Verdeans are subjected to is the result of a one-way process of segregation and discrimination imposed by the white mainstream, for it is also the result of the choices that the Cape Verdeans themselves make. Many families in the first generation preferred to live in shantytown neighbourhoods because there they could reproduce better the world they had in Cape Verde. Among second-generation families there is still a significant number who prefer to live in a predominantly Cape Verdean environment than move to the lower or middle-class non-ethnic suburbs, where people are not clustered according to 'race' but to 'class'. Moreover, in the beginning of the transfer from the shantytowns to the new housing projects, many families complained that they preferred to stay in their shacks than live in blocks of flats. Many youths also manifested their preference for shantytown neighbourhoods instead of the new housing projects, for they were afraid that they could not control the neighbourhood territory as before. They also felt that their identity was bound to the old neighbourhoods and that they would lose it once they moved into the new *bairros sociais* (council housing developments).

So, the construction of a black identity in which the Cape Verdean youths play an important part can be seen as both a 'performance' of their own and an 'imposition' from the world without. To what extent their new black identity is

'performance' or 'obedience', to use the terms of Stuart Hall (forward to Alexander 1996:vi), is difficult to establish. Perhaps the best is to see it as the product of both. I would not go as far as Claire Alexander (1996) did with her black informants in London, presenting them as 'artists' and 'performers' of a black urban identity; an identity of their own choice and creation rather than imposed by the outside white mainstream. But like her I believe that the construction of a black identity cannot be fully understood within the constraints of 'race'. In the case of the black youth Cape Verdean informants I know the notion of '*bairro*' is fundamental to the construction of their 'black' identity. Being black is not only related to skin colour but also to the urban geography of the *bairro*. As in the case of Alexander's London black youths:

[identity] is thus something of an 'art': It is an 'imagined' construction, which is constantly reinvented and challenges traditional notions of essentialised cultural or racial entities. (...) 'Being black' is at once a demand for inclusion within the bounds of 'British' identity and a celebration of 'hybridity' (1996:199).

The study of the Cape Verdeans in Portugal, as elsewhere, has much to gain from the comparison with the migrants from the Caribbean Islands, for they probably represent the closest experience that one can find. I have tried to introduce some comparison with the Caribbeans in Britain and in the U.S, but more is needed in order that the Cape Verdean experience can be viewed in a wider context and not in isolation, as is often the idea that the Cape Verdeans have about themselves as islanders and migrants. The Cape Verdean intellectual elite tends to portrait their case as unique, an idea which can be seen as a sequel to that of the 'uniqueness' of the Portuguese colonisation.

The comparison of the Cape Verdean migration experiences in Europe and

the U.S. can also shed light on the different levels and ways of social integration followed by the different Cape Verdean communities around the world. It is necessary to gather information on the Cape Verdean communities in the Netherlands, France, Luxemburg and other European destinations in order to better understand what is happening to the Cape Verdeans in Portugal.

Very little is known about what happened to the 'white' Caribbean elites after the independence of the Caribbean colonies. Most of the British literature on the Caribbeans in Britain not only usually tends to speak of the Afro-Caribbean, ignoring the Asian-Caribbeans, as it also ignores the 'white' minorities that were thrown out in the aftermath of the independence. As Vertovec has recognised, "just as the Indian experience in the Caribbean has been relatively unacknowledged in both public awareness and academic inquiry, so, too, in Britain has been the presence of Caribbean-derived persons of Asian descent" (1993:165). Dabydeen and Samaroo (1987) present a good collection of views which contradict the more common view of the Caribbean islands as colonial territories wholly determined by an African heritage.

The study of the Portuguese Cape Verdean 'elite' would have much to gain from the comparison to the other 'white' elites in other ex-colonies with a history similar to that of Cape Verde. Particularly, the case of Surinam, which was under the Dutch rule (1667-1954) for almost the same length that Cape Verde was under the rule of the Portuguese. Since the middle of the nineteenth century there was an increase in the number of middle-class 'coloured' Surinamers who sought for education and professional training in the Netherlands (Brock 1986:8). These middle-class Surinamers generally assimilated into the Dutch mainstream in a similar way to that of the elite

Portuguese Cape Verdeans in the Portuguese mainstream.

Finally, I should say that this work is part of a wider one which will aim at comparing the migration experience of the two groups of Cape Verdeans presented here with the experiences of other Cape Verdeans in the U.S. and Europe, as well as at comparing the Cape Verdeans in general with other colonial migrants who have also gone through similar historical processes.

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