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Nightlife in the Cabo Verdean diaspora: the case of Rotterdam City

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Nightlife in the Cabo Verdean Diaspora: The Case of Rotterdam City

Seeger Kersbergen

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Nightlife in the Cabo Verdean Diaspora: The Case of Rotterdam City

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Est vida ka é vida, ta trabalha na mar e ceu,
Pa larga pa Tipóia, m' tem vontade de bibe, vontade de vive.

This is no life, hard work on sea...
Let's go to Tipóia's bar, I'm in for a drink, I feel like having fun.

(Cabo Verde Show 1979, translation added)

In the song above, a group of Cabo Verdean sailors arrive at last in the city of Rotterdam, the Netherlands, after a long and tiresome trip at sea. One of the men tries to persuade the others to go to a bar known as *Tipóia's*, to let off some steam and drink the beer that is waiting for them there. Recorded in 1979 in Paris, France, by the group Cabo Verde Show, this song, entitled 'Barraca', is one of many traces, stories, and testimonies narrated by Cabo Verdean migrants about their lives in Europe's largest port city. This is no surprise - Rotterdam has deep historical connections with Cabo Verde. Building on an already-established relationship around maritime industries, migration from Cabo Verde accelerated from the 1950s. It was driven by political oppression in the country, which was still under Portuguese colonial rule, and by the economic opportunities available in the ports of Rotterdam.

Cabo Verde consists of ten islands off the coast of West Africa, nine of which are inhabited by approximately 550,000 residents. The islands, then uninhabited, were discovered in 1456 by Portuguese and Genovese navigators, and settlements were quickly established in several places. As transatlantic commerce grew, Cabo Verde became a transit port for enslaved people from the African continent to the Americas and Europe, as well as a supply point for transit ships, a business which was facilitated by the establishment of a plantation economy on some of the islands. With slavery coming to an end in Cabo Verde around the 1860s, many Cabo Verdeans migrated towards the United States to work in the whaling industry (Carling 2008: 20), which was the start of a tradition of migration that over time led many to move to

different countries including Argentina, Italy, Portugal, and Sweden. In fact, more Cabo Verdeans live in the diaspora than on the islands themselves (Meintel 2002: 27). The country remained a Portuguese colony until July 1, 1975, when it officially became independent after a long struggle led by the revolutionary leader Amílcar Cabral.

The Netherlands experienced large-scale labour migration after the Second World War. This consisted of several waves. Economic growth across post-war Europe was accompanied by large labour shortages, especially in lower-skilled segments such as the industrial sector, factories, and mining. These labour shortages were overcome by actively recruiting large flows of migrant labour. In the case of the Netherlands these workers came mainly from southern Europe (in particular Italy and Spain), and Turkey and Morocco. The government also formalised recruitment contracts and mediated in the recruitment of workers (Lucassen & Penninx 1995: 53). Then the 1973 oil crisis caused a global recession. Labour migration to the Netherlands slowed down, in part because of restrictive measures taken by the government. After this priority shift, migration through family reunification started (Jennissen 2011: 33-44). In addition, the Netherlands also received migrants from former colonies, particularly after their independence. This included from Indonesia (independent since 1945) and from Suriname (since 1975).

The case of Cabo Verdean migration is somewhat different from the migrations mentioned above. Although Cabo Verdean migration to the Netherlands also increased after the Second World War, this was not part of the broader national labour strategy but was instead achieved via other routes. A colony of Portugal, Cabo Verde became embroiled in a struggle for independence in the 1960s, resulting in people fleeing the country because of poverty, oppression or hunger, or to avoid military service. While other groups of migrants are spread over different provinces and cities in the Netherlands, Cabo Verdeans are mainly found in Rotterdam

because of their historical link with the maritime sector. This is partly because unlike, for example, Turkish and Moroccan workers, Cabo Verdeans were not actively recruited by governments or companies. Similar to other groups though, a pattern of chain migration towards the Netherlands developed over time.

One term that has stuck and which has become linked with the Cabo Verdean community is that of ‘silent migrants’. The term was originally coined by a local foundation for foreign workers (Slingeland 2012; Carling 2008) as a way of describing the inconspicuous and relatively small group of migrants. The term is also associated with the image of a hardworking, docile migrant community that causes few problems (de Freitas 2008; de Freitas 2016). Indeed, in the beginning of migration Cabo Verdean sailors stayed in boarding houses and quickly left for the sea again, not interfacing much with Dutch society (Slingeland 2012). This perception of silence, however, according to several key figures in the community, has also been taken or used to imply a certain subordination and docile mentality towards their living conditions, and a capacity to endure hardship without questioning or improving their marginal position in society. Thus it also carries certain “connotations of passivity and helplessness often rejected by the Dutch-Cape Verdeans themselves” (Carling 2008: 95).

Since the 1950s Rotterdam has developed into what migrants today call Cabo Verde’s tenth inhabited island, and is home to over 20,000 Cabo Verdeans across generations. The presence of Cabo Verdeans in the Netherlands is mostly unknown outside of Rotterdam, which is the only city with such a large community. Elsewhere in the country only small communities exist, usually of between 600 and 2500 Cabo Verdeans, in cities such as The Hague and Amsterdam, and in smaller port cities such as Zaanstad and Delfzijl. While at first Cabo Verdean men would generally arrive in Rotterdam looking for work on ships, over time work was also increasingly found ashore. This allowed for a steady growth of the community in the city, and different places in the city quickly became important spaces for the community to gather, both

in public (in streets, neighbourhoods and squares) and private (in restaurants, community centres, bars and nightclubs). Significantly, many of these spaces were visited at night; the bar in the song above is a notable example of such a common space. In such ways the night offered Rotterdam's Cabo Verdeans a way of bringing their social group together, to celebrate, connect and have fun.

This doctoral research took place in the context of the collaborative research project NITE (Night spaces: migration, culture and integration in Europe), led by the University of Leiden, which tackles the following question: *How are night spaces imagined, produced, experienced, and narrated by migrant communities in Europe?* The project involves five European universities considering the above question in eight European cities. NITE acknowledges night spaces as important sites of crisis and regeneration, memory and heritage, community solidarity and growth (NITE project website 2020). The night offers a crucial yet often overlooked space of reflection on daily life in migration. Night spaces hold the potential of becoming spaces of diasporic community, where a sense of belonging and identity can be constructed. The night is also a time and place in which culture is expressed in and through different forms: music, theatre, dance, and film, but also through casual encounters and conversations. Yet the night is not experienced equally by everyone. Ethnic minorities, for example, are often viewed with suspicion at night, looked upon either as troublemakers or potential criminals, often denied access to nighttime venues and surveilled in public spaces. For many women, the night is a dangerous domain too. They often need to be more vigilant at night, as they are more likely to be verbally and physically harassed, abused, or worse.

This thesis aims to contribute to an understanding of *how urban night spaces have been, and how they are currently produced, imagined, experienced, and narrated among the Cabo Verdean migrant community in Rotterdam, from the 1950s until the present day.* A common thread that runs through this work is the music written by Cabo Verdean artists who have lived

in Rotterdam since the 1950s, or who temporarily stayed there, but also those born and raised as second or third generation Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam. The Netherlands and Rotterdam are sung about or mentioned in at least eighty such songs by different artists, including contemporary artists. The selection of Cabo Verdean music in this thesis includes stories of occurrences in familiar city spaces for Cabo Verdean migrants, in which the daily and nightly life and rhythms of the city are described in meticulous detail, thus generating narratives of city life. As sociologist James Donalds puts it: “narratives about cities imagine events taking place in an urban topography. They conjure up the space of the city through the projection of these narrative images” (1999: 123). I argue that the city is both constructed and reconstructed through narratives found in music, as well as in other cultural expressions such as film, literature, and theatre. As such, the city is a space that is represented and imagined, and can be read through the lens of those narratives found in different media.

Cabo Verdean music is particularly firmly connected to the night. Nocturnal experiences are described and narrated in lyrics, and most performances, recordings, or music played at parties take place in the after-hours. Cultural texts not only shape Cabo Verdean life in the city, but they also facilitate the re-memorisation and re-experiencing of diasporic lives in current events and cultural productions. In this study I will address the connections of music and other cultural expressions to the city, in order to understand how urban spaces are represented and narrated, particularly those related to culture, work, and leisure, and how these representations can contribute to an understanding of day and night as important sites for belonging, identity and culture in the Cabo Verdean diaspora. I will address how the city historically was (and still is) navigated, used, and experienced, and how a collective Cabo Verdean memory of the city is constructed in which spaces of community are forged, thus emphasising important connections between place and diasporic memory. I emphasise that daytime and nighttime city life connec-

tions as cultural productions express how the cityscape is navigated, represented and experienced during both time-spaces, and in which working, going out, relaxing and sleeping all form part of the city's rhythms.

In her influential conceptualisation of time-space, geographer Doreen Massey argues that the idea of time-space requires thinking through time and space not as a dichotomy but as an interweaving, as “a configuration of social relations within which the specifically spatial may be conceived of as an inherently dynamic simultaneity” (1994: 3). Much in accordance with geographer Arjun Appadurai's (1996) concept of *-scapes*, the spatial should be thought of in terms of global and local interrelations, movements and flows, both political, economic, and cultural. Place, then, should be understood as a node within these (spatial) networks of social relations, but one which is ever-changing and contested by different (social) groups. Massey and Appadurai's ideas will be further discussed in the following chapter. In what has become known as the 24-hour city, and in relation to the idea of space-time's inherent dynamics, I study the continuations of diurnal and nocturnal time-spaces, even though these time-spaces display different movements, activities, and associations. Following political scientist Robert Williams (2008), I view night spaces as “socially mediated” (2008: 514), as they are embedded in social practices and, similar to Massey's views, constituted through the intersections of politics, culture, economy and history, and entangled in social struggles. Night spaces are mediated through forms of governmental control and yet shaped through daily practices by diverse social groups.

With regard to Cabo Verde's former status as a colony of Portugal and Cabo Verdeans' position as migrants in another country, (cultural) practices in the diaspora should also be considered in a 'postcolonial' context. In referring to the postcolonial in terms of culture, it is important to emphasise the asymmetries with regard to the expression, production, visibility and distribution of diasporic cultural practices and products vis-à-vis dominant cultures. In *The Postcolonial Exotic* (2002), postcolonial literature scholar Graham Huggan distinguishes the

concept of ‘postcolonialism’ from ‘postcoloniality’. On the one hand, postcolonialism refers to an anti-colonial intellectual practice which “reads and valorises the signs of social struggle in the faultlines of literary and cultural texts”. By this, Huggan in a broad sense refers to postcolonial studies as an intellectual field. Huggan’s definition of postcoloniality is however most instrumental. In his telling, postcoloniality refers to a “value-regulating mechanism” that produces value through “global market operations involving the exchange of cultural commodities and, particularly, culturally ‘othered’ goods” (Huggan 2001: 6). Huggan is largely concerned with the commodification of postcolonial studies and its conceptual fields as such. His idea of the “postcolonial exotic” provides insight into how postcolonial cultural productions are swallowed up into commercialised and commodified circuits. According to Huggan, a commodifiable difference turns non-Western cultures into “saleable exotic objects” through a process of fetishisation, as “cultural difference also has an aesthetic value, a value often measured explicitly or implicitly in terms of the exotic” (2001: 13). As such, he perceives the exotic not to be

An inherent *quality* to be found ‘in’ certain people, distinctive objects, or specific places; exoticism describes, rather, a particular mode of aesthetic *perception* — one which renders people, objects and places strange even as it domesticates them, and which effectively manufactures otherness even as it claims to surrender to its immanent mystery. (Huggan 2001: 13)

In this sense, it turns cultural difference into something culturally undifferentiated, and the exotic serves as a symbolic system within which cultural expressions are integrated. Cultural products from postcolonial cultures (Latin America, the Caribbean, and Africa) are in this regard ‘translated’ to a western metropolitan audience, where these products are less visible than those of other regions, or are understood and interpreted through an exoticised lens. This issue

of translation underscores the caution and rigour required when approaching the diversity of Cabo Verdean (diasporic) cultural products I engage with in this thesis.

This thesis is made up of four chapters. The first chapter seeks to establish a framework through which we can better understand the intricate connections of space and place to the night, to diaspora and to music practices, as well as proposing an understanding of how all these somewhat broad and diverse conceptualisations interrelate. The following three chapters each then build on this structure by focusing their attention on a particular place and/or activity.

Chapter two, entitled *Myth-Making In The Rotterdam Diaspora*, addresses the activities that take place in the city where a (conscious) effort is made to produce or maintain diasporic identities or narratives. It zooms in on a series of interrelated issues; the history and legacy of record label Morabeza Records, cultural activism in contemporary hip-hop, and the cultural-religious celebrations of São João Baptista ('Saint John the Baptist'). What these cultural manifestations all have in common is that each claims its space(s) in the city, and these spaces have since been embedded in memories of the city.

The third chapter is titled *The Routines Of Work Life In And Around The City*. It traces the routes that have been taken from Cabo Verde to Rotterdam and within Rotterdam itself, zooming in on the experiences of the city, especially since the start of migration. It traces important places related to the labour migrant experience such as boarding houses, employment agencies, but also the bars visited after a day spent working or looking for work. This process involves working with an archive of musical material in which these places are meticulously described through experiences and stories.

The final chapter, entitled *Dancing Down Memory Lane: (Re)Experiences Of Cabo Verdean Nightlife*, builds towards a discussion on music and experiences of nightlife in its more common sense, meaning dancing or clubbing, seen over a time period spanning the start of

migration to the city until now. It examines how certain night scenes are remembered, but also how elements of historic night life are reused, reworked, and re-experienced in contemporary nightlife events.

In order to take into consideration the multiple and changing experiences, representations and narrations of the night, this research pursues an ethnographic approach with a comparative component. The comparative component encompasses several elements. First of all, it compares different time periods. For what purposes has the night been used in different eras? This automatically entails a comparison between generations, between those born in Cabo Verde and who travelled to the Netherlands, and those born in the Netherlands (referred to as second, third or further generations).

The ethnographic approach is also textually comparative, as I engage with a diversity of materials. As part of the ethnographic research I conducted dozens of interviews with first-generation (cultural) pioneers, as well as with contemporary artists, producers and DJs. In addition, I researched within an archive of interviews realised through a project called *Storia de nhas Pais* ('The Story of my parents'), where children of first-generation migrants interviewed their parents or other relatives about their migration history. This archive has also been made available to the Stadsarchief Rotterdam ('City Archives of Rotterdam') in collaboration with the NITE project. Ethnographic observation involved visiting a variety of nighttime and cultural events and venues, including large-scale parties and concerts in city centre venues, small-scale music evenings in restaurants, cultural and educational events, and even simple city strolls, which often reveal the Cabo Verdean 'structures' of the city.

This study also draws heavily on an archive of Cabo Verdean music in which the Netherlands and Rotterdam are sung about. This archive was established in collaboration with two non-academic partners, Jorge Lizardo and Vera Rocha. Lizardo, a Rotterdam-based artist and

Cabo Verdean music connoisseur, has been a vital inspiration and partner in creating this archive, and I discussed, analysed and translated a large number of lyrics with him. Meanwhile a number of songs were translated by Rocha, a Lisbon-based translator working with the InterculturaCidade cultural centre.

Besides these materials many other types of sources are used, including (online) articles and interviews, newspaper clippings, literature and film produced by or about the Cabo Verdean community in Rotterdam, documentaries, theatre performances, and photography. In response to the diversity of source materials, this research approaches the analysis of migrant nocturnal spaces using mixed methods from cultural analysis, such as close reading of diverse materials, as well as ethnographic research, including both physical as well as online ethnography, the latter mainly as a consequence of measures intended to stop the spread of COVID-19.

On a practical note, I have chosen not to translate street names and other geographic names for readability. Street names usually contain the suffix *-weg* ('road/way'), *-straat* ('street') or *-singel* (a 'boulevard' next to a canal), and squares the suffix *-plein*. Some city districts, neighbourhoods, and of course (historical) ports contain the suffix *-haven* ('port') in the name, often indicative of the historical function of an area. With Rotterdam as the main port of Europe, there is no shortage of references to these. Additionally, in October 2013 the Republic of Cabo Verde changed its official English name in the UN (having previously been called the Republic of Cape Verde). In referring to the country I use 'Cabo Verde', but when citing secondary sources I maintain the original spelling present in these sources.

The study of night spaces — or 'night studies' — is an emerging field in the humanities and social sciences as well as natural sciences. This field includes the study of nighttime economies and the night-scenes associated with them, analysed both from a producer's and consumer's perspective and as part of the modern 24-hour economy. It includes historical studies

on nightlife in large cities and neighbourhoods, often based on historical reports written up by authorities. Studies of the night are profoundly interdisciplinary: “physical and social processes at night — circadian rhythms, capitalism, education, race, gender, security, mobility public lighting, and inequality — are entangled in complex and sometimes unexpected ways” (Kyba et al. 2020: 3). Migratory movements in the past seventy years have had enormous impacts on urban life in the city, yet scholars have regularly neglected to pay attention to how newcomers navigate and use cityscapes particularly beyond the sphere of work.

This research focusses on migrant night spaces as important spaces of belonging, culture and identity, combining analysis of cultural objects with ethnographic research. The night might serve as a backdrop, a shelter, a home, a place of worship or work, or simply as a space of leisure and relaxation. There is no singular meaning to ‘night’ nor is there a singular use, experience, or representation of the night, and as such it would be impossible to define the night unambiguously. In order to approach the study of migrant night spaces, in the following chapter I will first seek to create an understanding of the key concepts of space, memory, diaspora and the night.



Chapter 2: Approaches to space, diaspora and night

Space and Place

In his ground-breaking work *The Production of Space* (1974), French Marxist thinker Henri Lefebvre sought to problematise the notion of space as an undefined yet widely used concept, criticising previous approaches that view space as something pre-given to the world or something to be exclusively ‘read’. Instead, Lefebvre proposes that every society actively ‘produces’ and reproduces space, and that hegemony plays a role in shaping space. In his view, space is not a “passive locus of social relations” (Lefebvre 1991: 11 & 31). Instead, power-relations enable hegemonic powers such as states to determine how space is divided, classifying its various uses according to hegemonic models which control, police and homogenise space (Lefebvre 2009: 188).

According to Lefebvre, space is predominantly produced on three levels; spatial practice, representations of space and representational space (or, alternatively, perceived, conceived, and lived space). Spatial practice can be interpreted as everyday activity and routines, routes and networks. It links daily reality with urban reality and is telling of the way in which people perceive and use space on a daily basis, and how they move through the city. Representations of space are the “conceptualised space, the space of scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers, as of a certain type of artist with a scientific bent — all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived” (Lefebvre 1991: 38-39). Representations of space reveal certain ideologies and how plans are implemented in space, mostly top-down. To Lefebvre space is incorporated into, and aligned with, capitalist relations of production. It is space as planned. Lefebvre’s conceived space encompasses the idea of control: who controls space, who can produce it, and who determines its use, function, or value. Representational space, on the other hand, is “space as directly *lived* through its associated images and symbols, [...] the dominated — and

hence passively experienced — space which the imagination seeks to change and appropriate” (Lefebvre 1991: 38-39). Representational space thus speaks about the lived experience in relation to the symbolic meaning and use of space by its inhabitants, such as is observed in protests and art. Indeed, space is socially and politically produced, used, controlled, and managed, but also imagined and lived. This has the effect of producing spaces invested with symbolic meanings and experiences that come from different actors and directions. Space is therefore not a ‘finished’ product, but continuously contested in what it represents, and in its uses, functions, meanings and (symbolic) values.

Echoing Lefebvre, English geographer Doreen Massey understands the spatial “as an ever-shifting social geometry of power and signification” (1994: 3), emphasising the different experiences of and relations to space according to one’s position in society. Massey considers the importance of politics and class in spatial analysis and approaches the concept of space through a social-economic lens. Similar to geographer David Harvey’s (1996) views on the power of capitalism to organise space, Massey argues that the globalised economy organises itself and extends spatially, stretching out related social relations (1994 :22). Marking the inception of a period of academic attention towards issues of global mobilities, Massey calls for the multiplicity of space-time and the simultaneous incorporation of the local in the global and vice versa. Even though, as in Lefebvre’s work, the role of capitalist processes in the production of space is underscored, Massey also acknowledges the importance of cultural and social factors such as gender and ethnicity in how space and place are experienced. She emphasises the different degrees of mobility that particular social groups have: “some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don’t; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others; some are effectively imprisoned by it” (Massey 1994: 149). Distinguishing space from place, Massey argues that space is “constructed out of interrelations, as the simultaneous coexistence of social interrelations and interactions at all

spatial scales, from the most local level to the most global” (1994: 265). Place, on the other hand, should be understood as a meeting point, a point of convergence, “constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus” (Massey 1994: 154). Places and their identities are not so much rooted in history, but rather are established through routes and, as such, are “open and porous networks of social relations” (Massey 1994: 121). Place is viewed as open and ever-changing, dynamic rather than static.

If place is produced out of particular articulations of networks, identities of place are not formed through essentialisms. Instead, following Marxist cultural theorist Stuart Hall’s concept of cultural identity, they are “always and continuously being produced” (Massey 1994: 171). This distinction has implications when defining communities and pinning them to specific locations, identities, or cultures, as both individual and spatial identity are continuously negotiated and changing. Massey destabilises the notions of space and place by emphasising the multiplicity of identities contained within place and its shifting character, disconnecting ideas of fixity of community or group identity to place; “what is to be the dominant image of any place will be a matter of contestation and will change over time” (Massey 1994: 121). Even though we cannot deny the unstable dynamics of place-making and the openness and changing nature of spatial identities, I argue that humans and groups are also firmly attached to places by several processes and have a particular relation to place, which is emphasised in humanistic geographical approaches to space and place.

Humanistic geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (2001) argues that humans form relations with spaces through experience and emotional attachment. He distinguishes between the notions of space and place, arguing that space is abstract while place is concrete: “what begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to know it better and endow it with value. [...] If we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause” (Tuan 2001: 6).

Tuan considers space as an “area defined by a network of places”, defining space by people’s movement through it and through its relation with the “relative location of objects or places” (2001: 12). Place, then, forms itself as people embed values, experiences and knowledge into space, becoming attached to it. As such, it takes time to develop a sense of place, as it is made up of “experiences, mostly fleeting and undramatic, repeated day after day and over the span of years” (Tuan 2001: 183). Out of necessity space is ‘arranged’ serve life’s purposes, or as Tuan puts it, “so that it conforms with and caters to his [humans’] biological needs and social relations” (2001: 34), thus producing place. Tuan somewhat neglects to explain the differentiated experiences of place, especially in relation to gender, race and ability, and instead viewing the attachment of or to place as a biological fact rather than something relational (Tuan 2001: 4). He also focuses on the personal and emotional aspects of the attachment to place. Geographer Tim Cresswell points out that humanistic geographers such as Tuan have created concepts of space “that expressed an attitude to the world that emphasised subjectivity and experience rather than the cool, hard logic of spatial science” (Cresswell 2015: 35). Indeed, Tuan is more concerned with the concrete (sensorial) experience of place and how people attach themselves to place over time. Somewhat contrasting the conceptualisation of place as dynamic, ever-changing and situated within structures of power and networks, Tuan locates the concept of place in terms of an individual’s perspective and experience as well as a practice.

The shapes, meanings and values of place are constantly contested, negotiated and changed through natural, political, economic and social processes, as well as through time. Indeed, as Cresswell notes, “places are never complete, finished, or bounded but are always becoming — in process” (2015: 68). This relates to similar conceptions that consider place as something that is performed (Thrift 2006) or created through negotiation and interaction (Pred 1984). Yet, it is clear that humans and groups ‘attach’ themselves to places (at least

temporarily), stabilising the relation between place and person. These processes of place-making often require the work of memory, which in the context of the diaspora often involve notions of community, nationhood and homeland. These issues will be discussed in the following sections.

Space, place and memory

Humans attach themselves to space and place through various processes which often involve the work of memory. Writing in the 1950s, Philosopher Gaston Bachelard explored the relation between memory and space through the concept of home, arguing that, “all really inhabited space bears the essence of the notion of home” (Bachelard 1994: 5). Memory operates with images by generating maps of past, lived and dwelled spaces. It is, then, through the work of memory and imagination that we create a sense of integrity, belonging and homeliness. Bachelard proposes a methodology of topoanalysis, which he describes as “the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives”, where memories are part of a present in which we know ourselves not through time, but through “a sequence of fixations in the spaces of the being’s stability” (1994:8), thus prioritising space over time in the constitution of memory and subjectivity and identifying spaces with feelings such as enjoyment, solitude and desire (1994: 8). The familiarity with and experience of space is what constitutes memories as a spatial phenomenon.

The philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who is Bachelard’s contemporary, echoes this. He states that on the collective level “every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework” (Halbwachs 1980: 139). In this sense Halbwachs stabilises the relation between group and place, arguing that a collective understanding of place gives structure to a collective. Likewise, the contemporary American philosopher Edward S. Casey reiterates not the role of home, but the role of place in general for memory:

Only consider how often a memory is either of a place itself (e.g., of one's childhood home) or of an event or person *in* a place; and, conversely, how unusual it is to remember a placeless person or an event *not* stationed in some specific locale. To be placeless in one's remembering is not only to be disoriented; it is to be decidedly disadvantaged with regard to what a more complete mnemonic experience might deliver. Place serves to situate one's memorial life, to give it "a name and a local habitation." (Casey 2000: 183-184)

The ability of place to be situated in memory comes through its familiarity with a person, being "a container of experiences" (Casey 2000: 186). We become familiar with a place by inhabiting and appropriating it, becoming "sympathetic" to it, or connecting to its "emotionality" (Casey 2000: 192 & 200). Often, the memory of place is provoked by feelings of nostalgia, in which a "place's extraordinary memorability is found" (2000: 201), making it possible to 're-experience' a place. To situate oneself in the world, place serves an important role as memory is generated through and of it.

This premise is equally important when we consider a collective or community's memory of space. As urban planner Michael Hebbert argues, a collective constructs memories around spaces and uses specific spaces or objects in space. Collective memory, he suggests, can be constructed in space both from above — a position of authority and power — and from below — through daily practice:

A shared space — such as a street — can be a locus of collective memory in a double sense. It can express group identity from above, through architectural order, monuments and symbols, commemorative sites, street names, civic spaces, and historic conservation; and it can

express the accumulation of memories from below, through the physical and associative traces left by interweaving patterns of everyday life. (Hebbert 2005: 592)

So, collective memory practices in urban space take place on different levels as different groups invest different values, ideas and memories in place. They are thus able to shape collective memories and mobilise accordingly, appropriating parts of a city. It is both a matter of design, for example by placing a monument, or naming a square, as well as a matter of practice, by means of spaces lived in and through by ordinary people.

Sociologist Anouk Bélanger claims that, “how diverse social groups ‘remember’ the history of a city is crucial in the historical process and therefore in the making of identities in various social spaces” (2002: 72). Applying Massey’s idea of power-geometry, she states that “privileged groups [...] for example, dominant classes, national, racial, and ethnic groups, along with heterosexual males — are typically in a better position than others to make their representations of time and space ‘count’” (2002: 74). It is in this sense that Belanger argues, despite the various memories that run through city-spaces, that certain groups in society are able to claim a particular place and memory more decisively, which often happens through media practices and the work of transnational corporate promoters who sell place by selling particular memories as “*the* memory” (2002: 78-87). It is also in this sense that space can serve to create oppositions between ‘we’ and ‘they’, as spaces are appropriated which ‘belong’ to one and not to the other. However, according to Belanger,

There are always places and spaces in the city that are invested by groups in ways that escape, at least partially, the orchestration, values, and control of the dominant discourses [...]. In addition, the same places and spaces around the city can be invested with different

experiences and narratives simultaneously or at different times.

(Belanger 2002: 82)

Rather than resisting authority or power, space in the city is often claimed by minority groups in order to 'place' themselves within society and generate spaces of belonging, and by doing so creating narratives that run parallel to more institutionalised and hegemonic claims to space. This is particularly important in the context of migration, where people are often far removed from the places that are 'their own', and where place-making in places that are at first unfamiliar thus becomes crucial.

Diasporic spaces and flows

As can be understood from the section above, place and space are essential in the construction of a collectivity, of shared memory and identity. To produce or claim space and attach specific values, identities, and histories to place and space, the work of memory is essential. Migrant groups or diasporas are almost always a minority within their adopted national landscape, in which a (collective) memory is constructed within a context of other dominant (national) narratives. So how do migrant groups or populations navigate city spaces and construct a collective identity? In what ways are notions of nation and homeland important in the formation of a diasporic community? According to sociologist Avtar Brah, a diasporic community is created through a

Confluence of narratives as it is lived and relived, produced, reproduced and transformed through individual as well as collective memory and re-memory. It is within this confluence of narrativity that 'diasporic community' is differently imagined under different historical circumstances. By this I mean that the identity of the diasporic imagined community is far from fixed or pre-given. It is

constituted within the crucible of the materiality of everyday life; in the everyday stories we tell ourselves individually and collectively.

(Brah 1996: 183)

Brah not only connects the stories of migration to and from a certain place to the construction of a diasporic community's identity, he also emphasises the everyday life of the places in which migrating people settled and live. He particularly stresses the creation of narratives that occur through memory practices, so that a diasporic community can be imagined.

Experiences of migration are seldom similar, not just when considering issues of gender, race and class, but also due to varying economic and political situations. The diasporic experience is also different for first- and next-generation migrants, for those born abroad or in the diaspora, as it determines whether a diasporic memory has been experienced in 'real life', or through memory practices. In the diaspora, experiences of place are significant for community building and the diasporic experience, and they play an important part in producing and preserving the diasporic narratives that Brah mentions. Even though experiences of migration are multiple, it is in particular places that narratives thereof can come together in a "confluence of narratives", in which some form of togetherness and commonality is sought and produced. A diaspora is not a uniform group with a common story: even though a 'we' is constructed, according to Brah "all diasporas are differentiated, heterogeneous, contested spaces", in which social divisions are negotiated and power-relations determine the construction of the 'we' (1996: 184).

It is in place that a sense of "home" can be created. According to Brah, in a diaspora, home can be a "mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" but also "the lived experience of a locality", thus stressing the complexity of diasporic place-making, which involves both local and global connections and interrelations. However, according to Brah "it

bears repeating that the double, triple, or multi-placedness of ‘home’ in the imaginary of people in the diaspora does not mean that such groups do not feel anchored in the place of settlement” (Brah 1996: 192-194). Indeed, the idea of home can be quite distinct between members of a diaspora, yet they use, produce and need a space to generate a sense of home, whether this home is imagined through a place of origin, or in a place of arrival or settlement.

For Brah, the ‘imagination’ of a community refers to the “social and psychic geography of space that is experienced in terms of a neighbourhood or a home town”, as it is experienced through daily practices and encounters, and embedded in “networks of family, kin, friends, colleagues and various other ‘significant others’” (1996: 4). Yet Brah also acknowledges that group identity is imagined “in the sense that Benedict Anderson (1983) suggests” (1996: 117). Political scientist Benedict Anderson suggests that the nation is an “imagined political community”: “it is imagined because the members of even the smallest nations will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (2006: 5-6). Anderson suggests that the creation of an imagined community is possible because of the functioning of ‘print-capitalism’ as a mechanism of unification and dissemination of language and cultural production during the Industrial Revolution. In the context of the construction of the soon-to-be or recently independent Cabo Verdean nation, I argue that what sets apart the incentivisation of an imagined Cabo Verdean community is the importance of the circulation and distribution not of print media, but of oral and musical imaginations, which are often constructed in nocturnal undertakings.

