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Cape Verdeans in Cova da Moura, Portugal, an ethno-historical account of their destinies and legacies

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VI. Stage II: Settlement Patterns

VI.1 Ownership and the Implications of the Construction of a House in Cova da Moura

Besides the family, the other fundamental unit for the immigrant's social belonging is the 'kasa' (Port. casa / home, household). In this section I will examine aspects of ownership and the implications of building a 'house' as a central value and status symbol in Cova da Moura. In this context, I will outline its significance concerning the ideals of a 'vida digna' (dignified life) in the receiving country.

In Cova da Moura, residents are strongly identified with their physical homes, especially if they own them. Some of the houses are even named after the family name of their proprietors (e.g. casa Sousa) and are perceived as an emblematic continuation of the owner. According to Judite, her house represents a reflection of herself: "To possess a house is like having a relative who needs to be looked after; it is your shelter and something of value for the whole family. A house becomes part of you and if you live in a small neighbourhood, it is your image". Being the owner of a house in the neighbourhood is a source of self-esteem and prestige among the neighbours. This prestige affects not only the actual owner, but all the family networks and neighbours involved in the construction.

Sousa Family - In 1975, Lourenço arrived in Cova da Moura and bought a plot without official licence located in the northern part of the neighbourhood for 20.000\$00 Escudos (100€). Once more, without any licence he built a wooden shack in an area devoid of infrastructures. Like many others he had no running water, no electricity and no sewage, but this was the situation Lourenço was used to in Cape Verde: "It was an achievement to have a shack of our own, even if everything was lacking".

Fearing demolition by the Town Council, the shacks had to be rapidly transformed into brick houses: Lourenço remembers that they were given only three weeks: "Afterwards they would arrive with their machines and destroy everything that looked like a shack". Within two weeks, he transformed his shack into a small brick house. As he was working on building sites, he could ask colleagues for some truckloads of old construction materials. With the help

of Judite, some relatives and neighbours, he was able to improve their dwelling. They worked day and night and soon the exterior part of the house was ready. It was a narrow house of one block of 45m², located between two other houses. It had two rooms, a living-room, a kitchen and a very small toilet. Often, the construction of a house until its final state is an activity carried out over a long time. Some years later, when their financial situation had consolidated, they managed to add a second floor, which they rented out to neighbors - newcomers from Santo Antão. This is how Judite recalls this time:

“When I arrived in Cova da Moura, Lourenço had already built our shack; he bought an empty plot from his cousin. Because he was working in construction, he picked up the leftovers, wood, bricks, and parts from other buildings. It is just next to the house of the cousin who had arrived one year before. My husband stayed there before he built the house. Every day we had to walk in big boots just to get bread or to the fountain to get water, because the streets were so muddy, but we did the same in Santo Antão, so it was not much different. Only there it never rains... But it was a difficult time, and sometimes we asked neighbours to help, but this was a normal thing to do. Later, more relatives came and we built a second floor to rent. It meant some extra money and at the same time we were close to our family.”

“The construction of a home in livelihoods of urban poor is of great importance” (Moser, 1998: 3). The solidarity of relatives and neighbours helped the target families to achieve this goal in Cova da Moura. However, households are not static units, but change over time as a result of people’s capacities and opportunities, choices, strategic decisions and generational differences. The selection of the neighbourhood, the acquisition or occupancy of the plot and the construction of a house, the birth of more children and the arrival of other members of the family in Portugal obliged these households to transform and adapt to the new demands. In Judite’s words: “When the family grows the house has to accompany it.”

According to Moser’s (1998) study, households develop various strategies that result in either consumption modification or extra income generation. These strategies may increase the number of household members that have paid work (especially women and children), increase reliance on family support networks and increase the size of the household, including the renting out of rooms. With the arrival of many immigrants in the 1980s, rental speculation in Cova da Moura augmented. In some cases, rents inside the neighbourhood were higher than those outside. High demand for housing, social exclusion and the undocumented status of many immigrants were the main reasons that made it difficult to find accommodation in the

formal housing market. Judite, for whom rental revenues constituted an important source of income, benefited from this situation:

“We needed more money after building the second floor and renting out the house was an income to help to pay for what we had spent. The people who occupied the second floor were neighbours from Santo Antão; they were like family. They didn’t pay much rent, but it was something...”

To possess a house is perceived economically as a valuable resource, not only in terms of its use but also in terms of social mobility. A property also implied aspects of relative security for future generations. In Judite’s case, it meant a status symbol and an asset for the next generations, as she put it: “If we ever get what was promised to us (legalization of the plot and the house), what we were fighting for all our lives, then our duty to our children will be accomplished”.

For Judite and Lourenço, their house represented the fulfilment of their aspirations and expectations and at the same time social prestige inside the neighbourhood.

Costa Family – Deolinda never had the economic means to build or buy a house in Cova da Moura. Her family rented a first floor apartment of a friend’s house in a central street of the neighbourhood. Her small home of 40m² had a living room, two other rooms and a kitchen. The toilet was built later in the backyard outside the house. Deolinda’s first husband, Victor, installed the toilet together with the owner of the house at weekends. He was working in construction so he could bring home some building materials not needed on the site. In one month the toilet was ready, as Deolinda confirmed: “it was necessary to have a toilet near home, but at that time not many houses had one, it was hard work, and we all helped day and night in our free time”. In 1982 they paid 350\$00 (1,75€) monthly rent. Her good impressions of the apartment still remained:

“I was happy there, and I always remember it as my home, although I didn’t own it. It was small and very humid. In the toilet we always kept an umbrella, because the rain came in. I could never afford a house of my own. I always had many children with me and the earnings were low. But the flat was well located, close to my work and close to everything I needed in the neighbourhood. There was a school just around the corner, which made things easier. Even now, I sometimes pass there just to ‘feel the home’... Now, in the new flat, I have other facilities, but I’ve been living there for five years and the only conversation I had with my neighbours was ‘Bom dia or Boa noite’ (Good morning or Good evening).”

