

Governing Ndyuka Society Abroad: The Council of Kabiten and Basiya of Okansi in The Netherlands*

INE APAPOE

Introduction

Since the emergence of the Ndyuka Maroon societies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the hinterland of Suriname, there have been several migration flows. Their first migration was from the Mama Ndyuka creek to the lower Tapanahony, which became the new residential area. Through the years, other factors led to their departure from this area: better educational opportunities, better living conditions, family reunification, employment and forced migration. Over the years Maroons have left their original habitat and nowadays they have found shelter in other parts of the country and also abroad. Today, Maroons are living all over the world, but mainly in neighbouring French Guiana and the Netherlands (Thoden van Velzen and van Wetering, 2004; Pakosie, 2009; Hoogbergen and Thoden van Velzen, 2011). The latest census (2012) shows that over 21 per cent ($\pm 148,500$) of the Surinamese population is of Maroon descent, making them the second largest ethnic group in the country.

Methodology

For this study, literature on Maroons, trans-nationalism and self-organization were studied. Interviews were conducted using a topic list. The respondents were selected based on their role and

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TABLE 10.1: POPULATION OF SURINAME BY ETHNICITY 2012

<i>Ethnic group</i>	<i>2012</i>	
	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Hindus	148,443	27.4
Maroons	117,567	21.7
Creole	84,933	15.7
Javanese	73,975	13.7
Mixed	72,340	13.4
Others	40,985	7.6
Unknown	3,395	0.6
Total	541,638	100

Source: General Bureau for Statistics, Census Report 2012.

involvement with the Ndyuka traditional authority and the Council in the Netherlands, as well as in Suriname.

Although there is information about the migration flows of the Ndyukas, there is little known about how they deal with their traditional culture in the new living areas and whether or not they retain it. This article provides herein. In addition, insight is given into the establishment of the Council, its structure, the goals it pursues, how it operates and what relationship the Council maintains with the Ndyuka traditional authority in Suriname and whether they influence each other on issues regarding the Ndyuka society. Furthermore, the difference between the Council in the Netherlands and the Council in Suriname is addressed. The study shows that the Council fulfils the needs of the Ndyuka in the Netherlands, because those who want to perform rituals according to traditional rules can revert to the Council for assistance.

From Migration to Transnationalism

Migration (human) is the movement of people from one place in the world to another for the purpose of taking up permanent or semi-permanent residence, usually across a political boundary (*National Geographic*, 2005).¹ An example of 'semi-permanent residence' would

¹ <http://www.nationalgeographic.com/xpeditions/lessons/09/g68/migrationguidestudent.pdf> (24 April 2015).

be the seasonal movements of migrant farm labourers. People can either choose to move ('voluntary migration') or be forced to move ('involuntary migration'). Migrations have occurred throughout human history, beginning with the movements of the first human groups from their origins in East Africa to their current location in the world. Migration occurs at a variety of scales: inter-continental (between continents), intra-continental (between countries on a given continent), and inter-regional (within countries). One of the most significant migration patterns has been rural-urban, that is the movement of people from the countryside to cities in search of opportunities (*National Geographic*, 2005).

Today migration takes more international forms. For example, the boat refugees who are forced to move from their countries because of war, which is accompanied by human rights violations. Due to this, people are forced to migrate to safer places, where they try to join people of their own ethnic background. As Derksen (2006: 25-8) argues, a characteristic of international migration is the clustering of migrants in ethnic communities. Such communities facilitate the connections with the necessary networks and offer help in finding work and obtaining the necessary papers of the recipient country. Moyo (2010: 5) indicates that migrants remain connected with their family in the homeland, regardless of where they are located. This relationship expresses itself in periodic visits to the homeland, sending money, remigration, burying of the dead and other social activities (Moyo, 2010: 6).

Migration often becomes transnationalism, that is when migrants support their homeland from their host countries, while connecting both societies with each other. More concrete, Faist (in Bauböck and Faist, 2010: 9) argues that transnationalism is often used both more narrowly—to refer to migrants' durable ties across countries—and, more widely, to capture not only communities, but all sorts of social formations such as transnational active networks, groups and organizations. These activities emphasize that the social relationships that migrants build exceed geographical, cultural and political boundaries. This does not mean that all the migrants are concerned with maintaining relations across the border (Vertovec, 2009: 13).