What can be drawn from the merging of different narratives is that a diaspora is always based on travel, a multiplicity of places. In this sense, as sociologist Paul Gilroy explains, diasporic identity should not be approached through the idea of fixed “roots and rootedness”, but instead should be seen “as a process of movement and mediation that is more

appropriately approached via the homonym routes” (1993: 2&19), and which is produced through processes of “creolisation, metissage, mestizaje, and hybridity” (1993: 2), or, as sociologist Stuart Hall puts it, “diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference” (Hall 2014: 235). It is important to consider a diaspora not as a single community in place, but through space, taking into consideration global connections, networks and transnational relations (Georgiou 2010), without downplaying the importance of the local context within which diasporic identities develop and establish particular relationships to places in the city in both real and metaphorical ways. These connections are shaped and influenced by transnational or global flows of ideas, cultures and identities, but ultimately expressed and lived on a local level.

According to anthropologist Arjun Appadurai, global cultural flows are structured around five *-scapes*: ethnoscaples, mediascaples, technoscaples, financescaples and ideoscaples. The movement of people, media, technology, finance and ideas point towards flows of “cultural material” that move “across national boundaries” (Appadurai 1996: 46). According to Appadurai, this has consequences for the boundaries of group identity, as “groups are no longer tightly territorialized, spatially bounded, historically unselfconscious, or culturally homogenous” (1996: 48). Drawing on and expanding Anderson’s view of imagined community, Appadurai argues that scapes constitute “imagined worlds, that is, the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (1996: 33), evidencing a multiplicity of attachments. This is not to say, however, that identifications with nationality, territory, ethnicity, culture, space et cetera are suddenly not relevant anymore in the lives of diasporic groups. We need to consider local-global relations, such as those with the homeland, but we must also acknowledge the political and cultural imaginations that influence the ways in which a collective relates to new places of settlement and navigates diverse cultural worlds. In this context it is important to

emphasise that “histories through which localities emerge are eventually subject to the dynamics of the global” (Appadurai 1996: 18). This is to say: global cultural flows influence local place-making practices through exchanges and flows of images, ideas, technologies, capital, information, goods and people. A framework of -scapes can be useful in understanding both the cultural and political dynamics of place-making that are influenced by global cultural flows, where the production of locality takes places within a global context of cultural exchange. Place serves a double purpose. It is produced through and influenced by global flows, which emphasises the fluidity of what moves through place. If global cultural flows move through the world, it is in places that these flows enter, transform and sediment. It is also in and of place that specific memories, narratives and imaginations arise, particularly those of a community, making possible the fixation of collective identity in particular locations in the city.

To understand the particular function of the night in the above-mentioned processes, I would like to draw on the idea of ‘nightscape’ advanced by anthropologist Thomas Fouquet (2016), who in fact draws on Appadurai’s theory on -scapes. In this context, Fouquet delineates that nightscape can be places of circulation, appropriation and refraction of globalised cultural tendencies, in which the urban night constitutes a privileged site of observation of certain articulations between the local and the global (2016: 5-6). The idea of continuous movements of people suggests that networks become a more important part of daily life, especially considering the context of the diaspora. Spaces of the night, in this sense, have several purposes. They connect, firstly, the people that are dispersing, possibly having settled in yet another location, through which cultural exchanges are possible and encounters with ‘the other’ are inevitable. It also is, however, a space of re-encounter, between those that dispersed from the same (imagined) world, and through which an organisation of a cultural, ethnic, or political order is made possible, stabilising to some degree the idea of community.

In this thesis the night will be studied from multiple angles. To begin with I will zoom in on some of the more influential works used as a theoretical framework during this research and addressing topics of the night or night spaces.

Approaching the night

Studies of the night are still young. With his concept of the production of space mentioned before, Lefebvre was one of the first to distinguish the night as a specifically produced time-space. Daytime and nighttime spaces are not only accorded different geographical locations in the city, but also different functions, social values, roles and expectations, as well as different imaginations and experiences:

Space is divided up into designated (signified, specialised) areas and into areas that are prohibited (to one group or another). It is further subdivided into spaces for work and spaces for leisure and into daytime and night-time spaces. The body, sex, and pleasure are often accorded no existence, either mental or social, until after dark, when the prohibitions that obtain during the day, during ‘normal’ activity, are lifted. This secondary and derivative existence is bestowed on them, at night, in sections of the city. [...] In accordance with this division of urban space, a stark contrast occurs at dusk as the lights come on in the areas given over to “festivity”, whereas the “business” districts are left empty and dead. Then in a brightly illuminated night the day’s prohibitions give way to profitable pseudotransgressions.

(Lefebvre 1991: 319–20)

In the quote above, Lefebvre approaches day and night life through a division of city areas, in which different activities take place. As such, at particular times, in particular parts of the city,

spaces become available to particular groups for specific activities. This is not to say that the same spaces cannot have different functions between day and night, but this is simply not emphasised by Lefebvre. What is striking about the quote above is the direct link that is made with transgression, pleasure and sex, which only seem to take place in particular parts of the city. Night spaces are, in this sense, linked to areas of (pseudo)illegality and transgressions which are given no space during daytime. The choice of the term 'pseudo' transgressions implies that Lefebvre views these transgressions as still being embedded within a particular economic structure. Human activity differs at night, and the city seems to permit and profit from behaviours which would be treated as wrongdoings in daytime.

Historian Bryan D. Palmer (2000) also approaches the night from a conceptualisation of transgression, although associating it more with issues of marginality and resistance. The night is a time-space in which, according to Palmer, "marginality might best be both lived as an experience and socially constructed as a representation" and where night can be seen as a "time and place where power's constraints might be shed and powerlessness's aspirations articulated", thus adding a political dimension to the night (Palmer 2000: 6). However, Palmer also emphasises that there is no uniform experience of the night:

The dark cultures of the night are thus not unified in any categorical history of sameness. Rather, they are presented here as moments excluded from histories of the day, a counterpoint within the time, space, and place governed and regulated by the logic and commerce of economic rationality and the structures of political rule. Night can be understood as lowering curtains on these domains of dominance, introducing theatres of ambiguity and transgression that can lead towards enactments of liberation. But night has also been a locale

where estrangement and marginality found themselves a home.

(Palmer 2000: 17–18)

Although Palmer places the night within a framework of transgression, he indicates in the quote above that the night does not claim a specific role, nor does it imply a one-sided experience. On the one hand, the night is able to function as a space of rebellion and opposition towards the logics of power and capitalism, where cultures of the night are able to form. On the other hand, although transgression is often related to rebellion, Palmer also emphasises less romantic aspects in which the night offers a more straightforward “escape from the drudgeries of the day, the routines that define humanity in specific duties, obligations and tasks” (2000: 13) as well as serving as a space of “demoralisation, defeat and detachment” and even of estrangement (2000: 6-17). The night is indeed used, produced and experienced in different ways and provides a time-space distinct from daytime, whether that might be associated with marginality, resistance, pleasure, or otherwise.

Departing from Lefebvre’s theorisation on the production of nighttime spaces, political scientist Robert Williams argues that night spaces are socially mediated as they “do not exist prior to, or apart from, human practices and the attendant social relationships that seek to appropriate, even control, the darkness in its myriad human uses and meanings” (2008: 514). Even though hegemonic forms of authority shape and produce night spaces according to government or business strategies, implying the reinforcement of (capitalist) social orders, in line with Palmer’s theory of transgression, William argues that the night can provide a chance for marginal groups to generate spaces of resistance: “ideally communities might come together at night to re-establish human bonds in an attempt to controvert the domination of lived space by technocratic and commodified practices” (Williams 2008: 520), thus representing the night as both controlled from above, as well as holding an emancipatory potential.

Since the turn of the millennium, more critical studies on nighttime economies (NTE) have begun to emerge. According to urban ethnographer Dick Hobbs et al., urban governance has become more directed towards economic growth, where cities become “sites of consumption and leisure” (Hobbs et al. 2000: 702), promoting nighttime activities as part of a modern urban image. Leisure and pleasure go hand in hand to form the dominant environment as part of pragmatic commercial imperatives in modern cities’ nighttimes. This goes hand in hand with the repurposing of certain city districts such as city centres, in order to allow for these new economic impulses and the exploitation of new, commodified spaces while suppressing any alternative experiences of these spaces (Hobbs et al. 2000: 711-714). Indeed, as urban geographer Paul Chatterton and sociologist Robert Hollands argue, as corporate ownership of city-centre venues and spaces grew, this growth “squeezed out many alternative, subordinate spaces, meanings and practices” (2002: 96). Audiences with enough resources are targeted for nightlife activities while those with less purchasing power are excluded, “leaving the urban fabric at night increasingly socio-spatially divided with little interaction between night-life groupings in discrete geographical settings” (Chatterton and Hollands 2002: 112), and thus creating homogenised and uniform experiences and nighttime spaces (Chatterton and Hollands 2002; Hollands and Chatterton 2003). This is particularly important in the context of this research as it highlights how, within an environment of commodification and commercialisation, night spaces in the city become (in)accessible to particular groups such as migrants. This influences how these groups are (or are not) able to navigate the nighttime city and produce community nighttime spaces. On the other hand it is important to emphasise that alternative spaces also exist and arise to form part of a cultural infrastructure that answers the demands of audiences not considered mainstream, whether associated with issues such as income, ethnicity, age, sexuality or otherwise, and which can become an important source of

identity transformation (Gallan 2015). Indeed these alternative spaces are very much the centre of many migrant communities, as will become clear in this work.

Geographer Robert Shaw points out that the sole focus on nighttime economies and the emphasis of an economy based mainly on pleasure, leisure and intoxication falls short of studies on the ‘urban night’. Engaging with Deleuze and Guattari’s conceptualisation of assemblage, he instead proposes to approach the nighttime city as an “affective atmosphere” created through assemblage; the city is continuously produced and constructed “through practices and the movement of materials”, bringing together “people, objects, ideas, affects and discourses” (2014: 87-93). The idea of assemblage contributes to an understanding of how space and identity cohere and interfere at night. Take, for example, a night out; bodies collide, music flows and conversations are struck, creating a flow of impulses that work one’s imagination and generate a sense of belonging together with those encountered. Approaching the urban night as an assemblage helps us to see the connections between objects, spaces and people, contributing to an understanding of how space and identity cohere. The divisions between daytime and nighttime spaces are not always clear-cut, and could perhaps be seen more in terms of continuities: space in the same ‘geographical’ location changes when dark falls, both in terms of its function (often, but not always established through politics), and in the way it is experienced and narrated.

In the humanities, approaches towards the night have largely been centred on the history of the urban night in a handful of large cities such as London, Paris, New York and Berlin (Sandhu 2007; Walkowitz 2012; Hae 2012; Schlör 2016; Beaumont 2016). Theoretically diverse, these texts seek to apprehend the experiences and perceptions of the night by various actors throughout history, ranging from authorities to night wanderers. Cultural scientist Joachim Schlör explores these multiple experiences and perceptions of the night in the cities of Berlin, Paris and London from 1830 to 1930. He investigates how

different actors such as the police, sociologists and night-walkers, along with moral authorities such as “church people, city fathers, guardians of morality of various provenance” (2016: 19) have represented the night, and highlights which elements are still present in the imagination of the night today. According to Schlör, the most common images of the night are “on the one hand the nocturnal city as a celebration, as the place of pleasure and entertainment, and on the other the nocturnal city as the place of terror, of threatening danger” (2016: 14). It seems to be a common notion, both in popular cultural expressions and in academia, that the concealing nature of darkness can serve as both a liberation and a threat. Our contemporary imagination is ridden with images that have been created throughout time. These imaginations of the past are still relevant today, according to Schlör: “the history of night hands down stories that seem unfinished: arguments about security, morality and the accessibility of the cities still condition social discourse today” (2016: 327). Images of the underworld, of criminality and of entertainment all inform our experience of the night.

Both imagination and reality create images of the night which accompany the nighttime reveller. Schlör rightly points out that the experience of the city varies greatly between different groups in society, emphasising the concept of non-simultaneity, where “various groups within a society, within a city, for example, develop different conceptions, forms of perception and behaviour regarding (not only) the night, on the basis of their respective experiences and living conditions” (2016: 25). These questions of perception and experience, which are fundamentally rooted in issues of security and morality, are represented in larger issues of accessibility: “for whom — when, with what rights, and with what restrictions — is access to the nocturnal city open: to whom does the night belong? Who can dispose of it?” (Schlör 2016: 29.)

Because the night is seen as a time-space of transgression and disorder, the uncontrollable darkness of the city night also forms a threat to those who seek to have control

over security and morality. The night is more heavily policed and controlled, and this has the effect of determining the appropriate place for people to be during those times, while surveillance increases on the nighttime streets (Schlör 2016:41). Street lighting was an important instrument of control over city spaces by authorities (Schlör 2016: 69). When nocturnal activity increased in cities as a result of improvements in street lighting in the late seventeenth century (Schlör 2016; Beaumont 2016), authorities began several new discussions relating to their newfound power over previously uncontrolled spaces: on the closing times of venues to control night spaces, on the harmfulness and moral danger of night work and the continuous activities in the metropolis, as well as on the growing leisure and entertainment industry. The night was not only attacked by light to pursue order, but nighttime activities were illuminated and could be morally judged and observed.

In *Night Walking: A Nocturnal History of London* (2016), literary scholar Matthew Beaumont argues that certain groups are observed differently at night, revealing much about who ‘belongs’ to the city. In contrast to the rich, the poor are often seen as a threat at night, with authorities criminalising their presence on the street. Particularly women alone at night have historically been observed with suspicion: “they are either predators, in the form of prostitutes; or the predated, the potential victims of sexual assault. In both, cases, they are denied a right to the city at night” (Beaumont 2016: 3). Even though times have changed, our moral compass of the night has often not. Narratives of the night observed by authors such as Schlör and Beaumont capture the development of moral views on the metropolitan city, noting that nighttime activities do not only take place in hidden, marginal and estranged places, but are part of a day-to-day or day-to-night life, of common lifestyles and routines which are observed and judged by several actors. Experiences of the night reveal a multiplicity of stories, images and beliefs. Indeed, at night as one finds workers cleaning the desolate streets of the city’s business district, a few blocks away a pleasurescape arises in

which people mingle and collide, dance and get drunk. The night might at once be a space of transgression and subversion for the marginalised and oppressed, and at the same time a space anxiously governed and controlled by authorities. While the night, especially in its connection with the social conceptualisation of darkness, is often linked to malicious activity, danger and other ‘shady’ concepts, it also plays host to friends, communities and strangers coming together in places inaccessible or differently accessible during the day.

Music and the nighttime city

Much of this research focuses on life at night and in the after-hours, and particular attention is paid to cultural expressions that take place in nighttime spaces. This includes those spaces where music is played, danced to and sung, in various formats and ways, from traditional celebrations to modern parties. The next section therefore tries to understand the processes of belonging and community building that occur in music spaces, what the importance of music and culture at night is, and how place-making and music are connected.

Ethnomusicologist Christopher Small emphasises the different ways in which music is experienced, from orchestras in concert halls to someone walking down the street with their headphones on. By this he emphasises the meaning not only of music, or its content, but also of its performance. Music should be seen as something that is actively ‘done’ and ‘performed’ rather than passively listened to with meaning pre-assigned. Music involves interaction. These meaning-making processes and practices happen through what Small calls musicking: “to music is to take part, in any capacity, in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practising, by providing material for performance (what is called composing), or by dancing” (1998: 9). As such, musicking can be seen as a social ritual in which an identity is negotiated and performed: “those taking part in a musical performance are in effect saying — to themselves, to one another, and to anyone else who may be watching

or listening — *This is who we are*” (Small 1998: 134). Furthermore, Small emphasises that through musicking meaningful relationships are established, affirmed and celebrated in place, for example between people and a community. Indeed, as Geoff Stahl emphasises, relationships between music, space and place exist on “many scales and dimensions”, extending into “spaces of performance and listening, the spaces notes fill and the spaces between the notes, and the spaces associated with production, distribution and consumption of music” (Stahl 2022: n.pag).

In the context of the diaspora, sociologist Rolf Lidskog argues that music can have various functions: “it can allow people to understand themselves, form and maintain social groups, engage in emotional communication, and mobilise for political purposes, among other functions” (Lidskog 2016: 24). As will become clear in this study, many of these functions are at work simultaneously. In the diaspora, identity formation is often inherently political, linked to particular historical moments that involve ideological struggles. As Lidskog points out, “musical performances are places where marginalised cultures find public expression and contribute to the construction of a particular community”, thus seeking out both particular places and performances through which a collective identity can be constructed and where members can generate a “diasporic consciousness” (2016: 32&31). The choice of music is indeed an important component through which multiple identifications are possible. In the context of migration, ethnomusicologist John Baily and geographer Michael Collyer argue that particular music genres have a ritual role and are as such maintained over time (2006: 174). At the same time, newer generations often modify traditional practices. As such, music practices serve different goals and groups:

Music may be used to recreate the culture of the past, to remind you of the place from which you come, but migration can lead to cultural innovation and enrichment, with the creation of new forms which are

indicative or symptomatic of the issues facing the immigrant, and which help one in dealing with a new life in a place of settlement and in the articulation of new identities. This is especially typical of the second or third migrant generation, born and brought up in a new land. (Baily and Collyer 2006: 174)

Through music, then, migrants are able to reflect on their position in a host society, while also negotiating an identity that is linked to places abroad. At the same time the cultural identity of a group can be expressed through music either inwardly or outwards, to confirm and celebrate this identity towards their community, or to society more broadly (Baily and Collyer 2006: 175). In *Sound Tracks: Popular Music, Identity and Place* (2003), geographers John Connell and Chris Gibson emphasise the various global and local connections between place and music practices, approaching music spatially, as “linked to particular geographical sites, bound up in our everyday perceptions of place, and a part of movements of people, product and cultures across space” (2003:1). The authors approach the connection between music and place (and identity) through the idea of ‘fixity’ and ‘fluidity’, where music cultures, for example, can settle in certain places, creating a sense of place, while at the same time being part of (or resisting) a network of global cultural, economic, and technological flows (2003: 9-14). More locally speaking, however, the authors argue that music can also be thought of as “a mechanism by which the ‘cultural baggage’ of ‘home’ can be transported through time and space, and transplanted into a new environment, assisting in the maintenance of culture and identity” (Connell and Gibson 2003: 161–63).

Besides performance and other music practices, the narratives found in lyrics are a significant part of the meaning-making process of music practices. As such, they also play an important role in creating or imagining particular places. According to cultural sociologist Andy Bennett, music “plays an important part in the narrativisation of place, that is, in the

way in which people define their relationship to local, everyday surroundings” (Bennett 2004: 2) both through its practice and consumption. In this context it is important to consider that music “plays a significant part in the way that individuals author space, musical texts being creatively combined with local knowledges and sensibilities in ways that tell particular stories about the local, and impose collectively defined meanings and significance on space” (Bennett 2004: 3). As such, lyrics ‘translate’ the city into a narrative, and conflicting narratives coexist and compete, weaving together to form the fabric of a place.

Cabo Verdean scenes and music

Musical production and performance are deeply associated with the history of Rotterdam’s Cabo Verdean diaspora and will form a key focus in this thesis. Indeed in Rotterdam spaces associated with nighttime cultural production have had a particularly strong link to music practices, as venues for sharing and playing music as well as producing it. Moreover, the spaces I investigate in this study have been crucial for the construction of a common collective in which shared histories and experiences are conveyed, often transmitted through music. Since the start of migration to Rotterdam, Cabo Verdeans have organised themselves musically, particularly in the night. Among other things, Rotterdam is where the first Cabo Verdean music label, Morabeza Records, was founded, whose connections with the city’s community will be covered in depth in the coming chapters. An extensive night scene also emerged, with bars, cafés and nightclubs frequented by Cabo Verdean workers, sailors and migrants. Up until today nightlife remains an integral element within the Cabo Verdean community. Therefore in the next section I will examine the literature about Cabo Verdean music scenes, focusing on what has been written about music, identity and performance, and on the various musical genres that play a part in Rotterdam nightlife.

The importance of music and performance for processes of identity formation and maintenance is emphasised by several authors (Carling and Batalha 2008; Braz Dias 2008). Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973), leader of the independence movement of Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau, placed great emphasis on the value of culture, and particularly music, in the independence struggle against Portugal. Even after independence, popular music was still an important way “of disseminating the competing imaginations and narratives of both postcolonial nations” (Cidra 2018: 434). Indeed, as social anthropologist Juliana Braz Dias emphasises, “music has allowed the Cape Verdeans to contradict, reaffirm or simply complement the official history of the country — including the history of its multiple emigration streams” (2008: 174). At the same time, music is “an essential tool in the formation of the idea (and feeling) of what it means to be Cape Verdean, and aids in the adaptation of Cape Verdeans to foreign lands, as well as in their re-adaptation when they return to the homeland” (Braz Dias 2008: 174), thus becoming an important instrument that helps negotiate the identity of migrants, both pre- and post-independence. In the context of the Portuguese Cabo Verdean diaspora, anthropologist Rui Cidra argues that

Musical performance, along with the professional milieu of musicians, plays a significant role in the social gatherings of musicians, friends and fellow Cape Verdeans in homes, cultural associations and other public spaces, such as cafés and restaurants, of the Cape Verdean diaspora in Portugal. Musical practice in these performative contexts results from a relationship established with music and dance that organises social life and leisure activities. Music, poetry and dance become special links with the country of origin as significant ways of ensuring survival and emotional and intellectual ‘well-being’ within a migrant context. (Cidra 2008a: 201)

It is important to notice that in the spaces where music performances take place, important processes occur of “identification and memory configuration” (Cidra 2008a: 190). These processes materialise not only in specially designated music venues, but in all places that can be transformed into a performance space, whether that might be a sports canteen or a nightclub. What will become clear in the coming chapters is that most Cabo Verdean spaces are linked in some way to music, which has become one of the main instruments for constructing a sense of belonging and community. There are differences in the way the first generation and succeeding generations use music or have access to particular cultural symbols. Indeed, while both older generations and youth enjoy “multiple forms” (Sieber 2005: 146) of music, whether (Cabo Verdean) hip-hop or more traditional genres, geographer Jørgen Carling asserts in the Dutch-Cabo Verdean context that

Dutch-Cape Verdean youth who wish to assert their Cape Verdean identity do not have easy access to ‘Cape Verdean culture’ as a system of values, beliefs and practices. Many turn to more accessible cultural systems with elements of ‘colour’ (as opposed to Dutch whiteness) and ‘resistance’. These are as diverse as capoeira, reggae, hip-hop and gangsta rap. (Carling 2008: 92)

Even though cultural forms such as the ones mentioned above are more accessible to later generations, and are indeed actively engaged with, many still also engage with music styles which might be considered more traditional, as well as with more modern ‘Cabo Verdean’ genres. It should also be emphasised that Cabo Verdean youths are also still able to engage with Cabo Verdean culture, albeit in re-worked forms, through more accessible cultural forms such as hip-hop. In this study, different forms of music and entertainment will be discussed, emphasising various different forms of contestation and negotiation of diasporic identity, both contemporary and traditional, and through first and later generations.

Cabo Verde is mostly known abroad for its popular *morna* music, which reached international audiences thanks to Cabo Verde's most famous singer, Cesária Évora (1941-2011), as well as for the slightly faster *coladeira*. But the islands have proven a fertile ground for the development of various music styles. Even though some music styles such as *batuko* and *funaná* arose on specific islands first, these styles have now spread and been culturally appropriated as true Cabo Verdean music genres. Other genres, such as *zouk*, developed in the diaspora but are still regarded as part of the nation's culture. An extended discussion on the genres mentioned above is beyond the scope of this introduction, but they will be further examined in the coming chapters.

This section will predominantly focus on two styles, *morna* and *coladeira*, which have historically played a major role in the narrativisation of nation and diaspora worldwide. The instrumentation of *coladeira* is very similar to *morna*, but its lyrics are often quite different: "in contrast to *mornas*, *coladeiras* are more critical, and are often very humorous, sarcastic and irreverent, and they usually focus on the behaviour of certain individuals and everyday situations" (Braz Dias 2008: 177). The differences between the two styles are further explained by Braz Dias as follows:

Morna was originally closely linked to the musical experiences of the inhabitants of the Cape Verdean islands of Brava, Boavista, and São Vicente. However, a primary feature of the *morna* as frequently noted by Cape Verdeans is that it later spread across the entire archipelago and out to the communities of the diaspora. Today it is generally identified with the Cape Verdean population as a whole.

The *morna* was traditionally performed by a string ensemble and vocalists. The lyrics are sung almost exclusively in Creole. There are nonetheless, some *mornas* that are composed in Portuguese. *Morna*

lyrics deal with emotional themes such as love, emigration, the suffering caused by separation, *sodade*, the bonds with the homeland and the cruel destiny of Cape Verde and its people. (Braz Dias 2008: 177)

Even though morna is linked to particular islands, the later development and dissemination of the genre is strongly connected to the development of the Cabo Verdean music industry in the diaspora. Rotterdam played an important role in this process, particularly after the establishment of Morabeza Records in 1965.

The homeland has always been a major theme within Cabo Verdean music both on the islands and elsewhere. As a country that has known large-scale emigration for centuries, this inevitably became a major subject, and artists frequently seek to reconnect emotionally to the homeland left behind because of emigration. Lyrics often reflect the missing of loved ones, friends and family, their birthplace, and lives left behind. As such, many authors have identified *saudade* or *sodade* as one of the key themes which much music, and particularly morna, is centred on. Sodade is:

An emotional state of longing, nostalgia and incompleteness caused by the loss, distance and lack of something or someone. The word, untranslatable according to Portuguese and Creole language speakers, stems from its strong emotional burden and polysemy. (Cidra 2015: 311)

If mornas often focus more on sentiments of loss and hurt, and are centred more on the feeling of *sodade*, then by contrast *coladeiras* then:

Point out the harsh realities of life abroad; they talk about working hard, and about the problems between themselves and the native population and even among Cape Verdeans in the diaspora communities themselves; and, mainly, they talk about the delusions faced by the Cape Verdean emigrants who do not end up finding everything they had dreamed of once they are abroad. (Braz Dias 2008: 183)

The local migrant experience becomes a major theme in the Cabo Verdean music of the 1970s and 1980s. The experiences relayed through music came particularly from those musicians who settled or moved between several of the Cabo Verdean diasporas in Europe. The music of this era often relates to struggles of daily life and work, where issues of illegality, citizenship and mobility are brought to light.

Simultaneously, music starts to express the relation with the homeland from the perspective of those in the diaspora, and vice-versa. As sociologist Doris Pires summarises:

Music from Cape Verde ridicules returned migrants, their showiness, extravagance, the old men with money and young women, the behaviour of left-behind women of migrants, the delusion of the migrant. In the Netherlands, themes of new wealth and homesickness start to appear. (Pires 2006: 120, translation added)

Written in centres of the diaspora — Boston, Lisbon, and particularly Rotterdam since the 1960s and 1970s — music became an important medium through which the sentiments of migration are translated in verse and transmitted towards audiences around the world, whether through records and CDs, live performances or DJing practices. Particularly in the diaspora's

urban centres, lyrics also narrate and unveil how the cityscape is navigated and experienced, both during the day and nighttime.

Life in Rotterdam has been sung about by Cabo Verdean artists in many ways, and has become a key theme in Cabo Verdean music. Songs capture the experience of migrants in the urban city, of the hardships encountered particularly in work life, but also the fun times in nightlife leisure venues. They capture not only *how* life took place, often illegally, with many migrants struggling to find work, but also *where* life took place: on ships, in cafes, bars, clubs, boarding houses, streets and squares. Critical visions of nightlife are present in the music of both male and female performers, on the behaviour of Cabo Verdeans in various (night) spaces and the relation they should maintain vis-a-vis the receiving society. Music can in this sense become a commentary on what and who does or does not belong to a specific group or collective. In the diaspora, these processes often relate to membership and processes of belonging involving both communities related to the home country — such as the diasporic community — as well as to the receiving society and its various social groups. At the same time, music can give insight into the ways in which migrant communities give meaning to different space-times. Recognising that city spaces are socially produced (Lefebvre 1991) as well as acknowledging the diverse imagination of a diaspora (Brah 1996), the constellations drawn up in music produce an understanding of how the Cabo Verdean community in Rotterdam is imagined, experienced and produced by its members, in particular in its relation to night spaces' potential of transgression, resistance and emancipation (Palmer 2000; Williams 2008).



Chapter 3: Myth-making in the Rotterdam diaspora

Beginning in the 1950s, Rotterdam saw the arrival of an increasing number of Cabo Verdean men and a small community started forming in the port city. As mentioned earlier in the introduction, they mainly looked for work in the shipping industry, where plenty of work was still to be found. And while sailors were beginning to come ashore in Rotterdam, the anti-colonial war against the Portuguese colonisers was also beginning. This liberation struggle was led by Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973), originally an agronomist, who was born in Portuguese Guinea, which later became Guinea-Bissau. Cabral had founded the PAIGC (African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cabo Verde) in 1956. While initially a peaceful party, a guerrilla war was launched on the mainland of Guinea-Bissau in January 1963 which would eventually lead to the independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde. The former became independent on September 24, 1973, the latter on July 5, 1975. In the context of the colonial war, Rotterdam was not just an important place of economic opportunity. With the struggle for independence in full swing, Rotterdam in fact played an important role as a centre of anti-colonial political and cultural activity.

One of the first Cabo Verdean men to arrive in the Netherlands, João Silva (b. 1929), was commissioned by Amílcar Cabral to stimulate and safeguard the cultural identity of the Cabo Verdeans through the recording of music and poetry, spreading a message of independence and thus recognising the importance of the diaspora in supporting, both financially and morally, the decolonial movement. For this purpose, Silva established in Rotterdam the first Cabo Verdean record label in the world: Morabeza Records. Over time other activities aiming to promote Cabo Verdean identity began to take shape as the community grew, often involving events that brought these migrants together in the after-hours. In several places in the city, Cabo Verdeans became involved in a cultural circuit that included music recording and performance, dance, theatre, and other events that were in

several cases intertwined with politically oriented activities. In these venues specific images, stories and ideas were brought forward, sung, and acted out, helping to forge a common identity and narrative among the Cabo Verdeans of Rotterdam. The process of producing, maintaining and disseminating this identity will be referred to in this chapter as ‘myth-making’, for reasons I will explain below.

In *Mythologies* (1972), cultural theorist Roland Barthes follows linguist Ferdinand de Saussure’s semiological system of signifier, signified and sign, proposing a “second-order semiological system”, the myth. If in the first order the sign is the “associative total of a concept and an image” (1972: 113), myth imposes a second layer of meaning onto this associative total, a layer which Barthes calls “metalanguage” (1972:114). His approach is instrumental in understanding the symbolical order of myth.

