

Low intensity transnationalism: the Cape Verdian case

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Abstract

This paper focuses on a transnational approach to the study of contemporary Cape Verdian migrations in an attempt to account for the ideosyncracies of Cape Verdian transnationalism. For that purpose, the transnational practices of the Cape Verdian migrants (and/or non-migrants) are analysed, by comparing the transnational practice today with the transnational practices of the past and/or with the transnational practices of other groups of migrants. In this approach, the paper follows several theoretical perspectives of the sociology of migration that can be subsumed under the overarching label of transnationalism. In the Cape Verdian case, a glance at the recent history shows that the constitution of a transnational social space (the Cape Verdian world) is the cumulative result of the history of migration with an accumulation of individual and collective capitals, of which social capital (structured in a network) is argued to be one of its main components. This transnational social space can be interpreted as a specific configuration of social networks, which constitutes the support of what we conceptualize as a labour Diaspora and the support for the development of a low-intensity transnationalism.

‘Té na Lua Ten Kab’verdiánu’¹: a brief history of Cape Verdian migration

Migration has been integral to the formation of Cape Verdian society and continues to shape the islands’ present. In this sense, Cape Verde may be a unique example of a state that could be characterized as transnational at the moment of its creation; of a “nation” scattered over many territories; of an archipelago-like set of groups of transnational migrants, enmeshed in transnational practices understood as “the processes through which immigrants create and support multi-connected social relations which link the home and the destination societies” (Basch et al. 1994, 7). In fact, emigration has such a structural importance in the formation of the Cape Verdian society that, in order to adequately analyse it, one should go back to the fifteenth century, when the Portuguese first arrived in Cape Verde

¹ A Creole proverb meaning, “even on the Moon there are Cape Verdians”.

(circa 1460). The characteristics of the contemporary Cape Verdian emigration cannot be fully understood unless we analyse the history of this long-lasting emigration. The dispersion of the native Cape Verdians began in the middle of the fifteenth century, initially largely through *forced emigration* (slavery), which was gradually replaced by *spontaneous forms of emigration*, from the 18th and 19th centuries onwards, when slavery was officially abolished.

Over time, emigration became an opportunity not only because it mitigated the effects of a high natural growth rate (about thirty thousand per year in the last two decades of the 20th century), but also because it created groups of emigrants in the USA, Portugal, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and some other countries, which have been extremely important for financing the Cape Verdian economy. However, nowadays this former strategy of survival has come to produce several dependencies: it increased the country's reliance on remittances (not only financial remittances), it created a mythological or identitary dependency among the emigrants and, consequently, it supported the consolidation of an (almost) perpetual transnationality. The global and simultaneous geographical dispersion of several close relatives, neighbours, friends or fellow countrymen therefore allows us to describe Cape Verde not only as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 1983), but also as a truly imagined nation, or even an imaginary nation that flows within a particular and imagined world: *the Cape Verdian world*.

In response to the insufficiency of the concept of Diaspora to explain the contemporary migratory context, a new trend in research has suggested the existence of *transnational communities*². These transnational communities connect, in many different ways, the country of origin and destination of migrants as well as migrant communities from the same country in different receiving societies, thus creating truly deterritorialised or transnationalised

² Among the several texts that were published about these concepts we must point out those of Alejandro Portes (1996) "Transnational communities: their emergence and significance in the contemporary world-system" and (2001) "Introduction: the debates and significance of immigrant transnationalism", *Global Networks*, vol.1, number 3; the texts which resulted from the research "transnational Communities", coordinated by Steve Vertovec (www.transcomm.ox.ac.uk); or the review, also coordinated by Steve Vertovec and Robin Cohen (1999), "Migration, Diaspora and Transnationalism".

communities (Bash et al., 1994). In the specific case of Cape Verde and its migrants, these *transnational communities* were consolidated throughout the 20th century, thus creating a multipolar geography that resembles a network, connected by nodes of historically variable importance.

In fact, the Cape Verdian migrations throughout the 19th and 20th centuries assumed different routes, searching for new destinations and creating a net around one main axis: the Atlantic Ocean. This migratory process had some particular features because of the archipelago-like form of the country, with different migratory flows and destinations according to the islands of origin (e.g. linking the Santiago island to Lisbon and the S. Vicente Island to Rotterdam). At least at the beginning of the migratory flow, these nodes mostly linked specific places in Cape Verde (villages, towns, cities or islands) to other specific places abroad (cities or regions). For instance remittances will be sent and spent locally and the effects of these investments will be very localised. From a retrospective analysis, we can divide contemporary patterns of Cape Verdian emigration into three different migratory cycles, following a chronological classification:

- a) The first cycle, which ranges from the end of the 19th century to the first decades of the 20th century, is characterised by an emigratory flow to the Americas, predominantly to the USA, and, at the same time, by migrations to Sao Tome and Principe and, in some cases, to other parts of the Portuguese Colonial Empire, namely Angola and Guinea-Bissau. We can divide this cycle into two main divergent flows: one going North (for instance, the USA); and another one going South (for instance, Sao Tome and Principe and Angola);
- b) The second cycle, which ranges from the 1920s until the end of the Second World War, has two major tendencies: a great reduction in the number of exits and a clear shift of emigration flows to Brazil, Argentina, Senegal or Gambia, while migration within the Portuguese colonial empire continued to be of major importance;
- c) The third and last cycle started after the end of the Second World War and still continues today. In this cycle, the main emigration destinations are several European countries: the Netherlands, Portugal, France, Luxembourg, Italy, Switzerland, Spain, Germany, etc. In this period, the migratory flow to the USA is also reactivated, thus reactivating the migratory network whose origin

can be traced to the first cycle identified above. Also this migratory cycle can be divided into several flows with different characteristics: a first flow heading towards the Netherlands; a second flow heading towards Portugal; a third flow heading towards Italy; and a fourth flow heading to other European countries; a fifth flow that resumes the migratory lines of previous migratory cycles (Góis 2002, 36).

Since the 1960, Europe has become the main destination of Cape Verdian migrants. The massive economic growth in post-war Europe and the concomitant need for labour attracted many Cape Verdians. The Netherlands became the main destination, in particular, the port city of Rotterdam. Similarly, Portugal, most importantly Lisbon, increasingly became an important destination of Cape Verdian migrants, while several other important destinations in Europe, such as Italy or France, emerged as well. At the end of the 1960s there were about 9000 legally registered Cape Verdians living in Rotterdam, a few thousands in Lisbon and in the region of Paris, respectively, and a few hundred Cape Verdian women in Italy (mainly Rome, Naples, and Milan). Hence, the cities of Rotterdam and Lisbon were becoming the main poles of attraction of Cape Verdian emigration to Europe.

Visualising the migratory network

After a century of continuous and sustained migration, the Cape Verdian emigrant population, including persons of Cape Verdian ancestry (second and third generations) living abroad, outnumber the resident population of Cape Verde. The Cape Verdian migratory network involves a vast number of countries in three continents (Africa, North and South America and Europe) and tends, on the one hand, to consolidate the traditional migratory destinations while, on the other hand, to slightly diversify itself, mostly within the EU and EEA (European Economic Area) countries such as Switzerland and Norway. Through a diversification of the migratory destinations and their expansion within several continents, the Cape Verdian migrations created a migratory network in which nodes of variable importance can be detected.

While Boston, Brockton, Dakar, Lisbon, Paris, Pawtucket, Providence, Rome or Rotterdam, are the central nodes of this network, cities like Milan, Porto, Marseille, Rio de Janeiro, Bridgeport, Lausanne, Luxembourg or Faro are secondary nodes that support and diversify the migratory network, thus increasing the possibility of a continuous low-risk migration.³ In each of these migratory nodes, the Cape Verdian emigration (re)creates its transnationality and new particularities emerge. On the one hand, these particularities are the outcome of a particular migratory history; on the other hand, they open up new possibilities for Cape Verdian emigrants.

An analysis of the creation of these migratory networks reveals how important the theories of social networks, of *transnational communities* and transnationalism in general are to explain the development and preservation of migratory flows such as the Cape Verdian one. In particular, the role of networks in sustaining migration flows has increasingly been acknowledged in the literature. In network analyses of migration, (social) networks are interpreted as an important resource and as a form of capital - social capital. According to Bourdieu, "social capital" can be defined as the totality of actual and potential resources associated with the possession of a long-standing chain of more or less institutionalised relations of acquaintance and mutual knowledge. This approach enables us to explain why those individuals which have a similar cultural and economic capital differ so much in their migratory intentions (Bourdieu 1997, 51). The idea that "social capital" requires a participation in a group and that it may have an instrumental use is indeed crucial to understand Cape Verdian migrations.

