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The evolution of Surinamese emigration across and beyond independence

The role of origin and destination
states

Simona Vezzoli

DEMIG project paper 28



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- analyse migration as part of broader global change
- contribute to new theoretical approaches
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Abstract

This paper examines how states in origin and destinations countries shape migration by exploring emigration from Suriname from the 1950s to the 2010s. Suriname experienced substantial emigration growth, particularly between 1973 and 1980, a period that included independence from the Netherlands, a coup d'état and the end of the preferential immigration channel with the Netherlands. Using a historical approach that combines the analysis of migration literature, primary documentary sources and qualitative interviews of Surinamese migrants, returnees and non-migrants mainly in Suriname, this paper examines migration volumes, timing, destination and variations across different segments of the population. The paper finds that the political and economic uncertainties associated with independence and the establishment of a border regime had an important impact on the evolution of Surinamese migration, but also points to the importance of educational aspirations, long-term socio-economic conditions in Suriname, and employment opportunities and family connections in the Netherlands. Dutch migration policies also affected Surinamese migration, first stimulating emigration in the 1973–1980 period and then encouraging family reunification and irregular migration. The timing of these factors has contributed to the strong post-colonial influence in Surinamese migration.

Keywords: Suriname, emigration, independence, border regime, migration policies, non-migration policies, migration determinants

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1 Introduction

The South American country of Suriname is little known outside of the Dutch sphere of influence, partially due to its small population size – just under 525,000 in 2010 – and partially because of its almost exclusive geopolitical orientation towards the Netherlands, its former colonial state. Yet, Suriname is a very interesting case given its position among the top ten emigrant countries: 56.3 percent of the total Surinamese population in 2000 (World Migration Report 2010). Such a large emigrant population stems from emigration flows starting in the early 1960s to the late 1990s, when political and economic transformations generated instability. Suriname's emigration history is remarkable for the large volume of emigration during the period of political status change, ie independence in 1975 and the establishment of a full border regime with the Netherlands in 1980, and for emigration largely directed towards the Netherlands. The consequences of these events persist as Surinamese migrants remain concentrated in the Netherlands, where almost three quarters of the Surinamese population abroad resided in 2000 (see Figure A1 in Annex).

Surinamese migration has been studied primarily by Dutch and Surinamese scholars, who have examined specific migration periods (Bovenkerk 1987; Sedoc-Dahlberg 1984; van Amersfoort 2011), the impact of Surinamese emigration on the country's development (Dulam and Franses 2011; Hassankhan 1997; Kalpoe 1983; Krishnadath 1983; Menke 1983; Mhango 1983; Monsels 1983), the welfare of Surinamese migrants in the Netherlands and their remittance behaviour (Gowricharn 2004; Gowricharn and Schuster 2001; Reubsaet 1984; van Niekerk 2005) and return migration (Bovenkerk 1981). A few very valuable academic papers also discuss political, demographic and socio-economic changes and their potential migration effects (Chin and Buddingh' 1987; Dew 1978; Jeffrey 1991; Lamur 1973; Menke 1990; Menke 1991; Menke 1998). This paper's contribution is to analyse how the Surinamese state has shaped emigration patterns over the years not only through the enactment of migration policies, but through a broad range of policies and state actions.

Although migration studies generally limit the role of the state to migration policies, particularly immigration policies (de Haas 2010; Massey 1999), the state plays an important role in development processes and its decisions in a range of areas, from economics to education, health and security, and alter the set of opportunities available to individual citizens, which may stimulate or prevent migration (de Haas and Vezzoli 2011; Skeldon 1997; Vezzoli 2014b). Thus, this paper uses a broad view of the state and analyses how various policy changes have affected the quality of life in Suriname and have affected migration, while concurrently policies, including immigration policies, introduced by the destination countries, primarily the Netherlands, may have facilitated, stimulated or hindered Surinamese immigration.

The strong state-centred approach taken in this study may be seen as problematic, given its two major limitations: first, the state is not a homogeneous entity with a single opinion and its policies may in fact reflect this diversity; second, a state-centred perspective tends to focus on structural factors and the migration-constraints they impose (eg lack of access to credit) and disregard individual responses which may overcome such structural constraints (eg informal saving/borrowing schemes, remittances). These limitations have been addressed by considering the interests of various groups and policies implemented over the years in different areas and also by including individual interviews with Suriname migrants, returnees and non-migrants, who shared their personal migration histories and reflections upon their migration decisions.

By using a historical approach, this paper examines the role of the state in the evolution of Surinamese migration from the early 1950s to the early 2010s and relies on two main guiding questions: (i) what have been the short- and long-term migration effects of independence and the establishment of

a border regime? And (ii) what has been the importance of post-colonial ties for migration and why? To answer these questions, the study exploits two sets of sources: (i) secondary literature and primary sources to reconstruct the political, economic, social and legal transformation in Suriname and the policies designed to manage migration to the Netherlands and other destinations; (ii) interviews with migrants, returnees and non-migrants in Suriname and abroad who described migration in their lives and that of their family. Using this approach, this paper explores the changing structure of migration patterns, in terms of shifts in volume, timing, direction and composition, by combining evidence of important political and socio-economic changes from the literature with dominant migration-relevant factors that emerged from the interviews.

This paper first presents a brief conceptual framework to explore the potential effects of independence and the establishment of border controls on migration. After the methodological approach, Section 4 presents historical Surinamese migration patterns up to 1954. Sections 5 through 8 examine the evolution of migration patterns and explore political, social and economic factors in Suriname and the role of Dutch migration policies in four broad historical migration phases: 1954–1972; 1973–1982; 1983–1994; and 1995–2010s. Finally, Section 9 presents insights on the major Surinamese emigration patterns and elaborates on the role of the state and major structural changes in shaping long-term emigration and Section 10 briefly concludes.

2 Conceptual elaborations on independence, border regimes and migration

Scholars familiar with Surinamese migration readily recognise that independence had an enormous positive effect on migration (Bovenkerk 1981; de Bruijne 2001; Gowricharn 2004; Menke 1983; Taylor and Bers 2010; van Niekerk 2005)(see Figure A2 in Annex). Independence is generally associated with great political and economic uncertainties which stimulate emigration primarily towards the former colonial state resulting from linguistic and cultural preferences and privileged migration channels. However, migration research has weakly explored the migration effects of decolonisation, political and socio-economic transformations associated with independence and the establishment of border regimes which suddenly divide previously united geopolitical areas. When these changes are considered, existing theories tend to reduce migration decisions almost exclusively to changes in economic opportunities (cf. Vezzoli 2014b).

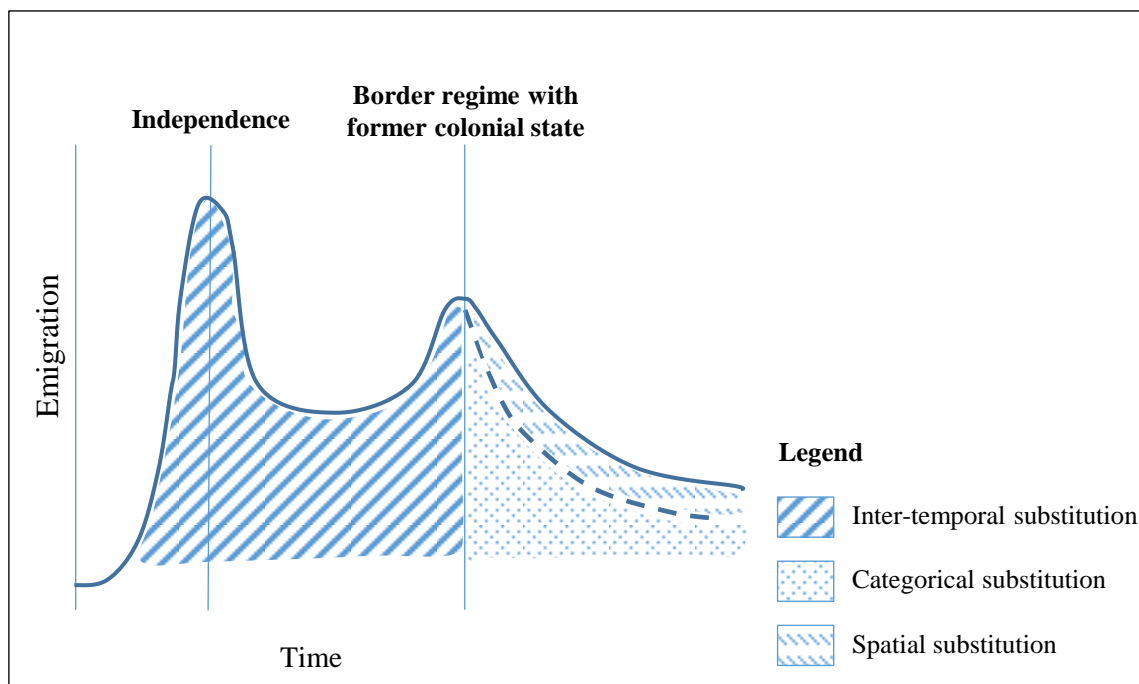
Yet, the process of decolonisation and independence involve deep transformations ranging from changes in governance, institutional systems and legal structure to social, economic and class shifts (Vezzoli 2014b). In particular, two main gaps are noticeable. First, there is a lack of understanding of the processes linked to these events. For instance, whether independence is the result of peaceful negotiations or of conflict may influence whether it is as a time of heightened uncertainty or a time of promise and change, stimulating more or less emigration, respectively. Second, while we assume that post-colonial ties explain ‘obvious’ migration preferences, citizens of independent countries do not always migrate primarily to the former colonial state (Vezzoli 2014a).

In addition, these events, particularly the establishment of border regimes, may produce potential ‘migration substitution effects’, namely the unintended and unexpected effects produced by migration policies (de Haas 2011). de Haas (2011) identified four potential effects: (i) *spatial substitution*, when restrictive policies divert migration to alternative destinations; (ii) *categorical substitution*, when migration shifts to alternative, regular or irregular, migration channels; (iii) *inter-temporal substitution*, when migration anticipates restrictive migration policies; and (iv) *reverse flow substitution*, when restrictive immigration policies impact decisions to return (de Haas 2011).

A conceptual framework of the potential migration effects of independence, border regimes, substitution effects and post-colonial ties was presented in a previous paper (Vezzoli 2014b) and separately applied to analyse emigration from Guyana, which showed that border regimes can be introduced before independence with important migration consequences (cf. Vezzoli 2014a). The case of Suriname introduces the reverse situation, as independence was followed by a five-year period of minimally-regulated migration. The expected migration effects are the following: with the nearing of independence parts of the population may feel anxious about the upcoming changes and seize the opportunity to emigrate before the official transfer of power, leading to an ‘inter-temporal substitution’ effect (first peak in Figure 1).

After independence migration largely continues as if it was internal migration regardless of citizenship changes. Benefitting from migration privileges, individuals have the option to ‘wait and see’ and make an informed migration decision based on whether independence is satisfactory or not. This points to a qualitative change in migration as emigrants may choose migration based on evidence of concrete reforms, rather than on speculations. Lowered but sustained emigration may follow until before the official enforcement of migration policies and ‘closure’ of the border. At this time, a last minute ‘now or never’ rush to emigrate may be noticeable (second peak in Figure 1), representing both dissatisfied individuals and those unwilling to renounce to future access to the former colonial state. The second ‘inter-temporal’ peak may be lower than the first emigration peak due to a degree of ‘saturation’ whereby all those who could and wanted to emigrate did so before the border was ‘closed’.

Figure 1. The hypothesised effects of independence followed by the establishment of a border regime on international migration



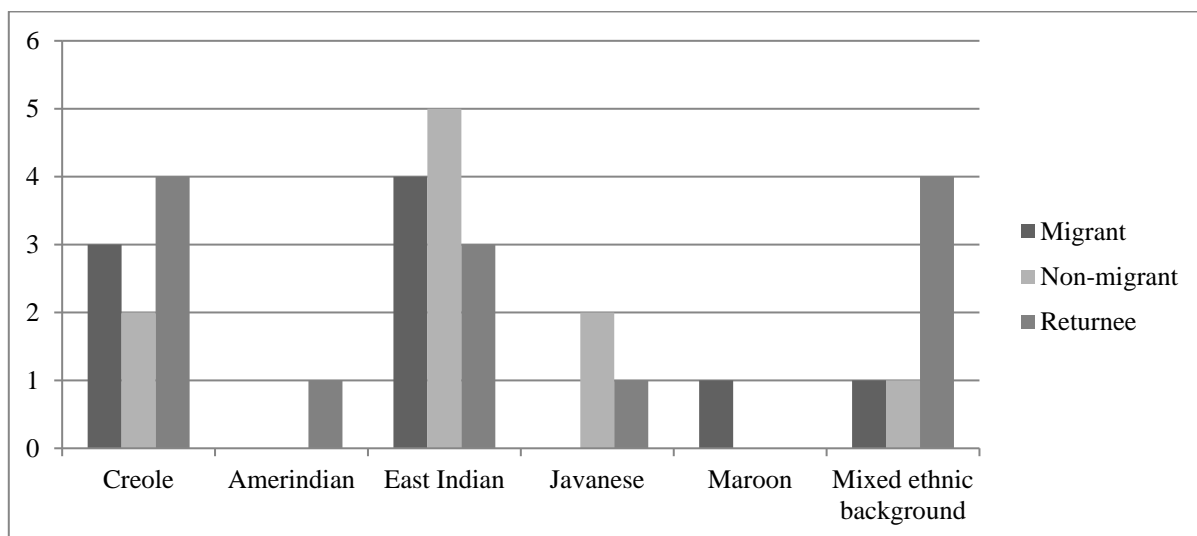
After the implementation of a border regime, those seeking to emigrate would have two options: find the most permissive channel of entry in the former colonial state or look for alternative destinations. The first option would lead to ‘categorical substitutions’ and the second to ‘spatial substitutions’ (de Haas 2011). Spatial substitution may be less important than categorical substitution given the strong migrant networks established and concentrated in the former colonial state over the years. This process would lead to the strongest possible post-colonial effect, which originated in the cultural and linguistic connections but was magnified by the delayed implementation of a border regime and the subsequent concentration of large volumes of migrants into the former colonial state.

While helpful to understand how these two major structural changes may affect the timing, volume, composition and destination of migration, this model is insufficient to determine the general volumes of emigration or the size of either of the peaks. For that, we must account for how independence was achieved and the structural changes introduced by the state in anticipation of and after independence (cf. Vezzoli 2014b).

3 Methodology

This paper relies on published articles, books and reports written by scholars on the country’s political and economic developments, employment and poverty and migration from and into Suriname. The literature consulted was almost exclusively in English. Archival research focused on the review of the Dutch-language newspaper *De Ware Tijd* for these specific periods: April–August 1973, September–December 1973 and October–December 1979. Literature and newspaper sources were complemented with information collected in 32 formal interviews plus 4 informal interviews conducted between 18 December and 5 April 2014 with Surinamese currently living in Suriname (23), the Netherlands (6), French Guiana (2) and the US (1). The interviews aimed to: (i) uncover migration decision processes, including motivation for emigration and decisions on the timing and destination; and (ii) investigate the relevance of structural changes on individuals’ migration decisions, eg independence, political changes, education. In addition, one in-depth interview was conducted with an individual who held a government function in the early years of independent Suriname.

Figure 2. Interviewees by type and ethnic group



The interviewee had different migration trajectories: 9 who still reside abroad, 13 who have returned to live in Suriname and 10 interviewees who never migrated from Suriname. The individuals in this sample are not fully representative of Surinamese society and do not represent the full spectrum of migration from Suriname, but efforts were made to reach some ethnic, gender and residence balance: 12 were Indo-Surinamese, 9 Afro-Surinamese, 6 mixed, 3 Javanese-Surinamese, one Amerindian and one Maroon (Figure 2); 17 were males and 15 were females;¹ 65 percent of the sample was urban, being born and raised in the capital Paramaribo (see Table A1 in Annex). Moreover, the rural-based interviewees included towns like Lelydorp and Wanica, which in the past constituted the rural periphery of the capital city Paramaribo and today are an integral part of Greater Paramaribo (de Bruijne 2001).