Barthes views France as a bourgeois society, based on capitalist ownership and power, which is expressed through a particularly dominant social ideology. He imagines that in this bourgeois-capitalist society a dominant worldview is imposed through myth. According to Barthes, “mythology can only have an historical foundation” (1972: 108). Myths are created or produced and as such have not existed eternally; they are formed and fed by history and found in the everyday. Myths are constructed through “collective representations” (1972: 8) that establish a particular way of viewing the world and which determine the “relations between man and the world” (1972: 139). Furthermore, myths establish a society’s traditions, histories, uses, ideas, ideals and beliefs as if they were ‘natural’. As such, myths postulate “a kind of knowledge, a past, a memory, a comparative order of facts, ideas, decisions” through which we view and understand the world (1972: 116). Myths are supported by different forms of speech, which can be understood as both verbal as well as visual, found in “photography, cinema, reporting, sport, shows, publicity” (1972: 108), to which, in the context of this study, I would add music and a range of other digital sources such as social media or blogs. Even

though Barthes approaches myth in the context of a bourgeois ideology, his concept contributes to understanding how a collective forms a particular image of the world or, in the context of the Cabo Verdean diaspora, of that collective. In this context, I argue that myth-making, as a conscious effort, contributes to the production of a collective identity.

By the phrase ‘myth-making’, I mean to define the process through which a common narrative is created that produces and describes the identity of a group or community, drawing on foundational (hi)stories, important historical figures, traditions and celebrations. This common narrative elicits particular imaginations that connect and construct an idea of community through which sense can be made of the connections with a homeland, its stories and traditions. Myths are also a means through which sense can be made of one’s position and identity in a diasporic community. The narratives that are told, re-enacted and performed in the diaspora are essential in the formation of a diasporic identity and make visible how that identity is described, felt and memorised. As such, myth-making should not be confused with the creation of fictional narratives. Rather, myths reveal lived realities that are fundamental in developing a sense of collective self. The idea of myth-making and the construction of a diasporic narrative is fundamentally connected to the act of imagining place(s): “the act of imagining migrant and homeland identity is always framed by the historical dimensions of that place and of the migration that started from there, but it is also inflected by those acts of imagining that produce the cultural identity in the present” (Alphen 2003: 57). Myth-making is embedded in a tradition of storytelling that finds its origins on the Cabo Verdean islands. Stories of the homeland and of migration are often told by parents and grandparents to their children and grandchildren, who go on to adopt and adapt these further.

As author and creative writer Pooja Mittal Biswas argues regarding those diasporic travellers that metaphorically or literally cross the sea, or successive generations of these

travellers born in the countries of arrival, all participate in processes of myth-making as a means of reconciliation and connection:

The farther they traverse, the more driven they are to participate in myth-making, in telling stories about their origins to themselves and to their children, so as to bridge the gap between their new “sky” and the old, far across the “sea” (sometimes literal, sometimes metaphorical) of experience. They tell these stories as a means of reconciling themselves to their inevitable hybridisation, such that they may survive in a new land while still remaining connected to their root. (2020: 95)

Mittal builds on American literary scholar Joseph Campbell’s (1904-1987) idea of the monomyth and its structure of the “hero’s journey” as one of the structures that emerges in myth-making. Campbell (1949) provided a blueprint, a succession of different stages that myths follow in every culture, which he called the monomyth. Myths provide signs and symbols that help construct the self while simultaneously describing, capturing and shaping human experience. An important commonality found in myth is the narrative, whether structural or incidental. As Mittal (2020: 97) argues, memory and myth(making) are “symbiotic processes” and as such are inseparable, as myth partakes in the construction of memory and (fragments of) memories construct these same myths. In a diaspora, myths and memories are mediated differently across generations, especially considering the different lives of those that migrated to other places compared to those born in the diaspora. In the context of this chapter it is important to highlight that second- and third-generation Cabo Verdeans appropriate, modify and retell the stories of previous generations, contributing to the mythification of the diaspora’s origins, histories and identity. Cultural producers then embed these stories into theatre, dance, music and other performances, placing themselves

and the audience in dialogue with these foundational stories or ‘myths’. Myth-making is an important process that has great value in constructing a sense of what it means to be Cabo Verdean, or of ‘Cabo Verdeanness’. The representations created through these performances are connected to various histories, symbols, persons, places and events, both in the diaspora and in Cabo Verde.

The process of myth-making is one that requires constant cultivation and reaffirmation. In the context of nationalism and the formation of a national culture, historian Joep Leerssen refers to cultivation as “the agenda on the part of cultural-nationalist actors and activists, their intended instrumentalisation of the national culture” (2006: 570). Leerssen argues that this cultivation consists of several endeavours: the inventorisation and salvaging of cultural products and expressions, the canonisation of cultural works or the conscious revival of traditions (i.e. sports, music, pastimes), and “propagandist proclamations” that work to “suffuse the public sphere with a sense of collective national identity” (2006: 571), such as through education, architecture and various cultural activities. In relation to diasporic myth-making, cultivation is not only found in national(istic), top-down policies, but in everyday practices, such as in the stories that are told and in the local celebration of cultural traditions. Myth-making is also not uniform throughout a diaspora, nor through time. Instead its process reveals a multiplicity of identifications with the idea of homeland and diaspora.

Night spaces facilitate moments for myth-making because after the conclusion of duties such as work and care, time and place are available for the development of cultural activities and the promotion of culture. In the context of the Cabo Verdean diaspora, myth-making is linked first and foremost to important political histories and the anti-colonial thinking of Amílcar Cabral and like-minded figures in the diaspora. At the same time, the night also provides a space-time for creative engagement with one’s identity, which becomes particularly relevant for later generations. This chapter seeks to understand the processes of

myth-making in the Cabo Verdean diaspora in Rotterdam, highlighting the cultural, historical and political values, symbols and events that play a role in shaping the diasporic experience in Rotterdam.

First, I investigate how a political-cultural connection developed between Cabo Verde and Rotterdam during the early years of Cabo Verdean migration to the Netherlands with the establishment of Morabeza Records. In the contemporary context the record label still plays an important role in the formation and dissemination of the diasporic narrative. As such, both past and current dissemination of the label's production and legacy will be considered, as well as their importance in the formation of a (early) cultural identity. I also illustrate how these processes of cultural resistance are incorporated into events in the city.

Second, much connected to the figure of Amílcar Cabral and the idea of an independent Cabo Verdean identity, I seek to discuss the practices of Cabo Verdean hip-hop/rap artists in Rotterdam and the way in which they interpret cultural heritage in their music, as well as their engagement with different levels of space, digital, home and abroad.

Third, linked strongly to the notion of place, I analyse accounts of the religious celebration of São João Baptista ('Saint John the Baptist') on June 24 in Rotterdam, which is known as the São João Festival. It is hosted every year on the Heemraadsplein, and mixes both traditional and modern cultural performances. The Heemraadsplein is strongly connected to the migration of Cabo Verdeans and has been co-named Pracinha d'Quêbrod ('Square of the Broken Ones') because many Cabo Verdeans historically used this square as a meeting place.

COVID-19 restrictions have caused a series of abrupt changes in the festival and event landscape, with São João and other events being forced to adapt their programming to an online environment from early 2020 to early 2022. Even though material of previous

events was collected and several interviews with organisers gave important insights into the previous physical events, online events were also valuable as research material because they have placed greater emphasis on the narratives and histories of the community, rather than a larger focus on entertainment that would usually be more common in physical events. For this reason, several online events that occurred during the research period are included in the analysis that follows.

Morabeza Records and the anti-colonial struggle

Resistance to the Portuguese colonial regime grew and in 1963 an armed struggle led by Cabral was launched that would eventually lead to independence on July 5, 1975. Back in Rotterdam, the incipient Cabo Verdean diaspora would serve as an important network of cultural resistance formed of and supported by a growing group of migrants. An important figure in this cultural struggle was João Silva, also known as Djunga de Biluca. Noting the growth of the Cabo Verdean community in Rotterdam in the 1960s, Silva and his business partner and friend Constantino Delgado (b. 1926) saw an opportunity to set up a boarding house for Cabo Verdean seafarers. Delgado later did, opening Hotel Delta in the Jan Kruijffstraat in 1964, very much in the centre of the Cabo Verdean concentration in the city's Delfshaven district. Delfshaven was located closely to the main port area of Rotterdam (the name Delfshaven refers to the historical port that was part of the nearby city of Delft in the fourteenth century). In the meantime, Silva set up a 'ship-store', a store catering for all necessities at sea, for newcomers in Rotterdam, on the ground floor of his house on the Beukelsdijk Street, which runs north of the centre. He also housed seafarers on the two upper floors of his house, while he himself lived on the first floor.

Instrumentalist Humberto Bettencourt dos Santos (b. 1940), better known by his artist name Humbertona, who lived in Belgium but recorded his work with Morabeza Records,

remembers in the preface of Silva's autobiography *De Ribeira Bote a Rotterdam* (2009) ('From Ribeira Bote to Rotterdam') that the ship-store was

More than a simple shop, it was a meeting point where creoles from all the islands met. [...] The store was also a meeting point for Cabo Verdeans, where people would come to play a game of *bisca*¹, with a bottle of Martel cognac (when there was *grogue*², it was a party). Everything and anything else was discussed there, from the girls they crossed paths with in the cabarets of the different ports, where each one was the main actor in their film, and in many moments the conversation drifted towards politics and even independence was talked about. (2009: 11-12, translation added)

During the beginning years of migration, when there was a scarcity of familiar places where people could meet, the house on the Beukelsdijk functioned as a hybrid space. It was not only a space of commerce, selling all things maritime, but also a place of diversion, of social relations and connection with those of the homeland that shared similar lifestyles, travelling and working around the world as sailors and telling stories of their foreign exploits. This everydayness was interspersed with conversations about independence and other political matters, much in line with the house's other function as a headquarters for Morabeza Records and Silva's anti-colonial thought, which will be elaborated hereafter. The history of Cabo Verdean boarding houses, which is also a central element of Cabo Verdean identity in Rotterdam and central to the story of Morabeza Records, will be also elaborated in the next chapter.

¹ *Bisca* is a Portuguese card game.

² *Grogue* is a Cabo Verdean distilled spirit made with sugar cane.

It is safe to say that ensuring the wellbeing of recently arrived migrants played a central role in the lives of all the pioneers in the diaspora, not just Silva and Constantino. Arriving newcomers were often quickly redirected to one of the many Cabo Verdean boarding houses that had opened in the city. This support began to be noticed by figures within the independence movement - Cabral had also been updated about the network that Silva and his companions had set up in the Netherlands and of the support they were providing to their fellow countrymen.

Indeed, the names of Silva and others in the diaspora soon began to circulate in anticolonial spheres (Gonçalves 2021). One of the main reasons that Silva had moved to the Netherlands was the threat of being imprisoned by the Portuguese, as he had had conflicts with Portuguese military officials during his time in service. Stories of Silva's rebellious streak against the Portuguese colonisers caught Cabral's attention and led him to send two representatives of the anticolonial movement to the Netherlands. Silva expected them to tell him that he was to be recruited to join the war in Guinea-Bissau against the Portuguese, but they instead brought direct instructions from Cabral to spread the Cabo Verdean culture in the diaspora and to "do everything to ensure that it was both preserved and cherished" (Silva 2009: 131, translation added). As Silva mentions in a documentary on his life, *Sodade - Djunga's Tiende Eiland* (2005) ('Sodade, Djunga's tenth island'), "according to Cabral, to be independent, without culture, without identity, is to be nothing" (Barendrecht and Slingerland 2005, translation added). With the assignment given to Silva, Cabral was acknowledging the importance of the diaspora in providing financial, moral and cultural support to the decolonial movement.

Morabeza Records - initially called Casa Silva - was founded in 1965 after the Cabo Verdean nationalist Abilio Duarte (1931-1996) visited Rotterdam. As an important figure in the PAIGC, Duarte and Silva discussed the idea of recording music albums. The idea of

recording was born out of the musical gatherings that had been taking place at Silva's home, which mixed music-making and get-togethers, often as a way to overcome homesickness. Silva worked as an electrician at the electronics company Philips and used his company contacts to get permission to record music in the company's recording studios (Gonçalves 2021), which facilitated the process. In doing this he was fulfilling his orders from Cabral, to continue to support the Cabo Verdean struggle in the diaspora, also by establishing relationships with governments and making Cabo Verdeans aware of what independence and being Cabo Verdean means.

With members of this group such as the renowned artists Frank Cavaquinho (1927-1993) and Tazinho (1932-2017), the first Cabo Verdean LP, *Caboverdianos na Holanda* ('Cabo Verdeans in Holland'), was recorded under the Casa Silva label, later Morabeza, a Cabo Verdean creole term meaning 'friendliness' and 'hospitality'. The label was graced with the collaboration of a number of high-profile artists who came to record with the new Rotterdam label. These included no less than the doyenne of Cabo Verdean music, Cesária Évora.

Before analysing the role of the Morabeza record label in promoting Cabo Verdean cultural identity in and from the diaspora, it is important to contextualise Cabral's views on culture in the struggle for independence, as it became an essential instrument to set Cabo Verde's identity apart from the Portuguese, as well as to position Cabo Verdean cultural expressions vis-à-vis the cultural ideals of the coloniser. Silva's activities as a pioneer resonated with Cabral's understanding of the political value of culture and the key role it should play in the construction of a national identity. In a speech delivered on February 20, 1970, at the University of Syracuse, New York, at the height of the anticolonial conflict, Cabral explained how foreign colonisers actively repress cultural life and expression as a means to dominate the colonised populations:

History teaches us that, in certain circumstances, it is very easy for the foreigner to impose his domination on a people. But it also teaches us that, whatever may be the material aspects of this domination, it can be maintained only by the permanent, organised repression of the cultural life of the people concerned. (Cabral 1974: 1)

For Cabral, the promotion of culture was vital to the success of the ‘liberation movement’. Indeed, the role of cultural life featured as a central concern in many of Cabral’s speeches and texts delivered during the war of independence, and he defended it as a crucial instrument of emancipation from the colonial yoke:

A people who free themselves from foreign domination will be free culturally only if, without complexes and without underestimating the importance of positive accretions from the oppressor and other cultures, they return to the upward paths of their own culture, which is nourished by the living reality of its environment, and which negates both harmful influences and any kind of subjection to foreign culture. Thus, it may be seen that if imperialist domination has the vital need to practice cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture. (Cabral 1974: 4)

Cabral’s vision of culture approximates decolonial philosopher and psychiatrist Frantz Fanon’s views on the interweaving of national culture in the liberation of colonised nations. For Fanon, national culture is a “collective thought process of a people to describe, justify, and extol the actions whereby they have joined forces and remained strong” (1963: 168).

The need for culture was emphasised by movements in the Cabo Verdean diasporas, within which migrants were educated and even recruited to participate in the colonial wars in

Guinea-Bissau. In the context of the Rotterdam diaspora, Cabral refers to the city as an important place for the cultural and musical development of Cabo Verde. In a 1969 speech before the party cadres of the PAIGC, Cabral emphasised “the *mornas* and *coladeiras* that have been composed, inspired on our struggle, lifting high our party, the name of our courageous fighters [...]” (Cabral cited in Cidra 2018: 441). According to Cidra,

Cabral was alluding to a set of cultural expressions arising in the forests of Guinea at the moment of the armed struggle and presented in diplomatic meetings (such as poetry, storytelling, theatre plays, music and dance), but also to the recording of Cabo Verdean music in Rotterdam, an important centre of the nationalist struggle in Europe. In this context, the recording of the Cabo Verdean musical genres of *morna* and *coladeira* became a means to spread the nationalist claims to self-determination as a ‘cultural act’. (Cidra 2018: 441)

Cabral’s cultural legacy in Rotterdam: Morabeza Records

As the curator of Morabeza Records, Carlos Gonçalves mentions, many Cabo Verdeans were conditioned to see themselves as Portuguese. Cabral stated that as long as Cabo Verdeans identify with the coloniser, the struggle was doomed to fail, and so he gave Silva an important task: to break Cabo Verdeans away from the idea that they were Portuguese, by stimulating cultural consciousness and an independent cultural identity (Gonçalves 2021). Two of the main instruments to achieve this were music and poetry recordings, and Casa Silva was considered an important actor in the resistance against the Portuguese. It was

Connected to the ‘anti-colonial struggle’ and PAIGC propaganda activities. With these political leanings, it published recorded poems of Cape Verdean writers and intellectuals and political speeches by

party leaders. [...] Records with political content were put into sleeves belonging to other records and transported covertly to African countries by Cape Verdean and Angolan sailors. (Cidra 2008a: 194)

A band called Voz de Cabo Verde ('Voice of Cabo Verde') was formed with the idea of recording these politically tinged albums, "conceiving the recording of Cape Verdean popular music as a means of documenting the cultural sovereignty of Cape Verdeans and legitimising the nationalist claims to self-determination" (Cidra 2015: 311).

In the initial phase there was little opportunity to pursue music professionally, so the musicians of the band kept themselves busy in other employment during the day and recorded (and performed) music at night and during weekends. One of the main issues Morabeza Records faced in its early productions was defining what Cabo Verdean is, and what it meant to be Cabo Verdean, as Carlos Gonçalves explains:

Morabeza is Cabo Verdean music, morna is Cabo Verdean. In search of what distinguishes the Cabo Verdean, the creole language, literature, poetry, all these came together in Morabeza's music. They sang in creole, they sang about the nostalgia for Cabo Verde, about the Cabo Verdean traditions and history, the feeling of being Cabo Verdean, they were distinguishing themselves. The poetry telling stories of the famine, the misery that was experienced, all these were themes in morna. (2021, translation added)

Considering that the morna genre was considered somewhat closer to Portuguese cultural ideals by Cabo Verdean elites (Cidra 2018), it is striking that this genre was used as a means of opposing the dominant (cultural) colonial powers. According to sociologist Wessel Verkerk,

The reason why so many *morna*'s [sic] and *coladeira*'s [sic] appeared on the label was primarily because these were the styles most Cape Verdean artists were acquainted with as other styles were prohibited. The artists that Silva and Frank Cavaquim brought to the Netherlands were musicians that had learned their craft from Catholic priests.

(2021: 60)

The colonial rulers had sought to prohibit and repress not only any cultural expressions, acts and performances that were inconsistent with Catholic principles, but also those expressions that were harmful to the cultural and political values of the administration or which exposed its violence and injustices. At the same time, those that had the privilege of studying on Cabo Verde often did so at Catholic seminaries which included an (ecclesiastical) music education. Contrary to the idea that *morna* connected Cabo Verdean elites to a Portuguese cultural ideal, the *mornas* recorded by Morabeza expressed an independent sense of Cabo Verdeanness, often carrying hidden messages such as the pain experienced under the colonial yoke and the desire for an independent nation. The album cover of *Caboverdianos na Holanda*, in Figure 1, carries such a message through its cover image of a combative, clenched fist holding up maracas in a sign of cultural and political defiance.



Figure 1: Album Cover Caboverdianos na Holanda, 1965. Copyright Morabeza Records Int.

This instrumental album contained classic mornas as well as newly produced compositions, the titles of which were deliberately ambiguous, leaving room for political interpretation. One composition, ‘Bô tem carinho di bô mãe’, (‘You have affection for your mother’), refers to the motherland of Cabo Verde: “the songs released by Morabeza often hid secret messages”, says Gonçalves. “A text about the love for your mother was actually about the love for your motherland, for example. Cabo Verdeans were called upon via music to unite and fight for their country, without arousing the suspicion of the Portuguese” (Gonçalves 2019, translation added). Another song on the album, ‘Otarde o Nunca’ (‘Late or never’) is an obvious reference to the struggle for independence that had started after more than 500 years of colonisation. On the back cover, Silva described the sentiment of Cabo Verdean music:

Cabo Verdean music has a painful feeling. Why? Because it is in our songs that we express what the mouth does not say, what the hand does not write. Muted anger, muted grief, muted despair, words of faith that have never been spoken, and confessions that die in the throat. All of this is delirious. (Silva 1965, translation added)

As these words suggest, the back cover of *Caboverdianos na Holanda* conveys the importance of music in Cabo Verdean culture, fostering a sense of national pride. Silva speaks cautiously about oppression on the islands, and about a sense of injustice that is being suppressed and that cannot be spoken (or written) about out loud.

The house on the Beukelsdijk thus became the centre of a cultural operation aimed at spreading these clandestine messages, with the night providing what Palmer terms a space of “rebellious alternative” (2000: 9) and transgression. The productions of Morabeza Records were prohibited in Cabo Verde, and there was not a large market for the label as communities in Europe were still relatively small. Silva mentions that many LPs were transported by car and sold in the Cabo Verdean diasporas in France, Germany and Luxembourg. Meanwhile, as Silva mentions in an article by Portuguese journalist Ricardo J. Rodrigues (2022) certain merchant navy sailors that he knew and trusted were given copies to take to Portugal, Cabo Verde and other more distant diasporas such as the United States. In this sense Rotterdam, with its centre of operations on the Beukelsdijk, became a remarkable distribution centre for anti-colonial propaganda. It became a place for the free expression and production of culture and opposition to the oppressive Portuguese regime, even as Silva and his associates were under surveillance by the Portuguese secret police, the PIDE (‘Polícia Internacional e de Defesa do Estado’).

Business and politics

Silva paid for studios, artists and press, but it was not a lucrative business. As such, work in the studio took place mainly at night and on weekends, as musicians still needed to work during the day. Indeed, despite Morabeza playing an important role from a cultural point of view in aiding in the socialisation of the community, the label was not a commercial success (Gonçalves 2021). As Silva himself reveals, “the LPs were sold sparingly - I had them pressed in editions of no more than 1000 copies. I paid the orchestra 6,000 guilders, the studio 400 guilders an hour, the sound engineer 200 guilders an hour. Then there were the factory costs for the pressing. They were albums with a price of ten guilders, which also did not sell well” (Silva 2016, translation added). Morabeza’s meagre returns did little for the health of Silva’s pockets, and at times he had put money earned from his boarding house and his maritime shop into the record label to keep it functioning, says Gonçalves (2019).

Silva’s political activities extended towards the foundation of the Associação Caboverdiana (‘Cabo Verdean Association’) in 1967. This association served the interests of the growing community, but it also had a political, anti-colonial current and supported the independence of Cabo Verde, which will be discussed in the last chapter in the context of nightlife activities. After several temporary locations, it finally established permanent headquarters on the ’s Gravendijkwal street, which became an important space for Cabo Verdean gatherings, both political and social. As Netherlands-based Cabo Verdean writer and former sailor Guilherme Mendes da Silva (1935-2019) pointed out in a personal interview, the Associação was a place to come together after a long time at sea, or after a long working day: “when I came from the boat, I already liked to go downtown. I was very close to the Cabo Verdean association, I would go there to play cards with the guys, talk and drink something” (Mendes da Silva 2019, translation added).

The Associação also published a series of magazines called *Nós Vida* ('Our Life') which, amongst other things, shared tips about work and the job market, life in the Netherlands, and news about the independence struggle (Silva 2008: 143). Curiously, Gonçalves (2021) notes that the distribution of *Nós Vida* pamphlets was also often carried out in the dark because the PIDE kept an eye on the organisation. The night was in this sense a safer space in which to distribute information and propagate alternative myths.

In the late 1960s Silva was able to secure a contract for *Voz de Cabo Verde* as the house band for a South American themed nightclub, 'La Bonanza' in Rotterdam, where they played every night for about a year. This was a turning point in the professionalisation of the group, as its members were able to solely focus on music. But as the group's music took off, it became clear that some of the group's members did not support the issue of independence and the politics surrounding Morabeza Records' activities:

Some were aware of what was happening, but there were also musicians who were completely unconcerned about independence. Bana, for example, was Portuguese, and did not like it. He was only busy making music and did not like the independence thing, the same went for Morgadinho. For them it was music, they were not bothered with the whole story on independence. In fact, some of them were not in favour of independence either. (Gonçalves 2021, translation added)

But if for some of *Voz de Cabo Verde*'s members the main reason for playing was professional and not political, there were other members who were more conscious of the political situation and who supported independence. As Silva mentions in his autobiography, once, during a tour of the band through Africa, they played in the Portuguese-speaking countries of Angola, Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau, in the midst of the anti-colonial

struggle. They were invited to the latter country by Governor Spínola, the commander-in-chief of Guinea who fought against the guerrilla movement of the PAIGC. This was obviously not appreciated by their manager, Silva, who agreed with the members that this went too far (Silva 2009: 136).

Regardless, Voz de Cabo Verde and Morabeza Records undoubtedly played an important role in capturing and promoting a unique cultural identity distinct from that of the oppressors at a time of great political upheaval, both through recordings and performances. As Morgadinho (1932) remembers,

There were many Cabo Verdean mariners in the Netherlands, due to the merchant navy, and since Cabo Verdeans are very fond of music, they would listen to good groups (at the time the Italians dominated). So, they felt a great pride knowing that a group from Cabo Verde appeared to showcase what we knew. (As cited in Nogueira 2016: 377, translation added)

For Morabeza Records, the commercial and political were, in this sense, interwoven. Morabeza records navigated the political by producing records that referred to the situation in the homeland and which were made and distributed to generate consciousness both inside and outside of the islands, through the nighttime activities of recording and performing. At the same time, it was connected to a circuit of amusement and entertainment directed towards Cabo Verdeans both in Rotterdam as well as in the diaspora, who sought familiar cultural references to enjoy as a way of connecting with their homeland and with fellow Cabo Verdeans. Performances and the spaces in which these were held became important for generating a sense of belonging in the diaspora. Not only was a cultural identity reinforced through music and lyrics, but a collective sense of self was created as Cabo Verdeans in

Rotterdam enjoyed these cultural references in nighttime venues. A more extensive analysis of Voz de Cabo Verde's work outside the studio and in the La Bonanza nightclub, as well as of other nightlife activities that arose in both the past and present, follows in chapter 5, 'Dancing down memory lane: (re)experiences of Cabo Verdean nightlife'.

The map in Figure 2 on the next page shows the spaces discussed so far, which constitute some of the first important Cabo Verdean sites in the city. Ships were docked in the 'Port Area', at the bottom of the map and south of the Delfshaven district, which is the highlighted area, although the port area later moved west of the city, towards the coast. A little to the North you find Hotel Delta, where many Cabo Verdeans were referred to after their arrival in the city. Located on the Rochussenstraat was the Habanera nightclub, where many Cabo Verdeans went for entertainment, close to the Associação Caboverdiana. The important public meeting point Pracinha d'Quêbrod, which will be discussed later in this chapter, is only a short walk westward from the Associação. La Bonanza was located a little further north, and was the first multicultural club in Rotterdam, popular with Cabo Verdeans. Located southwest of the central station, on the 's Gravendijkwal, was Silva's ship-store, which was also the headquarters of Morabeza Records, a guesthouse, and Silva's home.

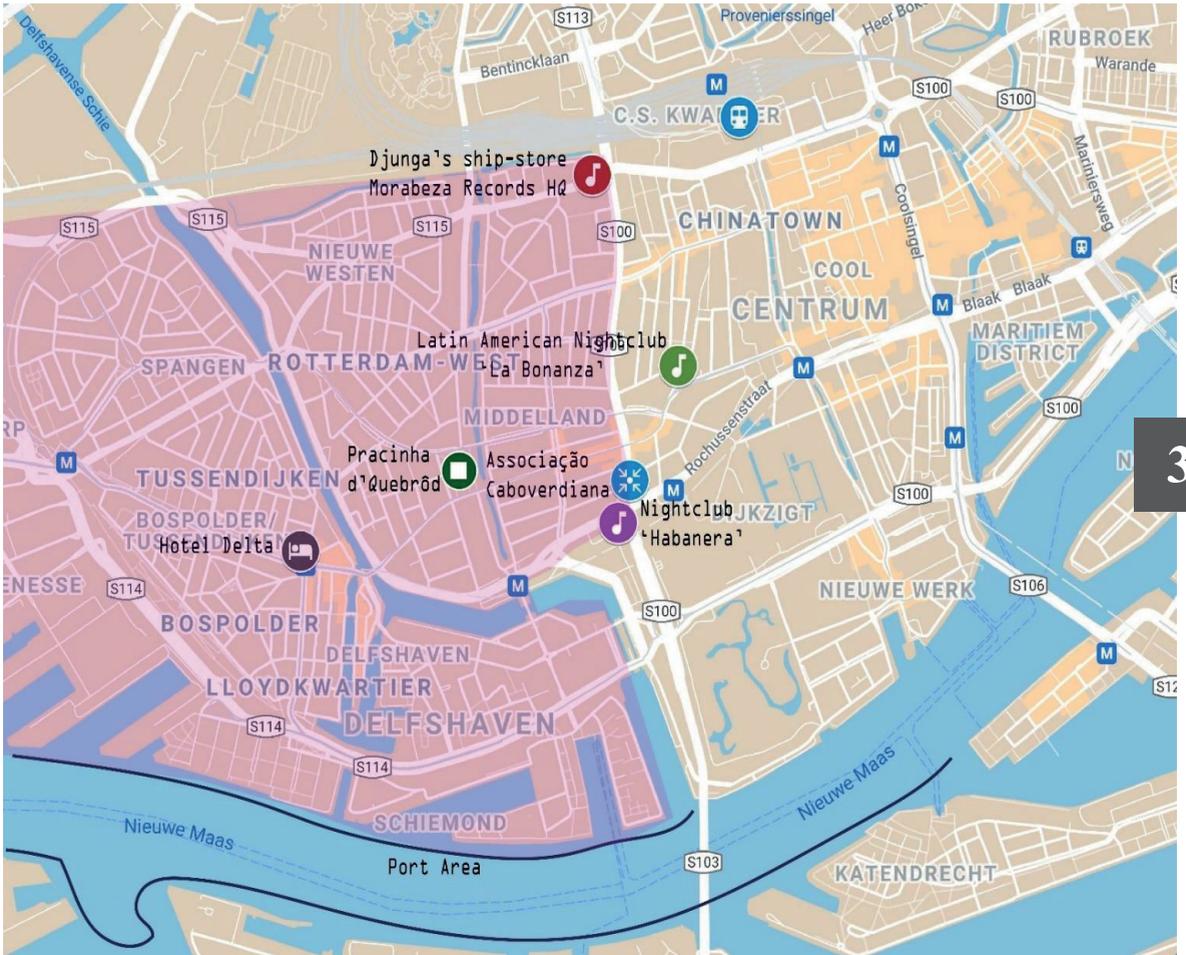


Figure 2: Map of Rotterdam's Port Area. Map retrieved from Google.com

Heritage (at night)

Stories such as those of Morabeza Records serve as an important frame of reference through which the common identity of the Cabo Verdean community in Rotterdam can be understood. As curator Gonçalves mentions in an interview with the online magazine *Vers Beton* ('Fresh Concrete'), "the story of Morabeza deserves to be cherished and passed on. After all, it is an important cultural heritage, both of Cabo Verde and Rotterdam. Stories like these can contribute to a community's self-image" (2019, translation added).

By 2016 Morabeza Records' masters were digitised by the Rotterdam City Archive, making the music accessible online as well as providing the historical context for the label. In 2019, the label was recognised by the Rotterdam Museum as *Echt Rotterdams Erfgoed* ('True Rotterdam heritage'), a move which represents an important step towards formally recognising the label as part of the memory of the city. The importance of the label is also made clear by the fact that the careers of many of the most famous Cabo Verdean artists took off in Rotterdam, establishing Morabeza as an institution central to the dissemination and development of Cabo Verdean musical culture: "the discography of Cabo Verdean music starts in the Netherlands. The careers of the greatest Cabo Verdean artists, including Bana and Cesária Evora, started in Rotterdam" (Lizardo 2016, translation added).