An important element of transnationalism is the involvement of migrants in their homeland. This involvement is shown in different

areas, among others in religion, economy and society (Basch, Shiller and Blanc, 1994: 7).

Moyo (2010: 8) argues that in a way, migrants become agents of change in the cultural practices of the home area and are to an extent responsible for the interaction between the home culture and that of their destination. Migrants are to a certain extent responsible for the interaction between the home culture and the host country. This cultural influence is twofold. The cultural values of the homeland have a strong influence on the development of values and are shaping the behaviour patterns of these migrants in host countries. But they do not retain the exact same cultural patterns when they move to another country (Foner, 1997). She argues further that these patterns are restructured, redefined and reconsidered in the new residence (Foner, 1997: 963). This is supported by Yangisaka (in *ibid.*, 1997) indicating that migrants give their own interpretations and act according to the traditions or adopt conditions in their current society. To maintain these traditions there is a role for organizations within the migrant community which are often referred to as *allochtone* organizations, migrant organizations, or (ethnic) self-organizations (da Graca, 2010: 20). Faist (2000: 2) talks about transnational social spaces indicating dynamic social processes taking place in economic, political and cultural dimensions. These processes are maintained by a regular circular exchange of both tangible and non-tangible resources and forms of capital between countries of origin and those of residence. This may include: human capital (such as educational qualifications and professional skills), economic capital (in the form of, among others, investments, remittances and donations) and social capital (such as ideas, information and cultural meanings) which are transmitted by or are inherent to social and symbolic links and flows (Portes et al. and Faistin Kwik, 2006: 19).

In this article, the term self-organization is used. Self-help organizations can be broadly described as organizations established by and for ethnic minorities and migrants. These organizations vary in nature and scope. There is also a distinction between self-help organizations which deal with general social and cultural activities (including sports), religious and political organizations or trade unions and organizations that provide education, training and information to their members. The objectives of self-help organizations are legion but the two main ones are: identity preservation and representation

of interests. Some self-help organizations focus on one of these goals, but many of them are involved in both types (de Haas, 1997: 4).

Maroons in Suriname

From the very first moment that Africans were brought to Suriname as slaves, they have made successful attempts to escape the slave life and start anew, far away from the colonial centres (van Stipriaan, 2009: 16). During these attempts the slave, individually or in a group, fled the plantations, found each other in the woods, and continued to live together in their own established villages in the hinterland of Suriname. From these new living areas, they attacked the plantations in order to get food and help other slaves to escape (Hoogbergen, 2009: 21). As retaliation, military expeditions were organized against the Maroons **but without** (Thoden van Velzen and van Wetering, 2004). After these failed attempts to fight the Maroons, the colonial government decided to make peace with them. The first peace treaty was signed with the Ndyuka Maroons in 1760, followed by the one with Saamaka Maroons in 1762, and with the Matawai Maroons in 1767. These peace treaties (Scholtens, 1994: 36-9; De Groot, 2009: 152-5) gave the Maroons, an autonomous status (Thoden van Velzen and Polime, 1988: 15). This meant that they could reside freely in the hinterland, but they could not visit the coastal areas, where the plantations were located, without permission of the colonial powers. Other provisions in the peace treaties were that the Maroons would receive goods, periodically, from the government, and that they had to transfer runaway slaves to the colonial government (Scholtens, 1992: 36-9). Due to the limitations which were imposed by the peace treaties, Maroons lived in relatively closed communities, enabling them to develop their own government and authority system. This system is characterized mainly by the appointment of leaders for life, through the matrilineal kinship system. According to Oostindie (1997), between 1667 and 1830, about 2,15,000 Africans had been brought to Suriname to work as slaves in the plantations. He further indicates that at the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were 1,000 Maroons and this number had been increased in 1863 up till 8,000. Today, Maroons make up 21.7 per cent of the total Surinamese population (see Table 12.1).

Maroon Migration

The geographical mobility of maroons to Paramaribo and other parts of the coastal area began soon after the conclusion of the peace treaties in the eighteenth century (Pakosie 2009; Price 2002). The first movements had mainly to do with the search for necessary products which the maroons could not produce themselves (Pakosie 2009). Their stay in the coastal areas, back in the eighteenth century, was of short duration. Usually they went to the coastal areas to sell their agricultural products, buy the products they needed, and return to their homes in the hinterland (Pakosie 2009). Over the years, the migrants were settling for long periods outside their original habitat.