The main reasons why Deolinda decided to move away from Cova da Moura were allegedly related to educational values: “my daughters wanted to go to a better school with a wider range of courses, so I had to give them the possibility to have a better life, but I regret it”. Nevertheless, the acquisition of an apartment in Cacém (Amadora) was a symbol of upward mobility and meant prestige for the family. Buying a ‘legal’ flat outside the neighbourhood, Deolinda also tried to dissociate herself from the low status linked to her rented apartment in Cova da Moura. Deolinda tried to leave the relative safety of the (stigmatized) environment, but failed to be accepted outside Cova da Moura, where the influence of the social network diminishes. Soon she regretted moving to Cacém, where she established no social contacts: “we are just neighbours living in the third floor A”. The isolation she felt in the new neighbourhood was attributed to the stigma of having lived in Cova da Moura: “they (the new neighbours) think they are not like us, that we are a different kind of people”. This feeling persisted in her daughters’ perception, as Ana mentioned: “we went to school and came back home. We just greet the neighbours in a polite way, but we don’t socialize with anyone in the building or at school”. Deolinda’s daughters still find refuge from their isolation, meeting other family members, who live in Cova da Moura. However, their expectation of social mobility by moving to a less stigmatized neighbourhood was not fulfilled.

Ferreira Family – Josefina and Alfredo experienced hardship and difficulties to acquire a ready-built house, as Alfredo explained: “it was hard work to save as much as possible, but it meant the certainty of a better life for the family with our own house for us and the children. I think this was my ‘destini’ (destiny)”.

The couple came from São Vicente directly to Cova da Moura, because their relatives, who lived there, allowed them to stay in their house until they could find accommodation. Josefina and Alfredo knew that there were houses available and the price for these properties was still affordable. In 1976, after saving some money and with the family’s help, they bought an already finished house without legal licence for 80 000\$00 Escudos (400 €). Their house is situated in a square between two muddy streets at one end of Cova da Moura, surrounded by other houses. Architecturally, it was in a bad state, very humid, without a toilet, no running water and electricity. As Alfredo was working as a builder, he could install several facilities (e.g. a toilet) over the years and add several rooms for his family. Although his house

consisted only of a ground floor, he never thought of adding a second floor: “It was too much money, the house was just enough for the family”. Their house covered 60m², divided in three small bedrooms, one living room, a kitchen and a recently built toilet. In the backyard there is a small garden with trees “brought directly from Cape Verde to make us feel at home”, and some vegetables. In another informal interview, Alfredo reflected on his first month in the neighbourhood:

“It was hard in São Vicente, there were no jobs and we wanted a better life for us and for the family that we left there. In the beginning we helped them with what we could spare, it is our duty... We bought a house with our savings and with the support of the whole family. It was a lot of money, but we could manage now we are the owners of a house. It was a great sacrifice to pay it back, but afterwards my children will benefit from it. I don’t regret coming here, and I think the neighbourhood helped us to get by. Looking back, it was the right thing to do; I would not leave here for anything in the world. We have friends that supported us in rough times, Cape Verdeans like us.”

Social relations as expressed above show the support of family members based on norms of reciprocity and value: “If I help now, I will receive assistance later” and “family is supposed to help each other”, confirmed an old resident of Cova da Moura. None of the family members stated that they felt uncomfortable asking or receiving financial help from other family members to construct a house, although they would probably take a long time to pay it back. In some cases, the loan would not be paid back at all. Families are supposed to support family members who start a new life abroad, as Alfredo’s simile taken from the oceanic fauna explains: “Each member of a family is like a leg of an octopus. We cannot live without the others and if one leg needs help, the whole body has to help”.

For the residents of Cova da Moura ownership is associated with the acquisition of economic and symbolic capital, as can be learned from the evidence of their statements and from the way they discuss material objects. Living near acquaintances helped the newcomers to get used to the host country, or to what they conceived of it through the ‘Cova de Moura way of life’. This means the importation and implementation, or simply the continuation of vital aspects of the Cape Verdean way of life: conviviality and sharing.

VI.2 Labour Experiences of the First and Second Generation

During the 1970s, Portugal's economy was structurally dependent on foreign work-force. Labour market situations, through constraints and opportunities, had important implications for the processes of integration of the target families into the host society. The integration of immigrants in the labour market depended on its composition and demands within the economic context of Portugal. National policies regulating immigrants' access to the labour market implied more obstacles for those who had less professional qualifications. The following section focuses on aspects that show how the three families managed to cope with this precarious work situation over two generations.

Portugal had welcomed labour migrants in the 1970s and 1980s, mainly for low paid work in construction jobs and services. Their work experience in Cape Verde significantly affected their professional position in Portugal. All members of the target families who had experience in different areas of activities (agriculture, fishing, construction) tended to continue in the same branch and at a similar professional level after immigration. This was also the conclusion of the study *LIMITS* (2006). Its target-group were first generation immigrants from different countries of origin (including Cape Verdean migrants to Lisbon and Rotterdam), in six cities in five European countries, and identified trends in the life courses of selected groups of immigrants. The results show that their work experience in the home country also significantly affects their professional position in the destination country (2006:34). There was no mobility among the members of the first generation, just continuity of the same activities in another country⁸⁶.

The unemployment rate in the tertiary sector in the 1980s was practically non-existent, as Lourenço affirmed: "there was always a possibility to get work in Portugal. There were a lot of construction sites, if not near home, then somewhere else, and we had to go where the work was". Hardly any inspections occurred on building sites, and therefore the undocumented

⁸⁶ In 2010 employment statistics for Cape Verdean immigrants (INE, Instituto Nacional de Estatística / National Institute for Statistics) indicated that 76,5% of the second generation of immigrants had an occupation, while 9,9% were studying. Only 4,7% were unemployed, while 1,8% were looking for their first job. 2,5% were housewives. The sector in which most of the target families were employed was the building sector, followed by personal and domestic services with 35,4% and 23,2% respectively. Males predominated in the first sector; women were mainly active in the second sector. Most of the members had no permanent work contract (38.8%). Only 8,7% had a permanent contract and a significant percentage had a fixed term contract 15,8%, while 14.2% had no contract at all.

status of the workers was beneficial for the employer (low salaries, no expenses for health or social insurance and no regulations concerning working conditions), but rather negative for Lourenço and Alfredo who could not get a regular job.

Not only construction and industry, but also the tertiary sector employed Cape Verdean immigrants, as Alfredo emphasized:

“What we could get in Portugal was construction work and it was not difficult to get these jobs, the Portuguese didn’t want to do it ... it was ‘black’ work. We were all Cape Verdeans and mostly all from Cova da Moura working on the building sites. We were used to doing the same kind of work as in Cape Verde. In all the constructions I worked in, the majority of my colleagues were Africans. The same happened with Josefina’s job - her colleagues were mostly Cape Verdeans.”