¹ Two thirds of the East Indian interviewees were male, while the majority of Javanese and people of mixed background were females.

In terms of the timing of emigration, interviewees were selected because they provided a range of migration experiences over the entire period under study. However, 90 percent of the interviews represented individuals whose first departure occurred between 1960 and 1989 (see Table A2 in Annex). This bias is primarily due to the fact that: i) All interviewees, with three exceptions, were physically in Suriname. This means that migrants were visiting Suriname, which may be less feasible for recent migrants due to financial constraints or uncertain migration status; ii) Interviewees included returnees, many of whom had migrated in the late 1960s to 1980s. However, this also reflects the period of high emigration from Suriname in comparison to much lower emigration rates experienced since the mid-1990s. While this makes it impossible to make strong statements of emigration drivers in the last two decades, this is not highly problematic given the main focus on independence, border regime and post-colonial ties.

4 Dutch Guiana, early migrations and population diversity

4.1 Early economic developments and labour immigrations

Suriname, named Dutch Guiana until independence, was acquired in 1667 by the Dutch after a brief colonisation by British settlers in 1630. Investments in Suriname's sugar and coffee plantation economy were limited as the Dutch government focused on the prosperous East Asian colonies (Buddingh' 2001; Oostindie 2008). Populating the colony proved to be a challenge as Dutch settlers preferred to pursue better opportunities for lucrative employment in the East Indies; therefore, the Dutch government invited other European planters from the Caribbean to settle in the colony, an invitation taken up by a small number of British planters (Janssen 2011).

Plantations relied on bonded labour, which was transported from Africa until the abolition of slavery in 1863. That same year, 95 percent of the population in Suriname was of African origin, while the remaining European population included Dutch but also Portuguese Jews and other Ashkenazim individuals (Oostindie 2008). After 1863 former slaves gradually left the plantations to enter the urban areas and mining sectors and planters resorted to the recruitment of indentured labourers of different nationalities to satisfy labour demand. Between 1853 and 1873, small numbers of Chinese were brought to Suriname from the Dutch East Indies, Hong Kong and Canton; around 35,000 Hindu and Muslim Indian workers from East Bengal in British India were recruited between 1873 and 1917 (Janssen 2011). About 33,000 Javanese indentured migrants were brought to Suriname between 1890 and 1939, when the outbreak of World War II ended all Dutch recruitment programmes (de Bruijne 2001; Janssen 2011; Oostindie 2008; Taylor and Bers 2010). Concurrently, Caribbean immigrants came to mine gold during the 'gold rush' of the early 20th century (Jubithana-Fernand 2009).

Over the early 20th century, active plantations gradually decreased from 180 in 1903 to only 24 in 1950 (Janssen 2011). Ironically, the Dutch government's interests in Suriname grew as it lost control over Indonesia (Buddingh' 2001; Oostindie 2008). The concurrent increase of world demand for bauxite encouraged the Dutch to create the Dutch company Billiton for bauxite exploitation in 1942 (Buddingh' 2001) and in 1947 the Dutch government introduced a development aid package to stimulate the economy, leading to the production of high quality rice in Western Suriname (Buddingh' 2001).

4.2 A small diverse population

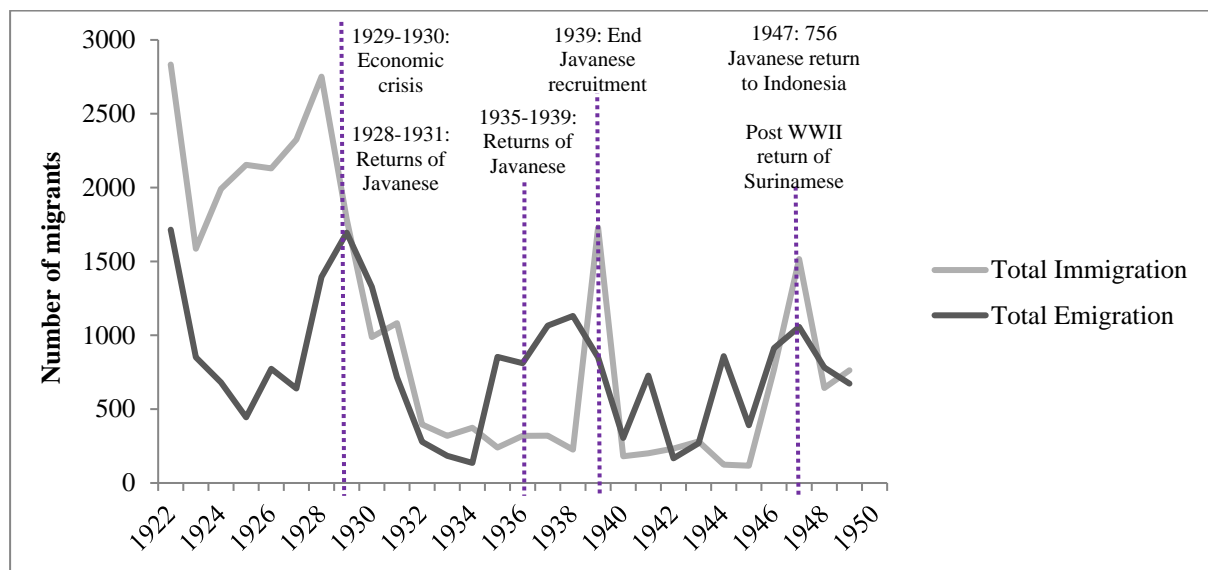
The arrival of indentured workers in Suriname marked an important shift in ethnic composition. In the mid-20th century the population was 47 percent of African descent, 35 percent East Indian and 14 percent Javanese (Oostindie 2008). Small autochthonous Amerindian and Maroon populations descendant of escaped slaves continued to reside in the interior, largely untouched by the political and

socio-economic colonial activities, which remained concentrated in the coastal areas (Taylor and Bers 2010). The population in the interior was also largely untouched by the programme of ‘Dutchification,’ which encouraged assimilation of Dutch customs and values and was ‘the safest way to prolong the colonial system and turn the country into a cultural appendix of the Netherlands.’ (Meel 2001: 129-130). The population of African descent gained greater exposure to European customs and values, leading to substantial creolisation and early connections to European cultures and power (Oostindie 2008). Dutch assimilation policy was softened by Governor Kielstra (1933–44) who encouraged each group to express its cultural identity. Diverse religious and cultural traditions emerged as well as a rich language diversity with Dutch coexisting with Sranan Tongo, ie the *lingua franca*, Sranami Hindi, Surinamese Javanese, Hakka Chinese and a number of Amerindian and Maroon languages (Meel 2001; Taylor and Bers 2010; van Amersfoort 2011). The Asian populations thus retained an ethnic distinctiveness and a weaker adoption of the Western values (Oostindie 2008) distinguishing these populations from the creolised Afro-Surinamese population.

4.3 A gradual shift from immigration to emigration

In the first half of the 20th century, Suriname was experiencing both immigration and emigration. Contract labourers arrived from India until 1916 and from Java until 1939, while cohorts of Javanese workers returned to Java at the end of their five-year contracts: 2383 returned between 1928 and 1931 and 2254 between 1935 and 1939 and 756 left in 1947 to return to Indonesia (Lamur 1973). These peaks are visible in Figure 3.² Post World War II immigrants also included Surinamese returnees: some were Surinamese men returning after fighting for the Netherlands during the World Wars (Hassankhan 1997), while others were returning migrants from the Netherlands (Lamur 1973).

Figure 3 Total immigration to and emigration from Suriname, 1922–1950



Source: Lamur 1973

² This figure and Section 5 strongly rely on data from Humphrey E. Lamur’s 1973 doctoral thesis entitled *The Demographic Evolution of Surinam 1920-1970: A socio-demographic analysis*. This work uses immigration and emigration data which originate in *Surinaams Verslag* for the 1922-1948 data, while post-1949 data was collected from registers of "Arrivals and Departures", statistics collected and registered by the Departments of Civil Affairs of the various District Commissariats, on the basis of residence change forms. Lamur compared the data from the continuous registers with that of the Aliens Branch of the Ministry of Justice, which registers all persons who leave or enter the country, regardless of the duration or purpose of their stay. This data compared reliably to the continuous registers of the District Commissariats, with the exception for the years 1950-1963 for which data from continuous registers was not used (Lamur 1973:11, 22).

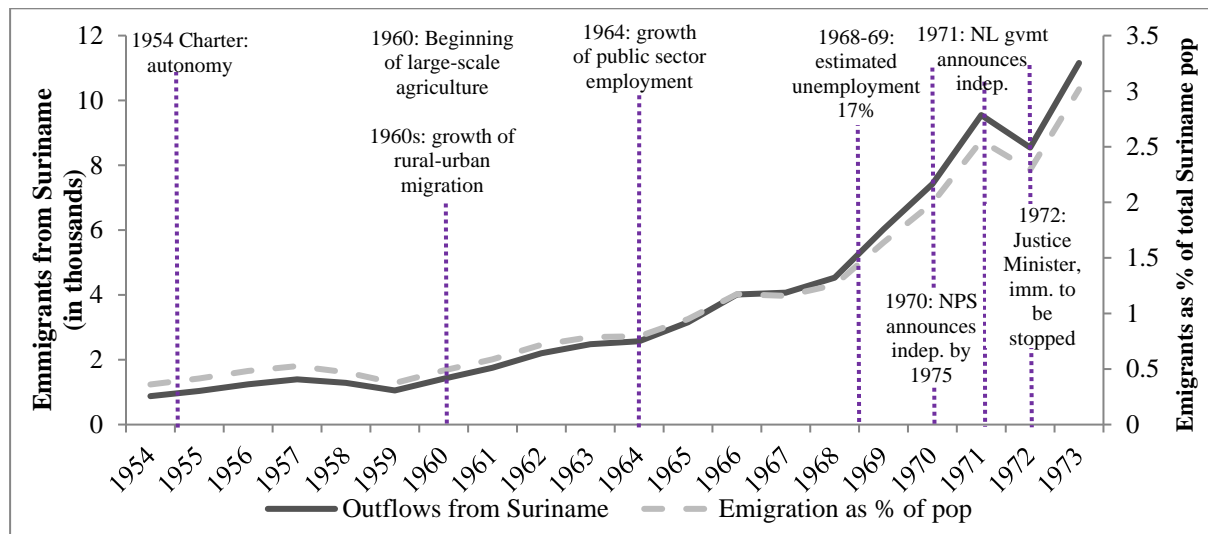
Three main forms of emigration to the Netherlands were gradually emerging. First, urbanites who belonged to privileged classes emigrated, eg planters and merchants, as well as many Afro-Surinamese in the elite (Gowricharn and Schuster 2001). A second group of migrants were the children of the elite, both of Jewish and light-skin African descent, who left to study. Education was a way to obtain a prestigious position in the bureaucracy in Suriname, and although not everyone followed through with return, it was estimated that in the 1950s up to one quarter of these individuals returned (Bovenkerk 1981). Although Afro-Surinamese were more heavily represented, the interviews showed that some Indo-Surinamese also engaged in this early migration as the Netherlands was perceived to offer better education and opportunities for social mobility.

A third group of migrants consisted of low- and middle-class workers, often unemployed, who left Suriname in the late 1920s and early 1930s to work in the oil industry in Curacao and Aruba, and manual workers and seamen in Cuba, Panama and the US (Gowricharn and Schuster 2001; Lamur 1973; Menke 1983; Oostindie 2008; Runs 2006). Other small migrations included Dutch officials, businessmen and military personnel returning to the Netherlands at the end of their tour of duty (Lamur 1973) and small numbers of people who married or retired in the Netherlands (Gowricharn and Schuster 2001).

5 From autonomy towards independence: social changes and growing emigration (1954–1972)³

Dutch and US immigration statistics combined recorded over 41,300 Surinamese immigrants between 1964 and 1971 (Figure 4). However, emigration was not only changing in volume but also in character, driven by a number of socio-economic and political transformations.

Figure 4 Emigration from Suriname, 1954–1973⁴



Sources: Migration flows from DEMIG C2C; Population data from UNPD DESA World Population Prospects, 2012 Revision, estimates 1950–2010, June 2013.

5.1 Labour market shifts and labour displacement

Lamur (1973) associated emigration growth to Suriname’s deteriorating economic conditions, while other literature linked emigration to education and to a sense of ‘adventure’ of members of the middle

³ See Footnote 2.

⁴ From here onwards, whenever emigration data originated from DEMIG C2C, it was compiled using Dutch, Canadian and US immigration figures combined, unless otherwise indicated.

and higher classes and suggested that only a marginal numbers of individuals emigrated in search for a better life (Gowricharn 2004). Similarly, economic hardship emerged only in a couple of instances among the interviewees and in both cases hardship was associated with very large families – ie 11 or 12 children – and in one case the closure of a family business. Nevertheless, economic determinants cannot be discounted.

Although Suriname's economic and per capita income were growing, Dutch-led economic plans had failed to diversify the Surinamese economy through industrialisation and continued to heavily rely on bauxite production, which contributed up to one third of Suriname's GDP in the mid-1940s to 1975 period and agriculture, stressing large-scale production and export of rice and bananas (van Dijck 2001). Technological innovation and mechanisation increased land cultivation and yields, but they reduced the need of seasonal labour and, by the 1970s, large-scale agriculture effectively supplanted the previously self-sufficient small-scale rice production (Menke 1983). To face the high costs of technology, rice producers began to employ low-cost seasonal labour from neighbouring Guyana (Menke 1983), while Surinamese farmers and labourers left agriculture and migrated to the capital Paramaribo or began to join the growing flow of migrants to the Netherlands (Lamur 1973; Menke 1983).

In the 1960s urban unemployment increased, prompting the Dutch government to promote social projects on education, housing and health, which were meant to reduce the motives for emigration to the Netherlands (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990). Surinamese leaders encouraged economic growth by attracting foreign investors for large infrastructural works (Buddingh' 2001; Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990) such as the US-financed Brokopondo project to build facilities to convert bauxite into alumina and aluminium. The project was accompanied by high hopes of economic growth and employment for many Surinamese; however, both effects were short-lived and high structural unemployment remained.

The Surinamese government advanced two alternative solutions to alleviate unemployment: first, it encouraged the emigration of labourers and their families in its 1962 development plan (Kalpoe et al. 1983); second, it created public service jobs and joint ventures largely owned by the Surinamese state (ie 51 and 60 percent, respectively) (Menke 1990). Public sector employment climbed from about 6 percent of total employment before 1960 to 25 percent in 1964 (de Bruijne 2001). These jobs were largely concentrated in the capital Paramaribo and benefited primarily the urban Afro-Surinamese population, while the Indo-Surinamese population concentrated in commerce and advanced into the middle class, both in rural and urban areas (de Bruijne 2001; Menke 1990). Still, negative economic growth, 17 percent estimated unemployment (Dew 1978) and social unrest contributed to the rapid increase in emigration starting in the late 1960s (Menke 1998).

As these events were unfolding in Suriname, Dutch companies in the Netherlands demanded workers and advertised job vacancies in Surinamese newspapers. Some firms even offered to pay for the cost of passage. An interviewee explained how some companies offered work-study programmes, which required young adults to work in factories while pursuing their technical studies. Teachers were in high demand in the Netherlands and Surinamese teachers were ideal recruits because of their knowledge of the Dutch language and their training in the Dutch curriculum. A combination of lack of employment opportunities in Suriname and a period of labour demand in the Netherlands suggests that the growth of emigration may at least partially be explained by economic and employment motives.

