Building bridges or bonds: the case of Ghanaian second generation migrants in Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam

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Abstract

Objectives. Scholars of immigrant integration generally agree that the success or failure of the integration of immigrants in the host society is determined by the course followed by the second-generation migrants. This research investigates if Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam bond Ghanaian second-generation migrants to their ethnic group and/or bridge them to the mainstream Dutch society. The study of the effect that social capital generated within Ghanaian churches has on the process of assimilation of Ghanaian second-generation migrants in Amsterdam is relevant because of the recent arrival and rapid increase in Ghanaian immigrants and Ghanaian Christian churches in Amsterdam.
Material and methods. This work is carried out through ethnographic research methodology of life history interviews, participant observation, informal conversation and in-depth semi-structured interviews.
Results and conclusions. The findings show that bonding social capital within some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam breeds intergenerational intra-marriage rather than intermarriage. Moreover, the research reveals that the religious-cultural identity formed by some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants contests the politico-legal understanding of citizenship bound to the nation-state and they call for citizenship of participation in everyday life which is marked by equality of rights. The notion of immigrant integration as defined in this research is contested by some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants that result from their experience of discrimination in the mainstream Dutch society. The enforcement of social control mechanisms on the choice of spouse in Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam is gendered, as the pressure weighs more on the female respondents than the male ones.

Keywords: second-generation migrants, immigrant churches, immigrant integration, Ghana, bridging and bonding social capital.

Introduction

Scholars of immigrant integration generally agree that the success or failure of immigrant integration in the host society is determined by the course followed by second-generation migrants (Aparicio, 2007; Bolzman, Fibbi and Vial, 2003; Crul and Vermeulen, 2003; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). Unsuccessful integration of second-generation migrants has negative impact on immigrants themselves as well as on the host society as a whole. This research investigates if Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam bond Ghanaian second-generation migrants to their ethnic group and/or bridge them to the mainstream Dutch society. The effect of Christian religion in the socio-cultural and socioeconomic life of first generation immigrants from Sub-Saharan Africa abound in the literature (Adogame, 2003; Tonah, 2007; Vernooij, 2004) but very little is known about their children. Most

studies on the religiosity of second-generation migrants in Europe and especially in the Netherlands have focused mainly on Muslim immigrant children (Diehl and Koenig 2009; Nielsen 1995; van Tubergen 2007). This ethnographic research is path breaking into the effect that Christian religion of Sub-Saharan African immigrants in Europe has on their second-generation migrants with the case of Ghanaians in Amsterdam.

The study of the effect that social capital generated within Ghanaian churches have on the process of assimilation of Ghanaian second-generation migrants in Amsterdam is relevant because of the recent arrival and rapid increase in Ghanaian immigrants and Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), 2015; Ter Haar, 1998; Van den Bos, 2013). In 1996 there were only 6859 Ghanaians in Amsterdam, but as at the beginning of 2015, Ghanaians formed the fifth largest ethnic minority group in Amsterdam with a total population of about 11,745 excluding those without residence permits (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2015). In 1996, there were only 1635 Ghanaian second migrants in Amsterdam, but the number has more than doubled to 4151 in 2014 (CBS, 2015).

The paper addresses the following research questions: Do Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam facilitate intermarriage or intra-marriage among Ghanaian second-generation migrants? In which ways do Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam impact the friendship pattern of Ghanaian second-generation migrants? This work is carried out through ethnographic research methodology of life history interviews, participant observation, informal conversation and in-depth semi-structured interviews. The paper begins by defining the research problem. It proceeds with the presentation of the data and methods. Consequently it discusses the findings, which are followed by conclusions and recommendations.

Data and Methods

The term second-generation is used in migration studies as an umbrella term to classify different categories of immigrant children (Aparicio, 2007) and there is no consensus as to who qualifies to be called second-generation (Aparicio, 2007; Favaro and Napoli, 2004; Gang and Zimmermann 2000; Timmerman and Crul, 2003). This paper conceptualises Ghanaian second-generation migrant as any child born in the Netherlands or who entered the Netherlands at/before the age of six (6) with at least one parent as Ghanaian and is now eighteen (18) years and above as at the time of the data collection (see: Crul, 2005:5). The process of ensuring that immigrants and autochthones live together in the host nation has been conceptualised as immigrant integration or assimilation by immigrant scholars (Park, 1930; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001). In this research assimilation and immigrant integration are used interchangeably to describe the process of enhancing socio-cultural interaction between immigrants, their children and autochthones.