Construction work employed mainly Africans. In Cova da Moura there were entrepreneurs who recruited Lourenço, Alfredo, other local residents and newcomers to work on building sites. Alfredo told me that his contract was verbal and his salary was paid daily or monthly, depending on the dimension of the construction. When the construction was over “another construction work would appear or another ‘empreiteiro’ (builder) would come to my house with another job proposal”, explained Alfredo. The networks were essential in the informal labour market, not only for construction work, but also for getting jobs in cleaning services⁸⁷.

Judite, Deolinda and Josefina got employed through Cova da Moura networks. Contrary to her husband Alfredo, Josefina was offered a fixed term contract (monthly renewable) as she stated:

“I always worked without a legal contract, I had a verbal agreement for one month with my boss, but I always got by. Later, I had a monthly contract in writing. As long as I could work hard I had a job, the problem was when I got ill. No social security, no unemployment money, nothing. We already had two children (Felizmino and Albertino) and we had to live on my husband’s (Alfredo’s) salary. Just one salary for four people ... he also had no contract. Thank God we didn’t get ill at the same time.”

In the late 1990s Josefina had an accident at work. She fell from a ladder while cleaning a lamp and suffered an arm injury. As she was undocumented, the cleaning firm she worked for kept the accident a secret. She could not work for months, was not insured and the firm would

⁸⁷ The Census of 2011 published by INE (Instituto nacional de Estatística/National Institute of Statistics) registered that 5 426 (34,18%) of the Cape Verdean citizens living in Portugal were working in domestic service and 3 063 (19,30%) in construction.

not pay her - she lost her job. After more than twenty years the pains remain: “I still feel that I don’t have much strength in my arm, but I don’t need to work as hard as before.”

Without work contracts, the Ferreira family and the other two families were extremely vulnerable to unemployment situations without any social support. Alfredo made the point: “if you can’t be useful, you can be dumped.”

Although two males of the three families’ first generation are retired, the females are still actively working, but apart from Deolinda, still without legally binding work contracts. Deolinda is employed as a cook and Josefina works as a home nanny. Judite is the exception, because she returned to Santo Antão, but until 2010, she took care of an old lady in Lisbon.

Second Generation

Basically, the second generation of the target families faces the same problems as the previous generation. Their employment is concentrated in the services sector, but without any specific professional qualifications. The first generation’s characteristics of precariousness seem to apply to the second generation: no steady contract, no unemployment benefits and no retirement benefits. They work with a fixed short-term contract (monthly or three month contract) that may or may not be renewed, always depending on whether their work positions are still necessary. However, Daniel managed to get a long-term contract job. He organizes short professional courses, giving training to pupils who have dropped out of school, teenage mothers and delinquents. Daniel identifies with his work: “I like to see people getting a job and trying to have a different life from before, not continuing to be ‘gandulos’ (villains).” After his eight hour job, he still trains a children's basketball team twice a week in the new stadium of Cova da Moura, “to get the kids out of the streets and out of bad habits”. Only at 10 pm does he usually arrive home.

Several of the second generation were prone to exploitation, because of their precarious, undocumented situation and fear of being unemployed. José admitted: “Sometimes I had to work ten hours and didn’t get extra pay, this happened quite often”. Despite agreeing to work more hours than initially required by verbal contract, an increase in unemployment has been noticeable during the last years among the members of the target families.

The rising unemployment rate in Portugal over the last five years (in 2012 approaching 16% and in the 18-25 age-group over 52%) had a particular impact on low-skilled migrants and those in modest occupations. The Census of 2011 published by INE (Instituto Nacional de Estatística/National Institute of Statistics) registered that 16534 (47,36%) of the Cape Verdean citizens living in Portugal were working and 15,70% were unemployed.

Francisca had no job and two children living with her. She attended school for nine years, but acquired no professional training and cannot find long-term work. She has had several small jobs without legal contracts: taking care of a sick old lady, cleaning apartments, at a supermarket check-out, and as a kitchen help in a café. She had never been eligible for unemployment benefits, because she had no contracts and was undocumented. Only after the respective law changed in 2006 did Francisca obtain Portuguese nationality in 2010 and applied for state benefits. Being a single mother with children, she receives 440€ a month from welfare and still does undeclared work in two apartments in Lisbon.

Other young Cape Verdeans considered emigration as the solution to find work following the first generation's example. Albertino and Felizmino could not find work after finishing high-school. They had a cousin living in Geneva who offered Felizmino work as a mechanic during the week and in a restaurant at week-ends. Consequently, Felizmino emigrated to Switzerland and soon his brother Albertino followed him. They both worked in the same garage that belongs to a distantly related Cape Verdean. In 2011 they got long-term contracts and are entitled to welfare and unemployment benefits.

As previously observed, both the first and second generation of the target families occupy the lower echelons of the occupational pyramid, working in the labouring sectors: manual jobs, no special skills required and no contract given.

This labour market situation of immigrants and their descendants was not unexpected or new. Alejandro Portes and his colleagues analyzed similar scenarios decades ago (cf. Portes and Manning, 1986; Portes, 1995; also Portes and Zhou, 1993) for Latinos in the U. S. They presented extensive research in the U. S. proposing a typology of modes of incorporation of migrant populations into the host country economy and society, which differentiates four modalities: incorporation into the primary labour market, incorporation into the secondary labour market, ethnic enclaves and middleman minorities. Considering the typologies

established by Portes, this group's incorporation in the secondary labour market is hindered and even prevented by Portuguese mainstream society.⁸⁸

VI.3 Education of Different Generations

In this section, the school attainment of the first, second and third generations of the target families and the possibilities offered to children in Cova da Moura will be analyzed. It also includes observations about educational activities organized by the local associations and of both schools that received students from the neighbourhood, Escola Primária EB1 da Cova da Moura and Escola EB2/3 Dr. Pedro D'Orey da Cunha.

VI.3.1 School Attainment of First Generation

The Portuguese Constitution recognizes that education gives concrete substance to individual freedom and rights⁸⁹. Respect for human dignity is granted to every citizen, Portuguese or not, the fundamental personal rights related to education in the form of a lifelong education/training process, aiming at the individual's personal worth and social development⁹⁰. This is an ambitious set of objectives which, for any educational sector, is difficult to accomplish, especially when people do not have much time for their professional training, due to long working hours and the responsibility for many children. This was the case of the first generation of the target families, as Deolinda explained:

“My days were busy. Arriving home late at night, I had to do all the housework and take care of my children, before I could finally go to bed. I had no more time and with so much work my head couldn't take in anything more. Who can think of school education if you have to wake up at 5 am, six days a week? Who would take care of the children, if I went to a night course? This is only possible for people who work from 9 to 5 ...”