5.2 The pursuit of education

Rural-urban migration was not only the result of labour displacement as it was also linked to education (Lamur 1973). Secondary education was often not available in rural areas forcing students to go to Paramaribo, where they may remain at the end of their studies. Students also went to the Netherlands

to pursue all levels of education, from the middle-school to the Master's level. Since higher technical schools were not available in Suriname until the 1970s (Buddingh' 2001), individuals who wanted to become mechanics, civil engineers or other technical professions were obliged to go abroad. Scholarships were available for professional development in the service sector, such as for the police force (Bovenkerk 1981) and in health services. Among the interviewees, two men left for the Netherlands to pursue higher technical studies and two women learned about nursing training programmes from magazines. The interviewees recalled many of their friends being 'recruited' in this manner. The lack of the highest level of academic education in Suriname led many students to pursue advanced degrees in the Netherlands. University education was facilitated by Dutch government-funded scholarships, which were initially available only for light-skinned Afro-Surinamese and, starting in the 1950s, were extended to the entire Surinamese population, including dark-skinned Afro-Surinamese, Indo- and Javanese-Surinamese (Gowricharn and Schuster 2001). The Surinamese government also funded fellowships to train Surinamese teachers,⁵ while medicine students began their studies in Suriname and completed them in the Netherlands.⁶ A process of diversification was underway as migration for education was no longer the exclusive of the elite, although the population benefiting from these opportunities was not fully representative of Surinamese's ethnic diversity (Bakker et al. 1993: 117 in Janssen 2011: 8).

5.3 Emerging political motives

Important political changes gradually emerged, starting with the creation of the Charter of the Kingdom of the Netherlands (*Statuut voor her Koninkrijk der Nederlanden*) in 1954, which gave Suriname and the Netherlands Antilles internal autonomy.⁷ Negotiations for the Charter underlined different perceptions on the desirability of Dutch control among the different ethnic groups in Suriname, with many Afro-Surinamese seeing autonomy as the anticipation of independence and the Asian groups generally desiring a long preparatory path towards sovereignty (Janssen 2011), which was perceived as a necessity to avoid negative developments such as those witnessed in neighbouring Guyana.

Political discussions gradually centred along these divergent visions: the Indo-Surinamese VHP party rejected independence while the Afro-Surinamese NPS party demanded independence by 1974 (Dew 1978; Moore 2001:243). In 1971 the Dutch government unilaterally announced that it would give independence to its autonomous territories as the public debate in the Netherlands increasingly questioned the benefits of the colonies (Moore 2001). Three issues were salient: (i) growing Surinamese immigration; (ii) the Dutch military intervention in Curaçao's 1969 riots, which was perceived internally as a financial burden, and externally as a Dutch neo-colonial intervention; (iii) discomfort with the long-term Dutch commitment to secure the territories' economic viability (Janssen 2011; Moore 2001; Oostindie 2006; Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990). Since the Charter denied any of the territories the right to withdraw unilaterally (Taylor and Bers 2010), the Dutch government needed Suriname to willingly agree to independence, an opportunity provided by the NPS' pro-independence position.

Disagreements on independence built upon historical antagonism between the Afro- and Indo-Surinamese populations. On one hand the East Indian population feared discrimination and continued exclusion from political and economic participation, while the African population feared that the growing East Indian population would take over the country (Hassankhan 1997; Menke 1990). Despite

⁵ This information emerged from an interviewee who received a similar fellowship.

⁶ The husband of one of the interviewees studied in a joint programme offered by the University of Leiden.

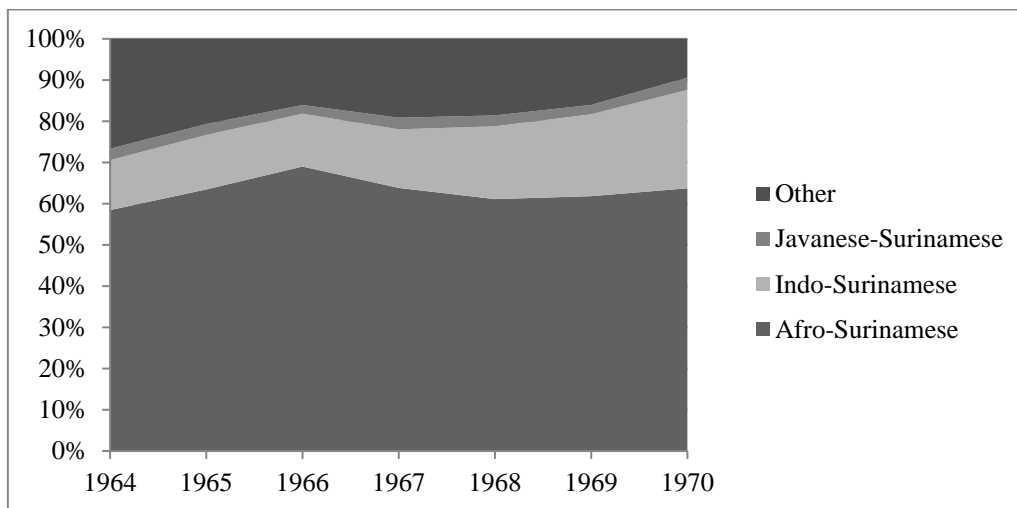
⁷ The Charter granted specific traits of sovereign states, such as the right to issue currency (Giacottino 1995), while the Dutch government retained control over international defence, budgets and development plans (Janssen 2011; Oostindie 2006; Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990).

the tense atmosphere, the Dutch political agenda moved rapidly forward and in late 1972 the Dutch Minister of Justice van Agt indicated that immigration would be limited, either by introducing quick changes in nationality or by changing the Dutch Constitution. Prospects of independence filled the population with growing anxiety: the Indo-Surinamese population as well as the Afro-Surinamese who also grew increasingly disappointed with the government's performance amidst strong allegations of government (Dew 1978). The Dutch government's declaration to pursue independence in 1971 suggests that political motives, in addition to employment and educational opportunities in the Netherlands, contributed to the growth of emigration and the 1971 spike (Figure 4).

5.4 Shifts in the composition of emigration

In this period, the majority of emigrants were Afro-Surinamese from the middle and lower classes, but Indo-Surinamese emigrants doubled from about 12 percent of total emigration in 1962 to about 24 percent in 1970 (Figure 5). Each ethnic group was increasingly affected by emigration leading, although the Afro-Surinamese population remained the most migratory over the 1964–1970 period as it experienced a yearly loss of 1.27 percent of its population, compared to 0.37 and 0.10 percent of the Indo-Surinamese and Javanese-Surinamese population, respectively (see Table A3 in Annex)(Lamur 1973).

Figure 5 Emigration by ethnic group, 1964–1970⁸



Source: Figures elaborated from data in Tables 51 and 54, Lamur 1973

An economic-based explanation can be proposed for the ethnic and class shift in emigration: on one hand, a large number of Indo-Surinamese farmers and seasonal workers were displaced by processes of mechanisation in farming, leading to migration to urban areas and overseas. On the other hand, the advancement of the Indo-Surinamese population into the middle-class may have increased the aspirations of this segment of the population to emigrate for education or other endeavours, while their increased financial capabilities may have facilitated emigration. Concurrently, the Indo-Surinamese youth gained eligibility for Dutch-funded scholarships, possibly giving further impulse to emigration for education. Age-disaggregated data shows the rapid growth of emigration among 0–14 year olds, suggesting the importance of emigration of entire families (Krishnadath 1983; Lamur 1973), a fact supported in the interviews: in this period, three women were brought to the Netherlands by their parents at the ages of 3, 5 and 12 years. Interestingly, the gender composition of Surinamese emigration was also shifting: while gender balance was observed in the late 1960s, in 1970 women were just above 50

⁸ Others included Dutch, other Europeans, Chinese and Amerindian, with the Dutch being the largest group.

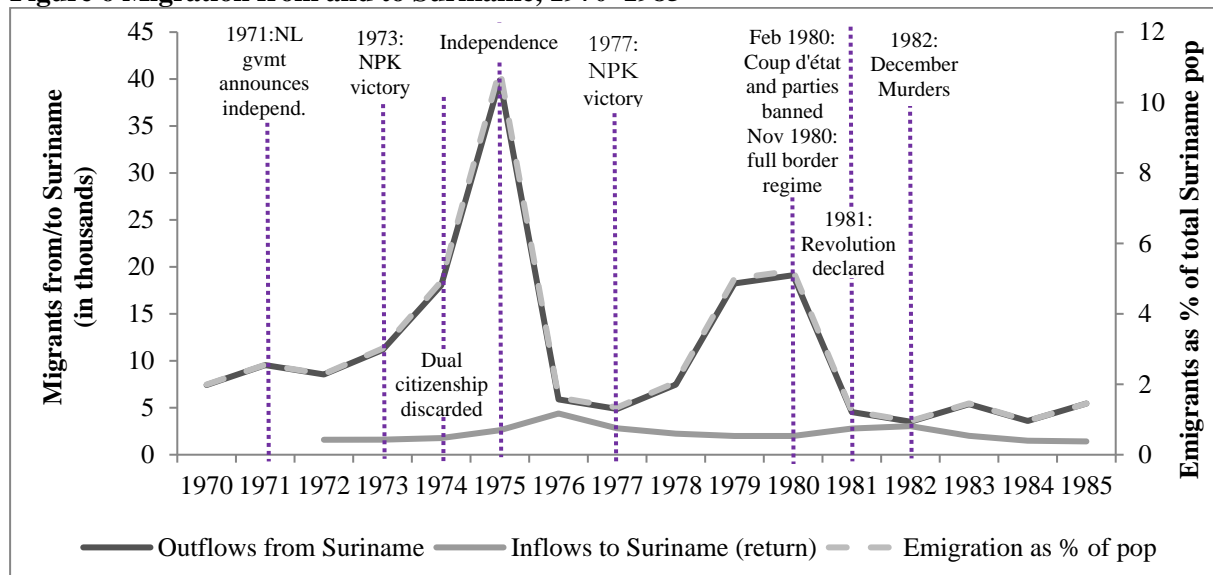
percent of all emigrants (Lamur 1973), marking the beginning of a long-term prevalence of women emigrating from Suriname. Women went to the Netherlands to become nurses or teachers, they wanted to leave the unpleasant living conditions and some were sent to the Netherlands by the parents (ie to prevent disapproved relationships).⁹

By 1972, the Surinamese population in the Netherlands was representative of the ethnic background, class and gender distribution of the population in Suriname, including small numbers of Maroons, Chinese, whites and Amerindians (Bovenkerk 1981; Gowricharn and Schuster 2001). The pervasiveness of emigration was visible in the narratives of the interviewees, who in almost all cases had at least one relative abroad and in a few cases indicated that most of their family was already abroad. Almost inevitably, relatives in the Netherlands provided initial migration support, even when the relationship between the migrant and the relative in the Netherlands was weak. This supports the literature which indicates that the support of friends and family already in the Netherlands, as well as low airfares, enabled most migrants to emigrate even without the financial and logistical support provided by the Dutch government or Dutch employers (Gowricharn and Schuster 2001).

6 Emigration peaks across independence and the establishment of a border regime (1973–1982)

Over 18,000 individuals born or residing in Suriname left in 1974 and almost 40,000 in 1975, the year of independence, with the migration rate jumping from 5 to 11 percent of the population in Suriname. Emigration to the Netherlands decreased significantly after 1975, but it increased again in 1979–1980 when over 37,000 Surinamese emigrated (Figure 6).¹⁰ These emigration spikes can be easily associated with independence and the establishment of a border regime with the Netherlands, but these events were interwoven with deep processes of political and economic transformation. In the next subsections we explore the factors that made migration so appealing for so many Surinamese and how they shaped this period’s timing, volume and composition of migration.

Figure 6 Migration from and to Suriname, 1970–1985



Source: DEMIG C2C and UNPD DESA DEMIG C2C Database

⁹ Across the periods of Surinamese migration, women discussed personal and sentimental issues as migration reasons, eg to stop an abusive relationship and to escape cultural traditions.

¹⁰ Based on combined immigration figures by the Netherlands, Canada and the US, reported in the DEMIG C2C database.

6.1 Uncertainty and growing anxiety of political future driving migration

6.1.1 Divergent positions on independence and citizenship

The year 1973 started with strikes and demonstrations led primarily by labour unions with little Indo-Surinamese participation (Dew 1978). A tense electoral campaign followed these events, as the Indo-Surinamese VHP party leaders warned that a Nationale Partij Kombinatie (NPK) victory would result in great insecurity and terror. The NPK was an Afro- and Javanese-Surinamese coalition which included radical parties such as the pro-independence PNR and parties represented by strikes' leaders (Dew 1978; Menke 1990; Moore 2001). VHP party members suggested that the PNR's leader Eddy Bruma would call for independence and increase conflict, the NPK would push the Indo-Surinamese to emigrate as in Uganda and NPK's Communist sympathisers would establish an authoritarian government (Dew 1978: 170).

Nonetheless, the NPK won and the VHP was relegated to the opposition (Chin and Buddingh' 1987; Dew 1978; Menke 1990; Moore 2001). As suspicions emerged that the NPK government would indeed introduce radical reforms that threatened the Indo-Surinamese socio-economic position, tensions intensified (Dew 1978: 175). When, in February 1974, Minister-President Arron announced that Suriname would become independent by the end of 1975 (Chin and Buddingh' 1987), the VHP fears actualised and anxiety ran so high that an Indo-Surinamese organisation sought to create a separate Hindustani state in Western Suriname (*De Ware Tijd*, June 18, 1974 cited in Dew 1978: 178). However, opposition to independence also gradually emerged also within the NPK (Dew 1978: 181).

Unable to stop independence, the VHP focused on citizenship and proposed the retention of Dutch nationality through dual nationality for an indefinite period (*De Ware Tijd*, July 4, 1974 and August 8, 1974 cited in Dew 1978: 179). The NPK counter-proposed that only the Surinamese in the Netherlands should be allowed to choose their nationality, while in Suriname the population would become automatically Surinamese. This position was viewed favourably by the Dutch government (*De Ware Tijd*, August 10, 1974 cited in Dew 1978: 179), whose strong objective was to halt Surinamese immigration (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1984). Throughout 1975, dual nationality became a point of contention: Indo-Surinamese politicians claimed that Surinamese unable to travel to the Netherlands to secure Dutch citizenship would suffer social injustice, while Javanese-Surinamese politicians threatened to take planeloads of constituents to the Netherlands (*De Ware Tijd*, November 14, 1975 cited in Dew 1978: 190). The Dutch government refused motions for double citizenship (Dew 1978: 188-189), while it threatened to introduce measures, eg visas, to stop the growing emigration flow, although none of these measures were introduced (van Amersfoort 2011). In the meantime, the Surinamese government saw emigration as a 'safety valve' to deal with a poor economy, structural unemployment and reduce social tensions (Moore 2001: 245).

The Dutch government's immigration obsession and rush to grant independence gave the Surinamese government ample room to negotiate unique migration and, as we will see later, economic privileges. A few days before independence the Dutch and Surinamese governments reached agreements: First, Suriname's new constitution largely extended the previous constitution, but it included greater guarantees for the Indo-Surinamese population (Giacottino 1995). Second, conditions on citizenship and migration were adopted: all Surinamese on Dutch territory on independence day would be able to retain Dutch citizenship (van Amersfoort 2011); after independence, all Surinamese nationals enjoyed the right 'to obtain a three-month residence permit in the Netherlands and, on conditions that he/she be self-supporting, could obtain Dutch citizenship' until November 1980 (Chin and Buddingh' 1987: 139); and Surinamese nationals enjoyed visa-free travel to the Netherlands until November 1980. Starting in November 1980, Surinamese citizens required a travel visa to enter the

Netherlands and those who wanted to stay for a longer period would need a work permit, which would be issued upon demonstrating access to adequate housing. Although these were very favourable conditions compared to border regimes established by other colonial states, for many Surinamese who saw migration as 'normal' (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1984), these restrictions seemed harsh.