De Beet and Sterman (1981) wrote that in 1980 many maroons had settled in and around Paramaribo. In addition to the voluntary migration, there had also been two waves of forced maroons migration. The first forced migration wave arose as a result of the construction of the hydroelectric dam in the district of Brokopondo in 1964. As part of the policy in this period, which was primarily aimed at attracting foreign investors, a cooperation was initiated with the North American transnational, ALCOA. As a result of this agreement it was determined that a hydro-electric dam, the official name being Prof. Dr. Ir. W. van Blommenstein dam, would be built on the Surinamese River. This dam would deliver electricity for the processing of bauxite into alumina and aluminium. A negative consequence of the construction of the dam for domestic residents in this area was that \pm 6000 maroons in 34 villages (28 Saamaka and 6 Aukaanse villages) were forced to move (Scholtens, 1994: 129). Although the government provided new residential areas for them in the transmigration villages, many maroons decided to leave these new areas and move to the city because they did not meet the living standards of their former habitat. For example, there was no river close to the villages.

The other forced migration wave was caused by the civil war (De Vries 2005), which lasted from 1986 to 1992. The attack on the military posts at Stolkertsijver and Albina on the night of the 21 July 1986, marked the beginning of the civil war in Suriname. Soon it became known that these attacks were orchestrated by a group of maroons led by Ronnie Brunswijk, a young Ndyuka maroon and former bodyguard of Desi Bouterse, ex-military leader and the current president of the country. This group became known as the

Jungle Commando (JC). The civil war formally ended on 8 August 1992. This war, which was primarily fought out in the eastern part of Suriname, had only negative consequences for the hinterland. Due to this war, the necessary developments failed to materialize and the little that had already been realized was destroyed.

This war mostly affected the Ndyuka Maroons, who live in this part of the country. About 10,000 Maroons fled to French Guiana, the Netherlands and other parts of Paramaribo (Thoden of Vezen and Polime, 1988; Price, 2002; De Vries, 2005; Pakosie and Polime, 2009).

Ndyuka Migration waves

Of all the Maroon groups, the Ndyuka is the one with the most new settlements outside their regions of origin. Shortly after the signing of the peace treaties, the first Ndyuka migrants left their original habitat at the Djoekakreek (Pakosie, 2009; Groot, 1965). They settled on the banks of the Tapanahony River, where their Gaanman (Paramount chief) resides until today. From there, the Ndyuka's went to the Cottica and Commewijne Area. Although initially their stay was temporary and seasonal (Groot, 1965; Polime, 2007; Pakosie, 2009), the Ndyuka later settled permanently in these areas.

One of the main reasons for this settlement was that there were no employment opportunities in their villages. Many Ndyuka men went to the coastal areas, mainly the Cottica River and Commewijne, to work in the timber sector. For years, Ndyuka men were one of the main distributors of timber to the sawmills in the coastal area. Because of their long stay in these new areas, they decided to take their families with them, and that is how a new Ndyuka society was established in the coastal area. Although they lived far away from the Tapanahony area, they continue to recognize the Gaanman in Diitabiki. The traditional Ndyuka authority decided to appoint a representative in this area, who is called the Fiskali. He is authorized to govern the Ndyuka societies in the coastal areas and act on behalf of the Gaanman.

The first Maroons arrived abroad shortly after the signing of the peace treaties, at the beginning of the 1960s (Pakosie 2009). They were brought by German missionaries, mainly to Europe, to be exhibited as exotic objects (*ibid.*: 15). Since the beginning of the 1960s, Maroons, chose the Netherlands as new residence (*ibid.*).

The civil war (1986-92) was another major cause of migration of Maroons to namely, the Netherlands (Price, 2002; Pakosie, 2009). The number of Maroons in the Netherlands was estimated at 9,000 of which 4,500 comprised Ndyuka maroons (Price, 2002). According to Pakosie (2009), there are currently between 15-20,000 Maroons in the Netherlands. Unfortunately, these numbers were not specified by the Maroon groups.