In the 1970s, the vast majority of Cape Verdean immigrants in Lisbon (80%) arrived with only primary school education. Almost all the target family members of the first generation attended Cape Verdean primary schools until the fourth grade, except Josefina and Lourenço

⁸⁸ Cf.: “While immigrants arrive willing to do the jobs that natives won't hold, a similar situation experience by Mexican immigrants in the U.S.” (Portes and Zhou, 1993: 85).

⁸⁹ Law nº 32 – A/ 2002, of 30 December 2002.

⁹⁰ ‘Development of Education in Portugal’ (2004), *National Report*, nº 1, Lisboa: Ministry of Education.

who had dropped out after three years: “we had to take care of our brothers and sisters because we were the oldest. Afterwards, we had to help in the fields to bring some food home ...”. Consequently, the possibility of climbing up the career ladder depended on further education in the receiving country. Usually most of the investment in education or professional training takes place during the first few years after arrival in the host country, as this gives the migrant a longer time-span in which to obtain a return on his investment. This was not the case for Deolinda and Josefina, the only two members of the first generation who invested in professional training decades after their arrival in Portugal.

After her arrival in Portugal, Deolinda was a cook for thirty years; at a later stage she became the head of a team of cooks. Then she attended a Professional Cooking Course (Curso Profissional de Cozinha e Pastelaria) for two months (six hours a week) during her work, as she explained:

“My life is mixed with my job. I like what I do, because I like eating. I couldn’t live without it. I only managed to join a cooking course in the Moinho da Juventude association, because I was living near there. The course was not as an investment, it was more for pleasure. Because I’ve been cooking all my life, I know a lot about food. And of course, I learned some more things and I also got a small amount of money at the end of that course. That too was a motive for my choice. And life is so difficult at the moment with the children that everyone has to think in materialistic terms... You know, for poor people all the cents count... It was an achievement for me, I learned new things, I got a diploma ..., but after all, I’m still doing the same job.”

Once Deolinda was the coordinator of four other kitchen assistants, she did not receive any financial benefits or a better working position due to her training, but she felt that she had learned from it, and in the Association Moinho da Juventude she became a reference. When a party was organized, Deolinda would be the first to be called and she enjoyed this distinction and responsibility: “I always have a lot of work. Preparing around two hundred meals a day for children from one to six years old and for adults is quite a task...”.

Josefina attended a three-month course (four hours a week) to become a Nanny Assistant (Curso de Auxiliar de Educadora de Infância)⁹¹ also at the Moinho da Juventude Association. More than twenty years after her arrival in Portugal this certificate entitled her to become a

⁹¹ This course promoted the know-how and competences that are acquired in non-formal and informal learning contexts (Law nº 147/97, 11 June 1997).

recognized home-nanny for children up to three years of age in the association's crèche. As Josefina's illness (arm injury) made continuing in the cleaning service impossible, her investment in education in the host country brought a significant change to her life:

“I always liked to have children around me. When I got unemployed, I thought that I would like to have another kind of work. My children were already independent, so I had more time. In the association (Moinho da Juventude) they were promoting a course for nannies with subsidies. I enrolled and was selected. Since then I can be at home and take care of three small children. It meant extra money and at the same time I could also take care of my husband.”

Josefina got two benefits from her further education. She got a more pleasant job in a 'crèche familiar' (family crèche) and she got greater financial rewards during and after her study. She could also stay at home to take care of Alfredo, who needed permanent assistance.

Only a very small percentage of first generation Cape Verdean immigrants (3,2% Ministério da Educação, 2010) furthered their education in the host country, as Deolinda and Josefina did. Adding educational competences to local associations are an essential element in any process involving the development of education. By upgrading her qualification, Josefina could find a more rewarding and suitable job. Deolinda chose professional training that improved both her working-skills and her self-esteem, but did not produce any sizable monetary results or higher social status.

VI.3.2 Educational System in Cova da Moura School and Attainment of the Second Generation

Consistent with the research findings, the educational attainment of the second generation immigrants are higher than the first generation. All the members completed at least compulsory education⁹². The second generation was not able to enroll in university courses for different reasons. Daniel, for example, completed the 10th grade of high school, but had to leave due to a lack of financial resources. Judite moved to a flat in Cacém, but her salary was insufficient to pay all her expenses: the bank loan and providing for three children. Being the oldest, Daniel had to find work in order to help the family financially. His sister Francisca

⁹² The Census of 2011 published by INE (Instituto Nacional de Estatística/National Institute of Statistics) registered that the Cape Verdean community had the lowest levels of education of the communities of the PALOP. 18592 (66,01%) Cape Verdean citizens with an educational level lower than Compulsory School. 7960 (28,26%) had completed compulsory education and 544 (1,93%) had finished Secondary School.

finished 9 years of obligatory schooling, but due to her early pregnancy left school at the age of 15. José and Martin also completed obligatory schooling, whereas Luisa, Albertino and Felizmino reached the 12th grade of secondary school. Luisa and Carla wished to continue their studies at university level but the family's economic restraints did not allow this.

Despite all the efforts made in Portugal during this decade by the Ministry of Education and the associations of immigrants, the educational system is not flexible enough to promote equal opportunities for all students and encourage the educational success of those from underprivileged backgrounds. As a consequence, they enter the labour market without the necessary skills to be competitive and rise in the social hierarchy. This tendency applies to pupils of lower social classes, whether Portuguese or African, as the problem is not merely ethnic but mainly social and economic.

Nevertheless, at a national level, introduction of the model of nine years compulsory schooling to combat illiteracy⁹³ and early entry to the job market with professional training had a positive effect. The number of drop-outs from Basic School was reduced from 13,1% in 2000/2001 to 8,7% in 2009/2010 (GEPE,ME, April, 2011). However, in 2009/2010 Cape Verdean pupils still had a 12,8% drop-out rate from Basic School (GEPE,ME, April, 2011). Only in 2005 was a wide range of professional courses (at Basic and Secondary School levels) implemented for pupils who wished to start an early professional life with a recognized qualification. In these courses the percentage of drop-outs was 16,1% (GEPE,ME, April, 2011).

⁹³ In 2012 Portugal is the European country with the eighth highest rate of illiteracy: 3,2%.