The concept of social network is widely used in the social sciences in general. A social network is, in itself, a theoretical abstraction which allows us to trace and reveal relational links between individuals. In the case of migration, the identified variables are the actors themselves, (potential and *de facto*) migrants, groups of migrants, *communities* of migrants and the relations among them. The analysis of social networks is not focused on isolated individuals, but rather on interactive systems of relations among individuals, corporations, *communities*, or even societies. What is important are the "flows" of relations that determine the structural position of each actor, of nodes within a system, and the relations between them (the

³ We differentiate between primary and secondary nodes according to the stock of Cape-Verdians immigrants in each destination country or city.

connections).⁴ In the case of the circulation of Cape Verdians as international migrants, this way of conceptualising the network enables us to explain the help granted by those who are already settled in a certain destination to those who have just arrived. This help can assume different forms (e.g. supporting new immigrants over a period of time with accommodation, with finding a job, etc.). According to Douglas Massey (1990), migrant networks generate a group of social bonds that link communities, regions, cities or original locations to specific destinations (mostly cities) in the host societies. These bonds unite migrants and non-migrants in a complex network of complementary social roles and interpersonal relationships that are maintained through formal and/or informal frameworks of mutual expectations and predetermined behaviours. The social networks, based on relationships of kinship and friendship, are woven on a social product, which provide the migrant with a valuable resource in a new environment (the host country, region or city). On the other hand, this is never a static situation. The emigrants carry their own ethnic identities, which change in the context of the migration, in the relations with the host society and with other groups of migrants. Some identitarian elements of the country of origin are selected, negotiated and reconstructed in the context of the migration. There is no simple collective "transplant", there is a selective recreation of social ties (Tilly 1990, 86) which leads to a change in the structure of the network itself. This is how the network that is originally based on the family or common origin, both in terms of national and regional origin, kinship embraces the common ethnicity, the common ancestry or the common language in the host country or region. However, if such common ties to the country of origin are not constantly reproduced and thus maintained, the nature of the social network itself will change. The network begins to operate in a sort of closed circuit in which the original identities are recreated regardless of the evolution of those parts of the network, that are still tied to country of origin by effective social ties. Some of the nodes of the Cape Verdian migratory network that we mentioned before could be cited as an example. For instance, the migratory flows to Sao Tome and Principe came to a halt in the 1970s. At the same time, the islands turned into a sending region of Cape

⁴ According to J. Scott (1991), [0] social networks are based on what he calls *relational data*, that is, the contacts, the bonds or the group connections that link one actor with another and which cannot be reduced to the characteristics of the individual actors (1991: 3).

Verdian re-emigrants (for instance to Portugal and the Netherlands) and/or Cape Verdian return migrants to Cape Verde.

The density and size of the networks (and their specific characteristics) have direct consequences for the economic “performance” of the network as well as the behaviour of the individuals who are part of the network. However, it is necessary to distinguish the two primary poles (country of origin and country of destination, respectively) of the migratory chain and their relative importance for the migratory movement and for the insertion in the host societies. If the network social capital in the country/region of origin can be essential to trigger migration, it is very likely that there is another kind of social capital to ensure a good insertion in the destination society. The existence of a complex group or a network of social capital, both in the country of origin and the country of destination, is a key factor for the success not only of the migratory projects pursued by migrants, but also for the insertion of the immigrants into the host country. In the specific case of the Cape Verdian migrations, this network is the building block of a global transnational *community* and enables the continuous migration from the origin and the circulation (emigration, re-emigration, remigration) between the nodes linking the network. The social capital embodied in the wider network of Cape Verdians also enhances the “competitiveness” of immigrants vis-à-vis natives and other immigrant groups on the labour markets of the host countries.

Density of the Cape Verdian migratory network

The Cape Verdians have what we could call a dense social network of traditional support. This network is the outcome of the union of small family networks, based on a concept of enlarged family, on the union of networks of individual, group and regional (i.e. island) social capitals; as well as on ethnic identity and a shared common language, namely Cape Verdian Creole. In the specific case of the contemporary Cape Verdian migrations and the networks formed by these migrants, we can understand their dimension and density if we analyse the data of recent studies about these migrations. For instance, if we look at the family network, the inquiry carried out by Jorge Malheiros in 1999 on Cape Verdians residing in Rotterdam and Lisbon reveals that 74.1% of the interviewees in Lisbon and 89.5% of the interviewees in Rotterdam declared that they had relatives

elsewhere in the main countries of Cape Verdian immigration. For the Cape Verdians residing in Lisbon, the regions with larger numbers of relatives were the regions of France (mostly Paris, but also Nice), the Dutch cities (region of Rotterdam), the region of New England (Boston and/or Providence) and Spain (Léon and Madrid). As far as the Cape Verdians residing in the Netherlands are concerned, the areas with larger numbers of relatives were the French region of Paris, Lisbon Metropolitan Area, New England (Boston and/or Providence), Luxembourg and Rome Metropolitan Area. Malheiros thus shows that the existence of this scattered network of fellow countrymen provides a group of (potential) contacts among the different elements of the network, which can be entered into/ or maintained both by more indirect communicational means (e.g. phone calls, e-mails, letters) and directly (e.g. visits). These contacts are used by Cape Verdians when they are looking for work but also for leisure activities. By comparing the locations where Cape Verdian immigrants reside with the most visited locations by Cape Verdians residing outside Cape Verde, we can, as far as the network theories allow us, create a map of potential migratory destinations that roughly coincides with the map of the network of migratory lines of the Cape Verdians. However, as Jorgen Carling points out, we should not forget that there is an important difference between the size of the immigrant population in a given territory and the contemporary migratory context. For example, the African destinations like Angola, Senegal and Sao Tome and Principe host a very high volume of individuals who originate from Sao Vicente or Santo Antão or who have ancestors in any one these islands, but they only play a marginal role in contemporary Cape Verdian transnational connections.⁵