As supported by the interviews, Asian political leaders' persistent warnings of terrible outcomes created alarm making politics the primary migration determinant in this period (Hassankhan 1997; Menke 1983). Two additional factors may have contributed to the heightened levels of anxiety generated by independence. First, throughout this process, independence remained a movement of the elite and intellectuals and never reflected a widespread desire for self-determination (Chin and Buddingh' 1987; Moore 2001). Moreover, while the Afro-Surinamese perceived independence as the end of Dutch oppression, other ethnic groups did not share such feelings (Hassankhan 1997) leading the Asian population to perceive independence more as an uncertainty than a celebration.

Second, feelings of uncertainty were worsened by the unstable conditions in neighbouring Guyana (Moore 2001: 246), which gained independence from Britain in 1966 but was seen as an example of the possible dangers of independence in a similarly ethnically-diverse society (Hassankhan 1997; Meel 2001). *De Ware Tijd* frequently reported on Guyana's socialist agenda, its worsening conditions and irregular Guyanese immigrants involved in various criminal activities in Suriname.¹¹ Indo-Surinamese interviewees talked about Guyana's difficult political and socio-economic conditions, the discrimination suffered by Indo-Guyanese and the fear of a similar outcome. Chaos, discrimination and loss of the hard-earned family's property were terms used to explain why their families and relatives left in 1973–1975.¹² This multi-layered sense of insecurity, contrasted to the certainties guaranteed by Dutch citizenship and opportunities in the Netherlands, contributed to the mass emigration anticipated by the newspaper *De Ware Tijd* (*De Ware Tijd*, August 14, 1974 cited in Dew 1978: 179–180), as many Surinamese rushed to secure Dutch citizenship before November 1975.

6.1.2 The 1980 coup and the 1982 December murders

Political tensions subsided in the post-independence period, but the 1977 electoral campaign reignited the VHP campaign against Arron's coalition. Once again the VHP lost and was left out of government, protracting anxieties among the Indo-Surinamese population (Giacottino 1995). This time, political discontent was growing among the population at large and in February 1980 a group of non-commissioned officers led by Colonel Bouterse carried out a successful coup d'état, justifying it as a necessity to resolve corruption and inefficiency, change economic model and eliminate ethnic conflict (Bovenkerk 1981). The Dutch military also saw the coup as a necessity, offering it covert support, while the Dutch government speedily provided 'an unprecedented volume of aid' in 1980–1982 (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990).¹³

Initially, large parts of the population supported the coup as a possible source of change (Chin and Buddingh' 1987; Gowricharn 2004; Menke 1990; Thorndike 1990). Signs soon appeared, however, that the coup's leaders were unprepared to resolve corruption, ethnic divisions and to set the country on a different path (Bovenkerk 1981). In late 1981 Bouterse declared a 'revolution' following socialist nationalism, but in fact little economic change followed, except for the loss of business confidence and increased opposition to the regime. After banning party activities in 1980 (Chin and Buddingh' 1987),

¹¹ Based on a review of *De Ware Tijd* in 1973 and 1979.

¹² Interviews with Indo- and Javanese-Surinamese non-migrants showed that not everybody felt a great degree of fear as some individuals separated political agendas from reality. Although some of these individuals had the contacts and opportunities to emigrate, their priority was to keep their businesses going and their family united.

¹³ The Dutch government's initial support relied on its understanding that the civilian government created by the ruling military junta guaranteed a speedy return to democracy (Buddingh' 2001).

the junta became increasingly repressive and by late 1982 the population turned to the streets of Paramaribo in a number of strikes (Thorndike 1990). The junta's attacks on political opponents grew, eventually leading to the murder of 15 opponents who wanted the restoration of democracy (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990). The murders, commonly known as the December Murders, shocked the population, shattered the Dutch government's belief that democracy would be restored (Buddingh' 2001) and led to a sudden halt of Dutch financial aid (van Dijck 2001).

It remains debated how much the coup contributed to the 1979–1980 wave of emigration. While some believe that this was the case, three reasons point to the contrary: (i) the increase in emigration started in 1977; (ii) the difference in total outflows between 1979 and 1980 is only 870, about 4.5 percent of the 1980 total emigration, which does not suggest panic as that witnessed at independence (there the difference of outflows between 1974 and 1975 was of almost 22,000!); and (iii) the literature and several interviews suggest that initially the coup was welcomed by many Surinamese (de Bruijne 2001). Conceivably, the second loss of the VHP in the 1977 elections may have contributed to strengthened feelings of anxiety linked to possible future discrimination of the Indo-Surinamese population, stimulating emigration.¹⁴ Moreover, evidence shows that visible patronage and nepotism produced discontent and hopelessness across ethnic groups, making migration increasingly desirable (Thorndike 1990).

6.2 Economic conditions and development aid

In 1975, per capita income in Suriname was US\$1,000, making Suriname a 'middle income country'. However, unemployment remained between 15 and 30 percent, notwithstanding the government's expansion of the public sector and growing emigration. Furthermore, continuous rural-urban migration contributed to rising urban unemployment. A promising economic prospect was the generous development aid based on the 'Treaty for Development Cooperation', often referred to as the 'golden handshake', negotiated with the Dutch government before independence (Dew 1978), which included the cancellation of Suriname's debts and financial assistance over a period of 10–15 years of Nf 4 billion (US\$1.6 billion) (Dew 1978: 185), an amount that accounted for large part of Suriname's national income (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990).

Notwithstanding its economic character, scholars observed that this deal was a political tool: first, it meant to convince the Indo-Surinamese politicians to accept independence and, concurrently, to reduce the large outflow of migrants (Buddingh' 2001). Second, the 'golden handshake' strengthened dependency on the Netherlands, giving the Dutch government the right to intervene in Suriname's budget plans (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1990). A patronage system developed that allowed the upper class to accumulate great amounts of wealth, while the poorest 10 percent of the population effectively experienced an income reduction of almost 25 percent between 1968 and 1980 (Buddingh' 2001). Hence, although development aid led to the growth of per capita annual national income to US\$2,200, economic growth was inflated by aid-funded government investment, concealing stagnation and a 6 percent shrinkage in national income. For the majority of the population the post-independence period was a great disappointment: the agricultural sector weakened, industry did not grow and the only solution to unemployment, which in 1980 surpassed 17 percent (Chin and Buddingh' 1987: 139), was the creation of more civil service jobs. Yet, the unemployment situation would have been even worse without emigration, a fact that did not escape the Arron government (Chin and Buddingh' 1987: 46).

The mismanagement of state entities, continued foreign ownership of industry, increasing corruption, the misappropriation of Dutch development aid, ethnic politics and Dutch neo-colonialism

¹⁴ I thank Jack Menke for bringing my attention to the VHP's loss in 1977 and its possible relevance for migration.

(Chin and Buddingh' 1987; Menke 1990) explain the population's initial support for the coup and also the increase of emigration in the late 1970s. A study on the impact of Surinamese migration on the country's socio-economic transformations produced valuable insights on emigration in the 1970s. First, it found that the increase in emigration to the Netherlands originated from Paramaribo as well as rural areas such as Nickerie. Second, many workers in the rice, sugar and forestry sectors emigrated, while few emigrated from the bauxite industry: HION industries, in forestry, lost 40 percent of its lower and middle cadres workers after independence, which were replaced by Guyanese and other foreign workers. Among the emigrants, many feared the changes surrounding independence, but many also left because of the economic benefits in the Netherlands (Menke 1983).

6.3 Combining uncertainty, migration policies and the role of migrant networks

Chaos in Suriname, large numbers of people leaving, families selling property as a result of the political uncertainties tied to independence were images painted in many interviews describing the 1973–1975 period. After independence, however, the worsening economic developments in conjunction with disillusionment with corrupt politicians seemed to produce most uncertainties, particularly for the middle and lower classes. The reality of these sustained political and economic uncertainties was in direct opposition of two important certainties: the knowledge that in the Netherlands employment opportunities and social assistance (ie housing, clothing and funds) were available even for families with many children; and, the awareness that the opportunity to start a new life in the Netherlands would expire in November 1980. A quote by an interviewee summarised this contrast, 'they were very uncertain about what was coming to them with independence and a lot of them, well you know, thought, "well, let me go to Holland because in that case I am at least sure about the system and things like that".'

After 1975, migration to the Netherlands remained easy, albeit with some constraints, in comparison to any other destination. Those with financial means could freely travel to the Netherlands, obtain a three-month residence permit, find a job, secure housing and gain access to Dutch citizenship. But not everybody could leave, as highlighted in one interview, 'Some relatives were able to send some money and they, they [people] just needed the tickets. People were thinking, "God, if I could just have one ticket, one ticket to Holland then everything will be fine."' And there was this man who even stole the ticket of his brother-in-law just to go to Holland.'

Thus, the role of family and friends already in the Netherlands was very important in many of the stories recalled in the interviews. Family and friends provided information on Dutch employment and services having been themselves receivers of such social benefits in some cases, while other families well-established in the Netherlands assisted new arrivals from Suriname and helped them find the assistance they needed to start a new life there. A couple of individuals reported how they were the catalyst to bring to the Netherlands their entire family in just a few years, while for many families it was important to send at least one family member to the Netherlands before the 1980 to secure access to the Netherlands once the border closed.

6.4 Migration diversification across class and ethnic groups

This period of Surinamese emigration has been generally associated with a shift in ethnic composition: while pre-1973 migration was mostly of Afro-Surinamese, thereafter it was strongly represented by Indo-Surinamese, as well as Javanese-Surinamese, who 'voted with their feet' (Chin and Buddingh' 1987; Hassankhan 1997). Afro-Surinamese continued to emigrate, but the rate of Indo-Surinamese emigration grew more rapidly, while Javanese-Surinamese emigration rose sharply only in late 1975 (Dew 1978:179, 183), suggesting a last minute rush of 'now or never' migration. Migration figures disaggregated by ethnic group are not available, but Dutch immigration figures disaggregated by

religious affiliation suggest that the emigration of individuals with religions generally associated with Indo-Surinamese increased by over 135 percent between 1973 and 1974, while at the same time an increase of over 37 percent was recorded for Surinamese of all other religions linked to Afro-, Chinese- and European-Surinamese (Table 1), confirming that the desire to secure Dutch citizenship was widespread across all ethnic groups (van Amersfoort 2011). The unsatisfactory economic developments also suggest that emigration was multi-ethnic. Contrasting with the initial emigration linked to elite and middle classes, from the early 1970s and into the early 1980s emigration became strongly a lower class phenomenon (van Niekerk 2005).

Table 1 Surinamese arrivals to the Netherlands, by religious affiliation¹⁵

Religion	1973	1974
Hindus, Mohammedans and Buddhists	3362	7930
All other religions	5391	7421

Source: Dew 1978, citing data from Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek

Unique emigration outcomes emerged in this period. Emigrants included individuals who are usually underrepresented among migrants, such as low-educated individuals of a mature age, particularly of rural Indo- and Javanese-Surinamese background (van Amersfoort 2011), suggesting the emigration of entire families to start a new life in the Netherlands. Menke (1983) found that in the 1972–1980 period emigration was particularly strong for women in the 15–19 age group and suggested that this may have been part of been a cultural strategy to send daughters away so that they would not get in trouble or perhaps because they were already ‘in trouble’ (Menke 1983). Evidence of this emerged when a Javanese-Surinamese interviewee indicated that a family member had gone to the Netherlands because he had seven daughters and he didn’t want them to get involved with boys in Suriname; he felt that in the Netherlands he would face fewer difficulties. Another Indo-Surinamese woman was sent to the Netherlands to fulfil an arranged marriage and yet another woman was encouraged to go to the Netherlands in order not to halt a relationship with a man the family rejected. While such socio-cultural motives may have played an important role, the emigration of women may also have been associated with strong demand for teachers and nurses in the Netherlands, professions often filled by women.

It is only logical that the Netherlands remained the primary destination of Surinamese migrants throughout this period, given the favourable migration and citizenship policies until 1980. Nevertheless, some Surinamese found alternative destinations: records of the immigrant population in French Guiana showed in that in 1974 a population of 600 to 700 Surinamese individuals resided there, 80 percent of whom were reported as being Javanese.¹⁶ France’s INSEE data show a larger Surinamese population of over 1,200 (Granger 2007).

In the meantime, Suriname was receiving immigrants. Among these were Guyanese and Haitians (de Bruijne 2001) and returning Surinamese following various migratory movements: emigration to the Netherlands may be followed by return, re-emigration and a second attempt to return (Bovenkerk 1981). This was visible also among interviewees, who moved back and forth in response to professional or family needs. Return continued in this period (Figure 6): among the interviewees, three Indo-Surinamese individuals (two men and one woman) returned right before independence, one to experience the transition to independence and contribute to the country, one because of a job opportunity and one because of the desire to return after several years in the Netherlands. These personal

¹⁵ The first category roughly includes Indo-Surinamese, while the second category includes Afro-Surinamese as well as Chinese and Europeans (Dew 1978:179).

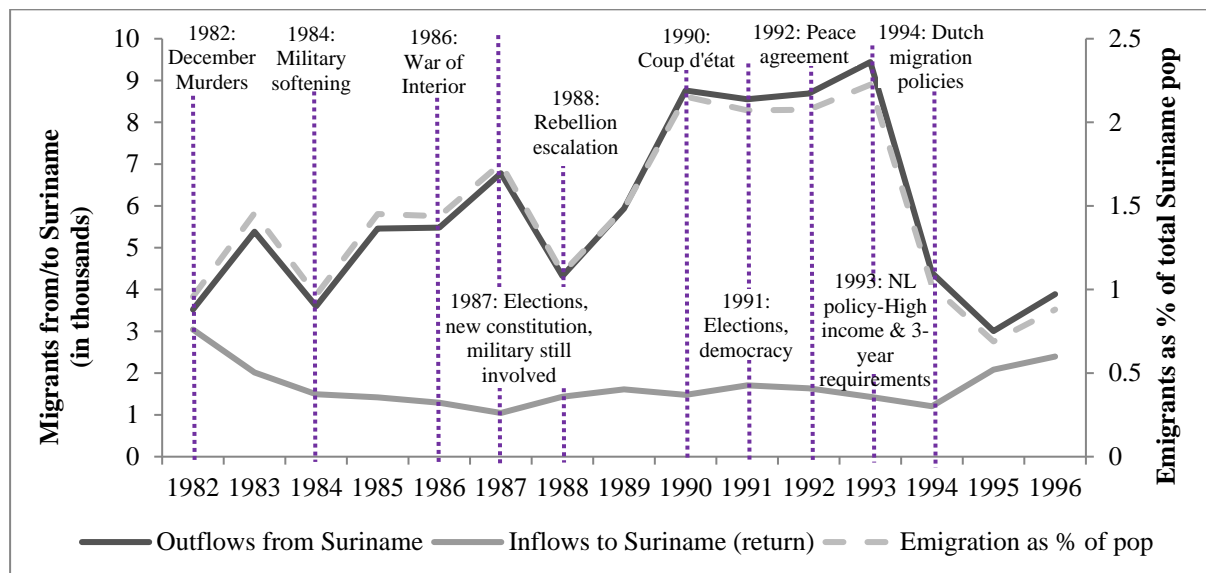
¹⁶ Guyane Action, Jan 1975, no. 31, p4.

trajectories suggest that despite the uncertainties and the alarmism promoted by politicians, some individuals perceived that independent Suriname could also offer opportunities.