The study adopts ethnographic research methodology of in-depth interviews, participant observation and informal interviews. The ethnographic study took place in Amsterdam from January 2014 till January 2015 and during this period, life history interviews were done with fifty Ghanaian second generation migrants and in depth semi-structured interviews were also conducted with nine Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam. Other sources of data were drawn from minutes of church meetings, constitution of the churches, church websites, videos and website of the Dutch statistical office.

Snowball and purposive sampling technique (Biernacki and Waldorf, 1981, p.141) were used to recruit Ghanaian second generation migrants in Amsterdam and Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam respectively. The interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The information were organised into themes and subthemes (Rossman and Rallis, 1998, p.171). The

interpretations were based on the state of the art and personal interpretations. The voluntary nature of the research participation and the possibility of withdrawing as a participant at any moment were clearly specified in the informed consent.

We present briefly the socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. Seventeen of the respondents were males and thirty-three were females and this ratio is not surprising because all the churches interviewed have about sixty per cent of their members as women. Thirty-nine of the Ghanaian second-generation migrants interviewed were born in Amsterdam and, interestingly, thirty-seven of the respondents were born in the Municipality of Amsterdam South East which hosts majority of Ghanaian immigrants and Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam (Gemeente Amsterdam, 2014).

All the Ghanaian churches interviewed in Amsterdam were established from the early 1990s till the beginning of the new millennium, which coincides with the period of mass entry of Ghanaian immigrants into the Netherlands. All the nine Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam that were interviewed are located in the Municipality of Amsterdam South East. Membership in the interviewed Ghanaian churches varies from 100 to 500. Five of the interviewed churches are Pentecostal/Charismatic, while four are mainstream Protestants.

Discussion

The data show that Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam serve as a social field that provides extra-familial primary socialisation for the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants in Amsterdam. Social field is defined here as "a set of multiple interlocking networks of social relationships through which ideas, practices, and resources are…exchanged, organised and transformed" (Levitt and Glick Schiller, 2004, p.1009). Bourdieu's concept of social capital guides the discussion of the empirical findings to investigate if Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam bond Ghanaian second-generation migrants to their ethnic group and/or bridge them to the Dutch society. Bourdieu (1985, p. 284) defines social capital as "the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance or recognition". Bridging social capital is defined here as the religious resources that enable members of immigrant churches to succeed in non-religious settings as it helps to improve their relationship in daily life (Bramadat, 2005). Bonding social capital is defined here as the religious resources that provide close relationships between members of the same religious group (Hopkins, 2011) with little effect on the mainstream host society. Intermarriage and friendship (Gordon, 1964; Portes and Rumbaut, 2001) are the two main indicators of immigrant integration analysed in this paper.

Intermarriage

Intermarriage is one of the most classical indicators of immigrant integration (Gordon, 1964; Lieberson and Waters, 1998). Intermarriage is defined here as the choice of spouse or partner outside one's own ethnic group. Intra-marriage is defined in this work as the choice of spouse or partner within one's own ethnic group. According to immigrant integration scholars (Bosswick and Heckman, 2006; Mullins, 1987), high rate of intermarriage within immigrant churches eventually reduces the sense of ethnic distinctiveness with time and has the tendency of fading ethnic boundaries and decreasing ethnic prejudices (Hartung, Vandezande, Phalet, & Swyngedouw, 2011). Studies (Kalmijn & van Tubergen, 2007; Lieberson and Waters, 1998) have shown that successive immigrant generations tend to marry people with different ethnic background compared to first

generation immigrants. A similar study on immigrant children of the four major immigrant groups in the Netherlands by Gijsberts (2004) concluded, however, that intra-marriage persists.

During the life history interviews, the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants were asked about the country of origin of their spouses or partners and the research probed further for the factors that influence the choice of spouse or partner. Seda, 34, a female Ghanaian second-generation migrant in Amsterdam, recounted that:

I was born in the Netherlands and I have been a member of Alleluia church since childhood. As a child I attended Sunday school and later moved to the youth group as a teenager. I got married to a man I worked with in church as youth leaders. We had to meet on several occasions during the week in church so we got to know each other better and that actually led to our coming together as husband and wife (interview on 19-10-2014).