Ndyuka Authority and Kinship System in Suriname

Many authors (De Groot, 1990; Pakosie and Polime, 2009; Libretto, 1990; Thoden van Velzen and van Wetering, 2004; Scholtens, 1992) wrote about the origin and composition of Ndyuka traditional authority. In general, a Ndyuka authority is organized as follows: The Gaanman is the head of the tribal group and represents both the internal and external interests of the Ndyuka group (Polime, 2007; Libretto, 1990; Scholtens, 1992). He is assisted by one or more (Ede-) Kabiten (head captain) and Basiya (assistant[s] of the traditional leader). The (Ede-)Kabiten leads one or more villages under the supervision of the Gaanman (Polime, 2007: 59).

One Basiya or more—this can be a man or a woman—assists the Gaanman and (Ede-)Kabiten. The male Basiya is a handyman, but his main task is that of a herald. He is responsible for the public disclosure of general decisions (Polime, 2007 and Libretto, 1990). Female Basiyas are responsible for the household tasks too during rituals. Libretto (1990) indicates that the Ndyuka authority has other institutions, such as the Gaankuutu (tribe meeting). The Gaankuutu is a general meeting which can be compared to a national assembly of the tribe in which Ndyuka leaders, dignitaries from the community and all adults participate (Libretto, 1990: 42). The political and administrative organization of the Ndyuka, as it is in other Maroon groups, is closely related to both the matrilineal kinship system and religion (Scholten, 1994: 25; Polime, 2009). According to Polime (2009) the kinship system affects almost the entire life of the individual Maroons, their mutual relations, settlement patterns, landownership and distribution of political and religious functions. Within the Ndyuka society, the Gaanman is usually also the religious leader (Thoden van Velzen and van Wetering, 2004: 58; Scholten, 1992: 25). This shows the interrelationship between society and religion. The

Ndyuka matrilineal society consists of various subgroups (Polime, 2007: 61), namely: the Oso (the family), the Bee (these are the true descendants of the relatives of the sisters from one family (Libretto, 1990: 24), the Lo (the matriclan) and Gaan-Lo or Nasi (the Ndyuka ethnic community). A number of Bees form a Lo or Gaan Lo. The Ndyuka society has, officially, twelve Los, but unofficially they number fourteen. The Lo of the Gaanman is the impartial thirteenth, and in 1806 another Lo, the Lebimusu, joined the Ndyuka (Polime, 2007: 62).

The inheritance and succession of key leadership positions, such as Gaanman and Kabiten, strictly follow the matrilineal line. If any of these leaders dies, he is succeeded by one of his lineage members (Libretto, 1990: 25). Nowadays, this traditional position can also be performed by a Kabiten or Basiya outside the traditional residential areas of Paramaribo, French Guiana or the Netherlands (Pakosie and Polime, 2009: 37). These Kabiten and Basiya are not appointed by succession, what is required according to the traditional rules, but by members of one or more Los² (Polime, 2007: 61). An additional change in the Maroon leadership is that since 2004, female Kabiten are also being appointed. The idea for appointing females arose when the Gaanman, during his travels to Africa in 1970 and 1977, saw that women were also appointed as Kabiten. It should be noted that women were already part of the Ndyuka governance in the function of Basiya (Polime and Pakosie, 2009). In 2014, the first female Gaanman was appointed in Jamaica. Also Surinamese traditional leaders took part in these appointment ceremonies. In Suriname, the appointment of a women as paramount chief is not an issue yet. According to the traditional leaders, this is something for the future.

Ndyuka Authority in the Netherlands

In 1999, a symposium was organized by the Foundation Sabanapeti in Utrecht (the Netherlands) on the occasion of the presentation of a book about the late Gaanman of Ndyuka, Gazon Matodja. The title of this symposium was *'De Surinaamse Marrons in de 21^{ste} eeuw, Ongsé*

² The Lo of the Ndyuka are, the Misidyan-lo, Dyu-lo, Kumpai-lo, Pinasi-lo, BEEI-lo, Dikan-lo, Nyanfai-lo, Otoo-lo (the Gaanman), Pedi-lo, Ansu-lo, Pataa-lo, lo-Piika, **Lebimusu-lo-lo** and Lape.