7 Internal political and economic crises driving migration (1983–1994)

A new wave of migration took place from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s: its volume was small in comparison to the previous decade, but emigration was once again on the increase, reaching 2.2 percent of Suriname’s population in 1993 before halving in 1994 (Figure 7). The political and economic conditions in Suriname were highly unstable and living conditions worsened over the decade. Two political events are relevant: the growth of military control and abuse; a guerrilla war waged in the interior. In combination with worsening economic conditions and the presence of a sizeable Surinamese community in the Netherlands, emigration regained some strength. However, different emigration strategies emerged: first, a new segment of the population engaged in migration; second, new migration channels were utilised stemming from Dutch immigration policies; and third, new migration destinations emerged.

Figure 7 Migration from and to Suriname, 1982–1996



Source: DEMIG C2C and UNPD DESA DEMIG C2C Database

7.1 Political emigration drivers: From a military dictatorship to the War of the Interior

The 1982 December Murders marked the start of a period of heightened tension. Interviewees indicated that no widespread violence occurred in the streets, but the military controlled the population in numerous ways and, as a general rule, the population knew that the military could do anything. Phones were tapped, sympathisers readily informed the military of ‘inappropriate’ conversations and adversaries received anonymous phone warnings. The surveillance instilled fear as people could no longer distinguish friends from enemies. Some individuals said they coped with the military regime by ‘keeping their mouth shut’, while others, particularly professionals and academics, felt directly under threat and compelled to emigrate.

In response to the December Murders, the Dutch embassy indicated it would ease migration entry requirements and provide support for individuals threatened by the military and their dependents

for humanitarian reasons (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1984: 6). A total of 1,444 Surinamese, belonging to several ethnic groups, with the majority Afro- and Indo-Surinamese, left with a Dutch visa, 400 of whom requested asylum, including professionals, trade unionists, commissioned officers and soldiers of Suriname's army and students who were involved in demonstrations against the junta. The Dutch embassy, however, refused 65 percent of the visa requests lodged by Surinamese and those who arrived with visas were not granted the longer term permits, leading individuals, among whom many students, to remain irregularly (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1984).

The strong military rule would soften relatively quickly as the military junta lessened its authoritarian approach and lifted the ban on party activities (Thorndike 1990), in 1983 it opened dialogue with civilian groups (Menke 1990) and by November 1987 it allowed the approval of a new constitution by referendum. The 1987 general elections resulted in the defeat of the military-backed National Democratic Party (NDP), although the party managed to retain significant power (Thorndike 1990). A second coup occurred in December 1990 (Meel 2001) once again orchestrated by Bouterse, but swift elections took place in early 1991. The victory of President Ronald Venetiaan of the New Front for Democracy and Development coalition marked the return to a democratically elected government (Giacottino 1995; Taylor and Bers 2010) and the reopening of Dutch-Surinamese relations (Giacottino 1995). In 1992 the two governments agreed to the Framework Treaty for Friendship and Closer Cooperation which included economic development and collaboration against drug production and related criminal activities (Meel 2001).

As military rule was softening, another political development would have important migration implications. From the mid-1980s, a guerrilla rebellion grew in the interior generating anarchy (Menke 1990). Starting in 1986 Ronnie Brunswijk and the Jungle Commando, composed of Maroon groups living in the interior, conducted an armed struggle, the so-called War of the Interior, against the military government (Taylor and Bers 2010). The rebellion rapidly degenerated (Thorndike 1990) and grave human rights violations occurred on a wide scale, such as the 1986 Moiwana massacre of 50 unarmed civilians (Meel 2001). In December 1988 violence escalated again (Thorndike 1990) and degenerated further as the government became involved with guerrilla groups until, in August 1992, a peace agreement was finally negotiated between the government and the Jungle Commandos to end the war (Taylor and Bers 2010).

The War of the Interior generated a large movement of the Maroon population across the Marowijne (Maroni) river into French Guiana (Gowricharn 2004) and although early figures indicated that 10,000 Surinamese Maroons fled to French Guiana in the second part of the 1980s (Meel 2001), estimates indicate that 13,000 refugees settled in the north-west of French Guiana, making the Surinamese the largest foreign population in French Guiana. These events were critical in transforming migration from Suriname to French Guiana which had been very low until 1986, when about 1500 Surinamese were recorded in French Guiana (Piantoni 2014 forthcoming).

7.2 Collapsing economy, shortages of goods, remittances and emigration

In the early 1980s two events converged to affect negatively the Surinamese economy: the fall of global bauxite prices and the halt of Dutch development aid (Thorndike 1990). Bauxite contribution to Suriname's GDP fell from 20 percent in 1980 to 12 percent in 1985 (Menke 1990), reducing foreign currency earnings and government revenues (Menke 1998). Dutch development aid, which had become vital in the 1975–1982 period, was suspended after the December murders, weakening an already dwindling economy (Menke 1998). The economic crisis of the 1980–1987 period eventually led to a GDP decline of -6.8 percent, real per capita income's declining at -23 percent (Menke 1998) and unemployment figures skyrocketing from 10 to 30 percent in 1980 and 1987 respectively (Thorndike

1990). The 1983–1984 IMF austerity measures led to shortages of essential imports (Thorndike 1990), high inflation and basic needs provision (Menke 1990). Resuming development aid was imperative upon return to democracy in 1988 (Buddingh' 2001), but the Dutch government requested the introduction of IMF's structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) to release the 1500 million Dutch guilders left in the 'golden handshake' agreement (Buddingh' 2001; Menke 1990). Aid discussions continued amongst difficulties and aid resumed from 1990 to 1996 upon the condition that all imports be conducted through a Dutch purchasing agency (Thorndike 1990).

By 1993, however, the economic situation deteriorated further with hyperinflation, increasing exchange rates, shortages of basic goods and price increases of basic goods (Menke 1998; van Niekerk 2005). A 1998 study based on surveys conducted in 1978 and 1993 in Greater Paramaribo, reported a shift away from public employment to precarious self-employment. The informal economy rapidly absorbed students, housewives and retired people unable to find formal employment, particularly in urban areas¹⁷ (Menke 1998). The study also found that 69.5 percent of urban household were below the poverty line in 1993, a proportion that increased by 10.3 percent if remittances were excluded, showing that remittances had the highest effect on poverty alleviation (Menke 1998). The study also showed that non-poor households had four main survival mechanisms: commodity remittances, cash remittances, additional jobs and emigration (Menke 1998). Many interviewees described their own situations of economic struggle and survival, recalled queues to buy foodstuff and how sometimes even having money would not help because there was nothing to buy. This resulted in the heavy reliance on barrels and packages from relatives in the Netherlands which included clothing and household equipment (Buddingh' 2001; Gowricharn 2004; van Niekerk 2005). Emigration was a solution for some of the interviewees in my sample and their families: Surinamese who had returned in the 1975–1982 period re-migrated, helped by their Dutch nationality; some parents were happy to see their children leave for the Netherlands knowing that their children would have better opportunities, but also because in the long-term the parents would also benefit; others had relatives who chose to reside irregularly in the Netherlands.

An unfamiliar fact about Surinamese emigration is that economic hardship led to emigration to French Guiana. Surinamese of East Indian, Javanese, Chinese and mixed backgrounds settled in French Guiana for rice cultivation¹⁸, forestry and sawmills, agricultural production and retail businesses, but also to provide services such as dentistry and medicine in the underdeveloped western part of French Guiana, where health service provision was weak (Piantoni 2009). Interviews carried out by Piantoni (2009) showed that these individuals left Suriname due to the unstable political and economic conditions but also because of investment opportunities in French Guiana, while the proximity allowed these migrants to remain connected to Suriname. These migrants held Surinamese or Dutch nationality and some were returnees that decided to resettle in French Guiana (cf. Piantoni 2009). It is possible that migration to French Guiana may have been a 'spatial substitution effect' due to the increasing barriers to migration to the Netherlands. The number of Surinamese migrants remained low, however, until the displacements caused by the War of the Interior.

¹⁷ In the 1970s and 1980s, Paramaribo doubled in size due partially to rural-urban migration and partially to the extension of the city to include surrounding farming lands (de Bruijne 2001).

¹⁸ These immigrants successfully re-launched rice production in French Guiana after several failed attempts of previous development projects supported by the French government (Piantoni 2009).

7.3 Surinamese attitude towards migration and Dutch migration policies

While the Surinamese government adopted a *laissez-faire* attitude as it watched undesirable political opponents emigrate voluntarily (Sedoc-Dahlberg 1984), the Dutch government took stronger positions with its migration policies. The openness showed after the December Murders was countered by the discretionary implementation which left many Surinamese migrants stranded in irregular situations. Concurrently, starting in the 1980s family reunification policies gradually reduced entry rights, particularly through income requirements for second generation migrants (1983). In 1993, income requirements were increased up to 70 percent of social welfare levels, a 3-year residence was required for family reunification eligibility and these requirements were extended to all, including Dutch citizens.¹⁹ In the late 1980s the Dutch Ministry of Justice began to repatriate over 5,000 irregular Surinamese immigrants as Suriname was deemed to be a safe country; this measure was halted by Minister of Foreign Affairs van der Broek who acknowledged Suriname's uncertain conditions due to the war in the interior (Thorndike 1990).

Given the importance of family migration (Gowricharn and Schuster 2001; Sedoc-Dahlberg 1984), the increasingly restrictive immigration measures provoked a shift to entries as tourists or for marriage, including marriages of convenience (Gowricharn and Schuster 2001). Interviewees' recollections of this time included recurrent references to marriage: siblings, daughters, nieces and nephews were marrying Dutch nationals, sometimes out of free will and at other times for arranged marriages, while Surinamese in the Netherlands with Dutch nationality were using this channel to help friends regularise their situation. Dutch authorities began to give travel visas more reluctantly (Gowricharn and Schuster 2001) and in 1994, the Dutch government introduced three policies which would aim to affect these migration strategies: the introduction of new identification requirements to prevent irregular migrants to access social services; requirements to obtain a 'provisional residence permit' before arrival in the Netherlands; and, the Law on Prevention of Marriage of Convenience, requiring Immigration Services to certify the genuineness of marriages.²⁰

7.4 Class, ethnicity and diversification of migration destinations

A survey conducted in 1992 found that 75 percent of the population in Suriname had relatives in the Netherlands representing all segments of Surinamese society (de Bruijne and Schalkwijk 1994 cited in van Niekerk 2005). The economic and political turbulence caused a significant part of the executives in the civil service and the private sector to depart the country: an estimated 25 percent of individuals educated in Suriname between 1970–90 migrated in this period (van Dijck 2001: 66). Middle classes were also well-represented (Gowricharn 2004), but the poorer population had fewer relatives in the Netherlands (de Bruijne and Schalkwijk 1994 cited in van Niekerk 2005). The severe financial constraints to emigration faced by poor individuals emerged from a couple of interviewees, who had both low education and lived in relative poverty and shared details of their inability to emigrate over the years.

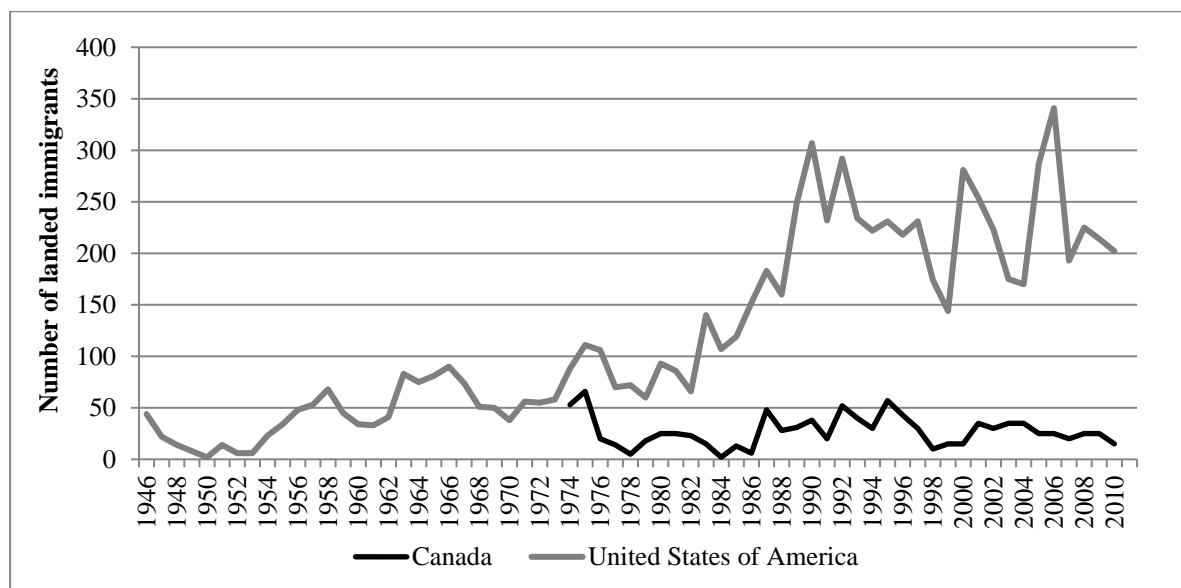
Differences were also found across ethnic group: more than 80 percent of European, African and mixed descent Suriname had relatives in the Netherlands; between 60 and 80 percent of people of East Indian, Javanese and Chinese descent had relatives in the Netherlands; and only between 35 and 50 percent of Maroons and Amerindians had relatives in the Netherlands (de Bruijne and Schalkwijk

¹⁹ Data drawn from DEMIG POLICY.

²⁰ Data drawn from DEMIG POLICY.

1994 cited in van Niekerk 2005). The emigration of Maroons became much more significant over this period given this population's displacement to French Guiana.

Figure 8 Immigrants to the United States who previously resided in Suriname 1946-2010 and immigrants to Canada who were born in Suriname 1973-2010²¹



Source: DEMIG C2C

Emigration gradually expanded, albeit weakly, to the USA, Brazil and the Dutch Antilles (Gowricharn 2004) in addition to French Guiana. Astrid Runs (2006) studied Surinamese emigration to the US and suggested that this spatial diversification was linked to changes in geopolitics, tourism and the difficulties in obtaining a Dutch visa. She specified that the migration to the US occurred before the military regime, but it was confined to the elite; after the 1987 elections the Surinamese middle class began to visit Miami and New York, where Surinam Airways flew for relative cheap fares. The US, particularly Miami, became a tourist destination and a place to purchase goods to import to Suriname. Gradually, some Surinamese decided to stay after their holiday and regularise through marriage, asylum, employment, family or other programmes such as the diversity lottery. Although Suriname's socio-economic and political conditions were important reasons for migration, individuals also mentioned a sense of adventure and family reunification (Runs 2006). Figure 8 shows how migration to the United States gained strength starting in 1983, although total figures are very small in comparison to migration to the Netherlands, while the attractiveness of Canada remained low.