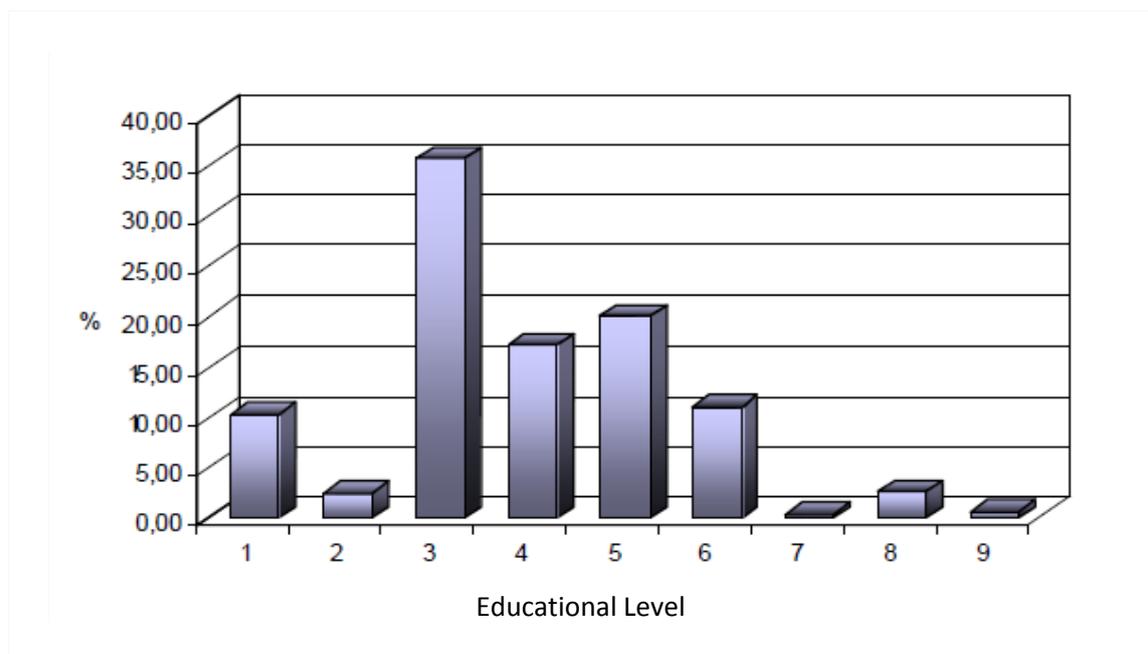


Figure 17: Educational Level of Cova da Moura Population > 3 years old

1) Illiterate; 2) Can read and write but no schooling; 3) Primary School; 4) 6th grade; 5) 9th grade (Compulsory Education); 6) 12th grade (Secondary School); 7) Polytechnic; 8) University; 9) Professional Course.

(Estudo de Caracterização/Diagnóstico do Bairro do Alto da Cova da Moura, Vasco da Cunha, Estudos e Projectos SA., 2010)

Figure 17 shows that the majority of residents in Cova da Moura achieved the sixth grade of schooling, which is less than compulsory schooling. The high illiteracy rate is presumably related to the first generation migrants in Cova da Moura. There has been an increase of educational attainment in recent years due to the second generation completing the nine years of compulsory education or secondary education.

VI.3.3 Nursery School and Primary School in Cova da Moura

For females with offspring, Cova da Moura is a place where all children can be looked after in the three local institutions. In the 1990s, both the associations of Moinho da Juventude and Clube Social and Desportivo da Cova da Moura and also Jardim-Escola São Gonçalo dependent on Damaia Church together with the Ministry of Education established a legal framework to create the development and expansion of crèche and pre-school education for children in the neighbourhood. With these measures, all children living in Cova da Moura could use nursery schools where they were allowed to stay during their parents' working

hours. As this work period usually started at 6.30 am and continued after 9.00 pm, the nursery school of the Association Moinho da Juventude is open daily from 6.30 am until 10.00 pm. Judite recognized the effort of the Association: “ I am not worried when my daughter arrives late to get the child. The Association even provides dinner, if parents take their kids home late”.

Contrary to nursery schools in nearby neighbourhoods, these institutions always have vacancies. At a national level, state crèches and nursery schools have a waiting list to admit new pupils. Although the facilities at Cova da Moura are open to all children, there were hardly any enrolments from children outside the neighbourhood as Joana, an employee of Moinho da Juventude, commented: “There is still a lot of segregation and prejudice against the people in Cova da Moura. People who live nearby don’t want to enrol their kids in our play-school, because they think that our children have a bad influence on their children. They never really did, it’s sad...we are in the twenty-first century...”.

At the age of six, pupils can enrol in the neighbourhood's primary school (Escola B1 da Cova da Moura). The primary school teacher explained why the children attending the school were exclusively residents of Cova da Moura:

“I think there is still a lot of segregation. The children are considered disobedient, rude and burglars. Therefore, the parents of the other neighbourhoods around here don’t want to have their kids in such an environment. In a way it is true that there is a lot of misbehaving, but the pupils here have much more supervision than in other schools and the work we do with them, as you can see, is very creative and they like it. For the past five years we basically haven’t had any drop-outs.”

Such segregation affects not only the adults, but also the children who live in Cova da Moura. The attitudes and behaviour of the pupils at the local school appear to be determined by the particular curriculum functioning within the school space rather than by the official school curriculum. I realized that this four-year primary school curriculum was more open to pedagogical visits to several monuments in the Lisbon area and to contacts with pupils from other schools. The aim was “to avoid pupils' isolation and to show them new aspects of life that some of them don’t even know exist. Sometimes these places are just half an hour away”, a teacher said.

Soraia testified social closeness between school-mates: “my classmates are like family, I am with them at school; afterwards I play with them in the Association and then in the neighbourhood”.

On the other hand, leaving Cova da Moura does not seem so easy, because outside, the children are under some kind of suspicion. In fact, when I went to a stationery shop in Damaia the employee told me: “Every time kids from Cova da Moura enter the shop after school, I take everything I can from their reach to avoid being robbed”. This seemingly discriminating attitude is absent at school, where an atmosphere of respect and self-critical discipline can be felt, as Ana puts it: “I love to be in this school, I love my teacher, but sometimes... I don't behave correctly. The school is pretty and I even have my work displayed on the wall.”

The primary school of Cova da Moura (Escola EB1 da Cova da Moura) is located in a street parallel to the main street, Rua Direita, which crosses Cova da Moura. It is a modern, white, two-storey building, surrounded by a large open playground. Around the school area there is a high fence (around 2m) with two large gates which are often closed. Outside the school, women are usually waiting for hours for their children, talking to each other. In 2012 it accommodated 280 pupils, mainly Cape Verdean descendents (85%), of whom the majority (80%) were eligible for official benefits (Acção Social). Due to the parents' low income; they were entitled to free school material and meals (free breakfast, lunch and a small snack in the afternoon).