Morabeza indeed acted as a springboard for Cabo Verde's musical development. Following Silva, many other boarding house owners and other entrepreneurs started music studios, greatly increasing Rotterdam's influence on the Cabo Verdean music and night scene. In this sense, the story of Morabeza Records serves as a kind of foundational narrative for the history of the community, while at the same time embodying an important connection with the independence movement and the figure of Amílcar Cabral as a pillar of Cabo Verdean

identity in the diaspora. As such it has also served as a frame of reference for subsequent generations seeking connection with Cabo Verdean history as a source of origin and identity.

The expression of cultural resistance and the re-working of national history and identity through music production and performance occur mainly at night. Today, the after-hours are particularly important as a time-space in which Cabo Verdean heritage in Rotterdam is promoted, negotiated and celebrated. For example, to celebrate Silva's ninetieth birthday, an event called Roterdão canta Morabeza ('Rotterdam sings Morabeza') was organised in an event location called De Doelen. De Doelen, which opened in 1966, is a concert and conference building in the centre of Rotterdam, and is the second largest concert hall in the Netherlands. The location is connected to the history of the Cabo Verdean diaspora in Rotterdam, hosting many Cabo Verdean events over the years. Amongst other moments it is where Cesária Évora, Cabo Verde's most known artist, had one of her first major concerts in 1992. Évora had in fact performed in another location two years prior to her concert in De Doelen, but this is not widely known. A variety of defining Cabo Verdean cultural events, concerts and festivals have been hosted at De Doelen.

With Roterdão canta Morabeza, both artists that had recorded with the label and newer generations from inside and outside Rotterdam performed works that interpreted key themes of the label and honoured the achievements of pioneer Silva, as well as highlighting the label's history and its role in the development of Cabo Verdean music and the nation's struggle for independence. Today, in Rotterdam, various (cultural) groups and organisers are active in producing events, festivals and other activities related to the cultural identity of the Cabo Verdean community, including in the above-mentioned concert hall.

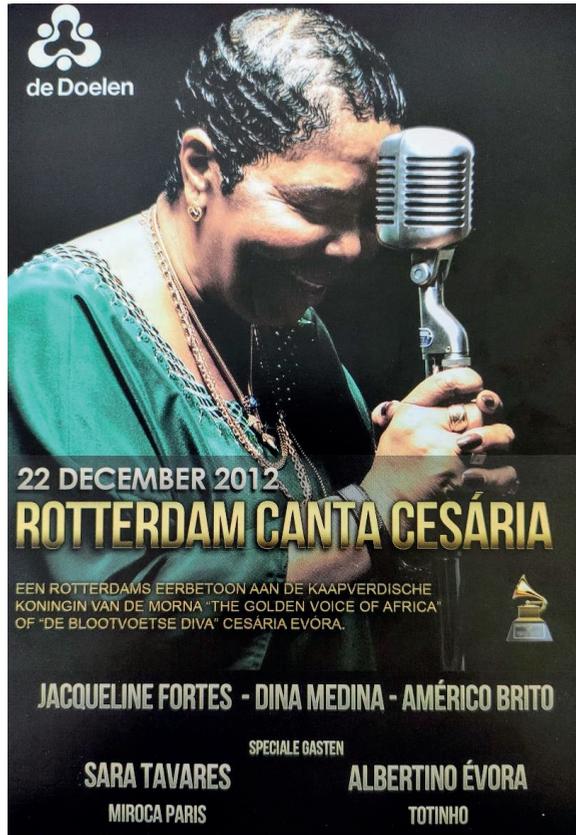


Figure 3: Flyer for tribute concert 'Rotterdam Sings Cesária', Flyer of de Doelen

As mentioned in the introduction, Cabo Verde became independent from Portugal on July 5, 1975. Given Rotterdam's important cultural role in the history of independence, it is no surprise that this eventful day is celebrated each year through diverse activities including theatre, dance and music, and it is through performances like these that connections are maintained with memories and narratives that emphasise the legacy of Amílcar Cabral and the origins of Cabo Verde as an independent nation. One of these events is Noite da Independência ('Independence Night'), which has been hosted in De Doelen since 2019. As the organiser explains, De Doelen is easily accessible for Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam. The

word ‘accessible’ refers as much to its physical location in the centre of the city as to the reputation of the location among Cabo Verdeans.

Besides the fact that Cesária’s first large concert in the Netherlands was held there, many Cabo Verdean concerts, shows and parties have also been held in De Doelen over time, including the popular Sodade Festival as well as a variety of (dance) parties that will be elaborated in the chapter on nightlife. The range of events at this location is evidence of the integration of Cabo Verdean events in Rotterdam city spaces, events and night culture. The Cabo Verdean influence on De Doelen is also due to one of the venue’s former programmers, Hans de Lange. He was a member of Rabassa, a well-known Cabo Verdean-Rotterdam music group, and put Cabo Verdean music on the map at the venue.

With Noite da Independência a nostalgia event connected to Cabo Verdean independence from Portugal was created. In a personal interview conducted by myself, organiser Savannah da Rosa emphasises the importance of this event, which centres on Independence Day:

It’s a topic that should stay and that everyone should remember, especially because it’s not that long ago. The youngsters should not forget their roots. We bring back this feeling of nostalgia and thank the migrants, the struggles they went through, the path they have laid out for us. That was what we wanted to preserve. (2020, translation added)

Several themes emerge from the quote above. Events often draw on the notion of roots, where a place of origin and belonging is explored through music and storytelling. Remembering and emphasising a common history is an important element in creating a sense of community. Nighttime events like Noite de Independência make it possible for younger generations to

visualise and connect with the history and culture of an imagined homeland, as well as providing a space of encounter that connects different generations. The idea of nostalgia is especially present in the idea of what the organisers call “taking people back home”, which they attempt to evoke through a combination of images of the sea, and Cabo Verdean music and food.

A common element in this type of event is highlighting the accomplishments of the first generation of migrants as a means of raising awareness about the origins of the community and the sacrifices that were made. Thankfulness towards diaspora pioneers and remembrance of their stories and history is an important way to connect migrants in the diaspora. In 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic forced the event online as government restrictions prevented the physical event from happening. Even though da Rosa emphasises that having to go digital was a setback, it provided different opportunities as well:

This edition has allowed us to make more contact with Cabo Verde, with the Ministry of Creative Industries, and with a local television channel that has broadcast it and is eager to work with us. Also for other editions and projects they want us to produce. It has been a downer, but it has also given us more opportunities. (2020, translation added)

Particularly noteworthy was the reception of the event on the Cabo Verde islands. The event was broadcast during the evening on the independent TV channel T-Verde, increasing visibility of diasporic cultural initiatives in the homeland. The event also provided an opportunity for organisers to include educational components. One example of this was a video of a first-generation migrant sharing his story of migration together with his son, explaining how he arrived in the Netherlands and about his occupation as the owner of a

boarding house and bar. His son, who was born in the Netherlands, then explains his connections to Cabo Verde and to historical figures such as Amílcar Cabral. In addition to Cabo Verdean entertainment, digital events share stories and histories of the community as a way of commemorating and honouring its pioneers and seeking connections within a common cultural ‘frame of reference’.

The political history of Cabo Verde still plays an important role in the creation of a diasporic identity. This is illustrated through the presence of historical elements and figures, such as the presence of Amílcar Cabral in the promotional material of Noite da Independência in Figure 4.



Figure 4: Amílcar Cabral featuring in promotional announcement of the Noite de Independência event in 2019.

In this still of a promotional video for the event, a cartoon version of Amílcar Cabral watches the signing of the declaration of independence in 1975 in Praia, Cabo Verde, where several head figures of the new Cabo Verdean government are seen, including the first president, Aristides Pereira, prime minister Pedro Pires, alongside Vasco Gonçalves, the prime minister of Portugal. While the video transitions to an announcement of the artists that will perform during the festival, in the background we can hear the famous refrain of the Tubarões song

‘Labanta Braço’ (‘Raise your arm’), as they sing “raise your arm if you cry for your freedom” (translation added). The song was recorded in Hilversum, the Netherlands, and became a hymn for Cabo Verdean independence fighters around the world. *Noite de Independência* reworks the historical figure of Amílcar Cabral into a figure that is more playful and thus more accessible for younger generations who are less politicised. Today, Cabral’s legacy is remembered and celebrated in cultural events across the diaspora. Cultural producers create diverse representations and narratives to explain the history of Cabral, his legacy, how he liberated the country and how the country was defined both in a cultural and political way.

Contemporary events reinterpret history and historical figures. The connection with this historical figure is also important for later generations that often have no direct memory of the period of independence and the preceding period of colonial oppression. The importance of this history of resistance also flows into various urban cultures. In the next section, therefore, attention is paid to Cabo Verdean hip-hop production and performance, in which these histories are re-appropriated and re-worked.

Cabral’s legacy and cultural activism in hip-hop

There is a large diversity of moments, events and places in which myth-making happens, often in the context of specific traditions and historical moments that are celebrated. Activities and events that work with Cabo Verdean history in Rotterdam entangle various contemporary and historical moments and places, both in Rotterdam and in Cabo Verde, in a web of references that construct a narrative of the community and embed it into the city’s structure. Common elements in this regard are Amílcar Cabral’s legacy and the role of the migrant pioneers in propagating his political and cultural ideas in Rotterdam, which they often did through music production and other political activities, as well as the assistance offered by

boarding house owners and others to newcomers to the city, and the migration of Cabo Verdean citizens travelling as sailors and workers.

Myth-making takes place in popular evening and nighttime events, such as in celebrations of independence, anniversaries, and other cultural events. However an often-overlooked field in which myth-making takes place is that of urban cultures, such as hip-hop and rap, which can provide a space of reflection on history and identity in diaspora. In Rotterdam a significant hip-hop culture has developed among Cabo Verdean migrants and second-generation Cabo Verdeans. Their music is often connected with issues of homeland, ancestry, migration history and life in foreign cities. In this section I explore the connections of rap relating to four themes: The legacy of Cabral, migration to the Netherlands, the connection with city spaces, and rap as a way of exploring Creole identity.

Cikay (Lúcio da Costa) is a Cabo Verde-born hip-hop artist who has lived in Rotterdam since his eighteenth birthday, after moving there from Portugal. Once he arrived in Rotterdam his best friend managed to get him into a Cabo Verdean radio program on Friday evenings, which helped him enter the music scene as an aspiring artist. For Cikay, hip-hop culture connected ‘his’ culture and the culture of others. He states: “it served as a bridge between Cabo Verdean culture, which I didn’t really know, which I couldn’t explain but lived because I was Cabo Verdean, and hip-hop culture” (Costa 2021). After starting out with an online platform, in 2018 Cikay and his business partner David Ferreira opened a space which they named *Voz di Rua* (‘Voice of the Street’), and which grew to become an important community centre hosting events every weekend. It functioned until 2021, when it closed due to the (financial) consequences of COVID-19 and was taken over by another Cabo Verdean entrepreneur, who remodelled the interior but continued hosting nighttime cultural activities such as music, as well as retaining its function as a popular bar/restaurant.

The venue is located in the neighbourhood of Schieffmond, which is also known colloquially by Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam as *Poço dos Negros* ('Black Well'), because it is one of the areas in Rotterdam where many people from Cabo Verde and other African communities live. The colloquial name speaks of the attachment and appropriation of city spaces by migrants through naming practices. These naming practices for familiar places are common in Rotterdam. For example, the Former Office of Government Taxes, which is located in the Puntegaalstraat - where *Puntegaal* is probably a corruption of 'Point de Galle', a seaport in colonial Ceylon - is also jokingly called the *Pluk-me-kaal-straat*, which means 'shake-me-down-street'. But for Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam, besides continuing a Rotterdam tradition, these naming practices are also an important means of claiming space in the city and creating a sense of belonging. Naming practices highlight the importance of particular places in the city, connecting them with the history of migration. The recognition of a certain culturally specific belonging by local authorities also plays a role in this, as is the case for the Heemraadsplein, co-named officially as Pracinha d'Quêbrod. The history of this square will be discussed in the last section of this chapter. Besides the important social role that city spaces have played historically for Cabo Verdean migrants, the memory of these spaces is safeguarded through naming practices. As Derek H. Alderman explains, "naming is a powerful vehicle for promoting identification with the past and locating oneself within wider networks of memory", where "renaming represents a way of creating new connections between the past and present" (2008: 195). Naming practices also arguably serve as a means of bringing recognition to the community's presence in the city and its role within Rotterdam's history and geography, since these practices have a clear commemorative function (Alderman 2008).

Even though Voz di Rua started as a platform to promote Cabo Verdean hip-hop, this concept soon expanded to include to a wider variety of cultural expressions. As Cikay

explains, “Cabo Verdean culture in Rotterdam needed a locale; we had no physical locale to meet” (Costa 2021, translation added). Very much embedded in the multicultural environment of the neighbourhood of Schiemond, Voz di Rua was intended as a meeting place, a space of creativity and encounter between different cultures, with a solid Cabo Verdean base: “of course, the base was Cabo Verdean because we are Cabo Verdeans. But we were open to all people, all cultures; our idea was to create a meeting point, in cultural terms, in business terms, to meet entrepreneurs from different areas, a meeting point to develop ideas [...]” (Costa 2021, translation added). This broad cultural-entrepreneurial vision is reflected in the wide variety of events hosted at the venue. Indeed, Voz di Rua became both a “key daytime community cultural centre and night-time venue” where one could enjoy “a monthly Cape-Verdean music night”, as well as “talks by community leaders, local business entrepreneurs, storytelling events, book launches, theatre performances” (Brandellero and Kersbergen 2022).

In an article entitled ‘Night spaces and stories of the Cape-Verdean diaspora in the Netherlands: belonging and cultural activism’ (2022), a detailed close reading of the space by Brandellero reveals its intimate connections with the community’s memory as a musical city and with the legacy of Cabral:

Once inside Voz di Rua, the walls functioned as an archive of collective memory and intercultural solidarity. Images of Amílcar Cabral sat alongside displayed record covers from Morabeza productions (including the iconic *Caboverdianos na Holanda* cover of 1965 referenced above), framed newspaper cuttings from visits of Cesária Evora to Rotterdam and other significant political and artistic occasions, as well as contemporary references to the ongoing struggle against racist violence. (2022: 98)

The venue also reveals its deep connections with contemporary issues of social justice, violence and racism through the artefacts and messages presented in the venue’s walls and surfaces. The photos in Figures 5 and 6 show the range of references that are displayed on the interior of Voz di Rua.



Figure 5: Wall of references at Voz di Rua

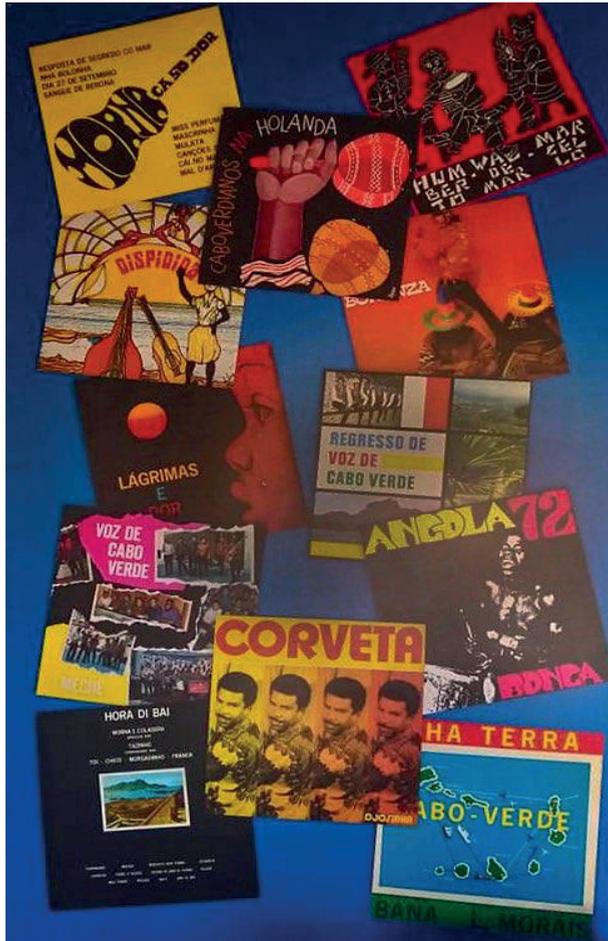


Figure 6: Morabeza Productions on the podium wall of Voz di Rua

The framed constellation of photographs on the wall featured in Figure 5 pays tribute to freedom fighters including Amílcar Cabral and Che Guevara, as well as the revolutionary Nelson Mandela. Black rights activists Martin Luther King and Malcolm X both also feature prominently on the wall. The connection of the space with mainly African American and African activists and heroes is thus clear and striking. Meanwhile the collage of Morabeza Records album covers (Figure 6) symbolically painted on the side wall of the podium, connects the venue with the foundational stories of Cabo Verdean night culture in Rotterdam.

Voz di Rua thus provides a space of reflection related both to significant moments in Cabo Verdean diasporic (music) culture, particularly connected to Rotterdam city spaces, and to issues that go beyond this local scope, including related to the African continent and Brazil. According to Cikay, the hip-hop nights organised in Voz di Rua functioned as a site of exchange of culture and knowledge:

Our goal, what we want to achieve, we want to promote unity, which was one of the first things we learned from Amílcar Cabral: Unity, Work and Progress. Everything we've done, we've always tried to promote that unity, whether it's a unity between us Cabo Verdeans, between older and younger people, or between us foreigners in a foreign country and the people residing in the country, what we want to do is an exchange, a 'one plus two'. (Costa 2021, translation added)

The fragment above demonstrates not only how an image of the history of Amílcar Cabral is used in an event, but also how a particular ideology inspired by Cabral's political ideas is constructed and promoted in contemporary hip-hop events. The dissemination of culture and of Cabral's ideology serves as a bridge between different generations of Cabo Verdean migrants, as well as other groups in society. As such, in the context of myth-making, Cabral's ideas are not simply disseminated but are incorporated into a strategy, into a *modus operandi* for dealing with contemporary cultural exchanges.

Rap and cultural legacy

Cikay's videoclip 'Fidjuz di Cabral '05' ('Sons of Cabral '05'), which is also the name of a foundation he created to help "communities in the diaspora and to spread and promote Cape Verdean culture and continue with the legacy of Amílcar Cabral" (Ck3Nation 2021), reflects the urgency of cultural activism in the diaspora. The song is a production of Cikatriz Crew

(‘Scar Crew’), a collaboration of three rappers including Cikay. The name *Cikatriz* refers to “that which does not end, which does not go away, which is forever, like a scar”, as Cikay (2022) elucidates in a personal conversation. The video clip opens with an interview with Amílcar Cabral, in which Cabral explains that the fight for freedom is being waged not by the military but by armed militants, who will return as farmers once the goal of independence is achieved. This emphasises the unity of a soon-to-become nation. As the beat picks up, a group of rappers gather in front of Cabo Verde’s pre-1992 flag, which symbolised the nation’s connection to continental Africa. In 1990 the one-party state led by the PAIGV (formerly PAIGC) since independence was abolished. In 1991 the MpD (Movimento para Democracia) won the first multiparty elections. The new red, white and blue flag adopted in 1992 by the MpD symbolised, according to Carling & Batalha, “a redirection of the country’s foreign policy and development strategies” (2008: 15-16) towards Portugal and the West in general. As the lead performer of *Cikatriz Crew*, Cikay raps while two colleagues behind him hold up the former flag:

Anôs Cikatriz, anôs é kabuverdianu
 Nu ten grandi orgulhu na ser afrikanu
 Kultura y liberdadi foi Cabral ki danu
 Strategia y teoria foi él propi ki enxinanu
 Pega na mic moda nu ta pega na pistola
 Pa tudu nós povu sabi, ma djâ sta na orâ
 Di nu rabela mô rabeladus lá di fora

We are Cikatriz, we are Cabo Verdeans
 We are proud to be Africans
 Culture and freedom is what Cabral gave us
 Strategy and theory is what he taught us
 Grab the mic as if you grab a gun
 So that our people know that it’s time,
 To rebel like the Rabelados from the countryside.

(Cikatriz Crew 2008b, translation added)³

³ Lyrics were provided in crioulo by Cikay Lucio da Costa.

As Cikay raps, the video switches back and forth between shots of him performing in an urban setting, and (historic) images that relate to the lyrics shown above. First we see an image of Cabral's face intertwined with the African continent, drawing on the idea of unity that was also present in the yellow, green and red flag of Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau - colours which are also included in the flags of several other African countries. This is followed by a video in which the 'Rabelados', a community on the island of Santiago that sought refuge in the interior of the island to flee persecution by the Catholic Church, are seen holding up the Cabo Verdean flag. Finally, the video shows an image of enslaved Africans receiving lashes, a reference to the colonial scar. In a somewhat aggressive rapping style, the song reflects upon Cabral's cultural struggle and the oppression suffered by the islanders under the colonial regime. A dialogue emerges in which the act of rapping is compared to an armed struggle, the weaponising of culture as a means of continuing Cabral's philosophy, with rap as one form of that struggle. It is therefore no coincidence that this armament is being compared to the rebellion of the Rabelados, who rebelled against the rule of the Catholic ethos by moving to the difficult interior of Santiago in order to safeguard their traditions.

In the context of this rebellion, Cabral looked at these cultures as an example in which a Cabo Verdean consciousness could be built:

Deep in the forests, in the most rural and remote parts of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau the semi-colonised retained and, often, recreated their cultures and reinvented their ethnic identities. Cabral asserted that it was these untapped aspects of precolonial and traditional culture that should be built on in the interest of developing anti-colonial, cultural, and a new "national" transethnic consciousness.

(Rabaka 2014: 225)

As cultural anthropologist Derek Pardue argues, “Kriolu rappers in their performances are doing identity work as they contribute to cultural production” (2014: 54). Even though Pardue’s work is focused on Lisbon’s diaspora, rap in Rotterdam is similarly an instrument for identity work. Armed with a microphone, Fidjuz di Cabral navigate a historical field of references in which a connection is made with Africa as an identity and a specific space, drawing on a consciousness of tradition and of consequent colonial oppression. It is a testimony to how urban space can serve as a field of reflection and connection in the diasporic context, a space through which historical, cultural and political references are ever-present and re-worked through contemporary forms of expression that then find their way into nighttime performances as a form of myth-making, whether at Voz di Rua or elsewhere.

The representations present in rap performances elicit a space, or multiple spaces that overlap and cross, bringing urban space into a dialogue, a negotiation, a crossing of cultures. Indeed, as cultural theorist Stuart Hall mentions, “we should think of identity as a ‘production’ which is never complete, always in process, and always constituted within, not outside, representation” (2014: 222). Although Hall’s ideas here refer to an analysis of Caribbean cinema, the same issue of representation is equally important in rap videos and performances such as the one described. Rap can be seen as a zone of productive encounters that produce identities and identifications. These encounters draw on “common historical experiences and shared cultural codes” (1990: 223) that generate a sense of fixedness, a rootedness, whether in specific ideas, images or histories. Identities are, in this sense, not produced so much by historical facts per se, but by processes of “re-telling” histories, or by what Hall calls an “act of imaginative rediscovery” (2014: 224).

In the context of the Rotterdam Cabo Verdean diaspora’s rap scene, hip-hop artists indeed produce images, sounds and texts that “offer a way of imposing an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation” (2014: 224). By claiming “we

are Africans” or “we are Cabo Verdeans” artists create a sense of unity that connects them and their craft to what can be considered a land of origin, as a source of identity. Rap offers an act of ‘positioning’ within a field of “unstable points of identification or suture” (Hall 2014: 226). Indeed, the fast flows of rap that seamlessly connect different cultural elements, histories, figures and places is quite appropriately described as a process of suture in which the modern sounds and flows of hip-hop carry cultural references into the urban landscape and generate a patchwork of belonging: ‘we are here but we are also [from] there’.

As Cikay highlights in the context of hip-hop performances throughout the city of Rotterdam, the night is a crucial point of departure for his creative endeavours:

We organise many spectacles and activities at night, we can’t work out our ideas during the day, or during weekdays... We have the advantage of utilising the night, the night carries night ‘life’ here in Rotterdam, because at night Rotterdam is a wonderful city, with all its lights inside and outside. I have worked at festivals in the nighttime streets of Rotterdam, it’s just like in the movies. (Costa 2021, translation added)

The quote above emphasises the importance of the night for artists, as a time-space in which both productivity and creativity can develop. For many artists who also work elsewhere during the day, the night inspires other sensations and connections beyond those permitted in our ‘9 to 5’ identities. Just as Fidjuz di Cabral evokes a field of references in their music, these references are also embodied in hip-hop nights in nighttime spaces like Voz di Rua, as is visible in the images of live performances in Figures 7 and 8, where iconography and symbolism are visible which ground the performances in a specific socio-political space.



Figure 7: Hip-hop performance at Voz di Rua. Courtesy of Cikay Lucio da Costa



Figure 8: Cikay performing at Voz di Rua. Courtesy of Cikay Lucio da Costa

In Figure 7, several of Cikay's colleague rappers perform in front of the highly symbolic post-independence flag of Cabo Verde, replaced in 1992, which today still symbolises a Pan-African ideal to many Cabo Verdeans at home and in the diaspora. This backdrop is often found in videoclips, concerts and performances, and draws on an idea of unity. In Figure 8 we find Cikay performing during the same night. He is wearing a necklace bearing two representations of Amílcar Cabral, one of them imprinted on the African continent. This

represents this same Pan-African ideal, as well as signalling Cabo Verdean rap's connection to Cabral's cultural legacy.

Rap and routes

As has become clear in the previous paragraphs, rap connects with the context of the home country. Even though the figure of Cabral, for example, is an important element in the song previously discussed, it is not only the history of the homeland that is re-worked and rediscovered in rap. In the song below, titled 'CABOROFFA', the history of the diasporic experience and the formation of the community serves as an important reference point:

Na anus 40 Berdianus tchiga Roterdôn
Marinherus di vapor ki binha di Santanton,
Sanicolão y Soncente y otus ilhas di kauberdi
Ês dexe pa tráz miseria, problema fomi y sedi
Di porton di nós ilhas di tchiga Portu di 010
[...]

Roterdôn dja bira kaza ku un novu sol y novu lua
Ta mata sodadi ku kansôns di Morabeza
Cabo-Verde Show, Bana y Cesária Évora
Primeru gerasôn di gravasôn di nós kanson
Cabral flá Djunga, kultura ké ruvlusôn
Musika ké salvason, di rap ti tradisôn
Pa Cabo-Verde y Roterdôn keli é un didikasôn.

Since the forties Cabo Verdeans arrived in Rotterdam
Steam sailors who came from Santo-Antão,
São Nicolau and São Vicente and the other islands of Cabo Verde
Leaving behind misery, hunger and thirst
From the port of our islands we arrived to the ports of 010
[...]

Rotterdam became a home with a new sun and a new moon
We overcome homesickness with the songs of Morabeza,
Cabo Verde Show, Bana and Cesária Évora
The first generation of recordings of our songs
Cabral told Djunga, culture is the revolution
Music is the salvation, from rap to tradition
To Cabo Verde and Rotterdam, this is a dedication.

(Liga di MC's 2016b, translation added)⁴

⁴ Lyrics were provided in crioulo by Cikay Lucio da Costa

If, following Hall, we consider identity as a production that is continuous, it is logical that its sources of identification, which can be found in place(s), are various, able to shift and contain some kind of inherent fluidity. The ‘I’ is formed and is in different places at the same time. In the construction of a ‘narrative of the past’, a multiplicity of places and narratives thereof intertwine. In line with Gilroy (1993) and historian James Clifford (1997), the idea of the Cabo Verdean nation is much less connected to a fixed root, but to routes, which intersect in contemporary hip-hop: The title of the song, CABOROFFA, is a compound word that combines Cabo (Verde) and Roffa, slang for Rotterdam, a collaboration between ten Cabo Verdean-Rotterdam MCs and rappers (paralleling Cabo Verde’s ten islands) called Liga di MCs (‘League of MCs’).

As Cikay explains:

Most of the rappers in the group are Cabo Verdeans born here on the ‘island’ of Rotterdam, that’s how they call it, it’s one of the islands of Cabo Verde. Automatically, we started talking about Rotterdam in Cabo Verdean creole, this was the dedication for the sound of CABOROFFA, it’s a dedication to Rotterdam, but also to Cabo Verdeans from our ‘island’ Rotterdam. CABOROFFA is a way to celebrate unity, of all small Cabo Verdean communities around the world, the ‘islands’, it’s not just ten, there are many. (Costa 2021, translation added)

Connecting both places, the song alludes to the rich history of travel between the island of Cabo Verde and the urban ‘island’ of Rotterdam that began with the arrival of a few sailors in the European port city. Indeed, this song draws on what has become a ‘foundational’ narrative or myth, one that is retold and remembered by many and in many cultural productions and

events, and then reworks that narrative into the urban structure of the city: “I wanted to take this image, of Rotterdam ‘the city’, and Rotterdam, ‘the urban city’, which is a creative city full of paintings, graffiti and paintings from all over the city” (Costa 2021, translation added). As will become clear in the next chapter, this narrative, and the experiences of sailors arriving, passing through and living in the city was an important theme in music of the 1960s, 1970s and to a lesser extent, the 1980s. Not only did artists record experiences of travel, but parallel to their transnational routes they gave insights into the routes through the city and the daily and nocturnal rhythms of the city, both in work life and nightlife. CABOROFFA reworks the motifs of migration, ‘misery, hunger and thirst’ as a reflection that transcends generations: ‘we arrived at the ports of 010’, the Dutch governmental area code for Rotterdam, where travel becomes a common identifier between generations.

At the same time, the song maps out the night and music culture that developed in Rotterdam, starting with the establishment of Morabeza Records. Bana arrived in the Netherlands to work with Voz de Cabo Verde, after which he moved to Portugal, though he remained a frequent performer at another nightclub in Rotterdam, Habanera, which will be discussed in the last chapter. Cesária Évora, Cabo Verde’s most decorated artist, recorded her first album with Morabeza Records, then still known as Casa Silva. Interestingly, CABOROFFA also mentions Cabo Verde Show, who did not record under the Morabeza Records label. The group recorded their first album only in 1977, under the Monte Cara label which was set up by Bana while he was living in Portugal. The group also later recorded under several labels in Portugal and France. The group gained great fame within the Cabo Verdean diaspora worldwide and as such they form part of a memory of nightlife and culture in the Dutch diaspora as well. The song actively tries to make a link between rap and tradition, a kind of continuation of the track record from what are now considered ‘classic’ artists, to the modern Cabo Verdean music culture in which rap plays an important role. It

does so by connecting different generations, places, and histories: the arrival of sailors to the city flows into the music culture of Morabeza Records, connected to Cabral's cultural struggle, flowing into contemporary rap as a patchwork of references and narratives, represented and performed in the urban landscape of Rotterdam.