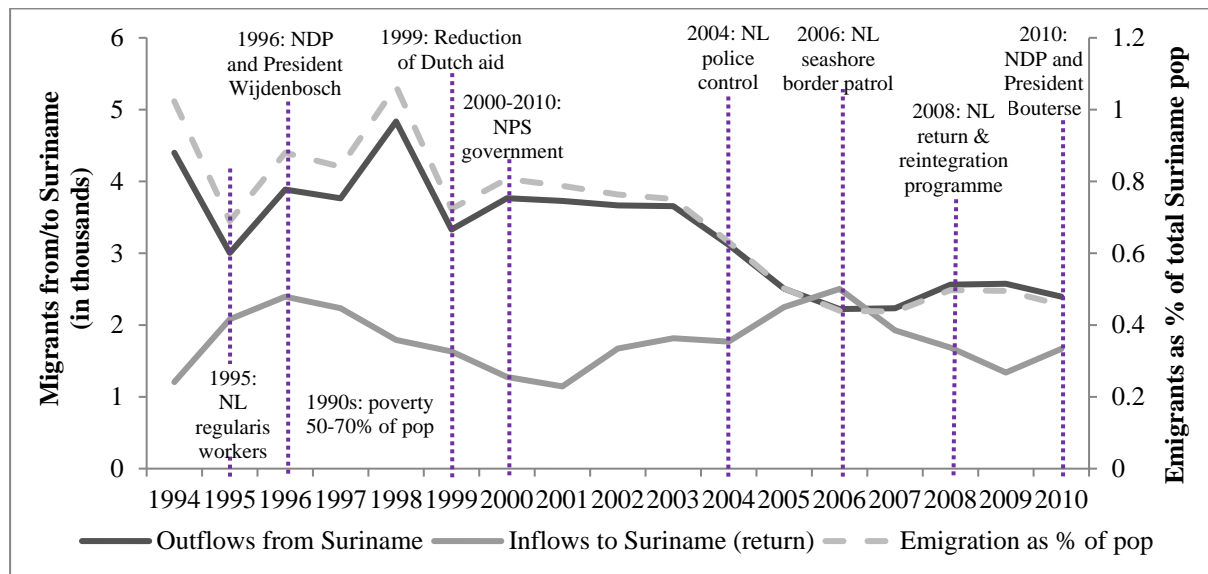
8 Gradual return to stability and low emigration (1995–2010s)

While the 1982–1993 period saw a gradual emigration increase, thereafter emigration followed a downward trend halving from about 1 percent of the population in 1994 to less than .5 percent in 2010 (Figure 9), approximately the emigration rate of 1956 (Figure 4). In the early 2000s this shift was associated with the restrictiveness of European migration policies based on two factors: the Surinamese population continued to perceive Suriname as a country with few opportunities; and migrant networks raised awareness of lifestyles and opportunities in the Netherlands (de Bruijne 2001). In addition to Dutch policy changes, I would argue that political and economic stability in Suriname over the course

²¹ Country of birth data for Canada and country of residence data for the US.

of the 2000s and worsening economic conditions in the Netherlands may have also contributed to a greater sense of well-being in Suriname leading to some changes in attitudes towards emigration.

Figure 9 Migration from and to Suriname, 1995–2010



Source: DEMIG C2C and UNPD DESA

8.1 Democracy and political stability

The 1996 victory of the NDP and President Jules Wijdenbosch, an associate of Bouterse (Meel 2001), led to the suspension of Dutch-Surinamese relations in 1997 by the Surinamese government (Buddingh' 2001) on account of two issues: the pursuit of macro-economic policies (van Dijck 2001) including SAPs; and Bouterse's prosecution for drug trafficking in the Netherlands, which eventually led to his conviction in absentia for 16 years imprisonment and US\$2 million in fines (Meel 2001). The Dutch government reduced aid to 40 million Dutch guilders (US\$20 million) in 1999, but a deep economic crisis forced President Wijdenbosch to request aid in 2000, which the Dutch authorities rejected on account of lack of 'good governance' (Buddingh' 2001).

Three free and fair elections took place since 2000: President Venetiaan led an NPS government for 10 years until the 2010 victory of the Mega Combinatie, a coalition that included Bouterse's NDP. Bouterse's Presidency surprised many people not only for his role in the December Murders, but also because of his Dutch drug trafficking condemnation and peculiar governmental decisions, eg including appointing his son Dino Bouterse in the Counter-Terrorism unit in spite of his 2005 charges on drug and weapon's trafficking.²² Yet, amidst voices of dissent, Bouterse has supported particularly among historically disenfranchised groups, such as the Amerindian and Maroon populations, who interpret the construction of new roads, access to housing and electricity as signs of inclusion which no previous government has granted them. Notwithstanding the accusations towards Bouterse, the high level of corruption in politics and business, a high degree of bureaucracy and, as one interviewee put it, the fact that 'there has been no real change' referring to the fact that who was in power in 1980 is still in power today, the political stability throughout this period seems to have reduced the importance of political factors as migration determinants.

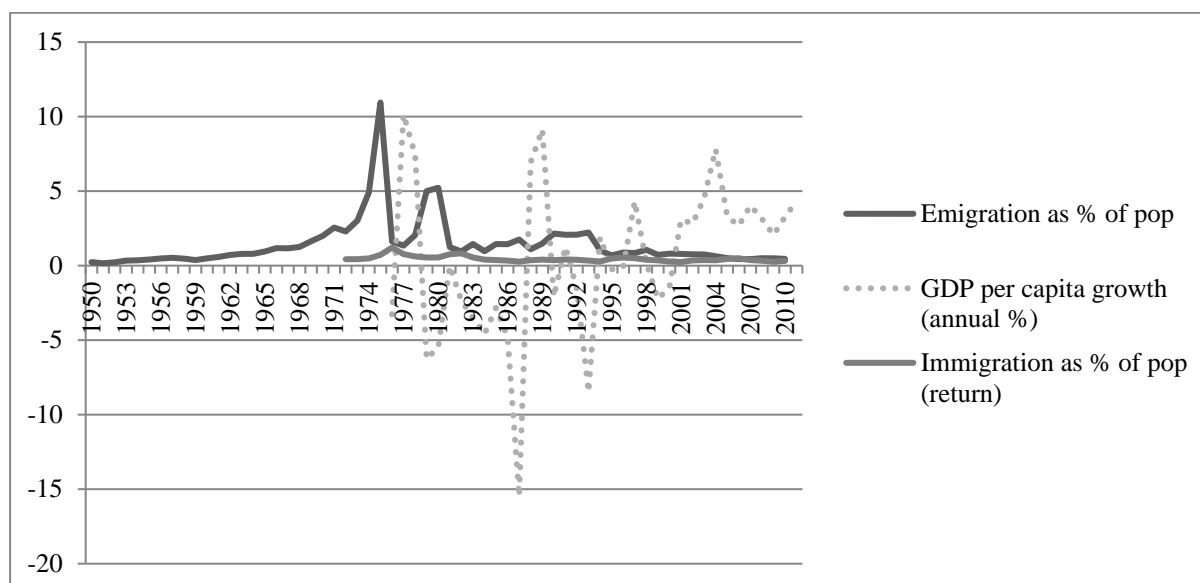
²² Ironically, in 2013 Bouterse's son was charged by the US for planning to build a Hezbollah base in Suriname, in addition to additional drug and arms trafficking.

8.2 Economic stabilisation but slow development

In 1999 the economy was in crisis once again, primarily due to the fluctuation of bauxite prices and the 1997 suspension of development aid. The economy remained centred on mining but gold production became more important than bauxite or oil, contributing an estimated 20 percent of GDP in 2000. Although overall living conditions improved in the 1990s, poverty still touched 50–70 percent of the population and income inequality increased (van Dijck 2001). But by this time, ethnic and income divides no longer run in parallel. The Maroon and Amerindian populations in the interior remained the poorest groups with lower standards of living (de Bruijne 2001; Taylor and Bers 2010), while the Indo- and Javanese-Surinamese continued to represent most of the rural population, including a large proportion of poor. However, the Asian groups have also become largely employed in government jobs and some Indo-Surinamese businessmen have gained great wealth (de Bruijne 2001). The middle class, mainly civil servants, struggled to retain their social position in the 1990s as their income decreased but the cost of imported goods increased (de Bruijne 2001). For such individuals, employment opportunities in the Netherlands motivated migration in the late 1990s, as indicated by a few interviewees.

Over the 2000s socio-economic conditions improved. From 2001 annual GDP per capita growth remained positive (Figure 10), education and health indicators improved with literacy rates at 89.6 percent, net primary school enrolment at 96 percent²³ and reduction of child mortality (Taylor and Bers 2010). Nearly all goods became available in Suriname, whether expensive Dutch and US products or cheap Chinese-made alternatives (van Niekerk 2005). Heavy reliance on imported goods raised criticism of visible signs of modern consumerism, while real economic and employment prospects remained scarce leading some young people to resort to 'hustling' (de Bruijne 2001). Studies suggests that poverty has been mitigated, in addition to remittances from the Netherlands, by the informal economy, informal mining (especially gold), and drug- and trafficking-related money (van Niekerk 2005). Illegal activities are estimated to comprise approximately 20 percent of Suriname's economy (Taylor and Bers 2010).

Figure 10 Long-term migration and GDP per capita growth rate, 1950–2010



Source: DEMIG C2C Database and World Development Indicators

²³ Taylor and Bers (2010) remind us that in the interior literacy rates can plummet as low as 36 percent, many indigenous and maroon children only reach grade 5 (64.5 percent) and schools in the interior lack qualified teachers, infrastructure and materials.

Today an average worker in a construction company earns about 1200–1500 SRD (US\$360–450) and would struggle to pay rent, meet basic expenses and purchase a car. Yet, as another interviewee who owns a small business indicated, in a two-earning household with an average salary the quality of life can be good. In spite of the lack of industrial development, young people from the lower and middle class shared positive thoughts about the fact that there are jobs for people, even for those not lucky enough to have received an education, and some shared enthusiastically their future plans to open a business in Suriname. Similarly, increasing numbers of returnees have made their way back to Suriname, attracted by business and employment opportunities, eg optical specialist, specialised shoe-making, developing counselling programmes for troubled youth. This is not to say that emigration for economic reasons is no longer occurring: for example, two daughters of an Indo-Surinamese elderly woman migrated to the Netherlands in the 2000s through family reunification because they were unable to meet basic expenses in Suriname, while a few individuals expressed their desire but inability to emigrate.

8.3 The effect of Dutch migration policies

In the 1990–2004 period, most policy changes introduced by the Dutch government regarded restrictive measures, when including all migration policies, ie border control, entry, integration and exit policies (de Haas, Natter and Vezzoli 2014 forthcoming). However, Dutch migration policies from the 1990s to the 2010s were a mixed bag of restrictive and non-restrictive changes. For family reunification, income requirements fluctuated, a one-year minimum residence requirement was introduced and civic and language requirements were tightened, although with little expected consequence for Dutch-speaking Surinamese. Policies targeting irregular migration included the 1995 regularisation of migrants working legally and the 2007 regularisation for failed asylum seekers; on the other hand policies led to the opening of deportation centres in 2003, the strengthening of police control in 2004, seashore border patrol in 2006 and return and reintegration programmes in 2008. Lastly, labour migration policies eased entry and residence requirements for graduating students and skilled workers.²⁴ The tightening of entry requirements for family reunification built upon already significant restrictive changes such as the 1993 income and 3-year residence requirement for family reunification and the 1994 Law on Prevention of Marriage of Convenience and contributed to a general perception that the Dutch border is closed. In many conversations with interviewees and in casual conversations people commented that migration rules are now very strict and it is difficult to migrate to the Netherlands. Some said that the only way is to marry a Dutch citizen, others gave examples of individuals who entered regularly and overstayed but eventually returned because it is difficult to stay. One interviewee indicated that you need money and a contact to make it in the Netherlands, while another added a third condition, education, as the only way to ensure a decent standard of life in the Netherlands. The obstacles to migrate regularly to the Netherlands were visibly part of public knowledge.

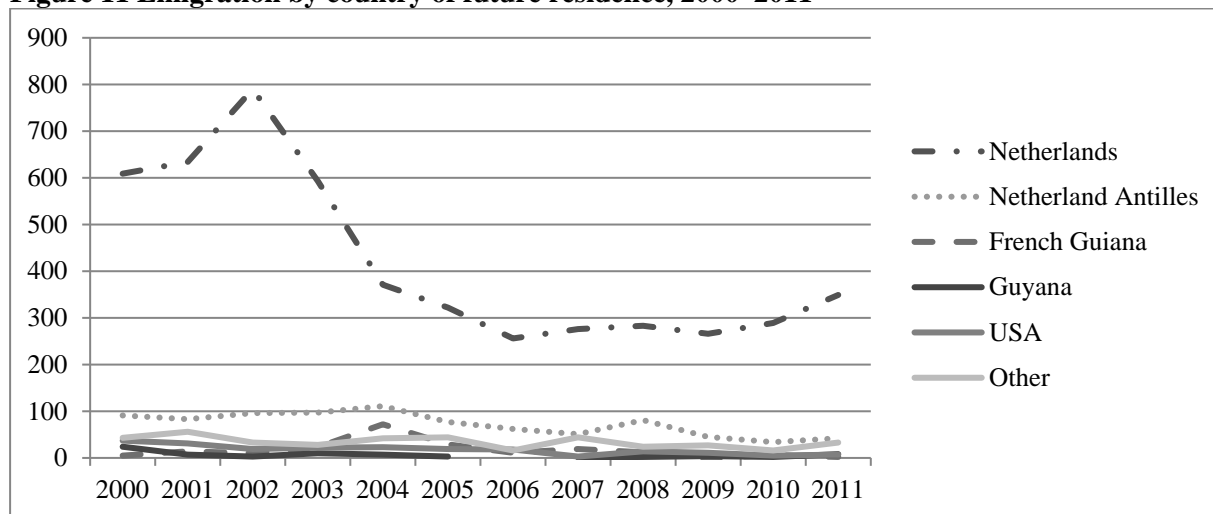
8.4 Migration motives and destinations and growing immigration

Surinamese statistics report a decrease of emigration flows to other destinations (Figure 11), suggesting that shifts in Dutch immigration policies may not fully explain decreased emigration. Two motives emerged from the interviews which may explain the gradual decline of emigration: the economic crisis in the Netherlands starting in 2008; and sustained exposure to the Dutch lifestyle through trips to the Netherlands. While still associated with a certain prestige, many individuals no longer saw the Netherlands as the ‘promised land’ amidst evidence of economic hardship, inclement weather and a

²⁴ Migration policy data originates from the DEMIG POLICY database.

stressful life. Young people, whether working class or among the university student population, did not see emigration as the only path to succeed.

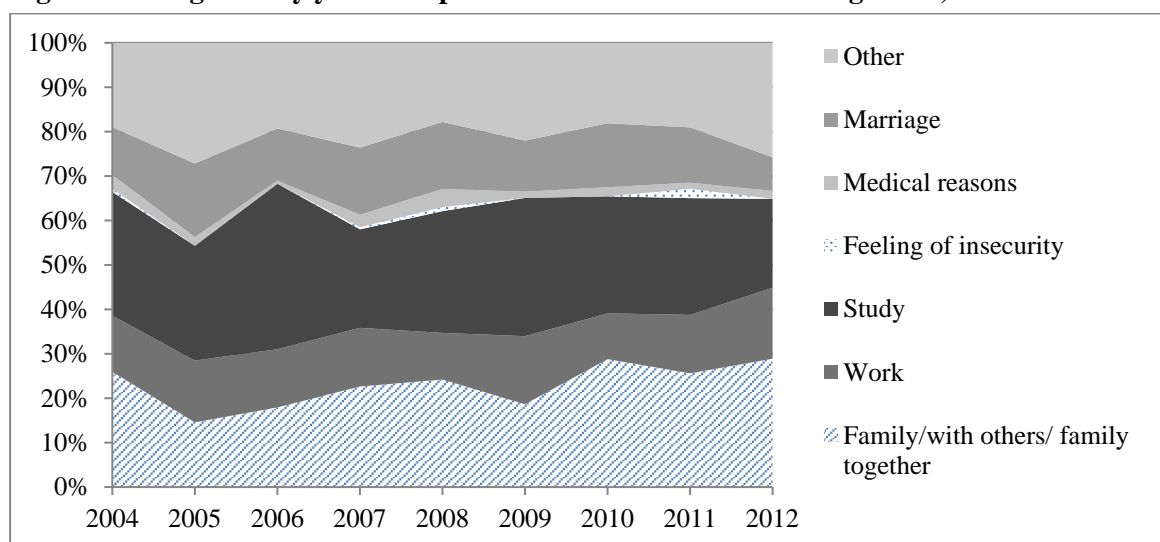
Figure 11 Emigration by country of future residence, 2000–2011²⁵



Source: Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, Centraal Bureau voor Burgerzaken (C.B.B), Demografische Data Suriname 1998–1999, 2000, 2003–2004, 2005, 2006–2007, 2008–2009, 2010–2011.