un nango' (*The Surinamese Maroons in the 21st Century, What is Our Direction?*). During the discussions it emerged that there was a need for the Maroon community in Netherlands to conduct Ndyuka cultural rituals. Pakosie (Interview, 2012) argues that because the number of Maroons in the Netherlands has grown over the years, the need for the preservation of the culture within the Ndyuka community has increased. According to him, some of the rites which are common in the Ndyuka traditional rule, for example, funeral, marriage and birth, are not conducted by the existing Maroon organizations in the Netherlands. This is in line with the description of Adekoya-Geelen (2007), who pointed out that existing Maroon organizations are especially focused on promoting Maroon music, collecting cultural arts, advising and organizing activities for and about Maroons. Pakosie indicates that these organizations cannot perform all rituals of the Maroon tradition because the presence of a Ndyuka leader is required during these ceremonies, including weddings, birth, dispute settlements and death. He pointed out that this has emphasized the need for the installation of a Ndyuka traditional Council.

The Institute of the Council of Kabiten and Basiya of Okanisi (the Council)

Before the installation of the Council, the Gaanman of the Ndyuka, Matodja Gazon, had been consulted, and he gave permission to assemble the Council. However, he did not interfere in the composition of the Council. The Gaanman felt that he did not know Ndyuka society in the Netherlands well enough to determine who the Dutch leaders should be and left this to the founders of the Council, to make the selection of the members. Gazon advised them to consider among themselves about the composition of Kabiten en Basiyas of the Council. The Gaanman had promised that after the formation of the Council was completed, he would install the institute. In August 2000, during a specially organized 'Busikondee-Neti', Night for the Hinterland), in Utrecht/the Netherlands, the 'Council of Kabiten and Basiya Okanisi in the Netherlands', was installed by the late Gaanman, Matodja Gazon (Interview Pakosie, 2012).

The Kabiten and Basiyas³ work as volunteers. The members of the

³ At the time of installation, the Council consisted of: Andre RM Pakosie,

Council reside in different cities in the Netherlands—The Hague, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Tilburg.

The aim of the Council is to provide assistance and help to Ndyuka Maroons in the Netherlands on traditional and cultural issues. The role of the Council relates mainly to matters of acquisition and strengthening of the Maroon cultural identity. According to Mosis (Interview, 2012), anyone who needs support can appeal to the Institute, and the Council will provide as much help as it can.

The installation documents of the Council show that it will focus especially on the preservation of the Ndyuka community in the Netherlands and in Suriname. Furthermore, it will reconsider the position of the Ndyuka governance in Suriname, and where possible share its view and knowledge on arranging and structuring Ndyuka governance in the Surinamese society. Due to developments in Suriname, which have their influence on the Maroon communities, it is important for the Council to think about the traditional structure of the Ndyuka authority in Suriname. An important question hereby is whether the Ndyuka authority can still exist and function in its current composition. It is unclear how the Council will contribute to the above-mentioned, and whether the Ndyuka authority in Suriname will be willing to discuss this with them and implement their thoughts. It is also important to know what the policy of the Surinamese government is regarding traditional Maroon authority.

Difference between the Ndyuka Council in the Netherlands and Traditional Authority in Suriname

As indicated, the Ndyuka Council in the Netherlands is not the same as the Ndyuka authority in Suriname. The Dutch Ndyuka Council focuses on maintaining the Ndyuka culture and assists at rituals. It has no governance tasks, and it is not seen as representatives of the whole Ndyuka community in the Netherlands (Interview Pakosie and Mosis, 2012). The *Gaanman* indicated that because the circumstances in the Netherlands differ from those in Suriname, a different meaning

Kabiten; and the *Basiyas*, Andre Mosis, Laetitia van Assen, Patricia Pryor, Marius Nengdisi, Hellen Ajentoena, Jacintha Apai, Maya Aboloi. In 2013, changes have occurred in the Council. One of the main changes was that, Pakosie had resigned and this function was now performed by André Mosis.