In addition to the moments and places that can be described as historical, rap also stakes a claim to significant Cabo Verdean city-spaces of today. As the backdrop for the video clip of his song 'Nos e que Nos' ('It's us') Rotterdam-born Leovegildo Vieira, known artistically as Vieira Nkosi, uses an icon of the Cabo Verdean community in Rotterdam, Club São Nicolau.⁵ Club São Nicolau is one of the few island-specific Cabo Verdean cultural clubs that has survived until now. It was established in 1979, by two men from the island of São Nicolau, and was originally a football club meant to bring islanders together in the diaspora. In the 70s, 80s and 90s there were a multitude of clubs and associations based around islands of origin, though few still exist. Club São Nicolau is one of the remainder, and still has a clubhouse, now located at the Admiraal de Ruyterweg in the centre of Rotterdam. It is not a



Figure 9: Leovegildo Vieira in Club São Nicolau, in Nos e que nos videoclip

⁵ There are various ways in which São Nicolau is spelled (Saniklau, San Nicolau, San Niklau). I adhere to São Nicolau, as this is the spelling the club maintains.

football club anymore, however; instead it serves as a cultural centre which organises music and dance evenings, football match viewings and a platform through which entrepreneurs, authors and other figures from the community can showcase their work.

In *Nos e que Nos*, Vieira immerses the viewer into the venue of the Club São Nicolau. It starts with an image of a man unfurling the current flag of Cabo Verde, alternating this with the faces of first-generation Cabo Verdeans visiting the club and with conversations had with visitors. The clip continuously changes, showing at times an inside view of the club, with people drinking and talking, and of images on its walls, intermingled with images of the islands of Cabo Verde, with workers processing sugar cane and a statue of Cabral, thus highlighting the deep connections between the two locations. As Vieira explains,

If I had to choose a favourite pub, it would be Club São Nicolau... now I just go there occasionally. Sometimes I just cycle past, I end up there and I stay for hours. For me personally, it's sacred ground, there is such a connection for me. The interior is exactly as it was when I was three, nothing has changed there. The same carpet, walls, furniture... The older generation is still coming... When I tell them who my parents are, or who my grandfather was, "Oh! Are you a grandson of his! I know him!" then the stories emerge... When I say who my father is, then the stories come, here or on São Nicolau, in my father's village. (Vieira 2021, translation added)

Connecting to the story of the club in the centre of Rotterdam, Vieira switches to the context of the island of São Nicolau as the birthplace of his father, emphasising the importance of locally known family relations and names and the connection to place of birth, drawing a direct line between this place on the island, and Club São Nicolau. He further explains:

My name is Leovegildo Vieira, but that doesn't work in São Nicolau, because then they still don't know who I am. There I am Leo, of 'Djo' of 'Mambá' and 'Toiquinha', Djo is my father, but which Djo? There are many of them. But I am Djo of Mambá, my grandmother, and Toiquinha, my grandfather. Toi is a diminutive form of Antonio, but he is Toi Quinha, Quinha was my great-grandmother. So, I introduce myself around my father's village on that side of the island as Leo de Djo de Mambá e Toi Quinha, so I've been taking four generations with me. And then people say, "Ooooooooooh those!" And on my mother's side of the island it's Leo de Antonita de Mari de Luz e nha Chico again... 'Ooh them! Are you their grandchild!' I don't know any better, I just throw it out. (Vieira 2021, translation added)

Following Massey's concept of space as a "porous network of social relations", a phrase which emphasises that the identities of place are constructed through "the specificity of their interaction with other places" (1994: 121), it is important to note the interweaving of places, languages and social relations evident in the conversation above. We see a continuation of local Cabo Verdean manners, where Nkosi figures out certain family lines according to a connection of names and generations. This process at the same time highlights the importance of local spaces such as cultural clubs in the city as a beacon of Cabo Verdeanness (or perhaps 'São Nicolauness'), where one talks about the past and thus strengthens family ties, acquaintances are rekindled and one can dwell in memories, facilitating and strengthening the connection with the homeland and those from there.

Language as performance of identity

Cabo Verdean rap can indeed be seen as a re-discovery of the past, of a re-working that is not always loyal to the chronology of history but instead to a merging of elements that assume significance for future generations. As mentioned before, rappers do identity work through performance, and language is significant in this process:

Kriolu is a hermeneutics for (inter)cultural understanding. More specifically, it is the medium through which local youth of Cape Verdean heritage reckon the ambiguous but nonetheless powerful discourses of being “African,” “Cape Verdean,” “black,” “European,” “Portuguese,” “an immigrant,” or part of the “Lusophone community” (*lusofonia*). (Pardue 2014: 54)

In addition to the historical awareness exhibited in the preceding fragments, Pardue refers to the negotiation that takes place in rap through the Cabo Verdean Creole language, Kriolu.⁶ Although he also writes from the context of Cabo Verdean rappers in Portugal, many of the same forms of subjectivity coincide and emerge in the fragments analysed in this work. These subjectivities are informed and shaped by both national and continental identities, by historical processes, by displacement and by work: African, Cabo Verdean, but also revolutionary, sailor and migrant. These are part and parcel of the different facets of identity negotiated in rap.

⁶ The terms ‘Cabo Verdean creole’ and Kriolu are both used in this thesis, referring to the language spoken on Cabo Verde and in the diaspora. When other terms are used, such as ‘creole’, it is in the context of use by other authors or interviewed participants.

Vieira Nkosi emphasises the importance of Kriolu in exploring one's own identity:

I have been making music in Dutch for a long time, I put that aside for a while and now I am fully engaged in Cabo Verdean. It's another way to engage with the language. I've always spoken it, but you go into it deeper, you have to play with how you want to word things and so on. I am discovering my own Cabo Verdean identity in it, investigating, because what does it actually mean to be Cabo Verdean? There is not a Cabo Verdean identity, it is multidimensional. My role as a 'Son of Migrants' ('Fidjus di Migrante'), that's the name of my Cabo Verdean-language album that I'm working on, I'm exploring my dimension and adding it to the whole spectrum of Cabo Verdean identity. (Vieira 2021, translation added)

The excerpt above highlights the importance of language for a generation not born in Cabo Verde in supporting the process of identity formation. Nkosi emphasises the multidimensionality of being Cabo Verdean by asking how one is Cabo Verdean as a son of migrants to the Netherlands. Language, in this sense, reflects the influences of local culture on the diaspora, raising questions about what it means to be a Cabo Verdean born in the diaspora, compared to those that were born in Cabo Verde. Equally, performing in Kriolu as a Rotterdam-born Cabo Verdean is a means to 'mark your presence': "it is a kind of assertiveness, letting people know where you come from, you often see that in rap" (Vieira 2021, translation added). As Pardue argues in the context of Cabo Verdean rappers in Portugal, Cabo Verdean-ness is "entangled in the performance of Kriolu" (Pardue 2015: 9). In the fragment above, rap can be seen as a performance of Kriolu presence. Performing in Kriolu creates a 'visibility of difference', where membership both within and outside Dutch society is negotiated. It lays claim to the necessity of 'being there', while also claiming a

space in the context of cross-cultural encounters in spaces where people are often unaware of any Cabo Verdean presence in the Netherlands:

I always did a song in Cabo Verdean, that was part of my repertoire.

You were simply going to know that I'm Cabo Verdean, I don't care if you've never heard of it, especially because you don't know I'm going to do it, so that in Nijmegen, or in Tilburg, they know who Cabo Verdeans are. [...] It is such a big part of me that I have to say things in a language that you don't know. I can't do it in the language you understand. I want people to understand that, "There is still a whole world outside of my world". (Vieira 2021, translation added)

The 'it' here refers to both the language, Kriolu, and to being Cabo Verdean. Not only is language an important instrument to create a personal demarcation of presence in the Dutch migratory context or to generate a sense of 'being there', but it is also a way to honour and represent the history of the community and to seek recognition, especially beyond Rotterdam. As Leovegildo discusses his work he relates it to his parents: "I want it to bring a piece of recognition for them. I want to write on the wall 'I was here, but my parents were here too!'" (Vieira 2021, translation added.)

Broederliefde's rise to fame in the Dutch music scene

Although Cabo Verdean hip-hop is generally little known in the Dutch scene, one group has gained prominence. Broederliefde ('brotherly love') is a hip-hop group consisting of a core group of four singers and a DJ. Three of the group have a Cabo Verdean background, while one is Antillean and one is Dominican. The group broke a record set by Dutch folk singer Frans Bauer, with their album *Hard Work Pays Off II* securing the number one spot on the album hit-list for fourteen consecutive weeks in 2016. As such, the album became the longest-

running Number One Dutch-language album. The two hits with which the group broke through in the Netherlands were ‘Alaka’ and ‘Labanta’. Remarkably, neither of these two songs have Dutch titles, and the latter is even sung entirely in Cabo Verdean creole. Alaka, a Surinamese word, translates to ‘all this shit’, while Labanta is Cabo Verdean creole for ‘stand up’. Their hybrid music style, which bears Cabo Verdean, Antillean, Surinamese, Dominican and various other influences, has had an enormous impact on Dutch hip-hop culture and has become immensely popular in Dutch club culture.

In *Cabosound*, part of a documentary on Dutch hip-hop culture, Jerr, one of the group’s members, demonstrates how Cabo Verdean music (including tracks by Cesária Évora and Chando Graciosa) is incorporated into their beats by slowly blending a *funaná* sound into a mainstream hip-hop beat on a mixing panel. With Broederliefde’s immensely popular presence in Dutch hip-hop culture the visibility of Cabo Verde has found its way into youth culture, and into nightlife:

In our music you hear a lot of Cabo Verdean influences, we are guys that play a lot with those sounds. Most of what we use comes from zouk style, morna, funaná. ‘Jongens uit de Cité’ [‘Boys from the City’], which comes from a song by Cesária Évora and Tito Paris, those are numbers that we actually sampled... (Cabosound 2021, translation added)

Even though one member admits that the group is perhaps not part of the Cabo Verdean scene, their original style possesses recognisable influences from what is today regarded as traditional Cabo Verdean music. The group released two well-received songs entirely in Cabo Verdean creole, ‘Labanta’ and ‘Moral’, both of which feature clips shot in Cabo Verde. In addition many of their other songs contain fragments and words from Cabo Verdean creole,

Spanish, Papiamentu and Surinamese, which is characteristic of this ethnically diverse group who grew up in Spangen, a multicultural neighbourhood within the Delfshaven borough of Rotterdam. In this sense, Broederliefde's music bridges the gap between different cultural forms, resulting in a hybrid style that has conquered the popular Dutch hip-hop scene. As such, they have brought Cabosound into popular Dutch nightlife.

Cultural Festivals - São João

As has been discussed previously, since the start of migration to the Netherlands, music culture has consistently played an important role in the Cabo Verdean community's identity. Starting with get-togethers in people's homes, a music scene appeared that was at first connected strongly to the political situation in Cabo Verde, and which later helped Rotterdam become Cabo Verde's music capital. The connectedness to Cabo Verde's history of a decolonial struggle leading to independence, to Cabral's legacy, as well as to imaginaries of migration and homeland, are much present in contemporary culture. As Brah mentions, "all diasporic journeys are composite" and as such are "embarked upon, lived and relived through multiple modalities" such as "gender, 'race', class, religion, language and generation" (1996: 183-184). Even though these modalities are indeed able to differentiate and generate a multiplicity of identifications within a particular (diasporic) group or culture, the opposite is also true, as these modalities can generate a sense of belonging and togetherness through specific symbols that come to be accepted, celebrated and recognised in a more community-wide fashion.

Much related to the formation of a common identity are the religious celebrations of São João Baptista that take place every year around June 24 on the Heemraadsplein, playing a fundamental role in gathering and reuniting Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam. In Christianity, Islam, and Mandaic, São João Baptista - Saint John the Baptist - is hailed as the prophet

who foresaw the birth of Jesus Christ and later baptised him. In Cabo Verde and other Portuguese-speaking countries São João is celebrated during the *Festas Juninas* ('June Festival'), with a mass held annually on June 24. This is a remnant of the colonial past during which Portugal imposed its religions, customs, and celebrations upon colonised populations. In Cabo Verde the celebrations have subsequently adopted elements of native religions and traditions, such as the *kolá* dance, described below, evidencing a rich cultural-religious syncretism.

In Rotterdam the São João Festival commemorates the religious feast day with food, culture and different kinds of performances presented in a party extending well into the evening. Very particular to the celebrations in Rotterdam, though, is São João's connection to the square, which itself has played a remarkable role as a community space over time. For this reason, before analysing the specifics of the São João Festival, I will discuss the history of the square as it demonstrates the centrality of place in the formation of a community.

A place to remember - Pracinha

Throughout the entire history of migration, one place in the city has consistently remained known as a space of encounter for the Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam. In the centre of the Heemraadssingel, in the Delfshaven district, is located the Heemraadsplein. The square lies at the heart of this historically Cabo Verdean district, with a majority of the diaspora community living in and around the streets connecting to the square. In 2001 the square was officially given a second name, Pracinha d'Quêbrod, by the then-mayor Ivo Opstelten and prominent members of the Cabo Verdean community. The name translates roughly to 'Square of the Broken Ones' or 'Poor man's Square', reflecting its historical role as "a focal point of the Cape Verdean community" (Carling 2008: 91) since the first generation of immigrants arrived in the 1950s and 1960s. The square became a place for seafarers to go to whenever they were

broke, unable to find work and wanted to meet fellow Cabo Verdeans to share their misfortunes and their longing for the homeland. There are many Cabo Verdean cafés around the Nieuwe Binnenweg, a street that also passes along the square, and these also served mostly as a meeting points and outlets for men, but for those who did not have money to visit the cafés, the ‘Pracinha’ served as their gathering space (Strooij 1996: 69). As of today, it is still considered an important community space.

In an online cultural magazine focused on important places and figures in Cabo Verde and the diaspora, Paris-based Cabo Verdean sociologist Luiz Silva compares the social role of the square for those in the diaspora with Praça Estrela in Mindelo, the capital of the island of São Vicente, in the 1960s: “you would meet kids, youngster and adults, to talk about anything, mainly about football, carnival groups, lovers, etcetera. On Mondays, football was discussed and on Saturday, the lovers” (Silva 2011, translation added). More importantly for the diaspora, however, the Pracinha d’Quêbrod was quickly appropriated to serve as a place to touch base with fellow countrymen:

When the Cabo Verdeans, autonomously, and thanks to the twelve apostles of emigration to the Netherlands, were leaving clandestinely from Porto Grande for a shelter to organise the liberation of Cabo Verde from droughts and hungers, from the route of São Tomé e Príncipe and the Portuguese colonisation, they arrived in Amsterdam (Jerusalem of the North) and Rotterdam. They needed their own spaces to meet each other and exchange information about work, politics, and to organise cultural and sports activities. For those who knew the situation of our newly arrived emigrants in the late fifties and early sixties in Holland and the importance of having a meeting place where one could find a friend and the solidarity of brothers, this

Square, which the Cabo Verdeans named “Pracinha d’Quêbrod”, had its own special history in the Cabo Verdean migration. (Silva 2011, translation added)

The ‘twelve apostles’, Silva refers to are the first group of men who crossed the sea towards the Netherlands, a group which included pivotal figures such as João Silva and Constantino Delgado. These ‘apostles’ laid the foundations for many others to take refuge in the Netherlands, whether for political or economic reasons. Silva also refers to Amsterdam as the ‘Jerusalem of the North,’ calling on the city’s status as a place of migration for many Jews (mainly Sephardic and Marrano), who have settled in the city since the sixteenth century. Prominent Jewish authors such as Daniel Levi de Barrios (c.1625 - 1701) already named the city ‘the Jerusalem of the North’ at that time. The name reflected its centrality in the formation of a Jewish community and its cultural identity (Mintz-Manor 2017), but also emphasised the relative safety in which Jews were able to live there as a diasporic community. Silva thus draws a link between the two cities in their function as safe havens for persecuted migrants.

But although Cabo Verdean seamen did indeed arrive in Amsterdam, this was not their largest mooring place, with most finding their feet instead in Rotterdam. And when recently arrived sailors lacked an address to stay at, such as a boarding house, they were often sent to the square to meet other Cabo Verdeans who could help them on their way. The square quickly became a regular meeting place. Whether on Praça Estrela in Cabo Verde or Pracinha d’Quêbrod in Rotterdam, Silva meets the same acquaintances and friends and engages in conversations that reveal relevant cultural and political references of the time:

And there we find old friends from Praça Estrela like Deiza, brother of the Castilian tennis player Marcolino “Naraus”, killed in a great

shipwreck, Amâncio, Djosa de Bernarda, Rui de Tuda, each proudly defending his Cabo Verdean team and not Portugal, as they do today. There is talk of the arrival of the emigrants in the late fifties and early sixties and of the people who organised our emigration, and in particular the founders of the community; the Cabo Verdean football teams from Rotterdam and Cabo Verde; the creation of “Voz de Cabo Verde” and the newspaper “Nôs Vida” (which needs to be reissued due to its role in the liberation struggle); the problems of other Cabo Verdean communities in the world; the social agents who found work on boats for Cabo Verdeans; Dutch people (like Maria Grega and Papa Dedona who helped Cabo Verdeans a lot); the participation of emigrants in economic, social and cultural transformations, from the end of the fifties. (Silva 2011, translation added)

In this panoramic view of the square, Silva captures its role in facilitating interaction and conversations among Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam, as a space of familiarity and connection with acquaintances and friends. A history of community is formed through conversations around the most important figures in the community and through colloquial discussions on football that reveal affiliations with the identity of a soon-to-be or recently independent Cabo Verde, where Silva curiously states that in Cabo Verde they would still support Portugal. Some discuss the political magazine *Nôs Vida*, issued by the Rotterdam-based *Associação Caboverdiana* with its close ties to the liberation movement, as briefly mentioned before. Conversation also discusses nightlife, in which *Voz de Cabo Verde* played a major role in Rotterdam. The square evidences what Massey has called the “mix of links and interconnections” of a place to a ‘beyond’ (1994: 5). Everyday spaces such as *Pracinha* make connections with other places and events possible. The beyond, in this case, is located in the

stories and imaginations of Cabo Verde, its diaspora, and Rotterdam, and the global-local interactions between these places.

The relevance of the square is also highlighted in the Rotterdam-Cabo Verdean discography. Rotterdam-based artist Américo Brito released his LP *Sintado na Pracinha* (‘Sitting on the square’) in 1980, which contains a song with the same title narrating an encounter on the Pracinha with a fellow Cabo Verdean. One encourages the other to go back to Cabo Verde with him, “to see our mothers and our lovers” (Brito 1980, translation added):

Cintad na pracinha quand bo txiga na mim,
Bo flam pa nos bai, pa nos terra Cabo Verde ...
Pam bai pa unde? Pa nos terra Cabo Verde
Pam bai pa unde? Pa nos terra Cabo Verde...

Sitting in the square when you came to me
And you were telling me, to return to our land Cabo Verde
Where are you going? To our land Cabo Verde.
Where are you going? To our land Cabo Verde.

(Brito 1980, translation added)

In this song, the square functions as a place in which *sodade*, the feeling of loss and homesickness that is often central to Cabo Verdean music in the diaspora when referring to the homeland, is processed.

The role of this square is further emphasised in a documentary which was published in 2007 about Brito’s life, titled *Rotterdam Saudade* (‘Rotterdam longing’). In one scene on the Pracinha, two men are having a conversation about how many children they have in Cabo Verde and Rotterdam when Brito walks by. He asks the men if they are reminiscing about the past on Pracinha, and one says they were remembering the old friendships and the conviviality of the past. The other then describes his memory of Pracinha: “I was working, but in my spare time I came here to talk about Cabo Verde. About the nostalgia for Cabo Verde” (Thelosen 2007, translation added). The first man also speaks of the necessity of such a space

in which to share struggles of poverty, joblessness and hopelessness, especially in times of crisis:

There were many people who because of the crisis could not return to the islands. They couldn't afford a plane ticket and they were ashamed to return empty-handed. Without gifts for your wife and your children you couldn't go home. Here we talked about these things. About sodade and some news. News about the family, and such things. It was all discussed here. (Thelosen 2007, translation added)

In the documentary, after hearing the conversation between the two men, and wrapped in this context and standing on the square, Brito starts singing 'Sintado na Pracinha', entangling the different sentiments that the men exchanged into an in-situ performance.

The celebration(s) of São João Baptista

In Rotterdam, even though the Festas Juninas are not celebrated *en masse*, since the beginning of migration to the Netherlands Cabo Verdean migrants have organised São João celebrations often simply as an informal way of getting together. Historically it was particularly celebrated by male labourers and sailors as a means to come together, but during the development and growth of the diaspora a more diverse audience appeared, including women and children. One of the first organisers of São João in Rotterdam, Manuel Felipe Rodrigues, described the festival in a personal interview: "everyone went, they took their children, lemonade, croquets, pastries, catchupa⁷, it was cultural" (2019, translation added). It was only later, in the 1980s, that the Cabo Verdean club Associação Centro Cultural ('Cultural Centre Association') started organising the celebrations in a more structured, officialised manner. One of the main members of this early Cabo Verdean association in Rotterdam, nicknamed Piduca, confirms

⁷ Catchupa is a traditional Cape Verdean stew with beans.

that their goal was to preserve and maintain Cabo Verdean Culture in Rotterdam, and to activate people, get them out of their homes and bring them together, to convey knowledge about the culture and through culture (São João Rotterdam 2020).

Today, São João in Rotterdam is an event that brings together thousands of Cabo Verdeans in the diaspora. In Cabo Verde, however, the social context in which the festival is celebrated still reveals a class issue, as mentioned by Carlos Gonçalves:

In Mindelo and other cities it was forbidden to celebrate São João in the city centre. It was a party for poor people, and therefore it was celebrated in the outskirts of Cabo Verdean cities. But here in the Netherlands the celebration took on a different dimension, it became a celebration of the community, and everyone felt connected by Sanjon, while in Cabo Verde it was also a class issue, it was more an event for the poor than for the middle classes and better-off people. (São João Rotterdam 2020, translation added)

Indeed, Portuguese authorities strictly forbade deviant cultural expressions, as discussed before, and the celebrations of São João were no exception. With room for free cultural expression in Rotterdam, São João was able to develop into a major event in the diaspora. Even though Gonçalves notes that it was mainly workers and sailors looking for a better life who came to the Netherlands, and in that sense they would have belonged to a poorer layer of Cabo Verdean society, in the diaspora the event is celebrated by people from all islands and different substrata of society, all congregating at the Pracinha.

The longstanding tradition of São João celebrations on the Heemraadsplein even led to the designation of São João as *Immaterieel Erfgoed* ('intangible heritage') of the Netherlands in June 2019 by the national Kenniscentrum Immaterieel Erfgoed ('Knowledge Centre for

Intangible Heritage’). The organisation’s website describes the start of the celebration as follows:

The celebration of Saint John the Baptist starts with the collection of the statue of Saint John the Baptist in the Saint Victor Church in Waddinxveen. The collection of the statue refers to the ritual in Cape Verde, where the statue of the saint is also fetched from the highlands, after which it passes all the villages before being brought to its final destination, the parish. On Saturday morning the statue is rigged by a local florist. At the Sociedade Cultural Caboverdiana the *tambores* and the *navio*, a miniature ship, are prepared and decorated. At noon, the religious celebration starts with a church service in honour of the birthday of Saint John the Baptist. (Kenniscentrum Immaterieel Erfgoed Website n.d.)

The celebrations have not always included the same rituals as described above. The first celebrations had no central organisation, and simply involved sailors coming together on the square to play drums, the so called *tambores*, and catch up. It was only with later organisations that a procession similar to that of Cabo Verde was added, seeking to revive and mirror elements belonging to the islands’ cultural heritage.

The revival of traditions plays an important role for Cabo Verdeans in the diaspora, including those not born and raised in Cabo Verde, and allows them to feel connected to the culture of the islands. In the context of myth-making, the tradition in Rotterdam was in fact produced or *made*. It did not exist previously, yet it elicits a particular imagination of the homeland by re-enacting the procession ritual. As anthropologist Marta Maffia argues in the context of the Cabo Verdean diaspora in Argentina, “descendants of Cape Verdeans have also

drawn upon memories that are not their own, memories which legitimise them as Cape Verdeans, recovering and reinventing traditions” (2008: 51). Rituals serve to connect and bind members of a particular diaspora to common cultural references and thus to find ways to ‘ground’ a diasporic identity in these. The day continues:

After the service, a procession takes place in which the statue is carried to the Heemraadsplein. The procession is attended by the churchgoers, the drummers, the one chosen to carry the nave, but also by those who for one reason or another could not attend mass. A traditional Kola San Jon dance is also performed. Arriving at the square, the statue is placed on an altar, after which the cultural activities begin on the square. Visitors can become acquainted with Cape Verdean culture through activities for young and old, culinary specialties, performances from home and abroad, exhibitions and storytellers. (Kenniscentrum Immaterieel Erfgoed Website n.d.)

Similar to the celebration in Cabo Verde, the statue of Saint John the Baptist is accompanied on its journey by a large crowd, a group of drummers, and a man bearing a miniature ship around his waist which he carries towards the Heemraadsplein, symbolising good sailing for this traditionally seafaring people. During the traditional Kolá San Jon dance, men and women allow their bellybuttons and hips to collide in an act that symbolises sexual fertility. And after the more traditional celebrations of São João have concluded, mainstream festival elements are introduced, with stalls, performances, music, and other activities that go on until the beginning of the night.

The variety of performances during the festival is large, including acts from both older and younger generations and cultural expressions coming from different islands. Indeed, using

Brah's (1996: 183) words, "multiple journeys" configure how the diasporic community is imagined and represented throughout the day: the stage, for example, is first set for a traditional *batuko* group. *Batuko* is a call and response genre that is both a dance and an oral tradition in which women take turns to put themselves at the centre of a semi-circle and narrate everyday stories and events, often denouncing everyday violence and conditions, while the other members rhythmically hit a piece of folded cloth clamped between the legs. This tradition, which comes from the island of Santiago, was persecuted and prohibited by the Portuguese colonisers "because of its supposedly licentious dance moves" (Cidra 2018: 437). The genre found its revival after independence, including in the diaspora. As of today Rotterdam hosts several *batuko* groups, each of which can be regularly found at Cabo Verdean cultural events. Even though the tradition specifically originates from the island of Santiago, in the diaspora it is often celebrated as something pure and authentically Cabo Verdean and is in this sense seen more as a celebration of national identity than of an exclusively regional one.

Starkly contrasting with the traditionalism of *batuko*, São João Festival also includes third generation rap/hip-hop formations and artists, who touch on more common themes such as wealth and love, attracting a younger audience to the festival. The festival also hosts performances by artists from across the diaspora and the Netherlands, playing popular genres such as *coladeira*, *kizomba* and *funaná*. Indeed it is the combination of all these elements of Cabo Verdean culture, whether considered more traditional or modern, which 'makes' São João. As organiser Jorge Lizardo mentions: "nowadays we really show it, from Américo Brito to Jacqueline Fortes, they wouldn't be together with Broederliefde or Bollebof. Well, on São João, they are!" (São João Rotterdam 2020, translation added.) Both Jacqueline Fortes and Américo Brito are accomplished artists living in Rotterdam and performing traditional *morna*

and coladeira songs. Broederliefde and Cape-Verdean born rapper Bollebof, on the other hand, are very much popular in the contemporary Dutch urban music scene.

Online cultures: São João Digital

During the pandemic, the yearly celebration of São João also moved (partly) online, being rebranded as ‘São João Digital’. The festival’s digital edition still included traditional (and physically celebrated) elements, such as the carrying of the statue of Saint John the Baptist to the Pracinha d’Quêbrod, a performance by a group of drummers, and a man carrying the miniature ship. The online festival also included the dancing of the Kolá San Jon, even though the obligatory 1.5 meters distance was observed in recognition of the pandemic. It was also the 40th edition of São João, making it a special occasion particularly because the São João celebrations were officially added to the inventory of the Kenniscentrum Immaterieel Erfgoed, with the signing of official documents taking place during the digital edition, emphasising the status of this tradition.

The venue in which the digital edition was recorded and celebrated with just a few dozen guests, was the pop podium Grounds, which is located on the Pieter de Hoochweg in the Delfshaven district. It is located in the former office for the Loodswezen (‘Pilotage’) building, built in 1921, and thus is symbolically connected to the history of seafaring. It is also close to various historic points of reference for Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam, such as the maritime employment offices, colloquially known as the *barracas* (the ‘sheds’), which are sung about in numerous Cabo Verdean songs and which will be discussed in the next chapter on labour. It is also close to various mooring places at which workers arrived and departed. The link with the Cabo Verdean maritime tradition and the cultural legacy of pioneer sailors that arrived in Rotterdam is emphasised by organiser Jorge Lizardo in his introduction to the event:

The link with Rotterdam is the *navezinho*, the little boat that brought us to this great city, now our home. Cabo Verdeans have been coming here since the late 1940s and early 1950s. But not only the sailors, our culture has come along too. One of these heritages is Morabeza Records, and that's where the story of Cabo Verdean musicians begins. (São João Rotterdam 2020, translation added)



Figure 10: The set of São João Digital 2020, with just a handful of sound and image engineers, artists, and traditional decorations such as the altar visible at right.

In this sense, the digital edition was in large part also a homage to the first Cabo Verdean settlers in the Netherlands, and those that founded the São João celebrations. In the online component of the festival, space was given to honour those pioneers in the diaspora, as well as those who have contributed to the wellbeing of the community. A special theme of the 2020 edition was 'Rotterdam', for which several artists were invited to play not only their own music but also songs that narrate the story of migration towards Rotterdam and the lives of Cabo Verdeans in the city.

During São João, religious, cultural and musical elements are synchronised and celebrated. Importantly, in these celebrations a strong emphasis is placed on the spaces in which life in migration took place: in general, in the city of Rotterdam, but more specifically in certain parts of the city, such as the *pracinha*, the *barracas* and other places of significance for Cabo Verdeans. One of the artists invited was Américo Brito, who performed ‘*Sintado na Pracinha*’ (Sitting on the square). Another Rotterdam-based artist, Jacqueline Fortes, also interpreted one of her own songs, ‘*Viagem de Costa*’ (‘Coast Travel’), which will be analysed later, which discusses the importance of preserving Cabo Verdean traditions such as those found in the nightlife of Rotterdam. The celebration and reiteration of city spaces in which key processes of belonging and identity formation took place, often because of their day-to-day significance to a large group of migrants, are key to the continuation of a community’s narrative in the diaspora. This digital edition of São João showed not only how the city was imprinted in music, but how music was imprinted on the city, as these experiences of urban life were vocalised in live performances.

Of particular importance when considering day-to-day spaces, are spaces of work. Narratives of work life in Rotterdam (or the lack of work) are also extensively documented in music and other cultural forms. The next chapter will therefore zoom in on the key spaces, rhythms and routines of labour.



Chapter 4: The routines of work life in and around the city

Mar mar. Rotterdam mês de frio.
Bia, cretcheu na coração,
Ness cartinha nha dor dorid e esse nô na peito
Hoje, ta bai ta bai, Assim assim, pa graça de Deus,
Manhã, pa norte, de largada p'esse mund fôra. Longe longe d-riba de mar.

Sea sea, Rotterdam in a cold month...
Bia, my sweetheart,
In this letter I describe the pain I feel and the knot in my chest.
Today it's going okay, sort of, thank God.
Tomorrow, to the North, off to the world outside. Far, far away on sea.