Migrations as transnational processes

In order to study contemporary migratory flows, Glick-Schiller, Basch and Blanc-Szanton (1992b) suggested the adoption of the concept of transnationalism as a new analytic perspective to understand and analyse migration. Glick-Schiller and her colleagues suggest to conceptualise

⁵ This is partly due to the fact that these countries have received few Cape Verdian immigrants for the last few decades. Moreover, these poor and relatively unattractive countries only generate very small flows of remittances (Carling, 2001: 19).

migrants as transmigrants when they establish and maintain several familial, economic, social, organisational, religious and political relations that enlarge the frontiers and interconnect the global and the local (Glick-Schiller, et al. 1992b). Research on migration following this paradigm also takes into consideration the society of origin (even) when what is being studied is the insertion of immigrants in the host societies. According to proponents of the transnational approach, traditional approaches to the study of migration fails to account for the complexity of contemporary migration flows, in particular since the fact that migrants maintain various sets of relations with the society of origin, in addition to those kept with the host or destination society, is not systematically taken into account. However, such continuing ties have been shown to be extremely important. Maintaining ties, for example, enables migrants to leave children with relatives in the country of origin; to keep participating in family decisions; to buy estate and build their own houses or set a business in their countries of origin, even though they had already done that in the country of settlement (Glick-Schiller, et al. 1995, 53). The frequency with which remittances are sent to migrants' hometowns or travel tickets which are pre-paid by relatives or friends at the place of destination, for instance, show the extent of the mutual help and the density of the social networks that link the extremes of the migratory chain. The importance of remittances is also reflected by several expressions in colloquial language: for example, a letter without any money is called *dry letter*.

Even though it may be a complex task to estimate the value of the migrants' remittances, its importance is, in any case, very significant and may even constitute, as in the case of Cape Verde, an important part of the gross national product of the migrants' countries of origin. Although the importance of the remittances has considerably decreased over the last 20 years [in 1980 those transfers represented 86% of the GNP; in 2000 they only represented 25% (Reis 2002, 3)], they still play an irreplaceable role in the financial balance of the country.

Nos ku Nos⁶: The Cape Verdian Transnational Community

Not all the Cape Verdian emigrants can be considered transmigrants. A clear distinction can be made between the immigrants in Europe or Senegal as well as the *kriolu* in the USA, on the hand, and the first wave of emigrants in the USA, the *merkanu*, (Sánchez 1998, 22) as well as the Cape Verdians that live in countries such as Sao Tome and Principe or Brazil, on the other. The former (the so called *Kriolu*) have always maintained transnational practices. The latter, (the *merkanu*) have also engaged in transnational practices of some sort, but of much lower intensity. The Cape Verdians in Sao Tome and Principe, for example, because of the lack of economic and, in many cases, social capital, were stuck at the end of a migratory line that had been closed in the meantime, thus, in a sense, excluding them from membership in the transnational community of Cape Verdians. Apart from economic factors, a major factor explaining differential patterns of transnational practices is related to the different moments in which the migratory flows for particular destinations took place. In a context in which the acceleration of the process of globalisation reduced distances (both in the sense of geography and in terms of time), the contacts between (several) emigrated communities and the home country, or among the emigrated communities, became easier and more consistent. Thus, more intensive links could be maintained compared to previous periods of emigration. Looking at the example of the Cape Verdians in the Netherlands or Portugal since the 1960s or at secondary migrants from Cape Verde within the EU, even migrants fully integrated in the respective host countries, are never disconnected from their country of origin and continue to maintain strong ties. Similarly, Cape Verdian secondary migrants, when migrating from a place outside Cape Verde to another, in a way also transfer a particular notion and practice of homeland from their previous country of residence (in which they have their ethnic network). For instance, many Cape Verdian migrants in Italy or in The Netherlands usually come on holidays to Portugal, visiting relatives instead to travel to Cape Verde, because is

⁶ The expression “nos ku nos” is colloquially used to give the idea that the Cape Verdians understand each other even though their cultural identity does not make sense to those outside the group (in Raymond Almeida <http://www.umassd.edu/SpecialPrograms/caboverde>).

cheaper, or because their relatives no longer live in Cape Verde but all reside abroad. In the words of Basch *et al.*, “transmigrants use the term home [‘nhá terra] for their society of origin, even when they clearly have also made a home in their country of settlement. (...) transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and develop subjectivities and identities embedded in networks of relationship that connect them simultaneously to two or more nation-states” (1992, 7).

