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Cape Verdean Associations in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon: their role in integration

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vehicle of immigrant expectations and demands in a host society.

It is also essential to be aware that besides the organisational transformations on the part of the associations, the host society's reception of these formal organisations is also a crucial variable when it comes to their insertion and acceptance by the general population (Soysal, 1994). It is

Cape Verdean associations or with leaders of associations that direct their work and activities towards the Cape Verdean community, was opted for. These interviews had some of the character of a normal informal conversation. However, the topics and questions were pre-selected and appeared in the interview in a structured order. In

interviewed, 19 were founded in the 1990's, 7 during the 1980's and only 1 in the 1970's. The *Associação Caboverdeana* stands out as the oldest Cape Verdian association, having been founded in 1970 under the name *Casa de Cabo Verde* (House of Cape Verde). Later it changed its name to

only regular source of income is the membership fees paid by members, but these fees are often of merely symbolic value, and, moreover, not all members pay their fees. Besides membership fees, there are other forms of financing that are primarily of a periodic nature. These include: i.) subsidies provided by public institutions such as the municipalities and, to a lesser extent, the parishes; ii.) subsidies from the Social Security Regional Centres for associations carrying out activities of a social nature; iii.) subsidies from various ministries (Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, etc.); iv.) project financing from the European Social Fund; v.) funding for solidarity initiatives from NGO's and other organisations (i.e. Food Bank Against Hunger, National Commission on the Fight Against AIDS); vi.) High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities and, lastly; vii) incomes from cultural initiatives (i.e. ethnic parties or gastronomical events) and activities of a profit-making nature (i.e. clubhouse bar or restaurant).

On the topic of the populations served, the geographical areas of action and associations' aims and objectives, one can observe that there is a correlation between these three points. Associations with strong neighbourhood links, for example, will direct their activities towards providing assistance to the neighbourhood residents. The neighbourhood thus becomes the geographical area of action. On the other hand, associations without strong territorial connections have more specific and heterogeneous objectives, directing their activities at a specific sector of the population such as individuals with problems of health and old age (9 of the associations), immigrant newcomers (6), immigrant descendents (7), professionals (3), students (1), or the population in Cape Verde (5). The case of there being heterogeneity in the populations served, also implies that the geographical areas of action will end up being more diversified, with activities being carried out, for instance, at multiple municipal levels, on a national basis or even for specific areas in Cape Verde.

Regarding the objectives of the associations, these will also vary depending on who they are aimed at as well as the territorial level of action. The aims and objectives set out by the associations assume several forms, the majority of which are of a social, cultural or solidarity nature, with the main overall intent being that of helping individuals integrate into Portuguese society. All the associations have, in one form or another, the goal of looking out for the best interests of the group. The associations that campaign for better residential conditions and social housing, for example, work as pressure

groups at both the national and municipal levels while maintaining a close relationship with the neighbourhood residents in order to be able to provide them with necessary support. Other associations have as their main objectives the promotion of specific initiatives, such as health-related issues, professional training and employment, the integration of the second-generation and youth-related issues, as well as the socio-economic development of Cape Verde. Lastly, there are associations with broader objectives, that do not necessarily represent specific populations within the community, but instead the community as a whole. These associations seek to contribute to the Cape Verdean associative movement in Portugal by promoting Cape Verdean culture and by creating the sense of belonging to both Portugal and Cape Verde.

When asked about the activities carried out, the association representatives were given a list of 20 pre-selected activities to choose from. Amongst the choices on the list of activities, the interviewees were then asked to highlight the activities carried out by their respective association. Space was also left for any additional activities not listed which the interviewee may have wished to discuss (*Table 1*).

In observing the results, we first single out activities related to cultural preservation, lectures and seminars, the promotion of Cape Verdean artists, the formation of music and dance groups¹⁰ and events promoting Cape Verdean gastronomy. In reality it can then be seen that, in one form or other, most of the associations carry out initiatives based on promoting Cape Verdean culture.