Suriname’s latest census shows that emigration motives changed over the 2004–2012 period (Figure 12). The importance of marriage has slightly decreased, while emigration for family migration or reunification gained some importance. Emigration for work reasons was the most stable, while emigration to study slightly decreased, supporting observations made by two faculty members at the University Anton de Kom statements that students are generally not eager to leave. One must note, however, that notwithstanding EU-resident tuition fees for which Surinamese qualify in Dutch universities, the financial guarantees required by Dutch universities cannot easily be met by middle- and low-class Surinamese families.

Figure 12 Emigrants by year of departure and main reason for emigration, 2004–2012²⁶



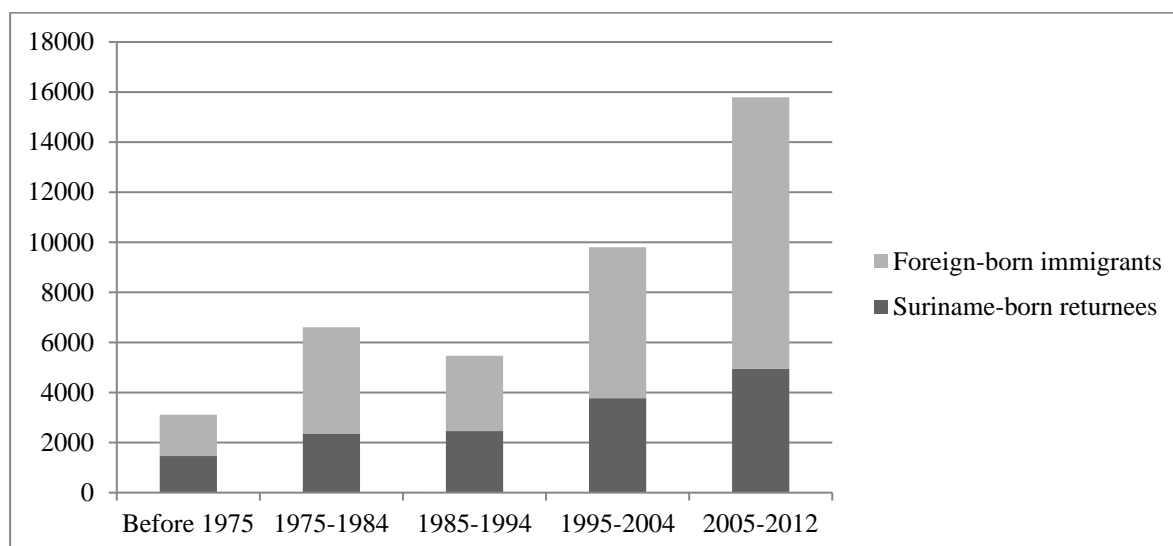
Source: Eight Census of Suriname, published September 2013

²⁵ The data reported by the Surinamese statistical office are much lower than the immigration figures reported by the Dutch and the US statistical offices (DEMIG C2C dataset). However, these data include immigration to regional destinations.

²⁶ Data of emigrant stock that may include emigrants who left before 2004 but did not know or did not answer what year they emigrated. These categories which are not disaggregated in Table 32.

When we match emigration motives with the country of destination (Figure A3 in Annex) the data shows continuous preference for migration to the Netherlands, primarily for family reunification, study and other unspecified reasons. Contrarily, the US are a destination for the pursuit of education, while French Guiana offers family connections and work opportunities,²⁷ similarly to Curaçao and other minor regional destinations.

Figure 13 Period of return of Surinamese-born population and period of immigration of foreign-born population, 10-year intervals



Source: Eight Census of Suriname, published September 2013

As emigration declined, immigration to Suriname increased. Figure 13 presents immigration of foreign-born immigrants as well as of Suriname-born returnees. While the return of Surinamese-born migrants was stable, immigration of foreign-born individuals gained strength since the mid-1990s. Census figures indicated that about 33,000 people of foreign nationality resided in Suriname. Among these, over 10,000 people had Dutch nationality, just over 8,000 were Guyanese, Brazilians accounted for about 5,000 individuals followed by just over 3,700 Chinese nationals. Other studies suggested that these figures grossly undercounted the foreign population as Brazilians were estimated to be 13,000, or 2.64 percent of the Surinamese population, when Brazilians who work in the interior are included (Jubithana-Fernand 2009). Interestingly, some young Surinamese interpreted the presence of foreign individuals who find work and investment opportunities in Suriname as signs that Suriname may, through hard work, offer them good opportunities in the future too.

9 Connecting the state, structural changes and long-term migration: a discussion

9.1 The effects of independence and a border regime

The immediate impact of independence could not be more evident as 10 percent of Suriname's population emigrated in 1975 alone. As we have seen, however, specific circumstances surrounded Surinamese independence with political and ethnic tensions generating great levels of anxiety; amidst these uncertainties, parts of the population felt that the only secure option was to obtain Dutch citizenship in the Netherlands. The delay in border closure provided a last window of migration

²⁷ This emerged from interviews with Surinamese in Cayenne.

opportunity for those dissatisfied with developments in independent Suriname and those who wanted to ensure access to education, employment and the lifestyle offered by the Netherlands.

These initial migration reactions created strong migrant communities and numerous Surinamese organisations that provided the financial and human capital to support further migration, but also enabled the transfer of remittances which ensured the subsistence of family members during recurrent economic crises from 1983 to the late 1990s. Today strong Suriname-Dutch connections exist at various levels, ie organisational, commercial, inter-personal, which are likely to continue influencing emigration in the medium-term period.

Whether the effects of independence and border regime will have repercussions in the longer term may depend on a number of factors such as continued Dutch interests in Suriname, the interests of the Surinamese diaspora and the Surinamese government's position towards the diaspora. The Surinamese government's efforts to build relations with neighbouring countries and regional organisations and create economic opportunities (eg with Brazil), combined with sustained political and economic stability may alter migration patterns, strengthening already observable returns of Surinamese and encouraging significant immigration of foreign nationals as well as opening new potential migration destinations.

9.2 Enduring post-colonial ties

The events surrounding independence and the delay in establishing a border regime strengthened post-colonial ties to such a level that even when Dutch immigration policies became restrictive, migration remained largely focused onto the Netherlands. When I asked interviewees why other destinations were not explored even as Dutch policies tightened, I received a puzzled look and realised that no consideration had been given to this option. Why not? Initially, post-colonial ties seemed to be embodied by language, strong cultural links and educational links, feelings of belonging, eg individuals powerfully stating 'I was born Dutch!', the fact that the Netherlands was 'for most Surinamese the most important window on the world' (Buddingh' 2001: 71) or, as an interviewee suggested, 'the promised land'. After independence, post-colonial ties were fostered through economic dependency and continuous Dutch interventions in Surinamese affairs, further strengthened by family and organisational ties and increasing influence of Dutch lifestyles through the import of Dutch foods, keeping the Surinamese perspective almost exclusively on the Netherlands. Hence, these ties have not just endured the passage of time, rather these have been nurtured since independence and have evolved over time.

While the continued role of the Netherlands in Surinamese life is of utmost importance, I suggest that four additional reasons may have reduced diversification to alternative destinations: (i) an important percentage of the population continued to migrate in spite of restrictive Dutch policies, renewing migrant communities; (ii) a level of 'saturation' of emigration may have taken place as most people who wanted to emigrate did so; (iii) remittances helped many families access goods that were not available in Suriname and face the worse aspects of the crises (Gowricharn 2004; Gowricharn and Schuster 2001; van Niekerk 2005), reducing the need to migrate and find alternative migration destinations; and (iv) information on the most likely alternative destination, the US, was scarce and negative, eg irregularity after many years, business owners without residence rights, the inability to visit Suriname, and the risk of being banned permanently from the US.

Ultimately, the strong post-colonial ties in Surinamese migration seem to be the outcome of language and cultural affinities, strengthened by institutional, networks and the import of Dutch lifestyle models on one hand and, on the other hand, the reduced willingness of Surinamese to take risks in exploring alternative destinations as Dutch migration policies became restrictive and, concurrently, the conditions in Suriname gradually improved. However, as the Surinamese government attempts to

expand diplomatic relations to Brazil, China and India, which not only have business interests but also historical diasporas, alternative destinations may emerge, weakening the effect of post-colonial ties.

9.3 Migration composition

While early emigration was overly represented by the European and Afro-Surinamese elites, the 1960s ushered in a gradual expansion of migration of all ethnic groups and social classes. The political, economic and citizenship changes introduced by independence caused further diversification, particularly by stimulating the migration of individuals who would have not migrated otherwise, ie low educated, rural and older individuals, as well as the departure of entire families after having liquidated most or all of their assets. Even individuals with few financial means were helped to migrate either by their friends and relatives abroad or by acquaintances in Suriname. Nevertheless, the literature and the interviews emphasised that the poorest individuals faced greater obstacles to migration: a combination of poverty, low education levels and lack of support of family members in the Netherlands prevented these individuals to emigrate in the past as much as today.

An important and understudied aspect of Surinamese migration is the prevalence of women in Surinamese emigration since the 1970s. Motives for the prevalence of female migration may be associated with social and cultural motives (Menke 1983; Ypeij), the selectivity of certain professions such as teaching and nursing (Jubithana-Fernand 2009) or to finalise a relationship or a divorce. Moreover, evidence from interviews also suggests that some Surinamese women prefer to live the Netherlands, where they have fewer cultural constraints and more rights than in Suriname. Further research is necessary to explore specifically the migration of Surinamese women.

9.4 Migration motives over 60 years

Over the past 60 years Surinamese migration has been influenced by five broad factors: education, economic factors, including employment opportunities in the Netherlands and socio-economic conditions in Suriname, political tensions in Suriname, family connections in the Netherlands and Dutch migration policies (Table A4 in Annex). Education emerged as a strong factor shaping migration in the pre-1972 period, its importance reduced radically in the period across independence, before reappearing in the 1980s and regaining importance most recently. Existing literature concurs on the importance of education for migration in the 1960s, but it also cautions that education became a standard justification based on early migrations of the elite who returned with a Dutch diploma (Bovenkerk 1981), but in fact many Surinamese who claimed an education motive in the 1960s did not actually do so (Menke 1983). Aware of the symbolic meaning of education, when it emerged as a migration reason among the interviewees, I attempted to understand migration trajectories once in the Netherlands to verify whether they actually pursued an education. In most cases this was confirmed and further validated by their careers.

Socio-economic conditions played an important role. In the Netherlands, migrants found employment opportunities throughout the 1960s onto the late 1970s as well as greater stability and security, including social benefits, which gained importance after independence and into the early 1980s. In the 1980s to early 1990s, employment and other social benefits in the Netherlands seemed less important, but employment re-emerged particularly in the late 1990s. In Suriname, socio-economic conditions were not strong migration drivers up until the 1970s, but they remained among the two major reasons for migration in the three following periods. Economic crises were linked to the development strategies, including SAPs, lack of economic diversification, fall of global bauxite prices and were frequently linked to development aid suspensions in 1982–7, 1990–1 and after 1997. Suriname's unstable economic conditions and the lack of employment opportunities remained migration drivers

until the early 2000s. Political and economic issues in Suriname often went hand in hand, but contrary to socio-economic factors, political factors were concentrated between 1973 and 1992. Political factors peaked during independence, the December Murders, the War of the Interior and the escalation of violence in 1988–1989. Once the political tensions subsided, economic hardship tended to grow, mixing the significance of these two important migration drivers.

The role of Dutch migration policies varied over time. They had no significance at all up to the early 1970s, but they became a migration-stimulant in the 1973–1980 period, when the time limits to obtain Dutch citizenship (1975) or to gain entry into the Netherlands (1980) stimulated migration. From 1980, however, migration policies become an intervening obstacle (Lee 1966): as continuous political and economic hardships unfolded in Suriname, which stimulated migration, migration policies prevented many people to emigrate. Migration was directed into family reunification policies with marriage (family formation) and irregular channels as ways for non-family to migrate, leading to strong categorical substitutions effects in this period, when the high demand for emigration was met with the gradual closing of migration policy channels. In the recent decade, the common knowledge on Dutch migration policies' restrictiveness combined with the worsening Dutch economy and promising Surinamese have reduced overall migration levels.

The importance of family connections in the Netherlands is undeniable and was already visible in the 1960s. It was really around and after independence, however, that family connections and migrant networks strongly emerged. Interviewees who migrated to the Netherlands as children recalled how their parents provided temporary housing for numerous family members and friends over the years. Family connections remained constantly important, although not always the most important factor, across the past sixty years. Nonetheless, family reunification never seemed to be the driving force behind most Surinamese emigration.

10 Conclusions

From education to the economic strategies and the politicisation of ethnic relations, the migration-relevant factors discussed were heavily influenced by the Surinamese state through its policies, political actions, diplomatic relations and geopolitical preferences resulting in political and socio-economic transformations in Suriname. Concurrently, the Dutch state also played a visible role over the years, most strongly through its migration policies, but also through its influence on economic models, ideological principles (eg 'good-governance') and its decisions on development aid. Today's lowered emigration has been associated with the increasingly restrictive Dutch immigration policies, although the economic downturn in the Netherlands and the political and economic stability in Suriname seem to play as much of a role in discouraging emigration.

Lastly, Surinamese migration could be easily discussed as a textbook example of the migration effect of post-colonial ties given the strength and endurance of the Suriname-Netherlands migration corridor. This paper shows that post-colonial ties have been nurtured since independence and the factors that have mattered over time have shifted: while language, culture, educational and institutional links were determinant in the early period, economic dependency on Dutch aid, family connections and influence of Dutch lifestyle have become more dominant. However, with the economic crisis in the Netherlands in the late 2000s, the improved conditions in Suriname and Suriname government's attempt to diversify the economy and strengthen regional ties, Suriname's 'window on the world' is expanding beyond the Netherlands. This may result in a gradual weakening of post-colonial ties as Surinamese migration destinations slowly diversify.