According to the transnational perspective, the analysis of the social processes that result from the interaction of specific groups of migrants in different nation states, enables us to visualise the emergence of a new social space, a *transnational social space* (Pries, 1999; 2001), in which the members of a nation may live anywhere in the world and, in a sense, still do not live outside the state (Basch et al. 1994, 269). The appearance of a *transnational social space*, in which many and complex relations between social actors take place is, simultaneously, a product and a manufacturer of a globalisation which is here conceptualised as an intricate expansion of translocal or local social spaces or of spaces of relations among social actors that previously were almost exclusively localised.

The archipelago-like migratory networks that shape transnational *communities* developed by Cape Verdians are an example of a (new) type of process of globalisation that expands the concept of globalised localism described by Santos (2001). Since these processes are driven by “below”, they can be understood as counter-hegemonic to dominant, state and business led neoliberal processes of globalisation (Portes 1999, 143).

It is the constant and continuous movement of individuals that belong to the same community that makes it possible to deterritorialise the concept of nation, suggesting the emergence of a deterritorialised transnational nation (Basch et al., 1994) that moves within a (new and emergent) transnational social space (Pries, 1999, 2001). In our case, this would be a transnationalised Cape Verdian social space, which can be conceptualised as the *Cape Verdian world*, a social space which is necessarily and clearly conceptual. This space has no political borders, but it is geographically and socially circumscribed because neither does it include the whole world, nor is it a global world. The appearance of this transnational social space, which is geographically discontinuous, within which there are individuals with

the same co-ethnic identity, Cape Verdians and their descendents, is the outcome of one of the possibilities suggested by Pries when he proclaims “the emergence of transnational social spaces as social realities prompted by international migrations” (Pries 2001, 3).

Kinship is an essential element of this migratory network in which we can also find: the identification with the homeland; proximity relations in the homeland (the hometown, the island, Cape Verde); the neighbour/proximity relations in the host societies (the neighbourhoods, the cities, the country); the cultural proximity (the music, the language); the importance of the use of the Creole, in a first level, and of Portuguese, in a second level; the religion (networks created around the Catholic or Protestant churches); etc. These are dynamic networks; they do not remain the same through time and space. On the contrary, they need to be fed by new migrants, otherwise, the network will lose its defining characteristics as a migrant network, closely linked to different geographical spaces; migrants, in their turn, need the support from these social networks to pursue their migratory projects. However, networks may differ in an intergenerational perspective. For example, there are obvious differences between the first generation of Cape Verdian migrants, for whom the hometown or homeland are extremely important, and the second or third generation, for whom the family, the language or the “ethnicity” constitute the bulwarks of the network. Actually, this is one of the main issues raised by the conceptualisation of transnational *communities*. The fact that the impacts and/or the participation of the second and third generations within the transnational *communities* have not yet been systematically studied makes it still difficult to talk about the emergence of a new kind of migratory phenomenon that may be sustained over time.

When analysing the Cape Verdian *communities* in Europe, all the necessary conditions to be considered as a transnational *community*, especially those that are mentioned by Malheiros (2001, 73), are fulfilled and can be empirically supported. Cape Verdians potential network social capital, when added to the overall potential volume as deriving from emigrated countrymen and to the number of non-migrants, is the source of a truly transnational *community*. Even within the central nodes of the Cape Verdian migratory network (e.g. Lisbon, Rotterdam), there are differences between

the several types of individuals (and their social, economic, cultural or political capitals) who belong to different *communities*; indeed, to originate from different islands of the Cape Verdian archipelago involves very different migration experiences, depending on where one comes from.

The interaction among the members of the community tends to be much stronger in the first generation than in the next ones. Nevertheless, the assistance to fellow countrymen, the social support they have in the different nodes of the network, and temporarily within them, provides Cape Verdians with an *active migratory culture*, that is, an understanding of the formal and informal mechanisms that enable a low-risk migratory flow. It also gives them an easier access to the local labour markets of the nodes of the migratory network, transnationalising, in special cases, the frontiers of the local labour market to other nodes of the migratory network. For instance, if the employer of a Cape Verdian housemaid in Italy asks for another maid, the local labour market may be easily extended as labour might be recruited from places in which relatives or fellow countrymen of the first maid live (e.g. Cape Verde, Madrid, Lisbon or Paris).