¹⁰ The association *Moinho da Juventude* has set up the traditional Cape Verdean dance and music groups *Grupo de Batuque Finka-Pé* and *Grupo Kolá Son Jon*; the association *AJPAS* has created the dance group *Riba d'hora*, the theatre group *Bom qui Bale* and rap music group *Illegal Rappers*; while the association *Unidos de Cabo Verde* has established the dance group *Estrelas da Paz*.

Table 1: *Activities carried out by the associations:*

Activities	Total n.	%
1.) Attending to the needs of the community	20	74%
2.) Distribution of food and/or medicine	15	56%
3.) Neighbourhood maintenance and clean-up activities	6	22%
4.) Mediator in residential issues	20	74%
5.) Day-care services	8	30%
6.) Pre-schooling and after school activities	9	33%
7.) Youth free-time activities	15	56%
8.) Portuguese language classes	9	33%
9.) Creole language classes	4	15%
10.) Professional/technical courses	16	59%
11.) Traditional music or dance groups	19	70%
12.) Celebrate and organise festive events and/or cultural celebrations	22	81%
13.) Carry out gastronomy events	15	56%

Activities relating to residential and housing matters and the initiatives taken by the associations in respect to the community's integration into the host society are a second set of actions. Concerning the activities aimed specifically at neighbourhood residents, activities such as attending to residential needs and community issues as well as nutritional and health concerns are a priority for many of the associations. Integration-related activities, such as legalisation processes and document renewal as well as providing judicial support are services that have been gaining more importance due to the legalisation processes in Portugal and the growing

number of undocumented Cape Verdeans wanting to gain legal status.

The third set of activities centres around issues relating to second-generation Cape Verdeans and education. We here refer to associations which have day-care centres, provide pre-school and after-school support, and leisure activities, professional and technical courses, as well as sporting and cultural activities. Lastly, although not necessarily aimed at second-generation Cape Verdeans, are the Portuguese courses for adults provided by the associations.

Close ties, not only with Cape Verde, but also with other Cape Verdean communities are also of

importance. These ties with other members of the Cape Verdean diaspora are maintained mainly

Concerning problems of a social order, it is important to first point out that the majority of the interviewees wished to make it clear that the social problems felt by the associations are not those directly suffered by the associations in themselves, but instead by the people the associations represent, a sentiment that is made clear in the following quote:

“Everyone requests the help of the association, be it because they don't have the proper documents, or because they're in danger of being repatriated, or because they have problems with the Town or Parish Hall, or because they don't know how to fill out forms because they can't understand the language, or because they have problems at work or with their health - in the end these social problems that the people suffer become the social problems of the association”.

On the other hand, there are also those
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with the Lisbon and Tagus Valley Regional Health Administration and with the Lisbon Sub-Region Health Department.

schools often work hand-and-hand with neighbourhood associations in order to create activities for community children. The associations also function as mediators in the hope of improving teacher/student relationships, often inviting teachers to come to the neighbourhood *"so they can see the reality these students are faced with everyday"*, as one spokesperson stated. It is also worth noting that some existing neighbourhood associations (for example, *Moinho da Juventude, Unidos de Cabo Verde*) possess mediators who work as a link between the families and school and, at the same time, help students integrate into the school system. Lastly, the Co-ordinating Secretariat of Multicultural Education Programmes¹⁷, in conjunction with local associations develop multicultural education projects based on social and cultural commonalities shared by the ethnic communities attending a specific school.

Labour unions have also adapted their activities in order to represent specific labour situations (such as denouncing labour exploration and the recognition of immigrant labour rights), not only of the Cape Verdean community, but of immigrant communities in general. The associations and labour unions (consisting of the General Confederation of Portuguese Labourers and the General Union of Workers) have collaborated on information campaigns on foreign workers' rights, as well as in the regularisation of the immigrants, which marked the first partnership experience among both organisational forms (Albuquerque, Ferreira and Viegas: 2000: 44).