Some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam provide primary form of socialisation to the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants from early childhood. They also serve as a marriage market for potential spouses, as they provide the social space for people to interact. The research shows that with time the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants develop interest in each other because of similar Christian values and worldview (Kalmijn, 1998, p.399; Lieberson & Waters, 1988). Seda engaged in church activities for building religious human capital but the church also provided her the opportunity to interact with potential marriage candidates who share similar objective social characteristics that influenced the choice of spouse (Kalmijn, 1998, p.402). The social networks developed by Seda and some Ghanaian second-generation migrants analysed in this research produce bonding social capital that leads to intra-marriage which according to classical assimilation theory (Gordon, 1964) does not favour marital assimilation into the Dutch society.

Hema, 25, a female Ghanaian second generation migrant, also recounted that:

I am going through marriage counselling with my boyfriend who is also a Ghanaian. I introduced my fiancée to the church. The church has pre-marriage course, which has to be fulfilled before the wedding could be celebrated. During this pre-marriage course the church counsels us on the Christian teachings about marriage and they are related with the Ghanaian traditional customary marriage. The church and its members highly recommend that we marry Ghanaians so that certain peculiarities could easily be understood. It is assumed that, if one of the spouses is not a Christian and not a Ghanaian, he or she might not be prepared to preserve the tradition and culture (interview on 02-10-2014).

Third parties or the social group of marriage candidates exert social force in the choice of spouse or partner (Kalmijn, 1998, p.400). The narration of Hema shows that her church as a social field with multifaceted interactions directs the choice of spouses of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. The analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants in this study perpetuate intra-marriage for fear of facing disapproval from their churches, which does not facilitate the process of immigrant integration into the host country. Bonding social capital generated within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam ensures the implementation of effective norms that constrain the search for potential marriage candidates of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. Some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam enforce intergenerational Christian identity through formal and informal sanctions meted out to the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants who do not participate in their church's marriage market. The head pastor of one of the interviewed Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam narrated that:

As a church we do not believe in boyfriend or girlfriend, as it is understood in the Dutch culture. Sex before marriage is not accepted in the church and it is punishable by suspension. We encourage the youth to find life partners within the Christendom.

The effectiveness of the social sanctions depends on the size of the immigrant churches and the quantity in a given geographical area (Blau, 1977; Stevens and Swicegood, 1987). The data show that all the interviewed Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam are located in the Municipality of Amsterdam Southeast and more than two-thirds of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants also live in this Municipality. Due to overrepresentation of the respondents in only one Municipality out of the six Municipalities in Amsterdam District, there is what we call *religious segregation*. Due to religious segregation, the interviewed Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam are able to effectively exert pressure on the choice of spouses or partners of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. The incidence of intermarriage is therefore low among the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants, which does not accelerate the pace of immigrant integration into the Dutch society.

Eno, female, 25 narrated her experience on intermarriage that:

Even though I am colour blind I have to be honest if I am serious about a relationship it is easier if the person is a Ghanaian and a Christian because we understand our culture and religious moral values. The non-Ghanaian does not understand my culture and why certain things are done. The church continuously encourages us the youth to be selective in the choice of a spouse and pray over it so that we could have one that share the Christian principles (interview on 10-10-2014).

The Netherlands is described as a secularised country and the fear of having a non-religious as a spouse deters Eno from considering non-Ghanaian as a potential partner or spouse. Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam provide the marriage market, which permits Eno to associate with like-minded people who share similar faith and moral values. Eno's religious behaviour does not permit her to sacrifice her religious preference for marital assimilation. Eno's recount demonstrates the importance of cultural resources embedded in religious practices that shape the construction of identity.

Sala's experience confirms the worries and anxieties of Eno in entering into a relationship with a person who is non-Ghanaian and non-Christian. Sala recounted that:

I prefer to marry a Christian and Ghanaian because with similar belief system and culture it is less difficult to understand each other. I once had a white Dutch guy as my boyfriend and I had difficulties attending church activities because he did not understand my religious attitude and he preferred that we ignored church activities, which were impossible for me. Attempts to explain things to him did not yield fruit so we broke up (female, 24, interview on 07-07-2014).