(Tito Paris 1996, translation added)

In the song above, having recently arrived in the cold city of Rotterdam, a Cabo Verdean sailor sits down and writes a letter to his loved one, Bia. He misses her dearly, and struggles with his loneliness, although today he feels 'alright'. Tomorrow he is off again to sea. In 'Cartinha d'Holanda' ('A Letter from Holland'), singer, composer and multi-instrumentalist Tito Paris⁸ (b. 1963) describes the emotional distress that is part of the sailor's lifestyle experienced by many Cabo Verdean men in Rotterdam. It is a portrait of how some men must have felt when arriving to yet another foreign city after having spent months at sea. The city probably not only felt cold because of Dutch weather, but because of feelings of longing, non-belonging and absence felt on arriving to a distant and unknown place. This same sentiment comes forward in an interview with a sailor from the island of Santo Antão, who arrived in Rotterdam in 1974. When he finally went back to Cabo Verde he found that many of his family and friends had passed away:

I felt loss every day.

- You felt loss every day, what did you think of?

I thought about the future, about going back and seeing them again,

⁸ Tito Paris' birth name is Aristides José Paris. I choose to use the artist's name in this work because they are usually better known by these.

alive and well. Luckily I found uncle Antoninho, Bibi, Mana. The others had passed. (Santos Lima 2014, translation added)

The above excerpt only gives a small glimpse of the feelings experienced in migration and being in another country. Despite these feelings of loss and longing, the motive for most young men, especially in the beginning of migration to the Netherlands, was work. Many sought employment particularly with Dutch or international ships and shipping companies 'stationed' in Rotterdam.

This chapter seeks to understand how key places of work for Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam from the 1950s onwards until now have been represented and experienced. Places related to work life have become important cultural references in Cabo Verdean diasporic culture, and these representations feed into local nightlife and local cultures. Past places have become symbolic for the community and are embedded in the cultural world of Rotterdam's Cabo Verdeans, being expressed through various forms of culture that are most often performed in the after-hours. In particular music has played an active role in creating a narrative of the diasporic experience and constructing an imagery of urban life, displaying how the city was lived in and experienced even for those in Cabo Verde or other places in the diaspora. In their songs Cabo Verdean artists, who often sailed the world as maritime workers, comment on the experience of work life, both at sea and in Rotterdam. These artists reveal how the city was navigated for work, leisure and more, creating an imagery of city life in the 1960s and 1970s, and up until the late 1980s, of its daily and nightly rhythms and activities, both during and outside work hours. Seafaring life became less relevant for Cabo Verdeans over time and more people started working on land. For this reason, after the 1980s few songs are written about such experiences.

In the process of finding work newcomers had to find their way around this new city, and as such it was explored and experienced in several ways. In a practical sense, several offices and stations had to be visited in order to go to sea again. Sailors needed to find an employer, arrange the right paperwork to go to sea, and buy the necessary maritime equipment and clothing. At the same time, having arrived ashore after a long time at sea, new arrivals were eager to spend their spare time in the city's bars, cafés, nightclubs, and restaurants. The places where these men would find work, or find each other after work, have been remembered through music and elsewhere, passing from generation to generation.

Narratives of work life found in music and other cultural productions highlight how belonging and non-belonging is constructed in the city, and how related themes such as poverty, marginality and illegality are spatially represented. Cultural productions were (and still are) a means or a vehicle for reflection on the life experiences of labour for Cabo Verdean migrants, and simultaneously are an important instrument in constructing a diasporic identity based strongly on images of work life and lifestyles that involves a broader range of daily and nightly activities. Representations of urban life are not constructed solely from the day, even though images of hard-working sailors are prevalent in Cabo Verdean migrant cultural production. Instead, we must account for the daily rhythms and activities that take place in a 24/7 city where work (or at least the process of finding it) is strongly connected to activities and experiences that take place during the evening and night, as captured in various forms of representation. Navigating the nighttime of an unfamiliar city is as much part of a sailor's lifestyle as is going to sea, and it is a well-documented experience.

In the first part of this chapter I discuss the role of the boarding houses where Cabo Verdeans often stayed after arriving in the Netherlands, and their role in work life and the networks that were set up to support newcomers. I also discuss the experiences of daily life in the guesthouses visible in interviews, literature, and music. After a night's sleep in the

guesthouses, sailors must also visit another important place, the maritime employment offices, also known as the *barracas*. This section emphasises the daily and nighttime rhythms that revolved around the *barracas*, an important place in the collective memory of Cabo Verdeans which was repeatedly sung about in music of the era. The lifestyles of the sailor-musicians and worker-musicians will be emphasised, with the music scene getting underway in the early years of migration to Rotterdam as musicians sought a path towards professionalising their musical careers. This started with the formation of Morabeza Records and Voz de Cabo Verde.

Cabo Verdean music history in Rotterdam is also analysed through the documentary *Rotterdam Saudade* (2007), mentioned in the previous chapter, which traces a day in the life of singer Américo Brito while emphasising both transnational and local connections to place. In the final section of this chapter, I focus on women's migration to the Netherlands, their workplaces, and the role of narrative in giving visibility to women's stories in otherwise male-centric diasporic memory practices. This section reflects both on the historical course of migration as well as cultural productions that emphasise the female perspective.

Arrival, employment: a night's sleep.

The history of Cabo Verde is intrinsically connected to the sea, sailing and ships. As mentioned, under Portuguese colonial rule the islands served as a transit port for enslaved people from West African countries on their way westward to the United States, Brazil, and the West Indies. In the nineteenth century, to escape drought and famine many young Cabo Verdeans “seized the chance to leave home in search of a better life as crew members aboard the US whaling ships that were beginning to arrive at the archipelago’s protected harbours” (Halter 2008: 35). The tradition of maritime work established a particular pattern of migration visible in the places where Cabo Verdeans settled over time, even in the (late) twentieth and twenty-first centuries: “In many countries, Cape Verdean communities are concentrated not in the capitals or the largest cities, but in the principal port cities. Rotterdam (the Netherlands), Antwerp (Belgium), Hamburg (Germany) and Gothenburg (Sweden) are cases in point” (Batalha and Carling 2008: 16). Thus it is no surprise why Cabo Verdeans chose Rotterdam over other large Dutch cities such as The Hague or Amsterdam.

After the city’s devastating bombing by German forces in 1940, Rotterdam underwent reconstruction and swiftly became a rapidly developing and growing city, home to the largest port in the world between 1962 and 2004, before being surpassed by Singapore and Shanghai. The first Cabo Verdean pioneers started to arrive in the post-war period. In the documentary on the life of João Silva, *Sodade - Djunga’s Tiende Eiland* (2005), Silva speaks of his first time travelling to the Netherlands, in 1949: “the first time I arrived in the Netherlands, I don’t know where this was because the whole port area was flattened with bombs, it was a mess. But in 1955 it was already a bit different, and I signed off from ship here” (Barendrecht and Slingerland 2005, translation added). As he speaks he is pointing towards the quay of the Maashaven, now a berth for inland vessels in Rotterdam bustling with warehouses and silos.

In the 1960s, the influx of Cabo Verdean men to Rotterdam started to increase. A dozen Cabo Verdean men who went ahead of the rest, the so-called 12 apostles, spread the message that Rotterdam was a good place to moor. Men who came to the Netherlands were often fleeing Cabo Verde because of poverty and political oppression, escaping mandatory military service, and were attracted by the prospects of working for Dutch shipping companies and in stable living conditions. This is also what Mendes da Silva, introduced in the previous chapter, emphasised: “Holland had a lot of fame already. The Cabo Verdeans who came here proved that the Netherlands was a good place to work. They sent money to their families, and these led an easy life” (Mendes da Silva 2019, translation added). Indeed, in the post-war period the economy was growing and finding work on ships was still quite easy:

The shipping industry was booming in post-war Europe, and Rotterdam was where not only Dutch but also Norwegian, British, and German ships recruited their crews. In 1962, Rotterdam surpassed New York as the world’s largest port, and for the remainder of the century it handled more goods than any other port in the world. The high level of activity meant that many Cape Verdeans found work soon after they arrived. (Carling 2008: 92)

First Arrivals, First stops

Traveling to Rotterdam was often a huge undertaking, and many who did it had never before taken a step outside the borders of Cabo Verde. A common first step before arriving in Rotterdam, often recounted in stories by first generation Cabo Verdeans, was an initial boat trip to Lisbon. There, travellers would be received by either family members, acquaintances or boarding houses. Boarding house owners in Portugal were often familiar with the routes

that migrants took towards other countries in Europe, and often aided in arranging the necessary paperwork and travel options. Those that decided to come by train arrived at Rotterdam Central Station. In other cases, especially when travelling without papers or illegally, the route towards Rotterdam was more hazardous, and migrants were constantly vigilant of the authorities' watchful eye. In many of these cases, border control in the Netherlands was circumvented by crossing the border by foot.

Having arrived in the Netherlands, newcomers were often collected by acquaintances, fellow Cabo Verdeans or boarding house owners, and sent to one of the many Cabo Verdean boarding houses in the city. In later years, when more Cabo Verdeans had already settled in the city, newcomers also stayed with acquaintances and partners, sometimes with multiple families in one home. A network of established Cabo Verdeans would thus ensure that newcomers were eased into new territory and quickly found a place to stay, eat and work. Many of them had never been in another country, much less worked as a sailor on a large ship.

In 1970 Maria Antonieta Miranda and her husband Manuel opened the boarding house *Nossa Casa* ('Our Home') in the Graaf Florisstraat, quite close to Rotterdam Central Station, which they bought with money they won in a lottery in Lisbon. The boarding house had room for around 60 people. In her autobiography *Vechten voor Vrijheid: Levensverhaal van Maria Antonieta Miranda* ('Fighting for Freedom: The life story of Maria Antonieta Miranda'), Miranda explains that the young 'men' that came to Rotterdam were often still children when they arrived:

For a long time, we received young Cabo Verdeans that migrated even before they turned 16 and had to fulfil military service for the Portuguese army. Boys between the age of 14 and 16 came to

Rotterdam saying they went there to study. We offered them a roof over their heads and arranged paperwork at the city hall. But those boys did not come here to study, because they did not have the money. In factories they were not allowed to work because in those times compulsory education was until 16 years old. They went to sail for companies that accepted them, and there were plenty of those. (Zonneveld and Miranda 2014: 20, translation added)

As can be understood from the above excerpt, the boarding houses and boarding house owners played a major role in supporting newcomers, who often had barely grown up and who arrived without any knowledge of the language or the Dutch bureaucratic system. Many migrants came to the Netherlands without a legal work permit and lived in precarious conditions, often depending on the help of fellow nationals in the diaspora for housing, work and social contacts.

Key figures in the Dutch diaspora such as boarding house owners, as well as other lesser-known members of the community, helped new Cabo Verdeans on their way in this unknown city. As mentioned before, Silva established a ‘ship store’, while Constantino established the first Cabo Verdean boarding house in Rotterdam, Hotel Delta, where Cabo Verdean seafarers could stay and where recently arrived workers could be connected to shipping agencies. As a side-note, Silva also opened a boarding house in the same street as boarding house Nossa Casa. In the documentary *Sodade - Djunga’s Tiende Eiland*, Silva repeats the role of he and his friend Constantino for those that recently arrived:

Thanks to Constantino’s boarding house, those who arrived had accommodation and we tried to get them work on the boats. Usually, they arrived without documents, without work clothes, with nothing.

They did not know how to speak the language. We were responsible for taking care of them and helping them to find work. (Barendrecht and Slingerland 2005, translation added)



Figure 11: Inconspicuous between a snack bar and a private house, Hotel Delta 'sleeps' in 2021 © Seger Kersbergen

As cultural anthropologist Henny Strooij (1996) mentions, over the course of the 1960s a unique network developed for the reception of newcomers. To alleviate the initial financial needs, every Cabo Verdean contributed to a joint bank so that new arrivals always had something to eat. Most Cabo Verdean boarding house owners did not ask for money until they were certain that the newcomers had found work on the ships. Until then, their accommodation was free. Boarding house holders often had connections with shipping companies and other businesses, and used these networks in order to help recently arrived Cabo Verdeans along and to arrange maritime work (Strooij 1996), functioning as a link

between companies and new recruits. In this sense the boarding houses served as an important spoke between work and home, an intermediate station between the route to Rotterdam and the route to the sea. Written as an ode to Constantino Delgado's efforts for the community, in the book *De Mozes van Rotterdam* ('The Moses of Rotterdam') Mendes da Silva compares the role of boarding house owner Constantino Delgado to that of Moses. Whereas Moses led God's people from Egypt, across the Red Sea, to the Promised Land, Delgado did so from Cabo Verde, across the Atlantic, to hotel Delta in Rotterdam. Once they reached Rotterdam, Delgado was able to accommodate newly arrived sailors and offer them work:

In the Netherlands, Mr. Delgado was very well known to all shipping agencies and maintained very good relations with the personnel managers who recruited the crews for their ships. They had so much faith in him that usually when they needed crew members, they went to Delta for the personnel they needed.

It was almost always Mr. Delgado who took them to an agency in his car so that the signing on went smoothly. He spoke for them or acted as their interpreter. And often he brought them on board himself.

Whenever he thought it might be a bit uncomfortable for a first timer, he wanted to be there to help him get to know the commander and make sure he was in good hands and well received. By handing the novice over to the commander, he had a good opportunity to gauge what kind of man that commander was, so that he knew whether he should be concerned or be at ease. (Mendes Da Silva 2016, translation added)

Delgado was one of the first *koppelbazen* in Rotterdam specialising in working with the Cabo Verdean community of Rotterdam. A *koppelbaas* is a ‘matchmaker’ or ‘subcontractor’, and in this role Delgado served as an intermediary, connecting employers and employees for a fee. Although Delgado’s story is positive, there are many negative stories related to the industry, with subcontractors scamming vulnerable job seekers, which will be discussed later.

Beside recruiters going to agencies, they would also visit the boarding houses to find skilled sailors. Thus the boarding houses were situated within networks of workers, shipping companies, contractors and intermediaries, and enabled a flow of workers that would board both Dutch ships and those operating under different flags. So, even though the boarding houses are mostly seen as places of rest, sleep and a meeting place for Cabo Verdeans, they have also served as an essential spoke in ‘mobilising’ Cabo Verdean migration to the Netherlands and aiding in their maritime endeavours.

Socialising and sleeping in the boarding houses

Hotel Delta, founded in 1964, is an iconic place within the Cabo Verdean community as it was the first and best-known boarding house for Cabo Verdeans. Many other Cabo Verdean enterprises followed in its footsteps, and it is estimated by some that at the industry’s peak around 15 boarding houses existed in Rotterdam-West and the Delfshaven district which were directed by and directed towards Cabo Verdean sailors,⁹ as Mendes da Silva narrates:

Pensão Mindelo, owned by Nhunha Brandão who is no longer with us, was a boarding house that was always ready to help Cabo Verdeans, if only for the price, which was about eight times lower than in Dutch boarding houses or a three-star hotel. Later appeared Manuel Panacho,

⁹ This number is an estimate based on boarding houses mentioned in interviews with first-generation sailors, as well as in literature (Pires 2006; Mendes da Silva 2016)

a cousin of Mr. Brandão. Several Cabo Verdeans lived in his boarding house. But his was purely business.

In the mid-1960s, Nha Maria Belchior appeared with her dish of rice with peas and chicken. Those who, like me, did not yet have a home or relatives in Rotterdam, went to Nha Maria Belchior's house to eat there. Often there was no seat left and you ate her famously delicious peas with chicken and rice standing up as if we were in Cabo Verde. One day I met the now deceased Olavo there; we both ate standing. When I later learned that he was a rich man, I understood his simplicity better. (Mendes Da Silva 2016, translation added)

As mentioned before, boarding houses were the only accommodation option for many Cabo Verdeans, as other accommodation around the city was often too expensive. On the other hand, for entrepreneurs, starting a boarding house was one of the first business models in Rotterdam. That is not to say that these compatriots did not act out of a solidarity, but with the growing influx of jobseekers, running a boarding house could become a somewhat lucrative business.

A multitude of experiences of those that stayed in the boarding houses emerge from accounts found in music, literature and interviews. Following Brah's idea of a "homing desire" (1996: 197), the idea of 'making' home while negotiating the "multi-placedness of home" for those in the diaspora, the boarding houses offered a space with some degree of cultural familiarity; you would be able to meet Cabo Verdeans and, as Mendes da Silva notes, it was a space where you could enjoy common foods and find or make acquaintances. At the same time, to pass some of the time migrants spent ashore residents would regularly play music or enjoy a game of cards, and converse and laugh. Thus, besides the infrastructural and

economic role that the boarding houses played, they also served an important social function. People slept on bunkbeds in shared rooms, sometimes with as much as ten other people from the different islands of Cabo Verde, and in some houses also with different nationalities.

However, numerous accounts also exist that are less about the joys of coming together. For many, life in and around the boarding houses felt monotonous, especially when not finding work over time. The ‘process’ of searching for work and not finding any, and the routes and activities undertaken during that job search, will be described in the next subchapter as it connects to other important spaces in Cabo Verdean work history in Rotterdam. Simply put, more often than not the boarding houses were the cheapest option to sleep and eat. As one sailor from the island of São Nicolau jokingly claims, the boarding houses were ‘almost’ like an all-inclusive hotel:

It was a system that allowed people to live with very low costs, allowing seafarers to get along. And with the meals you could also feed yourself. You paid a single, affordable price for eating and sleeping. But there were boarding houses where you paid just to sleep, and you could make your own food. The food in the boarding houses was basic food, with little variety, but you had to eat. It was like you were on vacation and you have those “all-inclusive” packages [laughs]. At that time there was already “all inclusive” [laughs], for sleeping and eating. (Gomes 2014, translation added)

The boarding houses were fully geared towards receiving seafarers who came and went, and these were often people with little income or in debt from the journey taken to Europe. As Mr. Gomes explains, residents lived on the edge of poverty in the boarding houses, and facilities were limited to simple food, a bath and a bed. In Figure 12, mis-captioned as a ‘boarding house for Portuguese’, the modesty of the facilities is particularly striking: a simple bedspread, bunkbeds, a washbasin and, except for a single poster, no decoration.



Figure 12: Ary Groeneveld, ‘Guest workers: Interior with bunk beds and residents of a boarding house for Portuguese in Willem Buytewechstraat’, 1971. Photograph. Rotterdam. © Stadsarchief Rotterdam

As the aforementioned sailor explained, the winters in the boarding houses were often freezing cold. However, the hope of work and going back to Cabo Verde was a large part of their motivation:

You lay in the cold bed, with 2 or 3 blankets on top. You wore your pyjamas and even your socks. You lay there waiting for sleep to come. When you managed to fall asleep, suddenly someone boisterous would enter your room. That’s what life was like! But you already know how it is... we had that idea in our heads, the hope of working and returning to our land. (Gomes 2014, translation added)

It was indeed a meagre existence in the boarding houses, consisting mainly of eating the provided meals and, at night, resting up for the next day. Sometimes those who left at night to go out into the city would return late and disturb others' peaceful night's sleep. Thinking back to the song 'Cartinha d'Holanda' that opened this chapter, it becomes clear that the song indeed describes an everyday sentiment or experience in the city of Rotterdam.

Viewing that era from a slightly more negative perspective, for those that were not happy with working on ships, or could not find any, Mendes da Silva narrates a tale of hopelessness:

Those who had no predisposition to become amphibians withdrew against their will into their boarding houses. They had to adjust the monthly allowance for their families according to circumstances and had little chance of taking a holiday once a year. The cure for the homesickness that welled up in these desperate hearts was sought in the mind, and the mind in alcohol, and alcohol required money.

(Mendes da Silva 2016, translation added)

Many were motivated to work in the Netherlands in order to be able to provide financially for their families back home on the islands, as is typical for migrant workers. But not everyone became an 'amphibian', Mendes da Silva's term for the sailor's work rhythm in which people come ashore for a short period of time and then go back to sea for months. Not everyone could cope with this irregular and mobile existence, and opportunities were not always there for the taking, depending instead on the economic tide and changing work regulations.

In such cases, where large parts of the day were spent in the guesthouses, the walls could seem to close in on you. Where some felt a sense of freedom and opportunity from being in another country, in terms of work, politics, and socially, others felt only loss and

longing for family, friends and the homeland. There is a variety of narrated experiences of the boarding houses that contribute to the community's stories. Indeed, even though referring to similar places, these narratives contribute to both the ambivalence and diversity of experiences of belonging. The accumulation of these experiences in narratives forms a picture of life in and around the boarding houses in which one story does not preclude the other, adding to the complexity of migrant life in the boarding houses.

Economic tides, the rhythm of the *Barraca* and daytime endeavours

While the boarding houses were the first place recently arrived Cabo Verdeans would visit when arriving to Rotterdam, those looking for work would soon be directed towards employment agencies for maritime shipping in the early mornings. These agencies were located on the Willem Buytewechstraat in the Coolhaven, one of the port districts of the city. Most Cabo Verdeans refer to the agencies as the barracas, literally translating as 'sheds', as the agencies were located in a temporary emergency building constructed in the 1960s. The barracas were officially named the Centraal Arbeidsbureau Scheepvaart ('Central Employment Agency for Shipping'), and were part of an official municipal system of employment offices spread across the city. The daily rhythm of these sailors was dominated by visits to the barracas as a main place for finding employment, and many spent entire mornings and afternoons, sometimes week after week, waiting to find a place aboard a ship.

The importance of the barracas as a significant space in the memory of the Rotterdam diaspora is underlined by several musicians restating their experiences of work life in the city in lyrics. Their songs often reveal how these experiences are connected to several other spaces in the city, such as in the song below, titled 'Rotterdam':

Rotterdam, nha vida, ca é tão fácil, sima txeu sta imagina.

É ergui di plemanhã, cum barriga pertado, m'bai pa barraca, xinta num banco. Na incerteza, ta espera cai di céu, um barco, ki ta trava deste vidinha.

Um barco ki ta traba deste vidinha, um barco ki ta traba deste vida di gasta sem julbeira. Ki ta sai pa impregamu. E se encontra um barco m tinki bai sem espia pa preço, se não est outro ta tomab el.

Se ka encontram na barraca, m sta na papa dedona ou na tipoia ta passa tempo. Pam ka bai pa cama, pamode na cama, pode encontra um bilheto ki ta levabu pa fronteira.

Rotterdam, my life, it is not as easy here as many imagine.

Waking up early, going to the barracas, sitting on a bench, waiting for a miracle from heaven, a ship, that takes me out of this penniless life.

A ship that takes me out of this life of spending with empty pockets. If I get offered a ship, I have to go without asking the price, or someone else will take my place.

If you can't find me in the barracks, I will be at Papa Dedona's or at Tio Poia's bar, to spend my time. Because if I go back to bed, I might find a one-way ticket that takes me to the border.

(Lima & Les Sofas 1977, translation added)

Written in the style of a letter to his beloved, Cabo Verdean singer Abel Lima (1946-2016) narrates a route through the city that starts in his boarding house bed, waking up and visiting the barracas, before ending the day either in *Papa Dedona's*, or *Tipoa's* bar. In a melancholic, wailing tone, Lima emphasises the difficulties and hardship encountered in his search for work, in going about his day without money, and in hiding from authorities that might send him back to Cabo Verde. Abel Lima was a sailor who lived in Paris and visited Rotterdam often because of the many clubs and cafés he would perform in, and because of its music studios. 'Rotterdam' is included on the album *Nos Bida* ('Our Life') (1977), on which several songs evidence Lima's commitment as a militant of the PAIGC-party, with a strong connection to the faith of the homeland, but also demonstrating an attentiveness towards the conditions of migrant life (Nogueira 2016: 21). The song is a testimony to the historical moment in which it was written, especially in relation to the economic conditions and the migrant's position in the 1970s, which gives a fresh context to the ways in which the city was experienced. For this reason, in this section I will first contextualise the lyrics of the song

historically. After this I will turn to narratives of life around the barracas. Finally, I discuss how the song connects the barracas to several other places, creating a route through the city and narrating experiences of daily life and of the daily and nightly rhythms of Rotterdam.

In figure 13 we find the employment agency for seafarers on the left. On the right we see the Parksluizen pumping station, in function of the locks that connect the Coolhaven with the Parkhaven.



Figure 13: 'Willem Buytewechstraat at the corner of Puntegaaistraat with a view of government buildings', 1981. In Stadsarchief Rotterdam
© Jannes Linders.

Working conditions and wandering around

'Rotterdam' was written during a time in which immigration policies, the economy and Cabo Verde were all undergoing large changes, affecting processes of legal citizenship in the Netherlands for the Cabo Verdean diaspora, as Carling noted:

In the 1960s, the Netherlands was relatively open to immigrants. Labour migrants could easily enter in search of work without formal intermediaries. Provided they found employment and accommodation, they could eventually acquire work and residence permits. The 1970s was a much more difficult period for Cape Verdeans in the Netherlands. The world-wide recession severely affected the shipping industry, and companies started hiring Asian seafarers at lower salaries. (Carling 2008: 92)

Abel Lima's 'Rotterdam' describes the local context and consequences of the economic recession. Especially after the 1973 oil crisis, which had a severe impact on employment opportunities in the ports of Rotterdam, Cabo Verdeans experienced increased difficulty in finding ships to work on. Several Arabic OPEC countries halted oil exports to the Netherlands because of the government's pro-Israel stance in the Yom Kippur war, cutting oil supplies to the port city by seventy percent, and prices shot up. This severely affected fuel prices for maritime transport and starved the refineries and petrochemical industries based around Rotterdam (Hellema et al. 2004: 99-100), making substantial workforce reductions unavoidable.

Semi-legal negotiations with intermediaries, the so-called *koppelbazen*, increased a worker's chances of finding work, but would often cost money, hence Abel Lima's lyric about accepting any offer to board a ship 'without asking the price'. This was common practice for shipping companies, especially in economically challenging times. In 1970, The newspaper *Trouw* published rumours of recruitment practices by a scamming subcontractor: "the man visited boarding houses where Cabo Verdeans stay and surreptitiously persuaded the sometimes barely literate Cabo Verdeans to give him their passport and a hundred guilders, after which he would provide work" (Organisatie Trouw 1970, translation added).

According to the newspaper, the broker's arrest led the police to discover the whereabouts of 30 Cabo Verdeans, who were traced and would be sent back to Cabo Verde. Subcontractors took advantage of the precarious conditions of foreign workers in this manner. On September 29, 1981, a newspaper headline stated 'Shipping Companies hold Cabo Verdeans in slavery'. It claimed that around 200 Cabo Verdean men were being held in slave-labour conditions by inland shipping companies. Labour conditions were bad, working days were long, and sailors were only allowed to leave their ships to get groceries (*Het vrije volk: democratisch-socialistisch dagblad* 1981). Another newspaper adds that workers were charged between 700 and 1000 guilders as a hiring fee (*Algemeen Dagblad* 1981), for a salary below minimum wage. It must be noted that these practices did not take place at the barracas, but elsewhere in the port area, often with individual subcontractors or small employment agencies. A logical interpretation of Lima's song, then, is that the sailor in question could not find work at the official employment office and sought his salvation elsewhere.

Besides the danger of being ripped off by one of these intermediaries, there were other dangers ahead. Strict immigration policies forced illegal migrants to wander the city. Going back to the boarding houses during daytime was risky, as immigration police often raided them while searching for illegal workers, and being caught meant receiving a one-way ticket back to Cabo Verde. In this context, constructing a sense of belonging and citizenship is a complicated process. Massey argues that different social groups have distinct access to place, or abilities to move about space:

Different social groups have distinct relationships to this anyway differentiated mobility: some people are more in charge of it than others; some initiate flows and movement, others don't; some are more on the receiving-end of it than others, some are effectively imprisoned by it. (Massey 1994: 149)

Illegality limits access to and use of urban space, which in turn limits access to practices of belonging that depend on the use of everyday spaces. Daily routines define both belonging and non-belonging, as the condition of illegality shapes and inhabits daily practices and the use of space, thus limiting how migrants themselves can ‘create’ spaces of belonging as authorities seek to apprehend these non-citizens. However, even as non-citizens in the Netherlands, a sense of belonging is created in relation to specific locations in Rotterdam, which serve as common references to the community.

These spaces, however, have an ambiguous character, which is captured in Abel Lima’s ‘Rotterdam’: on the one hand Cabo Verdeans come to places such as the barracas to find work, or to not find it. Some would go to bars mentioned in the songs to enjoy their free time, while others are forced to do so due to their problematic legal status. Daytime is represented as an endless search for work, an endless routine carried out under constant threat of being discovered as a non-citizen. In this case, the visibility of daytime also forces illegals to withdraw from the public eye. The night may serve as a release from daily life, yet that same temporary freedom only confirms their illegal status.

It is not the case that all Cabo Verdeans arrived in the same economic or social conditions when looking for work. But there are several songs that criticise the way Cabo Verdeans were treated by employers in Rotterdam. In 1966, on a LP produced in the Netherlands by Casa Silva, Bana, accompanied by Voz de Cabo Verde, recorded a *coladeira* about the conditions of work life in the Netherlands. It was titled ‘Desobriga’, meaning to be released from duties, or more simply, to be fired:

Oh Menish nós bem po es vida de Paz
 Est coisa de nos já tá demas
 Ques Holandês ta muito mau
 esh cre so da nós payoff.

Oh people, let's stop this life
It's enough already
These Dutchmen are really bad
They want to get rid of us.

(Bana 1966, translation added)

This coladeira criticises the treatment of Cabo Verdeans by the Dutch in the workplace, the lack of job stability in the Netherlands, and the routine summary dismissals of migrant workers. Even though the song calls for an undefined change to living conditions in the Netherlands, Bana later emphasised that Cabo Verdeans are clever enough to 'find a way' to survive abroad. Even though some musicians have highlighted stories of wealth and success in the Netherlands, most songs addressing the working conditions of Cabo Verdeans emphasise aspects of hardship, exclusion, poverty and hopelessness.

There are, however, different and competing representations of migrants' experiences in the Netherlands. Many Cabo Verdeans consider the era during which this song was recorded as the golden days; they were well-received by the Netherlands, and help from within the community supported new arrivals to find a place to sleep, to work and to have fun. This is highlighted by Silva:

When you start living in a new country, the first thing that you think is how will these people receive me, recognise me in this country? So, then you start to doubt... But when you notice that you are well received and recognised, then you feel more at ease and free.

(Barendrecht and Slingerland 2005, translation added)

Narratives, whether positive or negative, establish a frame of reference through which city life in the diaspora can be understood and interpreted by its members. In this sense, right from the

early days of migration music served as a medium through which these narratives were propelled, and where concerns could be voiced, discussed, but also questioned.

Commentary on living conditions is an important element in Cabo Verdean migrant music on Rotterdam. Often such music was not written with the purpose of reminding, exciting or pleasing, but rather to remind Cabo Verdeans of their position as foreigners in Dutch society, and often as illegal migrants. Amongst other methods this is achieved by offering a commentary on people's experiences in particular important places related to the history of Cabo Verdean migration to Rotterdam. Until now the role of place in this process has remained underexposed. By commenting on experiences in historically important places, a memory of the city is created. I will now turn to the barracas and the routes taken from there through the city, topics which are frequently sung about by Cabo Verdean sailor-musicians.