The head teacher has held her position in this school for many years and explained the difficulty in keeping a steady group of teachers:

“It is difficult to find teachers that have the skills required. We receive pupils from different countries almost every day. Some of them do not speak Portuguese and they have to be integrated in our classes which already have 20 pupils. Their age also varies. In the second year we have children aged 7-8 and others who are 12 or even 14 years old, with other interests. It is difficult to deal with this situation. The pupils from here are also not easy to deal with...there is a lot of bad behaviour.”

The pupils, and consequently the teachers, are confronted with two distinct cultural and social environments: the cultural difference at school and at home with their families and in the neighbourhood. However, the situation improved immensely after the opening of the nursery school of the Association Moinho da Juventude, the Association Cultural e Desportiva da

Cova da Moura and São Gonçalo (organized by the Church of Damaia) in 1982. One elderly teacher who has been teaching at the school since 1985 explained:

“When I came to this school some of the children did not even speak a word of Portuguese. We had to teaching them from the first word, and I am speaking about children of seven years old, born in Portugal..., they did not know how to behave in a classroom and they had no interest in the curriculum taught in classes. We had to teach them everything. Another problem was speaking to their mothers who also did not know how to express themselves in Portuguese. We could neither understand them nor be understood. Their mothers' lack of interest in the school extended to the families in general. They hardly appeared at our scheduled meetings, although they lived just around the corner ... It was a struggle ... Now, it is better. Some of the pupils still do not know how to behave, but they are more sociable and inclined to accept the rules. Their language skills improved with attendance at nursery schools. Unfortunately, their mothers still do not show much interest in the children's work at school, but if we call them directly at their homes they will appear, even if it is at 7pm (the school closes at 6pm).”

One problem that still remains is parents' lack of presence at school. Although education in Cape Verde is traditionally highly valued, the attitude of the second generation target families towards their children's education seems lacking.

Francisca's daughter, Ana, is a very smart nine-year-old girl. She attends the fourth year of Primary School in Cova da Moura. Before, she was in the nursery school of the Association Moinho da Juventude. Her Portuguese language skills are excellent and she switches easily to Crioulo, depending on who she is talking to. At home, Francisca usually speaks Portuguese, while the rest of her family communicates in Crioulo. Francisca goes frequently to school meetings, but refuses to take on any official role, even if the teachers try to involve parents in extra-curricular activities. She notes:

“I don't think it is necessary to go to all meetings at school. Ana is clever and she is doing OK at school, but she is not disciplined. She thinks she can do whatever she pleases... the teacher is always complaining about her behaviour. It is difficult to keep her seated and quiet during classes. Sometimes I have to ask Daniel (Francisca's brother) to punish her, because my punishments have no effect and she has no respect for me.”

Ana, like many children in the neighbourhood, speaks Crioulo with family and friends (even at school without reprehension) and Portuguese during classes with the teachers. Even so, her fluency in both languages does not create any communication problem. She has her preference:

“I prefer to speak Crioulo. I think I can say more things and all my friends speak Crioulo better than Portuguese. I think that the teachers should speak and teach us in Crioulo, because then we would pay more attention in the classroom.”

At school, Crioulo was not contemplated in the curriculum, just two languages are taught: Portuguese and initiation in English as an extra language⁹⁴.

The lack of communicative skills in Portuguese of many parents in Cova da Moura is an obstacle to the necessary exchange of opinions between families and teachers. Misunderstandings are unavoidable, when one cannot understand what the other is talking about. Josefina testified this problem: “I was scared to speak with my sons' teachers just because I couldn't understand them and be understood”. In an effort to establish a link between schools and immigrant families, the Ministry of Education has recently appointed ‘mediators’⁹⁵ (Law n°105/2001 of 31st August), whose task it is to visit families in their communities and establish a communication link between them and the schools in order to help solve some existing problems (aggressive behaviour, bullying).

As the majority of pupils in the primary school of Cova da Moura are of Cape Verdean origin, the ‘mediator’ is a Cape Verdean who speaks Portuguese and Crioulo and lives in the area. Júlio has been living in Cova da Moura for twenty years and knows almost all the pupils and their families. According to his comment, his mission is not only to control conflicts, but also to draw attention to any sort of help needed:

“The pupils often gather around me and talk about their lives at home with their families. Sometimes, I need to intervene and I visit their homes, even at weekends, to solve the problem. It is not easy to get the confidence of the pupils and of the family without betraying one of the parties involved. My aim is to prevent pupils from dropping out of school. At the moment nobody abandons this school, except when the family moves to another area. It is a job that I enjoy, and I am not afraid of the consequences, because everybody knows who I am and where I live in Cova da Moura.”

Júlio's task implies special training and the ability to deal with specific family and area problems. Mediators are also used in another school, which the pupils of Cova da Moura

⁹⁴ Some private schools offer education in parallel with the Portuguese curriculum (Lycée Français Charles Lepierre, British School of Lisbon and Deutsche Schule Lissabon) and these are allowed to use foreign languages as the teaching medium.

⁹⁵ In Portugal the employment of ‘mediators’ in difficult schools only started in 2005, although in Holland they have been used since 1990 to ‘bridge the gap’ between students, teachers and families (Casimiro, 2006).

attend after finishing primary school: the Basic School B2/3 Dr. Pedro D'Orey da Cunha. The results of their interventions are very promising: drop-out rates decreased significantly and marks improved, as a teacher from the Dr Pedro D'Orey da Cunha School confirmed:

“Júlio made the difference; the pupils' behaviour improved and certainly their absence from classes became more controlled. He knows almost all of the pupils, especially the ones that give us trouble. He has a good relationship with them and with their family, and this helps a lot.”

The measures implemented by the official educational institutions to improve the school attainment of African *lusófono* (Portuguese-speaking)⁹⁶ students who had revealed high levels of repeating years and drop-out during the last decades (cf. Casimiro, 2008) began to have positive results, as was the case in both schools mentioned above. Only recently have the government's educational proposals and laws also targeted these children. Although they were born in Portugal or arrived at an early age, they remained strongly connected to their parents' language and cultural practices. The investment in education aimed at the generation of descendants of African communities in Portugal certainly gives hope for mobility in the near future.

VI.4 Household Composition of the Target Families: Social Integration

In this section I show how the cohesion of family ties through generations is so strong that relatives and friends may be housed temporarily or, if necessary, for a long time. In exchange, they provide housekeeping and child-rearing help and even money from small jobs they find. In addition, elderly dependents and young children may circulate among different related households.