Sala and her fiancée could not manage to negotiate and compromise their religious and ethnic worldviews. Sala's personal and intimate interaction with a white Dutch should have created the opportunity to realise and appreciate the varieties among different groups. Intermarriage often connects the social networks of the man and woman, which normally extend beyond the immediate group to the out-group members. In so doing prejudice and stereotypes are weakened. Unfortunately, the differences in cultural resources between Sala and her boyfriend were not appreciated, which led to the break up in relationship. This study shows that diversity in religious perception and belief creates tension, which retards the pace of marital assimilation of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. Data from the fieldwork also show that pressure exerted on the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants by Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam is gendered. These churches enforce much pressure on the female respondents compared to the male respondents in the choice of spouse within the religious marriage market.

Contrary to the above life stories of intra-marriage, some of the respondents do intermarry. Interestingly, the underlying factor that sustains intermarriage as this research shows is similarity in religious belief rather than diversity in ethnic origin. Filipa recounted her engagement with a Surinamese guy that:

I have a fiancée and he is not a Ghanaian but Surinamese from my church. In my search for a life partner the bottom line was that the person should be of Christian background because it is important to share my life with someone with the same faith. I am of the conviction that similar religious background eliminates a lot of difficulties in marriage. My church directly and indirectly encourages us to marry persons with Christian background so that our children could be brought up in the Christian faith (female, interview on 18-09-2014).

Similar Christian belief is an important cultural resource that attracted Filipa to her partner and determines the sustenance of intermarriage. The similar religious beliefs of the two couples overrule their diverse ethnic background. The religious social field serves as the marriage market for potential spouses or partners to interact and form social network that eventually lead to marriage or partnership. Christian religious identity may serve as a bridge that draws together second-generation migrants from different ethnic groups within the Dutch society. As this study shows, religiosity does not always deter marital assimilation of Ghanaian second-generation migrants. The level of incidence seems to be however low, due to the predominance of Ghanaians within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam. Filipa reiterates the churches' role as third parties that engage in the choice of spouse of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants through social control mechanisms.

Joe, 27, male, also recounted his engagement with a Surinamese lady. He affirmed that the core of their relationship is their similar Christian faith, not their diverse ethnic background. Joe recounted that:

As a child, I attended Sunday school and at the age of 12 I joined the youth ministry. I had very strong relation with the other children. Apart from the Ghanaians, we had some few people from other ethnic minority groups …I am going through marriage counselling with my fiancée from the church who is Antillean. Church participation has provided me with the occasion to strengthen my relation with people from other cultures. It has also helped me to overcome certain prejudices I had against different cultures (interview on 15-11-2014).

As Joe noted in his story, institutionalised religious participation provided him the occasion to interact with diverse cultures. Consequently, Joe's taste and preference in the search for potential spouse or partner extended to non-Ghanaians, which resulted in his engagement with an Antillean second-generation migrant. The Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam therefore provide the marriage market for second-generation migrants from diverse immigrant groups who are united by their religious belief and values. The presence of non-Ghanaians in Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam has reduced prejudice in the life of Joe, which contributes positively to the building of the sense of peoplehood (Gordon, 1964) in the Dutch society.

Friendship

The study of Gijsbert (2004) on the four major Dutch ethnic minorities shows that more than half of second-generation migrants have contacts with people from their own immigrant group. Now the paper examines the impact the social capital generated within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam have on the friendship of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. This paper categorises friendship members into: white Dutch, Ghanaians and non-Ghanaian immigrants.

When the question was asked: how is the composition of your friends and what influences your choice of friends? Ebel, 19, male, narrated that:

All my friends are Ghanaians and they are also Christians either from my church or from other churches in Amsterdam. I used to have Dutch friends when I was in the primary school, but since I completed my primary education I lost contact with them. I do not have friends from other immigrant groups…My social life is centred around church related activities, as I attend church

every Sunday and I sometimes go for prayer meetings on Wednesday and on Saturday. I am in constant touch with Ghanaians as my church is predominantly Ghanaian, so it has affected my choice of friends inadvertently (interview on 20-02-2014).