From Barraca to Bar

For Cabo Verdeans in the port city, the lyrics of 'Rotterdam' contain various shared references to common places, situations and experiences. Even though place is often present in music, "most popular music [...] is subtle, ambivalent or vague in its designations and descriptions of place and identity" (Connell and Gibson 2003: 71). Many Cabo Verdean artists, however, have been very precise in defining, naming and commenting on particular places in the city. This is particularly true for the diaspora, where references are often made to central places known within the localised communities, whether during the day or the night, for work or for leisure. So even though place in music lyrics is often represented as "generic and aspatial" (Connell and Gibson 2003: 71), place in Cabo Verdean music is often its opposite: specific and spatial, linked to real and lived experiences in these places.

During the Rotterdam port's heyday the barracas were visited each day by hundreds of work seekers, not just Cabo Verdeans but also Spaniards, Indonesians, Filipinos, Portuguese

and other nationalities. As one sailor recalls, “there were as many people there as there are cobblestones on the street” (Santos Lima 2014, translation added). It was a continuous flow of people coming and going. Going to the barracas was a process of waiting and waiting in the hope of getting a call to board a ship. As observed in the story of one sailor from Santo Antão, it becomes clear that seafarers remember going there, drinking coffee, and playing *uril* (a so-called pit and pebble game) or cards, ‘always waiting’ to be called for a job:

If they called... Even if they don’t call you, you have to go in the morning and in the afternoon, again the next day, it was always like that because they can call you suddenly and if you don’t show up, they would call someone else who gets the job and then you’d have to wait again. We arrived at eight, eight thirty. We stayed there until noon. At noon it closed and at one-thirty we went there again. (Santos Lima 2014, translation added)

Whether work was found there or not, the barracas thus determined the rhythm of migrant life during the daytime. The visits became part of a standard routine that many had to follow, and it is remembered as such in music and stories. Similar to Abel Lima’s ‘Rotterdam’, in 1982 the group Galaxia 2000 recorded ‘m Krê Bai Pa Nha Terra’ (‘I want to go to my land’), which emphasises the endless process of looking for a job and not finding any.

Levanta tud dia, bai pa barraca
Volta pa casa, que môn na queshada

Get up every day, go to the barracks
Return home, hand in my chin

(Galaxia 2000, 1982, translation added)

These references form a common narrative created of Cabo Verdean sailor men living similar lives. Belonging is thus established both through “specific” locations and a “specific

narrative” (Yuval-Davis 2006: 205) which defines a community, with attachments to specific symbols, places and lifestyles in Rotterdam. In this context, however, belonging is also strongly linked to economic opportunities, economic structure and the worker’s uneven position relative to employers that is defined by insecurity and illegality. Being broke and looking for work at the barracas becomes part of a common identity that is created between those that have had similar experiences, and is often presented as an endless and repetitive process. This monotonous life is often confirmed in interviews when asking sailors about their daily lives in Rotterdam, where day and night become an almost continuous and arduous series of events and in which the night seems to become just as repetitive as daytime:

The daily rhythm was always the same. You wake up early in the morning, or you go to the shipping company, or to the barracas, you go back to the boarding house and eat something, in the afternoon, you go out again and then you come back to have dinner again. Then, after dinner, if you want to you go to sleep, or you go out, you go to a café and find people to converse with. You had cafés to play billiards or play cards, and like this over and over. Or you just went out and took a walk, you could go to the cinema, and at night you went to sleep. That’s what it was like. (Gomes 2014, translation added)

Whereas the night is often highlighted for its potential for freedom and expression, allowing the letting-go of the struggles and routine activities of the day, it is important to emphasise that the experience of the night is extremely context specific. The romanticisation of the night that is overly present in popular music, where the night is often liberating, is contrasted with accounts of endless and repetitive searches for work in which the night offers little more than distraction (and needed rest).

The visits to the barracas connect to a route through the city. The bars that are visited in the hours after job-hunting are as much part of it, as if it were a routine. In Rotterdam, Abel Lima refers to two bars that have become well-known within the community. He refers to them by the nicknames of their owners; *Papa Dedona*, roughly translated as ‘Father Fatfinger’, named for his apparently large hands, and *Tipoia*, which translates to ‘Uncle Pimp’, whose bar additionally offered prostitution services. Even though many songs by Cabo Verdeans mention these and other similar places in their songs, often glorifying Cabo Verdean nightlife in the process, in this context these places are mentioned more as places to stay out of necessity rather than for pleasure: due to the strict immigration policies, going back to the boarding houses during daytime was risky as migrants risked being caught up in police raids.

As mentioned before, not all seafarers’ experiences were the same, and not everyone who arrived in Rotterdam lived or worked illegally. Nevertheless the work and rhythm of life of many Cabo Verdean jobseekers seems to have been quite similar, and took place around the barracas situated around the Nieuwe Maas River and the streets that connect to it. The quays where they departed and arrived were close to the barracas. In turn, these were within walking distance of the pubs and bars frequented by the Cabo Verdeans, such as on the Nieuwe Binnenweg, as the artist Américo Brito explains: “the street was buzzing at this time because it was right next to the port’s disembarkation pier. The sailors left and advanced in this direction. Many, even many, came from Cabo Verde” (Rodrigues 2022, translation added).

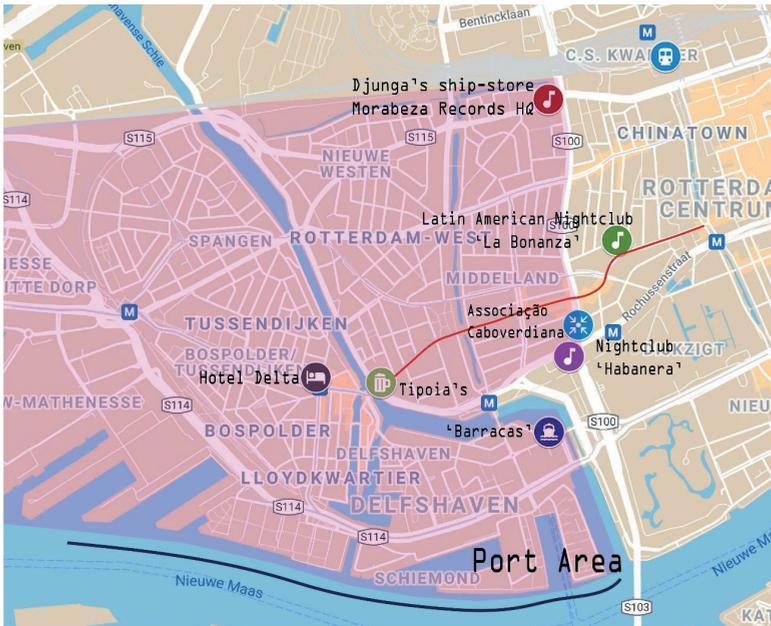


Figure 14: Map of city spaces & rhythms. Retrieved from Google.com

Note on mobilities and routes through the city

As can be seen on the map in Figure 14, many of the core sites of the Cabo Verdean community in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s were located around the same area in Delfshaven. As is visible from the map, the barracas were within walking distance, situated about 15 minutes from hotel Delta, which itself is also only 15 minutes from the quays along the Nieuwe Maas River, where the old harbour area was located. The Associação Caboverdiana and the Habanera nightclub, which was demolished in 1966 (Platform Wederopbouw Rotterdam n.d.) were also both only a 10-minute walk away from the port area and the barracas. Many other pubs and bars could also be found on and around the Nieuwe Binnenweg, marked with a red line on the map, and these were popular spots for Cabo Verdean visitors. Tipoiá's, for example, was located on the corner of Nieuwe Binnenweg and Aelbrechtskade, while Papa Dedona's cafe was also located a little further along Aelbrechtskade, and they were all a stone's throw from the waterfront of the Coolhaven.

Given the port's proximity to the centre of the city, it is no surprise that the surrounding streets were somewhat oriented towards offering entertainment for sailors arriving to the city.

Besides the various social and political processes, Cabo Verdean migration to the city of Rotterdam consists of various routes and motions to, through and in the city. Particularly with regard to work life, these movements visualise the concept of mobilities that “encompasses both the large-scale movements of people, objects, capital and information across the world, as well as the more local processes of daily transportation, movement through public space and the travel of material things within everyday life”, as stated by sociologists Kevin Hannam, Mimi Sheller and John Urry (2006: 1), thus connecting the local and the global. In this particular case, these mobilities involve movements of migration and work, often intertwined, between Cabo Verde, Rotterdam, and many other places sailors travelled towards, as well as movements *within* the city.

Connecting such routes there are “moorings” (Hannam et al. 2006): places and stations through which these movements take place and which enable these mobilities. These are “interdependent systems of ‘immobile’ material worlds and especially some exceptionally immobile platforms, transmitters, roads, garages, stations, aeriels, airports, docks, factories through which mobilizations of locality are performed and re-arrangements of place and scale materialized” (2006: 3). The aforementioned places such as the boarding houses, stores, port areas and barracas are all situated within “complex networks by which ‘hosts, guests, buildings, objects and machines’ are contingently brought together to produce certain performances in certain places at certain times” (2006: 13). In this context, we could think of guests such as sailors being received by boarding house owners and sent to ships’ moorings in the port area by intermediaries. Indeed, the movements between, through and within these places are examples of how mobilities are produced within the city, directed towards a particular economy.

Although the concept of mobilities and moorings emphasises places related to economic activity, it is important to state that these mobilities are also located within a network of places situated outside these economic activities, but nevertheless involved within the same processes, such as through activities that take place at night: rest, distraction, entertainment, not only as a network of places, but also as a rhythm.

Around the 1970s, more Cabo Verdeans started working ashore. Besides working for Dutch shipping companies, now more frequently on shorter routes or inland shipping, Cabo Verdeans would also come ashore to work in the factories in and around Rotterdam. Such places included the Van Nelle factory, a factory for tea, coffee and tobacco on the outskirts of the city, and the factory of the world-famous Heineken beer brand. They would also work in the cleaning industry, or in other unskilled positions around the city. Thus over time the port area became less directly relevant for Cabo Verdean migrants, and those that stayed in the city found work in factories located elsewhere in the city. As one former sailor recalls, having sailed for over ten years, working ashore was often harsh: “I went to work in a tea factory. But it was dirty work, a lot of dust, a lot of dirt, the vest I wore turned red. I left this job and told Maria [his wife] ‘if all the work in Holland is like this, I’ll go back to the sea’. Because I’m already used to the sea” (Fortes 2014, translation added). Because work ashore was typically in low-skilled positions, conditions were often poor. This could partly be related to the physical environment, as described in the quote above, but also to the fact that much of the work was physically demanding, or took place at irregular times, such as at night. The former sailor sought and indeed found other work:

I smelted iron with sand, made about 50 kilos during those 8 hours of continuous work, except for about 15 minutes to eat. I didn’t want to go on. I preferred the sea. Then I left, I already had a son, I told Maria that now I was going to look for another job, because this one was

often at night, and I couldn't sleep during the day. I went looking for work and found a job at Van Nelle, where I lasted about 2 years, with a man who told me that he had also been a sailor. (Fortes 2014, translation added)

As described in the previous section, where a common lifestyle was shared by many on and around the sea, this was also the case with work ashore and was how many found their way to different factories. Pires explains why working ashore would eventually be important in 'becoming Dutch'; at first, working time in the service of a Dutch shipping company did not count when applying for a residence permit, which required working on the Dutch mainland. For this reason, a search for work on land started. Seamen started working as classifiers (cleaner of oil tankers), as factory workers or as low-skilled personnel at other companies (Pires 2006: 77). Work ashore was often less lucrative for Cabo Verdeans as it meant that they would have to rent or buy a place to live and had to account for other expenses such as food, whereas aboard a ship this was all included. They were also forced to accept the conditions of the work they could find. As of today, especially within the second and third generation of Cabo Verdeans, the field of work is enormously diversified. According to Pires, this is partly because there is no longer a language barrier and they have better integration within Dutch society, as well as a higher level of education. With this, the specificity of places that marked the working life of the previous generations has disappeared. The ports have relocated from the city towards the coast, and so have the barracas and boarding houses, in the city's drive to innovate and modernise.

The sailor-musician hybrid

Cabo Verdeans who came to the Netherlands from the 1950s onwards, a movement that accelerated in the 1960s and 1970s, were sailors and workers. But curiously a number of the

men who arrived were also musicians, either singing or playing a particular instrument. This is, as many Cabo Verdeans consider to be a universal truth, an indication of an “inherent musicality” among the population (Braz Dias 2008: 173). However in the context of work, especially in the initial period of migration to the Netherlands, being a musician was often not sufficiently rewarding as a profession and there was no structure to become a full-time musician. At first, it was often in the boarding houses or at home that music would be played during gatherings and off-time. Later, with the community growing, more Cabo Verdean nights and events would be organised where migrants and residents could listen to music, dance and socialise, and thus also more opportunities for artists to play emerged across the city.

With the music scene growing, more musicians came to the Rotterdam to either record or perform, and newcomers came in the hopes of launching their careers in the port city. As Cabo Verdean music expert Guy Ramos mentions in the documentary *Rotterdamse Roots van de Kaapverdiaanse Muziek* (2012) (‘The Rotterdam Roots of Cabo Verdean Music’),

The cream of Cabo Verdean music came to Rotterdam during this time. During the day, some of them worked at Van Nelle or elsewhere, in the ports, and at night they played in cafés and dance venues. An artist like that is Bana, who also recorded the first Cabo Verdean solo LP in ’66, here in the Netherlands. [...] It is also in Rotterdam that Bana became most famous, because he performed at Habanera and the Rotterdam nightclub scene with the legendary group Voz de Cabo Verde. (RTV Rijnmond 2012, translation added)

Great names of the Cabo Verdean music scene such as Bana, Frank Cavaquinho and Manuel D’Novas arrived in the Netherlands as both sailors and musicians, later coming to work either

in the docks and factories of Rotterdam or staying in the city during the off-time between travels, before later leaving for other places. This was a common practice for musicians at the time.

Take the example of Voz de Cabo Verde, the first Cabo Verdean music group in Rotterdam which was introduced in the previous chapter. Morgadinho, the band's trumpeter and bassist, explains how he got involved in the band, leaving the idea of life as a sailor behind:

My idea was, from Holland, to make a career as sailor on one of the great European ships of the time. Meanwhile, Luís Morais, João da Lomba and Toy d'Bibia met Frank Cavaquim, who already lived in the Netherlands. And when I got there I was told: 'you are not going to work for any ship. What we're going to do is form a band'. So, instead of leaving on one of the ships, we stayed on land and got a job. And we were encouraged by Cabo Verdeans who lived there to form such a group, because they wanted to have a group in that country.

(Morgadinho 2004, translation added)

In order to make a living, and before pursuing a professional career, the members of the band had to find work on land. Bana, for example, worked at the Van Nelle Factory, while Frank Cavaquinho worked in the Heineken factory. When the band started playing in South American nightclub La Bonanza and secured a contract there, it marked a turning point in the group's professionalisation as they were able to fully focus on music making and performing, leaving their day jobs behind. As is clear in the previous chapter, the history of the Cabo Verdean migration to Rotterdam is inextricably linked with the development of Cabo Verdean music worldwide, which started with the establishment of Morabeza Records, after which

Rotterdam became a central place for music production, attracting many Cabo Verdean artists and producers over the coming decades.

Besides the political role the record label played in disseminating Cabo Verdean culture, it also played a role in the professionalisation of Cabo Verdean music in Rotterdam. Many entrepreneurs followed Silva's example and set up new music studios, especially after independence, which opened the music market and stimulated further professionalisation of the Cabo Verdean music scene. A range of studios sprung up around the city: Brandão Records, José Mestre Records, John Pop Records, Black Power Records, SVK dos Reis Records, Manuel King Records, CDS Records, Giva Records, Atlantic Music Records, Carrondo Records, Wow Pow Music Studios and more. Rotterdam was the 'springboard' for the later development of Cabo Verdean music, including the development of new genres. Transnational networks of music-making, performance and distribution between the Cabo Verdean islands and countries in the diaspora stimulated the professionalisation of groups and artists, ensuring a sales market and making it considerably easier for artists to record and disseminate their music (Cidra 2008a & 2008b).

The 1970s and 1980s marked a different era for Cabo Verdean music in Rotterdam, as the city became a centre for the development of different genres. *Funaná*, which was prohibited by Portuguese colonisers, began to be produced in Rotterdam after independence by groups such as Bulimundo and Os Tubarões (Gonçalves 2020: 165). One of Cabo Verde's most popular funaná bands, Ferro Gaita, recorded their first (and immensely popular) album *Fundo baxu* (1997) ('Low bottom') with CDS records in Rotterdam, sponsored by the State Secretary of Culture (Nogueira 2016: 200), thus evidencing global connections and networks in music making. Though other genres such as funaná also remained popular, the 1990s marked the era of *zouk*, originally an Antillean music from the French West Indies, and *cabo-zouk*, its Cabo Verdean derivative, with groups such as Cabo Verde Show and Splash!

(Hoffman 2008: 206-207) making hits and crowding dancehalls. Indeed, the history of Cabo Verdean music recording in Rotterdam “helped to create *cabo-zouk* in that Cape Verdean musicians as well as studios and impresarios already familiar with the music were located here” (Hoffman 2008: 215). The development of these genres is discussed in detail by the authors cited above. Performances by artists from these time periods, as well as the night scene and music scene that stemmed from them, are discussed in the next chapter. Important in this context is the fact that, even after the era of Morabeza Records, Rotterdam continued to play an important role in the development of Cabo Verdean music, both creatively, such as in the development of new genres, but also in the further professionalisation of music culture, which revolves around a network of artists, recording studios and performance venues.

The lifestyles of the sailor-musician

Some ‘musical’ men were not yet musicians when they came to the Netherlands, instead finding themselves becoming entangled in the music scene when they arrived in Rotterdam and encountered other Cabo Verdeans who played music in the boarding houses or elsewhere, as Rotterdam-based singer Américo Brito (1958) narrates:

In the Netherlands, out of loneliness, I visited the hotels every day, or rather the boarding houses, where the older men played the guitar and I carefully started singing there. First, I played percussion on the tumba,¹⁰ they didn’t like that... “Stop with that noise” they said. Okay, I said. Then I started singing. (Thelosen 2008, translation added)

Music was often a pastime and a way to come together, to somehow forget or process the sorrow and difficulties of migration. One of the places where you could find others who

¹⁰ The Tumba is a drum in the shape of a barrel.

shared these feelings and experiences was in the boarding houses, the first place migrants would stay in the city after arriving. As mentioned, at least at the start of their careers many artists worked during the day and performed and recorded at night and at weekends. In the 2008 documentary *Rotterdam Saudade*, Américo Brito presents the story of his arrival to the city in the mid-1970s and his route towards becoming a (popular) musician both in Rotterdam, Cabo Verde and other parts of the diaspora. In 1976, Brito left for Portugal at the age of seventeen for military service. After having reported for duty, he left for Rotterdam on leave and did not return to Portugal for some years. Today, he still lives in Rotterdam. In Figure 15 we follow a sequence of events in the documentary.





Figure 15: Sequence of Stills from Rotterdam Saudade Documentary © RTV Rijnmond & SeriousFilm

The documentary opens with a shot of Américo Brito, now around 60 years old, walking along the Nieuwe Binnenweg of Rotterdam. As previously mentioned, this street was historically home to many Cabo Verdean cafes, restaurants, but also hair salons and shops, as well as businesses of other migrant communities. Brito greets an acquaintance, and while talking and greeting he walks on into a record store. He stops in front of a rack with a large sign above it marked ‘Cabo Verde’, browses it, and leaves the shop again. In voice-over, he tells of his longing and homesickness towards his homeland, and his desire to return. The documentary has a clear performative character: While Brito investigates the shop window, the cameraman films the singer’s observational gaze from inside the shop. The image cuts to

the ports of Rotterdam, where containers are loaded on and off ships. Brito walks on the banks, and sings a *morna* song, while the image cuts to the ports of São Vicente, Cabo Verde. While in one of the transshipment ports of Rotterdam he performs his song, ‘Porto Grande’, looking directly into the camera while standing in front of a port crane. The documentary recreates the lifestyle of the Cabo Verdean artist by tracing his movements through a particular set of places that have become an important part of the diasporic narrative. In doing so, it expresses a sense of belonging through multiple attachments, a here and there, a then and now, sounds and images that intersect and overlap and are both synchronous and asynchronous.

In this documentary, the city is brought to life through a montage of images and sounds, of spaces and routes, histories and stories of migration, city life and artistic endeavours. The documentary emphasises the strong and historical transatlantic connection created between two places, Rotterdam and Cabo Verde, through the image of seafaring. It is a trajectory that is sung about, portrayed, imagined and performed by many artists. ‘Porto Grande’¹¹, the *morna* that Brito sings while standing between the containers, cranes and ships of the Rotterdam Port, refers to Cabo Verde’s main port area, which is located on the island of São Vicente. It thus draws a visual-sonoric parallel between the two areas in its initial lyrics. These translate to: “Porto Grande, bay with so many thousand mouths that depend on you for their livelihood” (Brito 2011, translation added), underscoring that the main motive for travelling to Rotterdam was economic. Through Brito’s performance, the connection with the homeland becomes inevitable, a powerful memory instilled through music that creates an ebb and flow between two places. It is the recreation of seafaring life and the conjuring of memories that are central to this scene and which instil an image of homeland and ‘away-land’. The documentary invokes a nostalgic sense of belonging relived through a meditated

¹¹ Porto Grande was later recorded on the album *Noti de Morabeza* (2011)

version of city life that is connected to particular places and temporalities, emphasising what Brah coined the “multi-locationality” (1996: 197) of a diaspora. It is linked to the ships on which Cabo Verdeans came to Rotterdam, and to the opportunities of life and work in the city. Seafaring is ‘the’ symbol of migration, although in this context exclusively for male migrants.

Later in the documentary we see stills of a young Brito on board of a ship, a guitar in his lap, an example of the sailor-musician ‘hybrid’, so many of whom visited Rotterdam. Moments later, we are in Brito’s house. Brito leans on a dresser supporting his stereo and computer (with the Cabo Verdean flag in the background) while he talks about his artistic inspiration Ildo Lobo (1953-2004) and a song that touches him, ‘Alto Cutelo’¹² which plays on the background:

It is a song about emigration, when the first left for Portugal; about the wave of migration to Portugal; about the companies they worked for. Tired, exploited. The women and children they had left behind. And then still, the Cabo Verdean that has the hope of returning to his country someday. (Thelosen 2008, translation added)

Next the documentary moves to Bar Stanis, a then popular Cabo Verdean bar on the Nieuwe Binnenweg, where Brito performs Alto Cutelo in front of an audience, illustrated in Figure 16.

¹² Alto Cutelo refers to a region/place in Cape Verde, on the island of Fogo.



Figure 16: Sequence of Stills in Bar Stanis from Rotterdam Saudade Documentary © RTV Rijnmond & SeriousFilm

The camera moves across a map painted on the wall and titled ‘O arquipélago de Cabo Verde’ (‘The Cabo Verdean archipelago’) and past a group of people at the bar laughing and talking, and then Brito begins to sing. The documentary bridges different temporalities and spaces where image and sound refer to local and transnational routes, mixing the local and global, the various places that could be considered ‘home’. The bar is a place where *sodade*, the feeling

of longing to the homeland that is often present in Cabo Verdean migrant music, is shared and expressed, as if in a home away from home. The act of singing a song from another context, the migration to Portugal that occurred in a bygone time, is transported to the context of the Rotterdam migration, in a night of communion in the bar. Singing becomes, among other things, an act of collage, activating a confrontation between the two ‘images’ of migration. The past returns to the present, and the present is where the past is reborn. Or, the past is revived, building in the memory of both artists and spectators a relationship between these two times and spaces, giving meaning and reframing the past so that it becomes familiar, proper, a common experience.

The documentary, in this sense, maps the city, creating a “spatial texture” for Cabo Verdean musicians and migrants alike in the city, constructing the city through a series of images and events taking place in a “symbolic space”, that is the city while at the same time shaping it, and which is operated as “a category of thought and experience”, in the words of sociologist James Donald (2005: 179). In other words, a ‘map’ of belonging is generated that is at once geographical, through the city as well as across continents, as well as symbolic, as it entails the imagination of space and community. A map of belonging is constructed that traces the routes of the sailor musicians, both their physical journeys from the harbours to the cafes and the imaginary routes that are interpreted in music and that find their way to the cafes, bars, nightclubs and restaurants where those artists perform. It creates a reflection on the connections between places created by musical practices, the lyrics that refer to certain moments and experiences of migration, and the performances and places in which this is interpreted, which ultimately produce these places.

The previous sections focused on the working lives of the men who came to Rotterdam as sailors and musicians. In the next section, I seek to highlight Cabo Verdean women’s stories of migration and work life.

Life-work balance from a woman's perspective

The Cabo Verdean migratory experience captured in music, popular literature and otherwise in events is mostly male-focused. Little is sung (or told, for that matter) about the experiences of female migration to the Netherlands and female migrants' struggles, lives and stories. This is also the case for the common narrative of the 'origins' of the community, which is heavily focused on the experiences of the first male pioneers and sailors in the city. However nowadays there is an increased level of visibility for the role of women in the community and their stories and history. In this subsection, I provide an overview of female migration, of the routes taken to the Netherlands, and of women's positions in the domestic sphere as well as in work life. I seek to highlight some of the issues and struggles that have occurred in relation to the domestic situation of Cabo Verdean women in Rotterdam. Finally, I seek to make visible some initiatives in the cultural sector that reflect on and increase the visibility of the roles played by women in the Cabo Verdean community.

Even though the first wave of migration in the 1960s consisted primarily of Cabo Verdean men, after approximately a decade migration of women towards the Netherlands also gathered momentum:

In the 1970s, important links also developed between the male dominated Cape Verdean community in the Netherlands and the almost exclusively female community in Italy (Andall 1999). There were several thousand Cape Verdean women working as domestic maids in Italy and many opted to migrate to the Netherlands in search of greater autonomy and better working conditions. As a consequence of their migration from Italy, family reunification, and increasing independent female migration from Cape Verde, women became the

majority among Cape Verdean immigrants to the Netherlands beginning in the early 1970s. Today the numbers of men and women are roughly equal, both among the resident population and among new immigrants. (Carling 2008: 92)

As sociologist Jacqueline Andall highlights, there were various reasons to migrate from Italy to the Netherlands. On the one hand, working conditions were more promising in the Netherlands as work in Italy was almost exclusively linked to the domestic sector, which also restricted independent social life and offered limited opportunities for family formation. The fact that hardly any Cabo Verdean men lived in Italy, and hardly any Cabo Verdean women in the Netherlands, also complicated the latter process. Through a series of interviews with Cabo Verdean women in Rotterdam, Andall highlights how diasporic networks generated new possibilities to meet a partner:

Marta met her husband, who worked in Rotterdam, at a Cape Verdean party while he was on holiday in Italy. Jacintha's relationship with her husband started when she was on holiday in the Netherlands.

Otaldina's husband, based in Rotterdam, saw a photo of her at a friend's house, obtained her address and began writing to her. They married two years later. (Andall 1999: 250)

It is not the case that all women already had a partner in the Netherlands and moved to the Netherlands for this reason. Many of them also came to the Netherlands alone, sometimes as single mothers. This also affected the economic situation of the women, who in this situation "could not rely on traditional patriarchal arrangements to provide their economic security" (Andall, 1999, p. 251). They were essentially 'on their own'. Women also started to arrive

directly from the Cabo Verdean islands, reuniting with or starting new families in the Netherlands, as well as from other parts of the diaspora such as Portugal and Senegal.

Like their male counterparts, women were prepared (out of necessity) to do unskilled work. As Pires explains, many Cabo Verdean women that came to the Netherlands ended up in the cleaning industry, usually in Dutch families, factories and hospitals in Rotterdam and its surrounds. For example, in the 1970s the sugar and chocolate factory in Delfshaven was a large employer. The Van Nelle factory, where many Cabo Verdean men already worked, also became a popular workplace. Pires notes, however, that even though work was often found quickly, at first it was also often arranged illegally. Many women (and men, for that matter) were arrested at factories and sent back to Portugal (Pires 2006). Exact numbers are not mentioned by Pires, nor are these available in national statistics or academic works.

Many of the women arriving in the Netherlands had crossed the border illegally or with a tourist visa, without a work or residence visa. They often arrived without proper schooling and without mastering the Dutch language. These circumstances pushed them towards both more precarious work and living conditions. Cabo Verdean women often worked as cleaning staff in hospitals such as in the Ikazia hospital, Franciscus Gasthuis, and Erasmus MC, all located in the city of Rotterdam, as well as in several nursing homes. As is typical in this line of work, this often included working evening shifts and on some occasions night shifts. With men at sea for several months at a time, women were often left singlehandedly raising their children while managing (multiple) jobs on land.

In the 1990s an emergency shelter for women was set up following several cases of extreme domestic violence. In 1994 Casa Tiberias was founded through the parish of *Nossa Senhora da Paz* ('Our Lady of Peace'). One of its founders, Tomázia Teixeira (1958-2021) stated, "the women's house had to be built. A lot of women were mistreated and then they

disappeared from Rotterdam, they did not know where they were going and then we suddenly saw them again. They came home again, their husband was nice for two or three days, and then things went wrong again” (Neves Teixeira 2020, translation added). In addition to serving as an emergency shelter for women and their families, the activities of the organisation are diverse. Since its foundation, the organisation has also played a key role in providing social assistance and as an activity centre for Cabo Verdean women where all kinds of projects are set up, such as Dutch courses and computer courses (Graça 2010: 66-67). In a personal interview, Tomázia told a story that exemplifies the precarity of the daily struggle to balance family and work:

One time, an eight-year-old with two other kids enters the school playground. I was standing at the door and asked why their mother is not bringing them to school, to which the kid answers that she is at work. After inquiring with the mother, it turns out that she gets up early in the morning to prepare the kids, goes to work, and calls home the moment the kids needed to walk to school. Often, women would only come home after work to feed the kids, after which they started another evening shift, for example as a cleaner at a hospital. (Neves Teixeira 2020, translation added)

Women often did whatever work they were able to find considering the circumstances they arrived in the Netherlands. The evening and the night, even though not particularly attractive for many, make up part of a landscape in which low-skilled work is carried out and of which migrants often occupy a large part. The necessity to work evenings or night shifts complicates greatly what human geographer Sarah Dyer et al. (2011) calls the work-life balance, in which “diverse and complex negotiations and strategies to balance paid work and their caring responsibilities” form part of women’s daily routines and where “tension between productive

and unpaid caring labour (with particular reference to the care of young children)” (2011: 685-686) is generated.