Developed societies have a tendency to reduce the size of the nuclear family and the number of members that make up the household (e.g. Flaquer, 1998) contrary to the target families. However, people also live together in search of emotional, physical and economic support. The present situation in Cova da Moura is the result of a cultural environment in which

⁹⁶ In the late 1990s the term that described a 'black cultural movement' of Portuguese-speaking Africans in the Diaspora was *Lusofonia*. Furthermore, the expression *lusófono* was highly charged with migrant experience.

households used to be larger and include several generations, even distant relatives and friends. Certainly a common feature in the first phase after arrival in the host country, but also several years after, as Judite commented: “Like in Cape Verde, the door of my house is always open for those in needs”. Not only had these households more members on average than native households, but also the relationships between household members were not necessarily based on blood ties. An example of this mixture of family and non-family links is one of the target families who housed a neighbour from São Vicente who had come to Portugal for medical reasons for more than one year, as Josefina explained:

“We have to help each other as that was what God said. Jocelino’s family lived in a house in the same street where my parents lived. I played with him when we were kids. He got very ill last year, and only in Portugal could he get treatment for his leukemia. I had to put him up, even for a long time... the time he needed. We used to say ‘a pan for two is enough for four’. He has relatives living in Portugal, but not as close to hospital as we do. Thank God, he got better and now he is backing home.”

Jocelino did not pay Josefina for food or accommodation. She had a free room from her son, Albertino, who had emigrated to Switzerland and Jocelino could occupy it and have his privacy. These non-familial or partially familial households share household expenses or help in other duties. Often, they divide the rent, bills and food expenses and distribute the cooking and cleaning responsibilities. Jocelino could not afford to pay for a room near the hospital for long. In exchange, he helped in the garden once a week, when he felt better, and took Alfredo for long walks.

Sometimes, due to their ‘precarious’ living conditions, members have to borrow money from each other to pay someone’s debt, help pay someone’s rent in times of unemployment, save money for someone’s family reunification or even to send to relatives in Cape Verde. This was the case of Lourenço, who helped his brother to immigrate to Portugal:

“My brother wanted to do the same as I did in my youth - emigrate. He was already in his 40s. At that age, it is difficult to start a new life in a new country...He couldn’t afford all the expenses to come here. You know... money for a visa in Cape Verde (to enter Portugal) and money to start a new life. All the family helped, but it was not enough. I had to ask a guy in Cova da Moura to lend me some money and afterwards I gave it back to him.”

This system applies to many transnational households and to the target families, where the first migrants sent money back which was used, among other things, to allow someone else to emigrate. Every month, Lourenço paid back a certain amount of the borrowed money, but

never told his brother what he had done for him: “When he can, he’ll give it back to me.” Judite told me that she already did the same and concluded: “It’s in our blood. We couldn’t live any other way.”

VI.4.1 The Cape Verdean Family

The tendency in immigrant households in Cova da Moura, especially in those from the second generation which follow the model of Portuguese mainstream society, is to reduce their size and composition to that of a nuclear family. However, these nuclear structures remain open to newly-arrived relatives or others with their own migration projects or those receiving medical treatment. Maria, for example, would not have been eligible for the Health Cooperation Programme between Cape Verde and Portugal⁹⁷, had her sister Judite, Francisca and other relatives not already been living in Portugal. Besides, she depended on the support that a patient should have, after leaving the hospital. Since the monthly benefits were 280 €, Maria could not afford to live independently and also needed assistance during her long sickness. I met Maria at the end of her radiotherapy treatment. She agreed to meet in the café of D. Rosa in Rua Direita in Cova da Moura. Although still very fragile, she was eager to talk about what had happened to her:

“In Cape Verde I used to stay at home, working in my father’s fields or doing small jobs from time to time. Only my husband worked regularly and with six children to bring up, the money was not enough. Luckily, in 2008 the Cape Verdean government signed an agreement with the Portuguese Government about treatment of serious health problems. The local doctors and I applied for treatment in Portugal and I got a visa. I had breast cancer and at the end of my treatment, I stayed for weekly treatment. I still get some money from the Portuguese state for further treatment, but this will end in December (2009). My sister and her future husband helped me a lot. He spent months with me in hospital. I stayed in Francisca’s house and I don’t know when I will return to Santo Antão.”

In Maria’s case, the density and size of the networks were extremely important: she received help from her sister Judite and Alfredo and Francisca, where Maria stayed for more than one year.

⁹⁷ Since 18 November 1980 Portugal has been linked by a bilateral international cooperation with Cape Verde’s social security system (Dec. Law 129/80 of 1980) which allows Cape Verdean citizens to be treated in Portuguese hospitals: Programa de Apoio ao Doente Estrangeiro / PADE (Programme of Support for Ill Foreigners), promoted by ACIDI and Instituto da Segurança Social (Institute of Social Security).

VI.4.2 Maria's Case

Judite's younger sister Maria came to Portugal for medical reasons. She went to live with her sister Judite in Amadora. Maria's neighbours did not speak to her; therefore she spent a lot of time alone in front of the television. Judite worked from 6 am until 9 pm and when she arrived home, she was too tired to stay awake for long. Maria's daily visits to hospital required someone to accompany her due to her fragile state of health and also because of her difficulties in speaking Portuguese. For more than two years Judite's future husband Alfredo spent five hours a day in the Hospital de Oncologia (Cancer Hospital of Lisbon) with Maria.

After her state of health had improved, she moved to Francisca's house in Cova da Moura where she felt well and even made friends in the neighbourhood, as she told me: "Here I feel at home and the people are the same kind of people I am used to from Berlin (Santo Antão). I know I can get help if it's needed. Like today, I didn't feel so well and Francisca was not at home, so I asked a neighbour to make me something to eat and to get the baby from Moinho". Maria stayed for almost two years in Francisca's house. She helped in the house and looked after the children. She took them to school, picked them up every day and gave Ana lunch. Francisca was pleased to have her aunt at home and it never crossed her mind to consider her an intruder:

"She is my aunt, my family, she stays as long as she wants or needs. There are only advantages; she helps with the children, who like her a lot, and I have more freedom. I am used to sharing my house with more people, sometimes my brother would come to Cova da Moura and stay in the house, and every now and then he brings friends along whom I don't even know. They sleep on the floor, I don't mind".