should be given to Ndyuka leadership in Netherlands. This means that the Kabiten and Basiyas in the Netherlands have not the same positions of those in Suriname. An important difference between the Dutch Kabiten and a Kabiten in the traditional areas in Suriname, is that the Dutch Ndyuka leaders are not appointed by succession according to the matrilineal line (Interview Mosis, 2012). These leaders are appointed by the Council or nominated by and are part of the Ndyuka community in the Netherlands which is participating in the activities of the Council. There is also Nofaakatiki (village prayer pole) in the Netherlands, which symbolizes the relationship with the ancestral spirits (Polime, 2007: 61). The Kabiten en Basiyas of the Council do not represent a Lo but the Okanisi community in the Netherlands. Unlike the traditional appointment of leaders for life, the Ndyuka Council members are not serving for life. Leaders who act against the rules of the Councils can be deposed, and those who want to end their term as Kabiten or Basiya can resign. Meanwhile, one of the Basiyas withdrew from the Council 'Because of personal circumstances, I am not able to contribute to the Council', he said. At the time of installation, Gazon indicated that the Council can decide on an extension of the Institute (Interview Pakosie, 2012).

In the evaluation report on the fifth anniversary of the Council, one of the proposals was to appoint a Kabiten in every major Dutch city. This proposal was not accepted by members of the Ndyuka community because they concluded that the function of the Kabiten should be of the highest order and that one Kabiten for the Ndyuka society in the Netherlands was sufficient.

In Suriname, traditional governance is not legally recognized, but there is evidence of an actual relationship between the government and the traditional form of governance. This means that traditional authority is involved, informed, and heard in important affairs of the state, where the interests of their population and area are at stake (Polime, 2007: 60). Maroon leaders in Suriname receive a monthly allowance⁴ from the government, depending on their function

⁴In the peace treaties it was decided that the Colonial government would contribute to the Maroons periodically with goods, which they lacked in the hinterland. The Maroons in turn would then return escaped slaves over to the colonial powers. The delivery of the goods has changed over the years to a fee which is updated from time to time. In addition, the leaders (namely the Gaanman) also receive various government services.

within the Ndyuka administration. Ndyuka traditional leaders in the Netherlands are not receiving an allowance or other subsidy from the Dutch government because there is no relationship between the Council and the government in the Netherlands. As mentioned before, being a Ndyuka Kabiten or Basiya in the Netherlands is a voluntary job, but the members of the Council receive money from those for whom they perform rituals. These earnings are deposited in the money-box of the Council (Juan Jonas, 2013). Due to the high travel costs, the Council had decided that those who make use of its services will have to reimburse the travel costs of the Kabiten and/or Basiyas.

Relationship between the Ndyuka Council in the Netherlands and Suriname

The relationship between the Ndyuka administration in the Netherlands and in Suriname is not formalized. Indeed, the Gaanman had installed the members of the Council, and the Surinamese Ndyuka leaders know of the existence of the Council in the Netherlands, but they do not have any relationship with these leaders. The contact between the Dutch and Surinamese authority was maintained mainly through the late Gaanman. There was, according to Pakosie (Interview, 2012) regular contact with Gazon. The secretary of the Gaanman (Interview, 2012) says that the friendly relationship between the Gaanman and Pakosie contributed to issues regarding the Dutch Ndyukas being briefly discussed with the Gaanman. According to him, the Gazon was only informed about activities in the Netherlands, after they had already taken place.

With the death of the Gaanman and the appointment of a new one in March 2014, it is to be seen how the relationship between the Surinamese Ndyuka authority and the Council will continue. With the resignation of the Dutch Kabiten in 2013, the survival of the Council has become a challenge. Reports of recent meetings of the Council show that actions have already been taken for the continuation of Council. An acting Kabiten has already been appointed, and meanwhile he is also nominated to become the new Kabiten of the Ndyuka in the Netherlands.

Difference in Performance of Rituals and Ceremonies in the Netherlands and Suriname