As for the relationship between the PSP and the associations, it is worth pointing out that many of the associations feel that the relationship that exists is not very positive, especially concerning the relationship between youths and the policing authorities. As mentioned by one interviewee: *"There is a lack of sensibility on the part of most of the police agents concerning the community. ...a different form of preparation and training on their part would facilitate the relationship between us and them"*. Besides the weak relationships that exist, two important initiatives between the associations and the policing authorities stand out: i.) some associations have been invited to participate in the multicultural teaching component of future PSP officers at the Police

Academy; ii.) neighbourhood-based associations occasionally organise football games between members of the police and the neighbourhood youth with the goal of trying to create closer ties between the two.

Lastly, we note the various projects, aimed at bettering community integration, shared among the associations and the National Catholic Board for Migration. It is important to note that two of the associations (*Centro Social do Bairro de 6 de Maio* e o *Centro Social e Paroquial Cristo Rei de Algés*) are linked to the Catholic Church.

4. The integration of the Cape Verdean community

Before discussing in detail questions concerning the integration of the Cape Verdean community in the MAL, it is essential to first observe that, in the same way in which the Cape Verdean associations are divided and stratified, the Cape Verdean community, in general, also finds itself segmented. On one hand, there is a minority group that possesses a high social status - mainly consisting of technical and administrative professionals that have had an easier time integrating into Portuguese society, due to their favourable socio-economic situation and because of their longer presence in Portugal (most of the individuals belonging to this group were already in Portugal prior to 1974). On the other hand, there exist the immigrants with low educational and professional status, who migrated to Portugal after 1975, who represent the majority and who experience great difficulties in integrating and are most commonly marginalised socially, culturally and economically (Amaro, 1985; France, 1992; Saint-Maurice, 1997). As argued by Gomes (1999: 197), although it is easy to identify these two different sectors within the Cape Verdean community, the tendency is always to see the predominant sector, the more numerous group, and assume that all community members fall within those characteristics. Making note of this point, my analysis will here focus mainly on the second group that experiences greater integration difficulties.

4.1 Integration difficulties

In this section, the Cape Verdean association leaders were asked to comment on the following questions:

- What are the difficulties encountered by members of the community in relation to their social, cultural, professional and residential integration?

¹⁷ The Co-ordinating Secretariat of Multicultural Education Programme (Entreculturas) was created to pursue activities (such as the promotion of equality of opportunities and the development of multicultural education at the primary education level) under the authority of the Ministry of Education. The programme develops multicultural education projects in 49 Portuguese schools (Gomes, 1999: 214).

- What are the main difficulties encountered by the second- and third-generation community members in relation to their integration?

Generally speaking, the difficulties felt by the majority of the community have to do with their socio-economic position, characterised by poverty, and which, in turn, is marked by the low education and professional qualifications, precarious insertion into the job market and lack of proper housing (Amaro, 1985; France, 1992; Saint-Maurice, 1997; Gomes, 1999). In communication with one association leader, this self-reinforcing phenomenon was explained in the following way:

“It's a vicious cycle; the Cape Verdeans have no economic resources. They live in shacks, and

Where there's an opportunity 'to earn some cash', Cape Verdeans are there".

The integration of the Cape Verdeans into the housing market is an issue that is also of great concern to the associations. It becomes evident that the situation in which many Cape Verdeans find themselves (living primarily in clandestine shantytown housing), is due to the economic difficulties faced by community members. "*Those who don't have any qualifications can't get good jobs. Those who don't have good jobs have low-paying jobs. Those with low-paying jobs, with no rights, with no way of acquiring a loan, can't acquire a proper house and therefore, continue to live in a shack*", is how one leader describes the situation. The lack of collaboration on the part of the local powers when trying to improve neighbourhood conditions or dealing with re-housing issues is also of great concern to the associations, although, contrary to those concerns, all of the associations located in the municipality of Oeiras highlight the good work done by the City Hall in relation to the re-housing situation¹⁸. In other municipalities, on the other hand, the associations feel that the political powers do not take into consideration the needs of the people living in the housing projects, with

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children with another relative. From a very early age, children are left home alone or abandoned on the street while their parents are at work. It is common, for example, for the oldest, who might be no more than 9 or 10 years of age, to be taking care of the other siblings. As a consequence of the parents not being around, this leads to the children not studying and not doing their homework. Many end up by following in the steps of their parents, but the reality is that many also don't want to work hard like their parents do, and, in the end, it's the bad influences in the neighbourhood that lead this young population into the world of criminality; this is always much easier than going to work on the construction site".