One of the main propositions of transnational theories is that the connection between the host societies and the societies of origin can be sustained over time and space. The novelty of this approach lies in the observations of the durability of those bonds, which go beyond what traditional migration theories posited for first generation migrants. Although these bonds can assume different forms, they always imply a high density of contacts, exchanges and/or relations. On the other hand, these bonds are potentiated by the disruption of spaces between geographical and social frontiers (L.Pries (1999, 2001)). The lack of coincidence between social and geographic spaces leads to a (new) transnational social space where transnational *communities* circulate, a reticular, multipolar and geographically discontinuous transnational social space which can be visualised by the metaphor of the migratory archipelago (Malheiros, 2001). The contingencies associated with *space* are overcome.

Some examples of Cape Verdian transnationalism

The case of Cape Verdian independently migrating women, often single mothers and their children, in the 1960s and 1970s, drew attention to the existence of Cape Verdian transnational families which sometimes divided

their members between several countries. At that time, it was already common for a family to split at the moment of migration: Men tended to migrate to the Netherlands or Portugal, whereas the preferred destination for woman was Italy. They all shared their lives in this multiplicity of spaces. While the earlier migrations of primarily male migrants had already shown the permanent bonds migrants maintained between places of origin and destination, respectively, the migration of Cape Verdian women to a third country, in turn, enlarged the network and gave it a clearly transnational character. If these Cape Verdians were the pioneers of this movement to Italy in the 1960s and 1970s, under a historical perspective it were the following migratory waves that reinforced these patterns.

But there are also more distant historical examples. The case of Cape Verdian migrants who worked in agricultural estates of New England at the beginning of the 20th century can be interpreted as such an early example of migrants engaging in transnational practices (Halter, 1993).

These migrants, who would become what we could call regular seasonal migrants involved in circular migrations, divided their lives between Cape Verde and America. They could do so, because of the increasing regular passenger traffic between the USA and Cape Verde. The historian of this early instance of Cape Verdian labour migration and nascent transnationalism Marilyn Halter emphasises that migrants worked for the same bosses every year and came back to Cape Verde with a contract for the next season (Halter 1995, 75). Some of these Cape Verdians stayed (temporarily or permanently) in the USA gathering around fellow countrymen and creating groups with strong transnational ties. The remittances sent through these circular immigrants and the easy access to the archipelago enabled by the regular sailing vessel trips increased the levels of transnationalism (Lobban, 1995). The end of the transatlantic migratory cycle, imposed by the quota system on the US side and the absence of political sanctioning by the colonial regime, led to a weakening of transnational ties between these populations on both sides of the Atlantic. With the beginning of the European migratory cycle (after the Second World War) a new transnational phase in Cape Verdian migrations was initiated. On the one hand, the migration of male Cap Verdians to the Netherlands as mariners led to the reappearance of the transnational practices of their ancestors, the crew members of the American whaling vessels.

The migration of single moving women to Italy in the 60s and 70s, which we have already mentioned, promoted a new level of transnationalism. Apart from the practices that were already mentioned above, also the migration between different nodes of the network should be mentioned. For example, the ties male Cape Verdian immigrants in the Netherlands maintained with Cape Verdian immigrants in Italy (who were predominantly female), for example through holiday visits, and vice versa, also translated into the forging of family ties through marriages between migrants from the two groups (Andall, 2000; Monteiro, 1997). Another example might be the triangle formed by Portugal, Italy and the Netherlands working as a circulatory axis for the transnational practices of the Cape Verdian community in Europe. The flow of individuals between nodes of the migratory archipelago, for holidays, parties or even retirement, is becoming a habitual practice accompanied by the circulation of economic, social and cultural goods.

For the last three decades, Cape Verdian migration to Europe as well as secondary migration of Cape Verdians within Europe has significantly increased, as well as the transnational practices involved, the kind of actors that promote them and the strategies that are used to put them into practice. Within the European Union, with the development of regional integration, the movement within this space has become much easier, in particular for those who have acquired the nationality of a European country and who therefore enjoy full freedom of movement. Many of the Cape Verdians who have been living in Europe for several decades already have the nationality of the country in which they live, which facilitates their migratory circulation. The emergence of new intensely transnational actors who move within a transnational social space, either within the several emigrated *communities* or in the archipelago, the transmigrants, introduces a new level of transnationalism. The traditional transnational entrepreneurs who circulate between the different emigrated *communities*, the home country and third countries are a good example of that. Another example are the *rebidantes* (Marques et al., 2000), women who circulate in a transnational level and move mainly in a transnational informal market, carrying with them Cape Verdian traditional products to be sold to Cape Verdians who live abroad and bringing back mass consumption products such as clothes, shoes, domestic appliances, jewellery, trinkets, food or tobacco, which

otherwise would be inaccessible to the lowest local social classes" (Marques et al. 2000, 7).