The Ndyuka leaders in the Netherlands believe that the living conditions in the country do not allow them to perform the rites of the Ndyuka as strictly as the tradition dictates. The Gaanman has given the Council permission to perform the rituals according to conditions in the Netherlands. To illustrate this, the example of the death rituals is used. In earlier days, a widow/widower had to travel to Suriname to undergo the rites. Nowadays, it is no longer necessary if the relatives ask the Council for assistance in conducting the rituals according to the traditional beliefs. The Council is authorized to perform the *poti a baaka* and *puu a baáka*⁵ rituals and ceremonies. The deceased is buried according to the Maroon traditions in the Netherlands, if the Council is involved. Before the Council takes any action, the family in Suriname is consulted, because they also have a say in how the rituals and ceremonies should be conducted. The rules imposed on the so-called 'Baakaman', widow/widower, are not strictly followed in the Netherlands. According to Ndyuka tradition, a widower or widow may not say goodbye to the deceased, nor is allowed to attend the funeral of their deceased partner. In the Netherlands this is not the case. Another change in the rules is that a widow/er, is not allowed to go on the streets after six o'clock in the evening, and he/she should not stay in the vicinity of women/men during the mourning period of three months. Pakosie (2012) cited the example of a widow. For example, if the widow works in the health sector, this can lead to a big problem if she or the family wants her to follow the traditional rules. If she has been scheduled for a night shift, and she had to treat male patients during her work, she will then act against the rites. To avoid such problems, the rituals and rules regarding the mourning period are flexible and based on the circumstances in the Netherlands. The rituals are being carried out in the living rooms of those who opted for them, partly because there is no *faakatiki* in the Netherlands (Pakosie, 2012). By changing in this way, money is saved and also the social life of the relative(s) can continue as normally as possible. Maroon

⁵ *Poti* is a *baáka* confirm the official mourning of the widow/widower and a *puubaaka* is the end of the official mourning period.

leaders in Suriname are given an official outfit from the government when appointed. Dutch Ndyuka leaders have no official attire.

Governing Ndyuka Society in the Netherlands

This study shows that the Council intends to support the Ndyuka society in the Netherlands who find it necessary to keep their cultural beliefs. Council members argue that it is not their intention to let Ndyuka Maroons live a traditional life, but to familiarize themselves with the Ndyuka Maroon culture (specific rituals and ceremonies), and the role that the Council can play. The Council is determining how it can be more in contact with the Ndyuka population in the Netherlands. It is still unclear how many Ndyuka are appealing to the services of the Council. Further research is needed to determine whether there is enough interest to accept the Council as 'the' Ndyuka authority in the Netherlands. This is because individual families, are organizing their own rituals and ceremonies without the help of the Council. According to Jonas (Interview, 2013) these individuals can do this because they often have many close relatives in the Netherlands. He points out that there are also people who have no close relatives in the Netherlands. For those people, the Council is very useful.

Conclusion

This article shows that the habitat of the Surinamese Maroons is not only limited to the hinterland of Suriname. Maroons have spread out to other parts of Suriname and abroad. In addition, a substantial number moved especially to French Guiana and the Netherlands. These migrants in many ways keep in touch with their relatives in the home country, Suriname. In line with studies on the theory of transnationalism, many Surinamese Maroon migrants still play a supporting role in the home society and they are involved in the social, economic and institutional development of that society. It also appears that, as with other migrants, the preservation of culture, traditions and rituals occupies an important place in the life of the Ndyuka migrants in the Netherlands, who want to preserve their cultural way of life.

The need for the Dutch Ndyuka society to perform their rituals according to tradition led to the establishment of the Ndyuka Council

in 2000, in the Netherlands. This article shows that this Council plays a role in the carrying out of Ndyuka rites and ceremonies in the Netherlands. Although the Council has been installed with the consent of the Gaanman, he was not involved in the formation of the Council.

There are also significant differences between the Council and the Surinamese Ndyuka leaders. The members of the Council are not appointed according to the matrilineal line of succession, which means that they cannot be appointed for life. In Suriname, ceremonies and rites are conducted according to the traditional rule, in the Netherlands they are tailored to the conditions in that country.

Although Surinamese Ndyuka leaders know about the existence of the Council, they are not involved in its activities and have no contact with the members, unless they are relatives. In its installation documents the Council states that it wants to shed light on the Ndyuka authority in Suriname, but in practice this does not seem to be happening. After the death of the Gaanman and the resignation of Kabiten, the appointment of their successors are yet to be appointed. The question is how the relationship between the two governments will develop in the future.

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List of respondents

Mosis Andre, Kabiten of the Council	May 2012
Pakosie Andre, former Kabiten of the Council	May 2012 and January 2013
Juan Jonas, former member of the Council	January 2013
Secretary of late Gaanman Gazon	May 2012