

Labor migration, diverging livelihood paths and development challenges

Immigration in a historical and geographical perspective

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Curacao people

- Changing face of the composition of the population
- Demographic shifts: gender ratio and age
- Immigration and emigration as the two sides of migration
- Economic transformation
- Political and economic change in the region and its repercussions

Curaçao has experienced different waves of immigration.

- The influx of oil-workers for the refinery from the 1920s to the 1950s has determined the composition of the population
- The new waves started in the 1980s attracted by the emerging financial, tourist and service sectors and added to the diversity of the Curaçaoan people
- In 2016 alone, 5455 new immigrants were registered
The population nowadays totaled 160.000 according to the Central Bureau for Statistics while for the Civil Registry it is 175.000

➤ Caribbean Environment

- Caribbean islands and rimlands
- Moving from and to Caribbean countries: most consistent and long lasting

➤ Dutch Kingdom

- Kingdom Charter gives freedom of movement: migration ratio reflects the effect of the way out. But also the remigration process

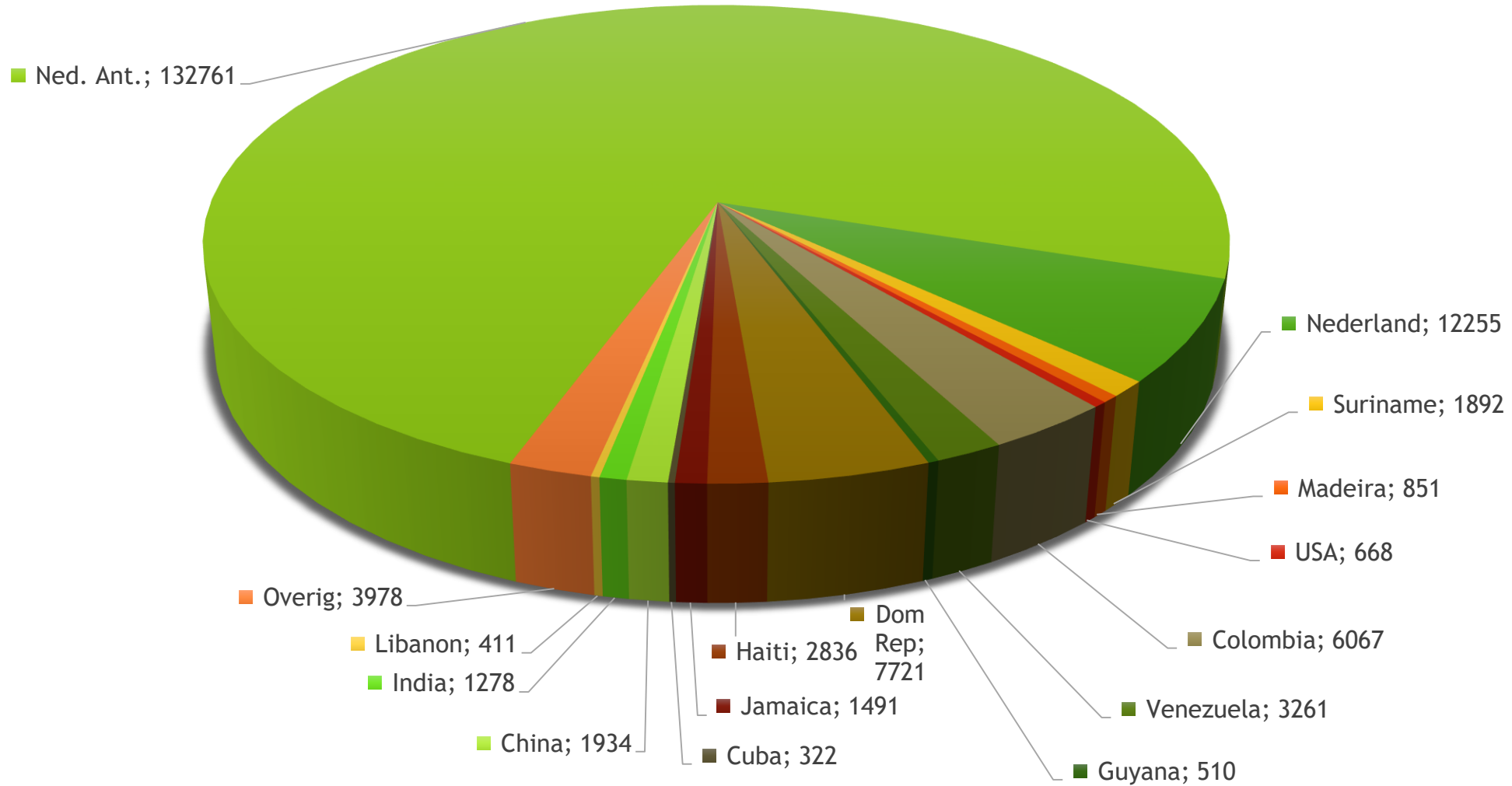
➤ Chinese Road

- Part of a bigger scheme of investing surplus capital and a political vision. In the 1990s Curaçao was still primarily a stepping stone to North America. Now the Chinese immigrant is an integral part of the local society.

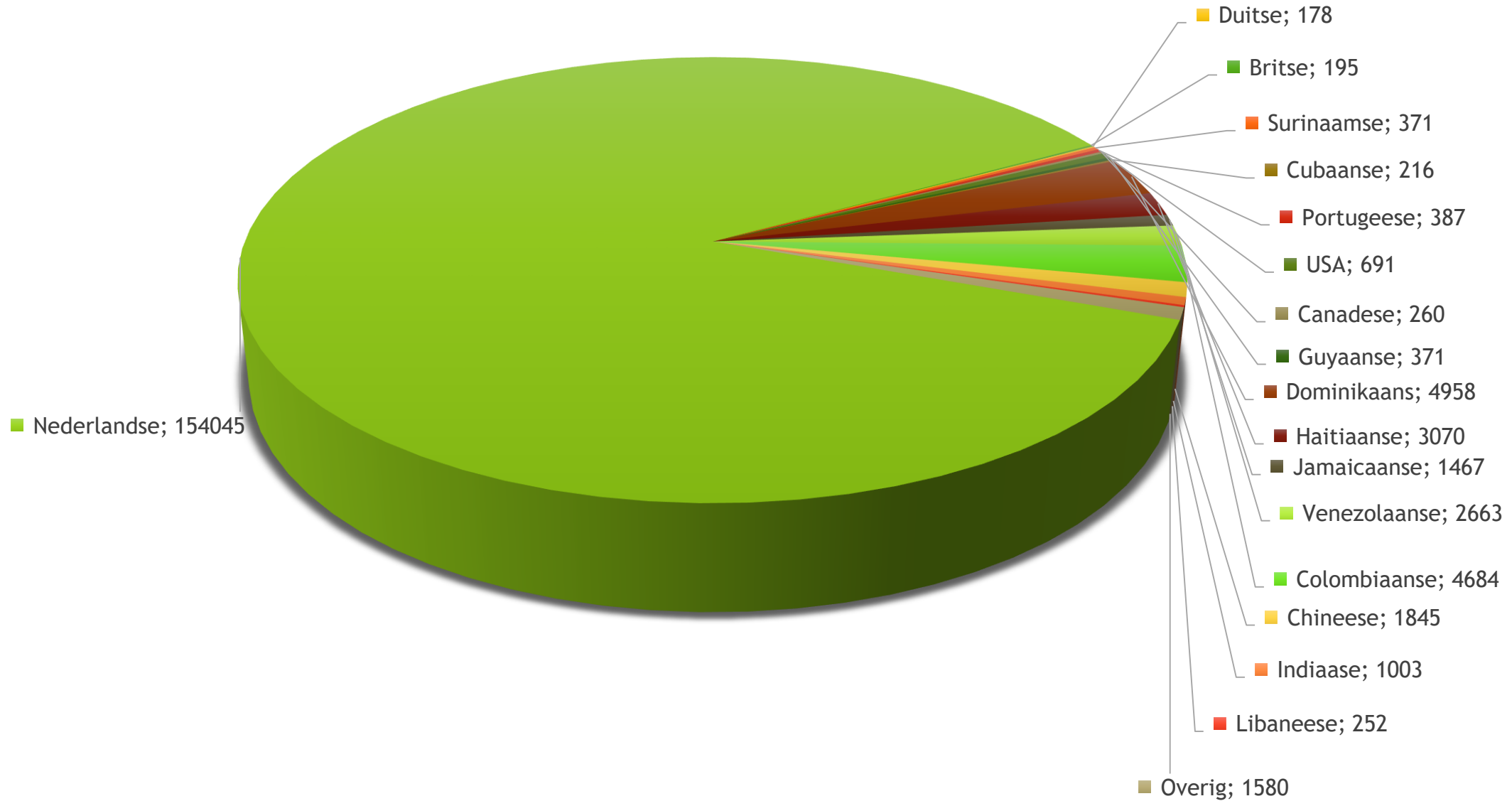
Population of Curaçao according to place of birth