Cape Verdian musicians involved in transnational practices are another example that we should point out since "music is actually a strong bond and an expression of the transnationality of their culture" (Esteves e Caldeira 2000, 15). But there are other less obvious examples such as the Cape Verdian transnational politicians, who are considered by Meintel (2002) as new transmigrants. We can even talk about a new generation of transnational actors who are economically and socially not very visible but who have been emerging as agents of change in the several societies in which they are present: the Cape Verdian students abroad. In countries such as Portugal and Brazil, many thousands of students adopt transnational practices dividing their lives among several countries. First, there are regular migratory movements following the rhythm of the school terms between the archipelago and the countries in which they live. Second, there is a communitarian type of life in those countries which equals or is even superior to the communitarian life of the groups of labour migrants. Third, there is a migratory flow through all these communities. Finally, there is a whole set of remittances (including, sometimes, financial remittances) that flows within those *communities*, groups and the home country. The transnational families are the last important distinctive element of the Cape Verdian transnationality that we would like to stress. Several studies have referred to a Cape Verdian family dispersion through several countries (França et al., 1992; Gomes, 1999; Malheiros, 2001; Góis, 2002).

In fact, there are several signs that indicate that this family dispersion (based on a concept of non-nuclear, extended family) is the bulwark of the Cape Verdian migratory flow. This migratory flow plays several roles, not just necessarily in the context of labour migrations or family reunion. For instance, the visits to relatives between some countries of Europe are a significant process which is, nevertheless, difficult to measure. The role of Lisbon as an island in a migratory archipelago, as well as that of Rotterdam, Providence or Boston, should be pointed out. The two main nodes of the Cape Verdian migratory network in Europe, Lisbon and Rotterdam, are important meeting places for the Cape Verdian emigrants in Europe, thus replacing, in many cases, the need to go back to the homeland.

Conclusion

In the case of Cape Verdian migrations, an analysis of its recent history shows that the formation of the transnational social space, the Cape Verdian world, in which social, economic, cultural or political interactions take place, is the result of the migratory history, of an accumulation of the individual and collective capitals in which the network social capital is one of the main features. This transnational social space does not follow the political or geographical borders of the traditional nation state. On the contrary, it responds to the increasing constraints imposed to migrations by those States, with cunning strategies that sometimes potentiate the competitive advantages of belonging to the same co-ethnic community. This space, which appears to be a set of social networks, has been created and preserved through the different shapes and types assumed by the Cape Verdian migrations throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. These migrations were the basis of what we consider a contemporary *labour Diaspora* and the support of a *low-intensity transnational community* or a *potential transnational community*.

Cape Verdians often refer to themselves as a united community: *nos ku nos*. This becomes clear if we look at the way illegal immigrants manage to have access to the labour market. However, the cases of Rotterdam, Lisbon and Milan show that, more than being united, the Cape Verdians are a closed community, they are invisible to the others. They can take advantage of that union, but they interact very little with the host societies and with the other immigrated communities, which makes this characteristic more competitive within the Cape Verdian world, but weakens their position in a context of interaction with the host societies. We believe that this is a conditioning feature of the Cape Verdian transnationality itself. The little relative interaction with the others reduces the opportunity of enlarging the collective or individual social capital and, practically speaking, decreases the job opportunities for the members of their own transnational community. The example of Lisbon, where the sectorisation of their ethnicity is at the same time a competitive advantage and an obstacle to their labour mobility, is significant (Góis, 2002). When other immigrated communities arrive in the labour market, the Cape Verdians' previous

competitiveness in relation to the natives is reduced. As we stated before, we believe that Cape Verdians do not fully constitute a transnational community. Transnationalism grows from the interactions with the specific context of immigration and it was their diversity which affected and still affects the Cape Verdian transnationality. In the case of the Cape Verdians taken as a whole, it is the lack of economic, associative and collective political capital that limits the formation of a strong transnational community.