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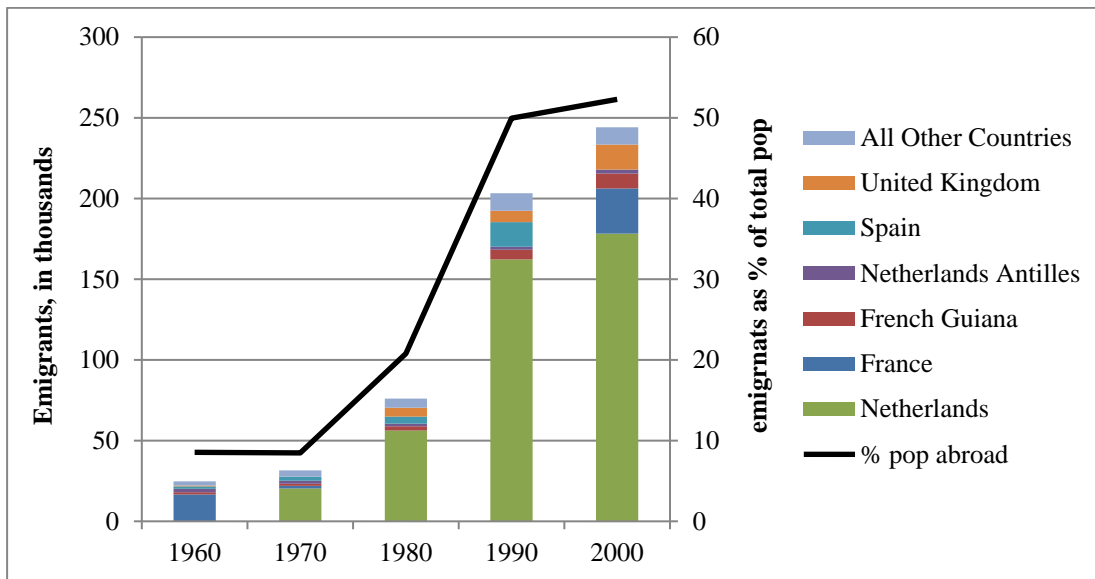
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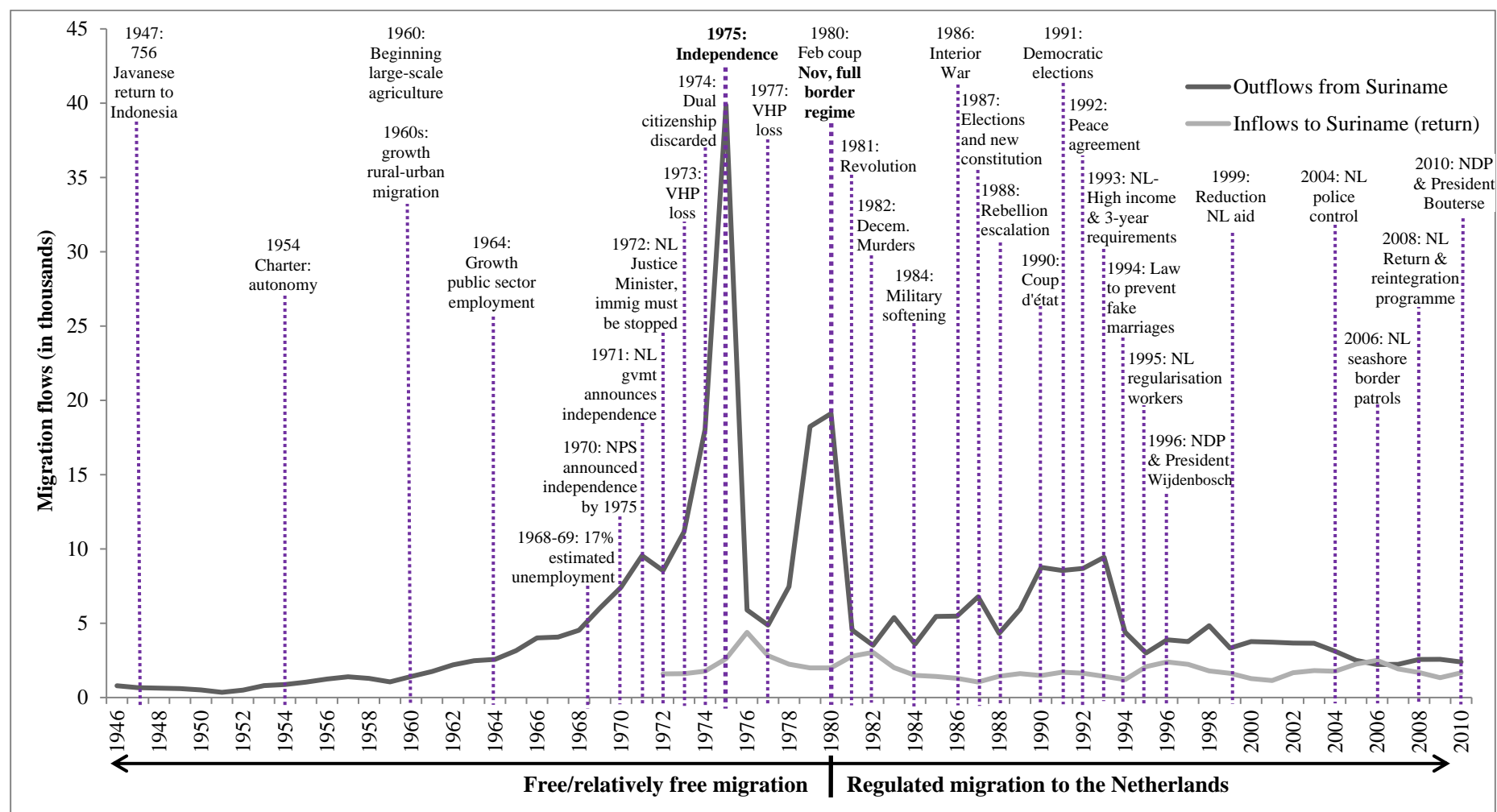
Annex

Figure A1 Suriname-born individuals residing abroad, by country of residence and Suriname's population size, 1960–2000



Source: World Bank Global Bilateral Migration Database; UN Population Division, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision, Total Population by major area, region and country, annually for 1950–2100

Figure A2 Migration to and from Suriname, 1946–2010



Source: DEMIG C2C

Table A1 Interviewees' demographic characteristics

Int. No.	Gender	Year of birth (approx)	Ethnic group	Place of birth	Internal migration in Suriname	Father's occupation	Mother's occupation
MIGRANTS							
1	F	1958	AF	Urban	No	Teacher	Teacher
5	M	1949	AF	Urban	No	unknown	unknown
13	M	1951	AF	Urban	No	Management in lumber industry	Home-maker, self-employed
14	F	1950	EI	Urban	No	unknown	unknown
18	F	1949	EI	Urban	No	Grocery store owner and keeper	Home-maker
22	F	1939	MI	Urban	No	Skilled artisan	Home-maker
23	M	1960	EI	Rural	No	Farmer	Home-maker
31	M	1962	EI	Rural	Rural-urban to study	Farmer and shop-keeper	Home-maker
32	M	1972	MA	Urban	No	Unknown	unknown
RETURNEES							
2	F	1964	AF	Urban	No	unknown	unknown
3	F	1945	JA	Urban	Family moved rural-urban when a toddler	unknown	unknown
4	M	1968	AF	Urban	No	Teacher	Teacher
6	M	1969	MI	Urban	No	Skilled artisan	Home-maker
7	F	1956	MI	Urban	Urban-rural	Bauxite industry	Home-maker
8	M	1945	EI	Urban	Family moved rural-urban when a toddler	Carpenter and shop-keeper	Home-maker, illiterate
9	F	1968	MI	Urban	No	Official mining company	Home-maker
11	F	1954	MI	Urban	Family moved urban-rural at the age of 6	Public servant and farmer	Home-maker, farmer
15	F	1956	AF	Urban	Rural	Admin clerk, bauxite company	Home-maker
16	M	1963	AF	Urban	No	Owner of transport company	Home-maker, self-employed
19	M	1954	EI	Rural	No	Unknown	Unknown
20	M	1955	EI	Rural	No	Mine workers in bauxite	Home-maker, farmer
21	F	1952	AM	Urban	No	Interior guide for big companies	Home-maker
NON-MIGRANTS							
10	M	1965	AF	Urban	No	Carpenter	Social worker
12	M	1968	EI	Urban	No	Shopkeeper	Home-maker
17	M	1939	MI	Rural	Rural-urban to study	Entrepreneur from China	Home-maker
24	F	1991	JA	Urban	No	Security guard	Home-maker, self-employed
25	M	1962	EI	Rural	No	Junior management at department store	Home-maker
26	F	1939	AF	Rural	No	Military, major sergeant	Passed away
27	M	1945	EI	Rural	No	Goldsmith, then low-level government employee	Disabled
28	F	1948	EI	Rural	No	Farmer	Home-maker and farmer
29	F	1940	EI	Rural	No	Farmer	Home-maker
30	M	1950	JA	Rural	Urban-rural	Unknown, low education	Home-maker

Legend

Interviewee Type (Inter Type): M=Migrant; R=Returnee; N=Non-migrant

Ethnic group: AF=Afro-Surinamese (Creole); EI=Indo-Surinamese; AM=Amerindian; JA=Javanese-Surinamese; MA=Maroon; MI= Mixed ethnicity

Table A2 Interviewees' migration characteristics

Int No	Travel (before emigr)	Emigr year/s	Age at emigr (approx)	EdLevel before departure	EdLevel Total	Country of destination	Year/s of return
MIGRANTS							
1	No	1961	3	n/a	University degree	NL	n/a
5	No	1969	20	Secondary	unknown	US	n/a
13	No	1969	18	Low level technical school	Technical profession	NL	Partial return
14	No	1963, 1986	12, 36	Primary school	Secondary	NL	1975, now partial return
18	No	1968, 1982	19, 33	Secondary school	Master's degree	NL	1980, partial return
22	No	1969, 2001	30	Junior secondary	Junior secondary	NL	1996, since 2001 partial return
23	No	1975	15	Primary school	University in the NL	NL	since 2005 partial return
31	No	1979, early 2000s	17, 38	Secondary	Technical profession	NL/ French Guiana	1994, expected 2014
32	No	2007	35	Junior secondary	Junior secondary	French Guiana	expected 2014
RETURNEES							
2	No	1969	5	Kindergarten	University degree	NL	2011
3	No	1964	19	Secondary	Secondary	NL	2008
4	No	1973 to Curacao, 1976 to NL	5 to Curacao, 8 to the NL	Kindergarten	Technical profession	NL	1998/9
6	No	1985	16	Low level technical school	Technical profession	NL	2012
7	No	1960 Guyana to Suriname (SU), 1984 to NL, 2009 to SU, 2013 to Guyana	5 to Suriname, 28 to Netherlands	2 years business school	Social worker/ counsellor	NL/ Guyana	2009 from NL, 2013 from Guyana
8		1961, 1965, 1973, and 1987	16, 20, 28 and 42	Secondary	Technical profession	NL	1964, 1970, 1976, 1988, 2010-2011
9	French Guiana	1986	18	University started	University degree	NL	2004
11	No; husband to NL	1992	38	Teaching credential	Teaching credential	US	2008
15	No	1978	22	Junior secondary	Middle school	NL, global, Guyana	2000
16	No	1974, 2008	11, 45	Junior secondary	Technical profession	NL, French Guiana	2001 to FG, 2004 and 2010 Suriname
19	No	1972	18	University	Master's degree	NL	1975
20	No	1975	18	Started secondary	Technical profession	NL	2007
21	No	1970, 1990	18, 38	Secondary	Technical profession	NL	1982, 2007
NON-MIGRANTS							
10	French Guiana	n/a	n/a	Primary school	n/a	n/a	n/a
12	No	n/a	n/a	Primary school	n/a	n/a	n/a

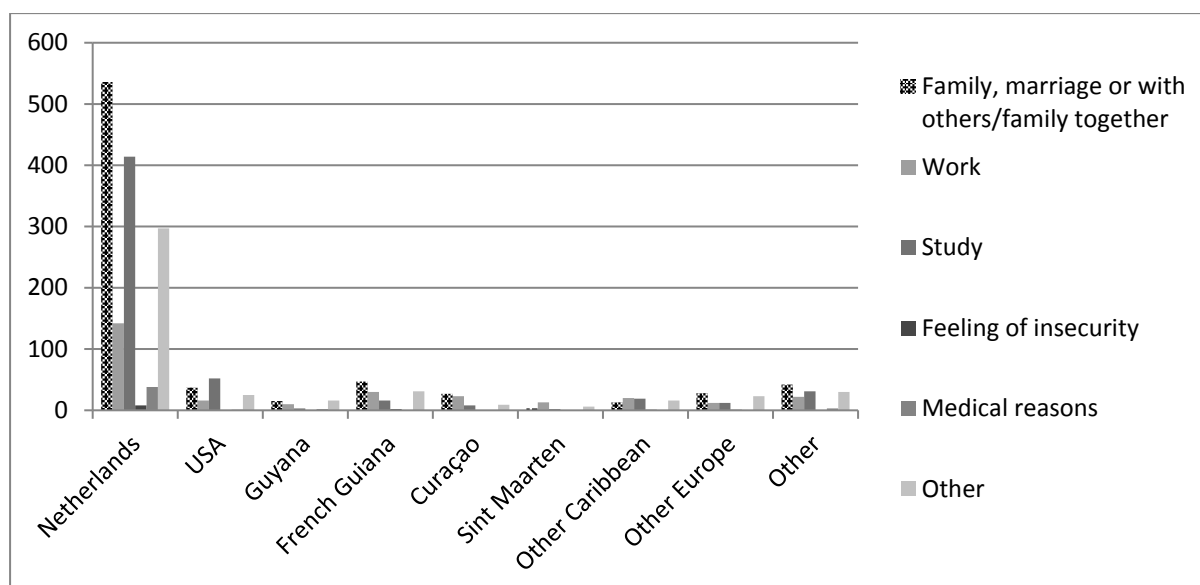
Int No	Travel (before emigr)	Emigr year/s	Age at emigr (approx)	EdLevel before departure	EdLevel Total	Country of destination	Year/s of return
17	Yes	n/a	n/a	Technical: English and Dutch corresp.	n/a	n/a	n/a
24	No	n/a	n/a	Secondary	n/a	n/a	n/a
25	Yes	n/a	n/a	Secondary	n/a	n/a	n/a
26	No	n/a	n/a	Junior secondary	n/a	n/a	n/a
27	No	n/a	n/a	Primary school	n/a	n/a	n/a
28	Yes, NL for 1 month	n/a	n/a	Almost none	n/a	n/a	n/a
29	No	n/a	n/a	Primary school, 3rd grade	n/a	n/a	n/a
30	No	n/a	n/a	Junior secondary	n/a	n/a	n/a

Table A3 Mean Yearly Migration per 1000 Inhabitants, by ethnic group, 1964–1970

	Immigration	Emigration	Net migration
Creole	5.2	17.9	-12.7
Hindustani	1.1	4.8	-3.7
Javanese	0.6	1.6	-1.0

Source: Data extracted from Tables 65-67 in Lamur 1973

Figure A3 Emigrants by land of emigration and main emigration reason, 2004–2012²⁸



Source: Eight Census of Suriname, published September 2013, Table 31

²⁸ Data of emigrant stock that may include emigrants who left before 2004 but did not know or did not answer what year they emigrated; these categories are not disaggregated in Table 31.

Table A4 Migration motives by historical period²⁹

Period	1950–1972	1973–1982	1983–1994	1995–2010s
First motive	Education: all levels, secondary, technical and academic	Political: first tied to independence and later to visible corruption and nepotism	Political: tied to military rule and threats initially and to the War of the Interior in the late 80s	Education: higher educational levels
Second motive	Socio-economic: Employment opportunities in the Netherlands	Socio-economic: economic concerns tied to independence and disappointment with developments in Suriname thereafter	Socio-economic: deteriorating economy, shortage of foodstuff and real economic hardship	Socio-economic: hardship primarily up to the early 2000s
Third motive	Socio-economic: hardship	Socio-economic: Security, employment opportunities and other social benefits in the Netherlands	Education: higher educational levels	Socio-economic: Employment opportunities and other social benefits in the Netherlands
Fourth motive	Negative personal relations in Suriname	Family and connections in the Netherlands	Family and connections in the Netherlands	Family and connections in the Netherlands
Role of Dutch migration policies	Not applicable in this period	Anticipation of introduction of migration policies stimulates migration, however other driving forces make migration desirable	Migration policies intervened to prevent migration, leading categorical migration substitution effects: marriages and irregularity	Migration policies are perceived as so strict that family connections no longer help and one needs also money and an education; reduction of categorical substitution. Improved conditions in Suriname decrease spatial substitution to alternative destinations

²⁹ The sources of data are primarily the interviews, which have been integrated with other information collected through conversations, observations and further supplemented with the literature. The prioritisation should not be interpreted very strictly and overlaps across factors exist. Moreover, as we know from the literature, each individual may have multiple migration motives operating at the same time and these may change over time. The colours of the text are simply meant to code similar factors.