Place of Birth	01-01-1999		01-01-2010		01-01-2017	
Neth. Antilles	149011	79,7%	130427	76,6%	132761	74,5%
Netherlands	12435	6,7%	10304	6,1%	12255	6,9%
Suriname	2581	1,4%	1941	1,1%	1892	1,1%
Madeira	1807	1,0%	1021	0,6%	851	0,5%
USA	1027	0,5%	555	0,3%	668	0,4%
Colombia	2197	1,2%	5653	3,3%	6067	3,4%
Venezuela	1971	1,1%	2279	1,3%	3261	1,8%
Guyana	282	0,2%	479	0,3%	510	0,3%
Dom Rep	6726	3,6%	6982	4,1%	7721	4,3%
Haiti	479	0,3%	2591	1,5%	2836	1,6%
Jamaica	502	0,3%	1195	0,7%	1491	0,8%
Cuba	176	0,1%	277	0,2%	322	0,2%
China	1116	0,6%	1436	0,8%	1934	1,1%
India	740	0,4%	923	0,5%	1278	0,7%
Lebanon	326	0,2%	451	0,3%	411	0,2%
Other	5520	3,0%	3693	2,2%	3978	2,2%
Total	186896		170207		178236	

According to Place of Birth on January 1st, 2017



According to nationality



Persons born in the Netherlands Antilles

Geboorteland	01-01-1999	01-01-2010	01-01-2017
Aruba	2334	1663	1690
Bonaire	2538	1913	1563
Curaçao	142860	125989	128813
Saba	223	108	85
St Eustatius	380	200	153
St Maarten	726	554	457
Totaal	149061	130427	132761

Labor immigrants from the region

- Low and semi skilled workers from poor family background:
 - Women: domestics, cleaners, elderly care, hairdressers beauty salon workers
 - Men: in building & construction, painters, gardeners
- Different educational levels and systems; Cultural distance
- Bridging communities, chain migration and networks
- Adapting to new working and living environments

Laborers in the actual situation

- Bonding: role of migrant organizations, churches and 'hotspots'
- New pathways and livelihoods: starting and intermediate jobs
- Many laws and procedures, but lack of control and enforcement
- Individualistic and opportunistic attitude of local population

Moving in the margin

- Legally contracted workers or free movers
- Undocumented, no legal stay and no work permit
- Trafficking in persons, abuse and exploitation
- Survival strategies
- Impact on recipient society
- Language barriers and citizenship

Hierarchy and marginality

- Upper echelons: not belonging to labor immigrants but affecting receiving society
- Middle echelons: highly trained professionals (Medical, ICT, Researchers, Consultants, Technicians), high and middle Managers.

Hierarchy and marginality

- In particular Dutch, Columbian and Venezuelan, but also Dominicans and recently Chinese. Apparently with a prevalence for hiring from their their own national groups. Problems mostly derives from status of migrants with not recognized papers and slow process of public administration.

Hierarchy and marginality

➤ Lower strata:

- Further division along ethnical/national lines and those working at the very margin (packers at supermarkets, very low-skilled workers in construction and garden business, cleaners, low-end entertainment, helps, undocumented persons). Often temporary work and stay. Money sending facilities considered essential.

Changing society and new relations

- In- and outflow: urgency and a way out
- Remigration, repeat migration and circular movement
- From social and cultural adaptability to economic sustainability. New entrepreneurs
- Competition and costs of immigration
- Politics at home, change in home country

Laborers in the past

- One big industry, well organized and immigrant workers on a contract
- Restrictive policy, but there was a big need and they were invited to come
- Absorption capacity was big enough to solve most labor problems for the moment. Challenge and opportunity.
- Competition on the local labor market, resentment and resistance

Elements for an migration policy

- Comprehensive and well elaborated (e)immigration policy
- Inclusive policy and guidance
- A well developed culture and educational system as instruments
- Registration, control and enforcement
- Monitoring costs and benefits of migration

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