One of the prerequisite that ensures the production of social capital according to Coleman (1990) is closure, which refers to the frequency with which the social actors in the social field communicate. As the social actors in the social group meet regularly, a closed system is likely to be created, which provides favourable environment of trust and trustworthiness among its members, allowing the formation of friendship. It is not surprising that Ebel's friends are of Ghanaian descent, due of his active church participation in a church that is frequented mainly by Ghanaians. Some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam therefore facilitate the building of bonding social capital through closed friendship. This research shows that institutionalised religiosity in some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam restrict the friendship composition of some of the analysed Ghanaian second generation migrants to Ghanaians rather than extending them to non-Ghanaians or white Dutch.

Ella, 29, female, also narrated that:

I was born in the Netherlands and I have been a member of my church since childhood. Most of my friends are Ghanaians and they are in my church or in other Ghanaian churches. I also have friends from other immigrant groups, but I do not have white Dutch as friends. The composition of my friends has been influenced by my membership in a Ghanaian church, which is situated in the black community of Amsterdam Southeast. I have friends both in church and at school, but I have built long lasting relationships with those friends I have in the church. They are childhood friends (interview on 10-10-2014).

Zeta, 25, female, also recounted that:

My parents were both Christians when I was born, so they introduced me to the church from infancy. My best friends are in the church and I have some Ghanaian friends who are not in the church as well as some few Dutch friends from school and other friends who are immigrants from other countries. My choice of friends is guided by several factors, but prominent among them are the negative experience of discrimination and social hardships that my parents and the church went through and continue to suffer in the Netherlands. I learnt from my parents and from the church that I should be serious in school and that I should learn hard so that I could have a bright future. Even though I am almost done with my first degree, I keep my ethnic identity and culture acquired from the church. Although I was born here, I do not consider myself as a Dutch…I am not white (interview on 06-04-2014).

The second prerequisite for the creation and maintenance of social capital is the stability of the social field (Coleman, 1990). From the data, all the Ghanaian churches interviewed were established over a decade ago and most of the second-generation migrants interviewed have stayed in the churches since infancy. Apart from the frequency of church participation that enables the establishment of social capital, the maintenance of social capital is made possible only through long lasting relationship in the church. Zeta, like most of the other respondents, is able to have her best friends in the church because of frequency of encounter with other second-generation migrants in the Ghanaian churches, as well as the trust that have been built over a period of time through membership in the church. However, Zeta and Ella's bonding friendship do not hinder them from building non-Ghanaian friendship bridges.

The research shows that there is intergenerational identity formation in some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam. Most of the churches in this research function as places of refuge, where Ghanaian second-generation migrants feel respected and accepted (Hirschman, 2004). The discrimination experienced in the mainstream Dutch society enhances the formation of Christian identity and consequently strengthens the bonding social capital within Ghanaian churches in

Amsterdam. Although she was born in Amsterdam and holds the Dutch citizenship, she is selective in her belongingness to the Dutch society, which influences her friendship choice. Zeta challenges the traditional legal-political notion of citizenship (Turner, 1990) and directs the argument towards the practice of citizenship in everyday life as proposed by feminist scholars (Lister, 2001; Tastsoglou & Dobrowolsky, 2006).

The head pastor of one of the Ghanaian churches interviewed in Amsterdam recounted that: *The church consciously organizes socio-cultural programmes in addition to the spiritual activities that bring the youth in the church together to interact and build interpersonal friendships. Through social media like Facebook and WhatsApp, the youth create platforms where they share ideas and plan outings that strengthen their sense of belongingness and oneness as members of the church (interview on 20-09-2014).*

Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam are actively involved in ensuring that the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants strengthen their friendship among members of the church, including the use of modern communication technologies. Interestingly, members of the Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam are mainly Ghanaians as such these initiatives of the churches are likely to generate bonding social capital rather than bridging social capital.

Conversely, the findings from the fieldwork show that some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants have few friends in their churches due to the closed nature of the Ghanaian churches and the gossip that circulate within the churches and even beyond into the broader society. Dina, 25, female, recounted that

As a child and a teenager, I had a lot of my friends in the church. I remember opening my home to friends from the church and I also went to their homes. Our friendship transcended church gatherings because we went out to cinemas and shopping malls, library and other recreational centres together. Currently, however, I have most of my friends outside the church because the church is a closed institution that has more or less the same persons circulating over a period of time whereas in school I meet different people in the various courses that I do. My church does not prohibit making friends from outside the church rather it encourages us to bring our new friends into the church. The church is my pseudo-family where I have my childhood friends and closest friends but most of my friends are from school (interview on 30-07-2014).