Considering the above arguments, it can then be said that the situation in which many Cape Verdean youngsters find themselves in is due to a variety of reasons, from the lack of acceptance by the host society to their disjointed family life. This often implies that they will often end up inheriting their parent's socio-economic position or, in other words, they end up inheriting their culture of poverty. With this, we will here consider one last opinion concerning this community:

"It is important not to forget, that Cape Verdean youth don't have the right studying conditions in the shacks. He or she is not a student with an individual bedroom and with a computer. Anything that he or she may want to be in life has to be attained through his or her own will and determination".

4.2 The role of the associations in the community's integration

In attempting to find out the importance of the associations as a community service provider, the question: 'How would you describe the importance of the associations in relation to the social, cultural, economic and housing dimensions of community integration?', was asked. In analysing this question, it is first and foremost important to note that all of the association leaders interviewed consider the respective functions of their associations as essential and of great importance when it comes to the integration of the community.

In relation to social integration, the associations become a reference point for those individuals who leave Cape Verde and arrive in Portugal without any knowledge of the social service mechanisms. The associations are sources of 'solidarity' for newcomers, providing them with a location where they can network and at the same time maintain links with the 'home country'. In the opinion of one association leader: "*The associations are centres of communication, of*

integration, of familiarity and, for some, 'a second home', especially for those who find themselves in Portugal without any family'". The associations are aware of the difficulties experienced by the community and feel that their role as community representatives in issues important to the people is essential. As one of the interviewees reveals:

"... to intervene in government bureaucracies is essential, mainly when it comes to the initiatives carried out by the municipalities to improve people's living conditions. This is why the associations are important".

The associations, through their activities, feel that they also play a key role in providing recreational alternatives for community youth, with the goal of keeping them 'off the streets' and providing them with healthy activities that also promote self-esteem. The associations also work to transmit that integration is a 'give and take situation' and that it is important to live in a harmonious manner. At the same time, they also exist to provide visibility to cases of discrimination against the community.

In relation to the community's cultural integration, the associations highlight their capacity to

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are numerous, two particular issues need highlighting - the lack of information on immigrant rights and regularisation matters, and the lack of an integration policy favouring a multicultural society. The associations feel that these two issues are pivotal and that immigrants will never be seen as equals until policies are clearly defined and respected. In relation to the community's cultural integration, 16 associations expressed their dissatisfaction with the political powers, explaining that there is a lack collaboration, particularly on the part of the municipalities, when it comes to carrying out cultural events. Concerning the professional integration of Cape Verdeans, 16 associations also agreed that the powers-that-be do not do enough. These associations are of the opinion that the political powers in Portugal are not diligent when it comes to creating better professional training courses and also protecting the rights of workers, especially the undocumented. Finally, 21 associations said that they are dissatisfied with the political authorities and their dealings with housing matters. The associations primarily criticise the slowness of the re-housing process and also the lack of consultation on the part of the municipalities when it comes to the needs of the residents.

In relation to the five mechanisms chosen for analysis, although they are of great importance to immigrant communities, it should be mentioned that two of these mechanism are not directed at immigrants exclusively, but for all members of Portuguese society. These mechanisms are the Guaranteed Minimum Income Programme (Social Insertion Income Programme) and the PER and PER Families Projects. *Table 2* sets out the pattern of answers across the five dimensions.