For Francisca, a house full of people, some of them even unknown to her, does not seem to be a problem. Trusting her brother's friends to sleep in her house is far from normal behaviour and role-expectancy in the Portuguese way of life, where privacy is treasured. However, it seems that habits and housing in Santo Antão are similar to those of the families in Cova da Moura, as Maria told me: "not everyone can enter my house, but if they come along with family members or friends, the door is always open". This may explain why there was such a high fluctuation of inhabitants in the households of the target families in Cova da Moura and in Cape Verde. Maria and Natália are good examples to illustrate this fact. Every Sunday, Maria called her sister Natália in Porto Novo (Cape Verde), to talk with her and sometimes with her father. "I don't feel right if I don't hear their voices. I know how things are going, just by the tone of their voices", Maria commented. Her role as a daughter had been replaced by her sister who looked after her father regularly and also by a cousin who lived in his house

since Maria left Santo Antão. I was surprised when Maria told me that her sister and her cousin had moved to her father's house for almost eight months, leaving the family behind. Maria did not understand my surprise and simply explained that "someone had to take care of our old father, which is a normal thing to do, if you are a family". Being attached to the European way of life, this kind of arrangement would be very difficult for me. But as my fieldwork continued, I realized that it is not unusual for these families to give shelter to those who need it, be it for illness, old age or for any other reason.

VI.5 The Return to Judite's New House in Porto Novo, Santo Antão



Figure 18: Judite's house in Porto Novo /Santo Antão (Photo: Gerald Bar, 2010)

The return to 'Judite's roots' is the end of a migration cycle in the Sousa family. In this section, I describe the proceedings involved in the construction of a 'big' house, one of the biggest in the neighbourhood. This achievement is the visible testimony of a successful migration project that ends up where it started - in Porto Novo, Santo Antão.

The complete circle of the Sousa family migration ends with the return of Judite and her husband Alfredo to Santo Antão. During my conversations with Judite in Cova da Moura, in 2007, she expressed four wishes: to live near her family, to live in Santo Antão, to rebuild her

old house and to die on her island. She explained that “a real Cape Verdean woman never forgets her country and wants to die there”.

For many years Judite had worked hard in Portugal, always trying to save money for a house in Berlin, the neighbourhood where she was born. She inherited her mother’s old barn and decided to build her house in the same place in honour of her ancestors. As Carling testified, “Having a house in Cape Verde is sometimes given as a *precondition* for return” (Carling, 2003: 16). Even if construction is still not finished, the new house represents the success of her life abroad in the perspective of family and neighbours. For Judite the house means the fulfilling her dream of a lifetime, and in a practical aspect, means a place to live and a way of earning money when the project of a restaurant in the basement is carried out.

When I visited her in Porto Novo three years later, the door of her house was always open and Alfredo, her husband, was sitting on a white plastic chair at the side of the door. Relatives and neighbours entered or stayed on the doorstep in front of the house just for a chat or to bring her cakes or fruits “as if they were part of my family” as Judite affirmed. She was always very lively and greeted them joyfully and proudly.

Few people speak Portuguese in Berlin and Alfredo does not speak Crioulo: “I understand bits and pieces if they speak slowly”. Although he refuses to learn it, Alfredo feels quite happy in Santo Antão:

“I like it here... it is so calm. The weather, Judite’s family and the neighbours are very friendly. I don’t miss Portugal much; I only miss my ‘Água das Pedras’ (special Portuguese sparkling water) which I cannot find here. I am very proud of the new house that Judite is building. I am in charge of supervising the workers that come to work when we have some money left at the end of the month. And I make them work hard.”

Alfredo often sits outside the front-door, from where he can see all movement in the street and greet whoever passes by. Socializing is considered very positive and an important element of everyday life in Cape Verde. He was very well received by Judite’s family and neighbours. Judite’s brother and other members of her family often come to talk with him and ask him to help his nephews with their school homework. In comparison with his former stressful life in Lisbon, Alfredo’s existence in Berlin seems relaxed: “In Lisbon everyone is running, here the time stretches”, he remarked.

Immigrants who have succeeded with their life projects are admired and are even envied in the neighbourhood. Judite feels that she is one of them: “I am well considered here, because I

worked all my life and helped my family, now I can enjoy my life in my neighbourhood, in my hometown”. When I went for a walk around, I got lost in the many similar streets of Berlin and asked people the way to Judite’s house. Everybody knew where it was and that Judite had recently returned from Portugal for good.

Her successful return with her ‘white’ Portuguese husband, and building a big house were considered the result of a life of much ‘sacrifis’ (sacrifice) and also a reward for more than 30 years of living abroad. According to Judite, “Portugal was a place to work, but living is here”. This notion of sacrifice and reward is not only evident in Cape Verdean migration. The same idea was already mentioned by Oscar Lewis (Lewis, 1965) in the context of Mexican migration.

Although many migrants experience difficulties in adapting to the way of life in their country of origin after their return, this does not apply to Judite. “A successful woman” as Alfredo puts it, and sometimes the cause of envy in neighbours, but Judite seems not to be affected by this, as she explains:

“I am so happy to be here (Porto Novo). It is like I never left. Everyone seems to be the same, all the small things, the sun, the heat make me even happier to be here. The money I saved, even if I don’t rebuild my house as fast as I would like, it is enough for us (she and her husband). But I have my dream (to open a small café in her house) and if God wishes, it will happen sooner or later.”

Despite having being away for many years, Judite has readopted the islanders’ way of live. She dresses simply; she speaks the Crioulo of Santo Antão well, prepares local dishes and listens to the same Cape Verdean music as she used to abroad.

Before she left Portugal, she applied for a special programme implemented by the International Organization for Migration and financed by the Serviço de Estrangeiros e Fronteiras (SEF) (Portuguese Foreigners and Borders Service) the Programa de Retorno Voluntário (Assisted Voluntary Return Programme, AVR)⁹⁸. This programme is mainly directed to Cape Verdeans who decide to return to Cape Verde. After her successful

⁹⁸ The AVR Programme is part of a comprehensive approach to migration management aiming to promote the return and reintegration of migrants who are unable or unwilling to remain in the host countries. It was implemented in 1997. The demand for AVR among immigrants has grown progressively over the years (1209 applications in 2011). Such an increase in demand is due to the economic downturn linked to the developing financial crisis.

application, she received 1800 €, which helped her to pay for the trip and shipping her belongings to Santo Antão.

As she worked all her life without a contract, she is not entitled to any further pension from Portugal, but she accumulated enough savings for a future without worries. Her husband Alfredo receives a monthly retirement pension from Portugal.

Living a 'vida boa' (good life) after having returned 'home' seems almost like the cliché of a 'happy end' to the migration cycle. Judite can benefit from an independent life 'back to my roots'.