For Dina the church takes a new dimension which she refers to as *pseudo-family* and as a family, the members are closed and do not easily circulate. This study shows that Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam like the family have slow pace of circulation of members so some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants extend most of their friendship outside the closed setting of these churches.

Adwoa, 32, female, narrated that:

Definitely the church is like my second home, but I am cautious because of the gossip that informally perpetuate among members of the church. I have very few best friends in the church, because I am very selective in discussing my private issues in an environment where everybody knows everybody. I have witnessed how rumours have damaged the reputation and life of some people in the church, so I try to avoid being a victim. I have noticed that the youth in my church have formed small groups and there are those groups I could be very close with and there are those groups that I just meet on Sunday and those are Sunday friends (interview on 08-08-2014).

Gossip is a social control mechanism that ensures the enforcement of norms within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam as it "flourishes in close-knit, highly connected social networks (Merry, 1984, p.277)." The fear of formal and informal sanctions as a result of the spread of gossip deters Adwoa and some other respondents in this research from making a lot of friends in the

church. Gossip drives Adwoa to extend her friendship to people outside the closed setting of her church, and in so doing may enhance the process of assimilation into mainstream Dutch society.

Akyea, 29, female, recounted that:

A lot of people in Ghanaian churches have interest in people's life and I do feel that they are not with genuine interest and I do not like that. Rumours start and spread very quickly in the church. I do not really have friends in the church, even though some of the members do check up on me, but I do not meet them aside church activities. I am not afraid of the church, but I am afraid of the people in the church. My friends are outside the church (interview on 18-08-2014).

Akyea buttresses Adwoa's perplexity about gossip in the church and further explains that the rumours in the church are just for the personal consumption of those members of the church who are only interested in building their information bank. As Merry (1984) explains, in close connected social settings like Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam, gossip is a positive tool in ensuring that members live according to the norms in the social field. Gossip brings shame unto the object and it serves as a corrective and preventive mechanism that strengthens the norms in Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam. Some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants rather perceive gossip and rumours as driving force to move beyond their church in the search for friends.

Conclusion

This ethnographic research work investigated the effect that social capital generated within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam had on the process of integration of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants in Amsterdam. Friendship and intermarriage are the two main indicators of immigrant integration analysed in this research. The paper finds that Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam are important social field that have rippling effect in the friendship and marriage pattern of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. Due to the qualitative nature of this research, the authors do not seek to generalise the results to other settings and recommends for further investigation into the following conclusions.

The research concludes that the effective social control mechanisms that occur in the form of sanctions and gossip in some of the Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam facilitate the growth of both bridging and bonding forms of social capital among the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants. The findings show that the effective social control mechanisms within some of the Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam result from religious segregation The enforcement of social control mechanisms on the choice of spouse in the analysed Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam is, however, gendered, as the pressure weighs more on female rather than male respondents.

Through institutionalised religiosity, the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants blend the formation of Christian identity and Ghanaian cultural identity. The religious-cultural identity constructed within Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam enforces the building of bonding social capital within Ghanaian churches excluding non-Ghanaians and non-Christians from their choice of potential spouses. The findings show that bonding social capital within some Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam breeds intergenerational intra-marriage rather than intermarriage. Moreover, the research reveals that the religious-cultural identity formed by some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants contests the politico-legal understanding of citizenship bound to the nation-state, while they call for citizenship of participation in everyday life that is marked by equality of rights.

Some of the Ghanaian churches in Amsterdam retard the pace of immigrant integration into the Dutch society through their influence in the choice of friends and spouses of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants This practice does not enhance the process of entering into the

social clique (Gordon, 1964) of the autochthones in the mainstream Dutch society. However, the notion of immigrant integration as defined in this research is contested by some of the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants, which results from their experience of discrimination in the mainstream Dutch society. The research shows that through bonding social capital, the analysed Ghanaian second-generation migrants build leadership skills and self-esteem, which enhance upward mobility in the mainstream Dutch society.

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