Table 2: Mechanisms of integration and their perceptions by representatives of the Cape Verdean associations (n=27)

	Not effic.	Mod. ineffic.	Mod. effic.	Very effic.	No answer
• Immigration Law and regularisation processes	0	12	13	2	0
• Guaranteed Minimum Income Programme	0	12	9	6	0
• PER and PER Families Projects	0	10	11	6	0
• High Commissioner for Immigration and Ethnic Minorities	1	4	16	6	0
• Consultative Council for Immigrant Affairs	1	10	9	1	6

Source: Interviews with Cape Verdean association leaders, 2001

In analysing the regularisation processes, the majority of the associations are split between the answers "moderately inefficient" and "moderately efficient" with only two associations answering "very efficient". In quoting an association leader on this question: "*When you legalise an immigrant, you are making him/her visible; someone who can contribute to the society*". However, in spite of the fact that a number of the associations consider the processes to be useful, it is the elaboration of the law, in itself, that is criticised. For instance, some associations claim that it should not be necessary to wait five years to obtain a 'permanence permit', stating that the Immigration Law should favour 'residence' instead of the 'permanence', claiming that the annual renewal of authorisation is not practical. Another common complaint is that the procedures for obtaining the necessary documents are too bureaucratic. The fact that an undocumented individual requires a work contract in order to obtain legal documents is another factor that divides the associations. While some feel that the regularisation processes are good control measures when it comes to worker-employer relations, others hold the opinion that the fact that a work contract is required will keep many individuals from becoming documented because their employers will not provide them with an employment contract, and thus they have no other alternative.

Most of the association leaders have a positive opinion of the Guaranteed Minimum Income scheme, as is illustrated in *Table 2*: 15 answered, either "moderately efficient" or "very efficient", while 12 answered "moderately inefficient". Those leaders who shed positive light on this integration mechanism believe that this instrument is very useful in the battle against poverty and in giving people a chance to move out of such a situation. In addition, the leaders explain that Cape Verdeans are very proud individuals, many of whom prefer to work their way out of their poverty. A typical quote: "*Cape Verdeans like to live off what they can achieve for themselves and most don't want to be in a position of having to appeal to such a resource. In fact, I very much doubt that most Cape Verdeans even know of its existence*". According to spokespersons' opinions, one can then argue that an effective campaign has not been carried out to notify this community of this instrument. Lastly, many of the association leaders also pointed out that if an immigrant is undocumented, he or she can not appeal to this

recognise the value of these two initiatives: 17 of the interviewees are of the opinion that these two instruments are either "very efficient" or "moderately efficient". A generalised opinion is that these projects provide reasonably decent housing for those who have no other options. *"Something is being done in bettering our living conditions and that's what's important"*, stated one interviewee, *"...and even if things aren't always done correctly, it still demonstrates that there is some concern and that the politicians want to improve the lives of community members"*. Still, in spite of comments showing satisfaction with these mechanisms, it is the management of the programmes that is highly criticised, with the main critique being the lack of community consultation:

"The infrastructures and project designs are not appropriate for the Cape Verdean community. Cape Verdeans are not used to living on the fifth floor of an apartment building without space to 'mash corn'²², for example. They put up these cement blocks without spaces for the children to play, without green spaces - this is

that 6 of the 27 interviewees did not know of the COCAI's existence. This can be explained by the fact that some of the associations have never dealt or been asked to deal with the COCAI, and therefore do not know of its existence; or because the State government, which set up and runs the

Concerning professional integration, the interviewees felt that the following measures should be taken into consideration:

- More professional training, both in quality and quantity, in order to give immigrants more qualifications so that they can compete for higher-level, qualified employment;
- Create laws that will protect and dignify immigrant workers, namely those who work as unqualified labourers, both documented or undocumented, who are also susceptible to exploitation, so that they that can contribute to Portuguese society and have equal rights to any other worker;
- Within the scope of a multicultural education, create an alternative school curriculum for African youth that will hopefully provide a greater incentive to African descendents in order for them not to drop out of school;
- Increase and revise the existing relationships with labour unions in order for these organisations to be able to work together with immigrant associations and communities, to gain more strength in combating employment inequalities and discrimination.