Smith and Guarnizo (1998) or Portes *et al.* (1999) allow us to specify the levels of transnationalism that we are analysing. In the Cape Verdian case there is an evident macro level of transnationalism (the city networks, the Cape Verdian world), and there is also a micro level of transnational activities (an individual transnationalism and transnational families). Finally, there is also an organisational meso level (Guarnizo and Smith, 1998), which has an embryonic potential in the kinds of transnational projects that result from the interaction between immigrated Cape Verdians and the institutions of the host countries. This meso level is still being created within the Cape Verdian communities. If a transnational community was just that one that “develops multiple family, economic, social, organisational, religious and political relations, beyond the geographical distances and the national borders” (Basch *et al.*, 1994), then, almost all the current migrations would or could be transnational. Since something else is necessary, some sort of triggering mechanism, some transnational communities are incomplete. That is the case of the Cape Verdian transnational communities. The relation among the communities in different countries, the migrations or the international migratory flows, the development of some forms of network socio-spatial organisation, the transnational associative capacity and the transnational entrepreneurship are mechanisms that still work in a very inefficient way among the several Cape Verdian communities. The examples we found, such as the one of the Cape Verdian maid in Italy who set her own restaurant in Sal, or the one of the subcontractor who re-emigrated from the Netherlands to Portugal, are still the exceptions to the rule of the lack of economic capital. As we know, the success of an immigrant in a certain labour market is spread through the personal or media information, thus attracting future migratory flows to those spaces. On the contrary, the failure of the integration of an immigrant

in other locations inhibits migratory flows. It can be assumed that the successes of the transmigrants are spread through the same media and produce the same results. If these shortcomings can be camouflaged in periods of economic expansion of the local labour markets in which these communities are inserted, in periods of economic and labour recession, transnationalism dwindles and is unable to react. This becomes even more evident in multisegmented labour markets. In fact, there is nowadays a very competitive process in the secondary labour market, even though it remains hidden, with the replacement of a group of migrants for another. In the short term, this replacement is harmful for the most ancient groups of immigrants, such as the Cape Verdians in Italy, the Netherlands or Portugal, who must accept lower salaries in order to keep their jobs. But it is also harmful, in the medium and long term because it jeopardises the sustainability of the migratory network itself. This can be illustrated by the recent examples of Lisbon, with the Eastern European immigrants, or Milan, with the Philippine immigrants. Transnationalism, as well as the migratory networks, need to be continuously fed by new migrants.

In short, there is a very high potential of transnationalism, with several examples of characteristic features of this reality. However, despite all that, the several types of transnational practices are still quantitatively not very significant. For example, the group of Cape Verdian associations in the Diaspora has many problems in presenting itself as a solid movement of reunion of the Cape Verdians abroad. On the contrary, the family appears to be the main transnational component. Interpreted as basic groups, the Cape Verdian families would be complete transnational structures. On the other hand, there is an obvious absence of formalisation in the transnationalist practices of these structures because if we exclude the financial remittances, everything else is informal or not very formal. If we assume that the families are part of the emigrated *communities*, then the latter would not be completely transnational anymore because of the lack of collective strategies (e.g. political and civic associativism, entrepreneurial associativism, etc.) The lack of this kind of strategy hinders the capacity of the Cape Verdian transnationalism and makes it a merely potential transnationalism (especially if compared to other groups of emigrants such as the Mexicans (Portes 1995b, 1997b), the Dominicans (Guarnizo, 1992) or the Hindu diaspora (Vertovec, 2000). The existence of a set of high-intensity family or

individual transnational practices, instead of collective transnational practices, is one of the main features of Cape Verdian transnationalism. The potential transnationalism scattered throughout the Cape Verdian world is not activated because of the lack of economic capital of the different groups of emigrated Cape Verdians. If it is true that the Cape Verdians have a high migratory capital, a high network social capital, a distinctive cultural capital, a high geographical migratory dispersion, then the lack of economic capital may be the aspect that prevents the formalisation of a “high intensity transnationalism”. And because this economic capital is not necessary for an individual or family migratory circulation, these families are transnational. Since this type of capital is absolutely necessary to activate complex transnational forms (e.g. entrepreneurial transnationalism), it conditions the transnationalism of the *communities* as a whole. Because of the inexistence of a high-intensity transnationalism, in a flow of people, goods and ideas among the different groups of the migratory and home archipelagos within the transnational space built throughout decades (the Cape Verdian world), the main competitive advantage in relation to other groups of migrants in the global system of migrations is lost. Through the introduction of the analytic conceptualisation of transnationalism (and of a deeper analysis of the current features of contemporary Cape Verdian migrations) we realise that the Cape Verdian community is silent and invisible, interacting at a low intensity with the host societies and the migratory nodes, in an informal and unstructured way which compromises its (potential) transnationalism.

We believe that there is a potential Cape Verdian transnationalism which is not completed yet. Even though it has a set of features that we may characterise as transnational (the existence of a transnational social space of circulation, a growing migratory flow between the origin and the destination, and among the migratory nodes), there is still a relatively reduced number of Cape Verdians involved in transnational practices, which, overall, form a low-intensity transnational community.

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