Finally, in order to improve residential integration, the association leaders add the following recommendations:

- More information, participation and collaboration from all parts (governments, associations, citizens, etc.) as far as the re-housing projects are concerned;
- Credit concessions equal to those given to native residents when it comes to acquiring a house;
- Improve the living conditions in the shanty neighbourhoods and carry out a proper inventory of all the homes in a neighbourhood and the conditions of dwellings before any re-housing or decision to re-house is carried out;
- Improve the social, cultural and architectural conditions (including recreational spaces and meeting places) of the re-housing projects, so that the people can enjoy and identify with the residential space they live in;
- Create or reinforce residents' associations in order to stimulate local dwellers' public participation;
- Develop a policy plan that will discourage residential segregation, in the hopes of putting an end to ghettoisation;
- Train and prepare individuals for living in the re-housing projects (including living habits,

decolonisation, having only concerned themselves with foreign populations at the start of the 1990's, the Cape Verdean community was left to its own devices in trying to map out its belonging within Portuguese society.

As the Cape Verdean population in the MAL grew in the last quarter of the 20th century, so did the community's integration difficulties. A number of associations sprung up with the intention of bettering the living conditions of the community, although their reasons for existing vary. Thus, the associations Cape Verdeans created to in order to preserve cultural patterns, in order to represent them and to battle for resources, have been limited in their mobilisation attempts, primarily due to economic and organisational reasons. As argued by Soysal (1994: 86) "host societies shape the collective organization of migrants by providing (or not) certain resources for and models of organizing".

Institutional modes of incorporation not only are determinant in shaping the Cape Verdean community's organisational structure, but also their influence reaches further into migrants' individual and collective forms of integration considering the role these institutions play. One can then argue that the relevance of Soysal's arguments is thus apparent in relation to this analysis. In order to maximise the resource acquisition, the associations will then move across receiving–sending country contexts. The relationship between these contexts not only reflects distinct relations between resources and associations, it is also grounds for ongoing negotiation of rights as well as identities. So it is not only resources that are negotiated but also multiple identities, since this is the way through which immigrant associations acquire their places of power (Mapril and Araújo, 2002).

Although some immigrant associations might present clear strategies of settlement through their activities and contacts with the host society, they seldom lose what brings them together in the first place, which is their affective ties – the fact they share the same country of origin, a common cultural heritage, language, religion, consciousness of kind, etc. Thus what emerges from here is a "third space" (Bhabha, 1994); a space of hyphenated identities and practices where the belonging, resources and rights from different national contexts are constantly negotiated. In the end it can then be argued that these associations, just like the individuals and the community they represent, are neither Cape Verdean associations nor Cape Verdean individuals, but instead they are Portuguese-hyphen-Cape Verdean associations and

individuals, for they end up amalgamating what they consider to be the best of both worlds.

Gomes (1999: 222) describes the Cape Verdean community as one trapped by "unavoidable poverty". As has been discussed in this paper, the majority of Cape Verdeans living in the MAL find themselves at the lower end of the social mobility scale due to their socio-economic positioning which is marked by low levels of education, an unskilled status in the job market and lack of proper housing. In addition, integration difficulties are due to the irregular status which many Cape Verdeans find themselves in, which will frequently not permit them to benefit from certain Portuguese social support services in addition to also being prone to labour exploitation. Second-generation Cape Verdeans are another concern, with this population frequently inheriting their parents' patterns of poverty due to the lack of opportunities given to them to improve their lives.

A positive integration for this community does not depend exclusively on the Cape Verdean population, but also on Portuguese society, and primarily the Portuguese State. A mutual collaboration (between Cape Verdeans and Portuguese) is, thus, a crucial dimension to the integration question. The ideal scenario would be characterised by the maintenance of Cape Verdean culture and identity through community and associative actions, while, at the same time, being given the same citizenship and participation rights as those given to the host society.

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Appendix 1: List of Associations Interviewed:

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Annex 1