A 2003 local report shows that the problems of balancing family life and working outside regular office hours remain visible in the facilitation of childcare, putting Cabo Verdean women in a troublesome position:

For (working) Cabo Verdean women the lack of childcare is a big problem. In particular, the fact that they often work outside ‘office hours’ plays a big role in this. A good example is that of women working in the cleaning sector: these women often work in the mornings before, and the evenings after office hours. These are exactly the times during which their kids are home (alone). (de Gruijter & Verwey-Jonker instituut 2003: 20, translation added)

According to Tomázia, only a handful of women were able to go to school after arriving as financial resources were often not sufficient for newcomers. The story that she tells is typical of the life of many women, often single or with their husbands at sea, looking to make ends meet:

Women did whatever work they could find, so there were hardly any women who went to work at night, because they had to be home. You couldn’t do that, with such a large group of single mothers. Getting up early to clean the offices before they open and back to work late in the afternoon was normal. They were tired, it was all they could do. The children learned very early to take care of themselves or to listen to the eldest who was usually not older than 10 years. (Neves Teixeira 2020, translation added)

Women's lives in cultural expression

For many women, the night was reserved for duties such as childcare, household, and rest, whereas nightlife in a context of socialising, relaxing and going out was reserved for sporadic occasions during the weekends. As will become clear in the following chapter on leisure and nightlife, this picture stands in stark contrast with narratives of the night that are brought to light by Cabo Verdean male artists, who often highlight going out as part of a common lifestyle that is routinely lived. This is also a lifestyle that is criticised by several Cabo Verdean composers. The song 'Dialogue', for instance, written by Cabo Verdean composer Faria Júnior and interpreted by Dutch-based female singer Jacqueline Fortes, highlights a lifestyle in which men often cheat on their partners on nights out while their wives are at home. In ironic fashion, she highlights a fictional idealised situation with an 'exemplary husband':

Mi nka tem ess problema
Nha marido é exemplar
Casa traboi, traboi casa
El ka sabe vadiar
Sum tiver n'arranjo de panela
El tá po mesa
E cuida de nós Fidjo

I don't have this problem
My husband is 'exemplary'
Home, work, work, home.
He doesn't know fooling around.
When I'm arranging the pots and pans,
He's setting the table
And taking care of our kids.

(Faria Júnior 1986)

With 'ess problema', Faria Júnior refers to an unfaithful husband who is living 'the good life', lying that he was at work, and always away from home. The harmonious coexistence within the family that Faria Júnior then pictures is not always present. Even though the situation illustrated in this song takes place in Lisbon, Portugal, similar situations are discussed in

many interviews and stories that include women's perspectives. Tomázia emphasises that when men returned from sea, they interfered with family life. On the one hand, the work that the women did both in the household and other jobs was little appreciated. On the other hand, many men behaved in macho ways, resulting in abusive home situations: "Once I was at work, and someone called me to come to the hospital right now. She had been pushed off the second-floor balcony by her husband for greeting another man, just an acquaintance, on the street" (Neves Teixeira: 2020).

Sonya Dias is a well-known storyteller, talk show host, entrepreneur and cultural producer within the Cabo Verdean community. In an essay on the role of women in the community, she emphasises that when the men began to work ashore, relations within the family became further disrupted and a spate of divorces ensued:

The frictions and family problems increased, especially because many children had difficulty with the new relationships of authority and the often strict attitude and hard hand of the father. Unfortunately, there are plenty of examples of children who dropped out of school because of this and suffered emotional damage. It resulted in a big wave of divorces within the Cape Verdean community, which hardly happened before. (Dias 2020: 187-188)

The difficulties that arose in Cabo Verdean family life, like the fate of the women who had to fend for themselves and their families, were fairly invisible because it was a taboo subject. Tomázia discusses problems of the Cabo Verdean community in a radio program in the 1980s, at the Cabo Verdean Broadcasting Foundation C.O.S., called *Het Hoekje van de Vrouw* ('The women's corner'), which played at the beginning of the evening. For example, she discussed the theme of incest for 6 months on this show. She told the stories that were

shared with her personally, and guests came by with their story. Other themes discussed included the emancipation of women and teenage motherhood. Many of these topics, as mentioned before, were strictly taboo. However, she emphasises that men also listened to her program. She tells a striking anecdote about men who, after work, before heading home, would go to particular cafés in the city and listen to the program, which reveals the urgency of these discussions.

The invisibility of women, women's issues and their role in the Cabo Verdean diaspora also translates to the invisibility of women in narrative. Considering the concept of myth-making, it is clear that in both historiography and popular storytelling (whether spoken, written, or sung), the genesis of the community in all its facets, of which work life is one of the most important elements, is mainly based on the story and experiences of men and the sailor's lifestyle. This is of course not something that is exclusive to the Cabo Verde community but occurs in migration stories with different origins. The story of women's migration to Rotterdam is much less widespread and has earned little public recognition, although it has been very important for the organisation of the community. The myth, so to speak, is male. Indeed, perhaps also on a self-critical note, it is often the male pioneers of the community who are highlighted in stories of the community. One of the exceptions is Sonya Dias' work, briefly mentioned before. In 2018 she performed a storytelling theatre piece titled *Het verhaal van mijn moeder* ('The story of my mother'). This is a clear caveat to the standard male-centric story told about the Cabo Verdean migrants, as she herself states:

The story of the first men who came to Rotterdam, like Djunga de Biluca, is known by many people. The people of Rotterdam know the story of the first Cape Verdeans that came, who came to work on the ships. But nobody told the stories of women; how did they get here?
(Dias 2020)

As Dias highlights, her mother's story is a feast of recognition for many women who came to the Netherlands: "my mother's story is not my mother's story, it's the story of the first generation" (Dias 2020) and serves to fill a gap in an otherwise male-centric narrative of migration. Comfortably seated in an armchair and creating a visual atmosphere of intimacy, Dias narrates the early life story of her mother Joana until the moment she arrives in the Netherlands (Krakowska-Rodrigues 2022). Both a personal story (that of her mother Joana) and a collective experience (of many women who shared similar trajectories and lives), Dias' narrative unfolds the connections between roots, routes and memories by sharing a trajectory that starts in her mother's birthplace of Lajedo, on the island of Santo Antão and ends in Rotterdam. Although the story of migrant women is still an exception in the diasporic narrative and cultural productions that tell the history of the Cabo Verdean community today, present performances such as *Het verhaal van mijn moeder* generate a flow of 're-memory' (Brah 1996) and re-experience that create a broader narrative and enable re-imaginings of the community's past.



Chapter 5: Dancing down memory lane: (re)experiences of Cabo Verdean nightlife

Oh pove bzot ben oiá
Êss kriol na porta de Habanera
Frontode num pavio dôde
Na finta dêš holandesa

Kem k'uvi bzot
Kêss bóca xei ta falá
Nêš menina k'bzot ranjá
Nem oiá bzot ta temá paioff

Quem crê sabê sê devera
Esperá quate hora de madrugada
Pa ben oiá kebra kabeça
Ma ês menina de 70 ma 100

Oh people come and see
These creoles at Habanera's door
Crazy with excitement
For conversations with the Dutch ladies

If someone would hear you
Talking with your mouth full
About these girls you've had
They didn't even see you get the worst

For those who want to know
Wait until it's four o'clock
To solve the puzzle
Of these girls between 70 and 100.

(Morais 1967, translation added)¹³

In the song above, we are at the entrance of Habanera, a Latin American nightclub in the city of Rotterdam. Some men from Cabo Verde decide to try their luck chatting with some Dutch ladies outside the door of the club to earn bragging rights. Comically, the song urges the listener to wait until four o'clock, when 'the puzzle is solved': as it turns out, the ladies are professionals who charge 'between seventy and a hundred' guilders for their company. As an article from 2015 in the Dutch newspaper NRC describes, "night-time hunks were picked up in front of the doors of the Habanera, l'Ambassadeur, the Cascade and the Spidobar: for forty

¹³ Luis Morais is the composer, though this song was recorded and performed by Bana.

guilders extra, a sea boy could also arrange his overnight stay in a love room” (De Jong 2015, translation added). The article refers to a series of popular nightclubs in the early 1950s and 1960s in Rotterdam, around which sex workers would pick up sailors visiting from all over the world. These were most probably the girls these men depicted in the song were talking to late at night. Indeed, the entertaining scene illustrated in the lyrics is a testament to Rotterdam’s lively nightlife, and the song was recorded by renowned Cabo Verdean singer Bana, who arrived in the city in 1965. The song is called ‘Problema’, translating to ‘Trouble’, and it relates the nighttime adventures of Cabo Verdean men from a somewhat critical perspective. Waiting and looking for a ship to board, many Cabo Verdean sailors ventured into the nighttime city. Simultaneously, this became an interesting and entertaining subject for some artists to sing about.

After some years, with more and more Cabo Verdeans arriving and staying in Rotterdam, the diaspora community increasingly sought ways to spend its evenings with compatriots. For this reason, many Cabo Verdeans started to engage with a night circuit that encompassed their own community. Cabo Verdean musicians and artists found their way to Rotterdam and the first so-called *Noites Caboverdianas* (‘Cabo Verdean nights’) were organised. These served as important occasions in which the socialisation of the rapidly growing community was a central goal. At that time, the city of Rotterdam was (as it still is) in constant movement and (re)construction, and many historic venues have been repurposed or demolished as of the time of writing. In present-day Rotterdam, the nights that were celebrated in various (historic) venues, whether in clubs or at Cabo Verdean parties, have become part of the community’s memory of the city. At the same time, the histories of particular places and memories where Cabo Verdeans used to meet and have fun together are appropriated in contemporary nightlife, as organisers draw on collective memories of historical nightlife events. These events are promoted through narratives of the nocturnal city,

where both the community's and the city's past are reflected through practices of re-memory and re-experience (Brah 1996) and where an imagination of the nocturnal past is constructed.

Moving mostly from studios, community centres and squares in the first chapter, to barracas, boarding houses and bars in the second, this chapter addresses nightlife spaces such as nightclubs, performance venues and 'dancings' (a pseudo-English Dutch word for a bar or venue in which people dance, possibly best translated as 'dancehalls'), and explores how these spaces, and the practices therein, contribute to understandings of the night as important sites of belonging, identity and culture within the Cabo Verdean community. Drawing on a variety of materials from several events, places and organisers, including music, newspaper articles, promotional material and interviews, this chapter discusses the memory of Cabo Verdean nightlife and its associations with specific locations in the city since the 1960s. I also seek to demonstrate how current generations of nightlife organisers (and partygoers) imagine the city's different (historic) night scenes.

The first part of this chapter includes an historic account of early nightlife. I will first seek to understand in what historical-social context a nightclub scene was constituted in Rotterdam, in which the Cabo Verdeans found their way into the cities' nightlife. Navigating one of the Netherlands' major cities inevitably led to cultural encounters in post-war nightlife venues, and early night venues visited by Cabo Verdean migrants became important spaces of encounter where ties with fellow nationals (and others) were forged. After this, I will consider the 'politics' of nightlife and how the first Cabo Verdean night spaces were informed by particular ideological and political ideas linked to the situation in their homeland, as well as emphasising the particular visions of nightlife that appear in music. Finally, contemporary nightlife events will be discussed in terms of how historic nightlife practices are re-imagined and re-appropriated in the present.

Rotterdam restarts its nightlife

On May 14, 1940, Rotterdam, the second largest city of the Netherlands, was bombed by the German Luftwaffe. Dropping almost 1300 bombs in thirteen minutes, the German invaders left little of the historic centre of Rotterdam intact, and destroyed a major part of the port area. In fact, Rotterdam was the only major city in the Netherlands that was destroyed to such an extent during World War II. Post-war reconstruction did not initially prioritise the development of nighttime spaces of leisure such as nightclubs but, on February 28, 1948, the social-democratic newspaper *Het Vrije Volk* ('The Free People') announced the re-starting of nightlife in Rotterdam:

Whatever has already been or is being rebuilt in Rotterdam, the world of going out still lacked one facet: nightlife. For a global city that wants to attract foreign nationals (read: foreign currencies), insiders say it cannot be missed and that is why the gap has been filled from tonight onwards. Rotterdam started its post-war nightlife. Three establishments have been granted night permissions and Parkzicht has used this to found the Parklane night club. [...] The main thing is that it can no longer be said of Rotterdam that it is so far behind other cities in this term of entertainment. [...] In view of visitors from elsewhere, of course. [...] (*Het vrije volk : democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*, 28 February 1948, translation added)

Large flows of sailors from all regions of the world, including the Cabo Verdean archipelago, visited the city in the downtime between journeys. The nocturnal city welcomed them, whether outside, or in cafés, bars, restaurants or nightclubs. Several neighbourhoods in the city served as red-light districts or offered other forms of nighttime entertainment. With

Rotterdam in reconstruction following the end of the war, several new establishments opened while others were remodelled after having served as ‘emergency nightclubs’, which were constructed during the war. The article above states that the opening of the Parklane nightclub was a great success with, amongst other performances, “a little dancer who had come all the way from Ceylon to show the strangers some most curious dances. The highlight was the ‘dance of the seven veils’, the details of which we gladly disguise with the veil of love for the sake of the guests who cannot escape them...” (*Het vrije volk: democratisch-socialistisch dagblad* 1948, 28 February 1948). Parklane would later be renamed Casino de Paris, also a nightclub, which was also frequently visited by Cabo Verdean sailors. In a broadcast made in 1958, the socialist public broadcaster *Vereeniging van Arbeiders Radio Amateurs*¹⁴ (VARA) emphasised the variety of cultures represented in Rotterdam’s nightclubs of the late 1950s, describing “South Slavonic” sounds in the grand cafe ‘Engels’ and Italian ones in the ‘Belmont’ (*Het vrije volk: democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*, 7 July 1958). Later in 1966, the local tourist information office *De Vereniging voor Vreemdelingenverkeer*¹⁵ (VVV) emphasised that Rotterdam was ahead of the capital city, Amsterdam, in terms of entertainment available, offering a large variation of amusement:

An establishment where you can hear chansonnettes (’t Winckeltje), places where you can dance and are regularly treated to a floor show (La Bonanza, Bristol, Casino de Paris, Habanera, l’Ambassadeur, El Amra), a place where one can ‘twist’ for hours (De Wieck, where beatgroup the Hot Jumpers plays), an establishment where one can drink a glass with piano or accordion in the background (Doofpot and

¹⁴ ‘Association of Workers Radio Amateurs’

¹⁵ ‘Association for Tourist Traffic’

Drie Muskietiers) (*Het vrije volk : democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*,
18 February 1966)

At the time when Cabo Verdean sailors began arriving in Rotterdam, no Cabo Verdean clubs, associations or music spaces existed in the city. However several clubs were frequented by Cabo Verdeans, and in the newspaper excerpt above, two places stand out. Habanera, a venue we encountered in the previous chapter, was opened in 1950. It was a dancing and bar “completely furnished in the Cuban style” where “Rotterdamers and non-Rotterdamers can find amusement” (*Het vrije volk : democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*, 30 September 1950).

Habanera was a popular club for young Cabo Verdean sailors. Bana regularly played at this venue and attracted a significant Cabo Verdean audience. As one sailor recalls:

I worked for Heineken for some time, but I only earned 90 guilders per week. During the weekends, I went to Habanera - two nights, and it was all gone! So, I thought, I’m going to sea, this way at least I will be able to save some money! (Rosario Silva 2021, translation added)

Many men who came to Rotterdam were still young and keen to go on nightly adventures in Rotterdam’s nightclubs, such as Habanera, when they were off work. The realisation that this was not a very sustainable lifestyle often came later. Three years after Habanera, La Bonanza opened, another dancing venue that would later become a hotspot for Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam and create cultural connections between Cabo Verde and Latin America in the city:

South America is now also represented in the entertainment life of Rotterdam. In six weeks’ time, the former café De Kroon [...] has been transformed in La Bonanza (‘Prosperity’), a tastefully decorated

bar. Lou Hidalgo holds sway over it and the Don Alvino Garcia orchestra receives visitors with South American tunes. (*Het vrije volk : democratisch-socialistisch dagblad*, 4 September 1953)

Cabo Verde in La Bonanza

La Bonanza was run by the first Surinamese club owner in Rotterdam, Lou Hidalgo. Even though Cabo Verdeans attended the nightclub, the space attracted a diverse audience, predominantly Dutch but with many migrants - Antillean, Spanish, Portuguese, Surinamese. Over the years Hidalgo contracted many migrant and foreign musicians, and it became known for its exotic performers; Black Surinamese jazz performers such as Teddy Cotton and Kid Dynamite, a variety of Latin American performers, as well as floorshows and stripteases. La Bonanza was also one of the first nightclubs in Rotterdam to contract the Cabo Verdean music group Voz de Cabo Verde, which would soon become a popular icon of Cabo Verdean music. As mentioned, the group was managed and created by Silva, the owner of Morabeza Records.

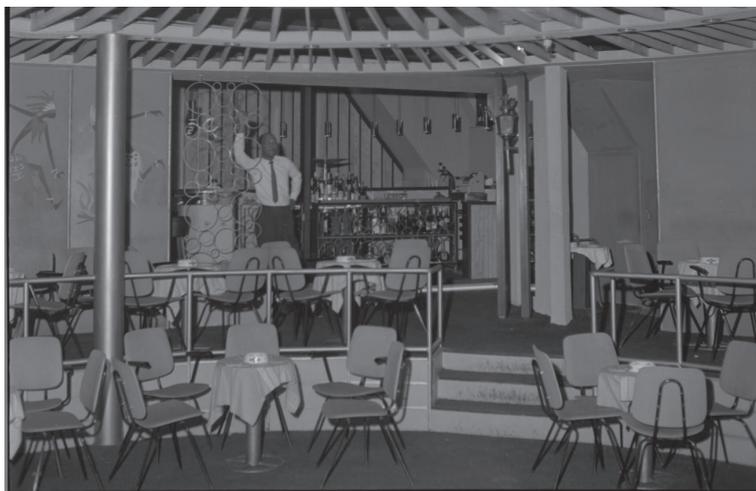


Figure 17: 'Interior of La Bonanza on the Van Speykstraat', 1964. © Gemeente Rotterdam (Stadsarchief)

The group, first named Os Verdianos and later renamed as Voz de Cabo Verde in 1966 to appear more professional, started playing at ‘creole parties’ almost every weekend, and according to Silva, Amílcar Cabral himself was very content with the group as they “symbolised and represented Cabo Verde” (Silva 2009: 137, translation added). The term ‘creole’ has also played an important role in the genesis of Cabo Verde and the formation of a national identity. Although it implies national unity in this context, the term is also in constant debate given the variation of life experiences, cultural traditions and migration trajectories on each island. In the nineteenth century, the Portuguese colonisers even regarded creole as an intermediary stage “on the way to speaking and being Portuguese” (Pardue 2015: 42). In the description above, however, the term creole is rather used as a badge of honour for Cabo Verdeans as it is placed in the context of the anti-colonial struggle.

Voz de Cabo Verde was one of the first internationally successful Cabo Verdean music groups to be integrated into this diverse landscape of night scenes: as well as performing in Cabo Verde, they played in Dutch and Belgian clubs and in nightlife venues of the Cabo Verdean communities across Europe, in France, Luxembourg, and Portugal. Silva landed a contract with Rotterdam’s La Bonanza in 1968, where they became the house band and played several evenings a week.

The cover of the album *Meché* (‘Shake’) produced in 1969, seen in Figure 18 on the next page, shows a series of photos of the group with their own instruments inside and outside La Bonanza, including at the bar, on stage, and in front of the building. Meanwhile, the nightlife activities employed at this venue coexisted with more the politically oriented activities of the label, which were discussed in the first chapter.



Figure 18: *Mechê* Album Cover, 1969. Copyright Morabeza Records Int.

At La Bonanza Voz de Cabo Verde played a repertoire of mainly Latin American music styles, including *cumbia*, *merengue* and *samba*. Cabo Verdean music styles such as *morna* and *coladeira* were for the most part played for recordings and at Cabo Verdean parties, even though the stirring rhythms of *coladeira* would also be played in La Bonanza at times. The owner of the club wanted them to play mostly Latin American music, in line with the ‘tropical’ Latin theme. The group even switched vocalists, replacing Bana for Djosinha to satisfy Hidalgo’s wishes as Bana almost exclusively sung *mornas* and *coladeiras*. The group’s adaptability and versatility are well-reflected in their music production: “along with the dance styles in vogue in Europe, the group recorded in their phonograms a substantial repertoire of *mornas* and *coladeiras*, vocalised or in instrumental versions [...] which circulated in Portugal, in the then African colonies and in the centres of the Cape Verdean diaspora” (Cidra 2008b: 114, translation added). This first popular Cabo Verdean music group was thus in a

sense entangled in both political and commercial circuits, each of which had a particular place and time. Whereas recordings were integrated in streams of information and images oriented towards Cabo Verdeans in the context of a political struggle, the group was also integrated into a nightclub scene that offered transnational forms of entertainment. At the same time, these spaces still offered room for generating a sense of belonging in the diaspora. Voz de Cabo Verde's residency in La Bonanza is in this sense an example of how different cultural, political and ideological flows are interwoven in nightlife, entertaining both foreigners and the diaspora.

Unlike other venues that were marketed towards mainly white and western preferences, performances in La Bonanza included a variety of standardised or stereotyped performances of Latin American music and entertainment, as well as black jazz. Catering towards an ethnically diverse audience, these commercialised nights out created experiences that drew on the popular imagination of foreign cultures. In this sense, foreign cultures were commodified towards a standardised (formula of) commercial cultural expression and captured within representations of leisure and entertainment that were both reproducible and accessible. Cultural performances can also be read within the context of what Huggan has called the "postcolonial exotic" (2001), in which a product/show/performance is marketed towards a particular audience, made familiar, and in which cultural expressions are commodified so that they can be enjoyed. In this way, La Bonanza provided a space for the integration of Cabo Verdean music performance into a somewhat 'exoticised' cultural product. Even though the group obtained an iconic status as a Cabo Verdean musical reference, in Rotterdam it was integrated into a commercial cultural circuit surrounded by a tropical, Latin-American or Caribbean commercial image, which can also be observed in nightlife venues such as La Bonanza and Habanera. It is, however, inaccurate to consider the

integration of Cabo Verdean music (groups) into this image as dependent exclusively on processes based on cultural homogenisation.

Considering that “globalisation is itself a deeply historical, uneven and even localising process” (Appadurai 1996: 17) and migration, settlement and integration occur within a context of power-relations, the cultural context of the development of a Cabo Verdean night scene cannot be seen separate from what Appadurai has coined “global cultural flows” or the (rapid) “flow of mass-mediated images, scripts and sensations” (Appadurai 1996: 4). Simply put, artists, songs and performances are always and already influenced by the representations and sounds that surround them. This is even more evident in the case of the Cabo Verdean community, where both artists and nightlife visitors often travelled the world as sailors (also often passing through and along Latin America) and thus were exposed to different music styles, venues and forms of nightlife. Thus instead, hybridities, cross-cultural flows and intercultural exchange should be emphasised, “producing locality in (new) globalised ways” (Appadurai 1996: 9).

A playful appropriation of the commodified Latin-American cultural expressions that could be found in places as La Bonanza are also visible on the cover of Luis Morais’ album *Luis Morais em La Bonanza*, shown in Figure 19 on the next page.

Luis Morais (1935-2002) was the saxophonist of Voz de Cabo Verde, and the music on his album is also the music played in La Bonanza at the time. During that period they played in a more commercial format (Gonçalves 2021). The album features Latin American songs, and the album cover brings together a collection of stereotypical images: two barefooted men with ponchos and headgear sit on the floor, while behind them stands a woman with a turban reminiscent of Brazilian star Carmen Miranda, thus playing with the representation of Latin American pop culture that was performed at La Bonanza.

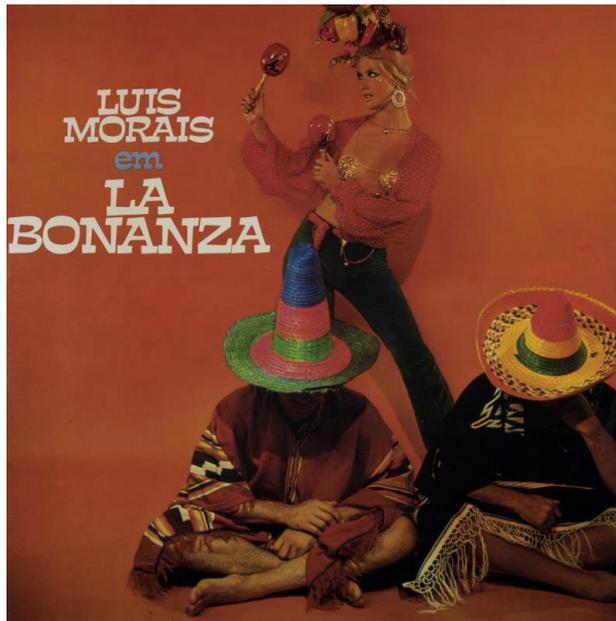


Figure 19: Luis Morais em La Bonanza Album Cover, 1974.
Copyright Morabeza Record Int.

Socialising on the dancefloor

With the arrival of Voz de Cabo Verde in La Bonanza, a larger Cabo Verdean crowd was also drawn to the nightclub. In the social realm, La Bonanza offered a space of transnational encounter (both musical and between communities) and of re-encounter with fellow Cabo Verdeans. Interactions with strangers were common: sailors from other countries, tourists, locals and visitors of both sexes mixed in this space. The dancefloor functioned as a space of inevitable cultural mixing, and sometimes collision. It also served as a space of re-encounter: of those Cabo Verdeans that had departed from the same country and were able to socialise with each other ‘between ships’, or with those that had already settled on land. The dancefloor was simultaneously a space in which common cultural references could be enjoyed collectively. In a Rotterdam neighbourhood newspaper, a Cabo Verdean migrant remembers his first experiences of La Bonanza as a 16 or 17-year old, while waiting on land to board another ship:

You saw so many familiar faces... greeting... kisses... shaking hands at tables... a couple of beers to warm up [...] We danced the *cumbia* ... When ‘Quem tem odio’ or ‘Terezinha’ were played the dancefloor exploded. Merengues, sambas, coladeiras, yeah yeah... Djosinha was the king on the podium, he jumped right in the middle of the audience. Luis Morais was the joker — always teasing, always with a drink: “Listen, there is no bad grogue, it’s about how you feel - FORMIDABLE!”(Hart 2012)

In La Bonanza, both artists and audiences appropriated various cultural forms and the enjoyment of this blend is emphasised, with crowds enjoying equally the cumbias mentioned above, but also Cabo Verdean coladeira hits such as ‘Quem tem Odio’ (‘Who has hate’), by Cesária Évora and ‘Terezinha’ (‘Little Tereza’) by Voz de Cabo Verde. There was room to meet acquaintances and to enjoy the entertaining scenes caused by the popular artists on stage. Cabo Verdean music, artists and music groups were soon firmly integrated into the dancing and nightclub scenes of Rotterdam and other European countries, while Cabo Verdeans enjoyed nocturnal entertainment outside of community-founded spaces, engaging with the (transnational) cultural expressions and circuits that found their way to Rotterdam. In fact, the Latin American hits of the time, for example those played by Voz de Cabo Verde in La Bonanza, became popular among the Cabo Verdean public outside this club and began to be played at other parties (Gonçalves 2021), including at more exclusively Cabo Verdean events which will be discussed later. Early nightclubs were a privileged site which accommodated encounters in an informal, casual setting. As such, these spaces simultaneously functioned to generate a sense of community through shared experiences of enjoyment and encounter.

The politics of nightlife

As previously discussed, at the time when Cabo Verdean sailors began arriving in Rotterdam, no Cabo Verdean clubs, associations or music spaces existed in the city. However several clubs were frequented by Cabo Verdeans, such as La Bonanza and Habanera. During this period, Cabo Verdeans would also more often gather at their own homes or at boarding houses to play and enjoy Cabo Verdean music. However over time a shift from private to public spaces took place, and soon Cabo Verdean groups no longer exclusively performed in intercultural spaces such as La Bonanza, as groups and partygoers alike began to get their money's worth elsewhere in the city. When larger numbers of Cabo Verdeans settled in Rotterdam from the mid-1960s onwards, a night scene directed towards and created by Cabo Verdeans started appearing and more and more community organisations were founded.

Writer Mendes da Silva describes this change in an interview, when he explains to us what nightlife was like for him when he arrived in Rotterdam in the mid-1960s:

I loved to dance, I danced a lot, always, every week I danced. At first, I danced in Bristol, which was a little 'dancing' close to the Weena Fountain. A pretty little 'dancing' with only pretty women, lots of pretty women, but later that place closed. I immediately went to dance at the Casino de Paris, near the Euromast, I went there for a while, but that one closed too. But then Cabo Verdean music appeared, Cabo Verdean players, I went to go dancing at Cabo Verdean dance parties. But at first it was just Dutch [clubs], there were no Cabo Verdean parties. (Mendes da Silva 2019, translation added)

In the early 1970s, many events started to be organised by Cabo Verdean clubs and associations that were committed to the well-being of the community in Rotterdam. During

the day, both the artists and the organisers that lived ashore worked in Rotterdam's factories and other companies, and they organised nighttime events in their spare time. Organisers contracted groups from Cabo Verde to play in the Netherlands as a way to promote Cabo Verdean culture in the diaspora, but also to invest in cultural exchanges to increase visibility in Dutch society (Rodrigues 2019).

Parties and associations

Community organisations often strove to contribute to the independence of Cabo Verde by organising cultural and social events, including nighttime (music) events. These activities always took place in the after-hours: “cultural life, club life, everything always took place after working hours. After work you went to the association, you went to the meetings, you went to parties, you went to practice [music], everything took place at night and in the evenings” (Gonçalves 2021, translation added). One of the most prominent Cabo Verdean organisations in Rotterdam was the Associação Caboverdiana (‘Cabo Verdean Association’), which had been founded in 1967 to meet the needs of newcomers for housing and mutual contact (Pires 2006: 10). As sociologist Doris Pires mentions, this organisation was founded by pioneers such as João Silva and other members of the Cabo Verdean resistance against Portugal, and it had an emancipatory goal to create awareness among the Cabo Verdeans of their own culture. Members and sympathisers of the independence movement actively joined to promote their Cabo Verdean identity. To overcome a lack of funding and in the absence of governmental support, the association started to organise the first Cabo Verdean nights in Rotterdam to raise money and awareness. The first of these parties was organised in Café Arena (Pires 2006: 105), which was located on the Marconiplein in the Delfshaven district, a place the association would come to rent every week in order to organise dance nights. With the income from the bar and entry fees they would finance their other activities including literacy lessons, card evenings and the establishment of a Cabo Verdean football club. In the

1970s, a small childcare centre was also organised for working mothers (Pires 2006: 104-105).

As one prominent member of the association recalls, “Cabo Verdeans organised many dance evenings. But the dances were there to get people involved, to sell their political story” (Sailor A 2014, translation added). As Gonçalves mentions

The purpose of those parties was to gather people, give people a good time, make people aware of... hey, remember, our youth? Cabo Verde, Cabo Verdean music, we are not Portuguese, those are elements that always came back at parties. The people who organised it did it consciously, but the people who went there, it was giving those people a good feeling, so that they could have some fun and be a Cabo Verdean for a while. It was something psychological, but it wasn't something handed to you on a pamphlet. (Gonçalves 2021, translation added)

In this sense, party nights can be seen in light of the political ideas and motives of the Associação Caboverdiana and other organisations that sought to promote a Cabo Verdean identity and consciousness in the diaspora, even though this often occurred in a less obvious manner. It was mainly small elements that were used during parties, such as food, drink and music, that were supposed to provide a sense of collective self that was distinct from what was Portuguese:

Everything you encountered was typically Cabo Verdean, ‘Cabo Verdeanness’ was celebrated. The Cabo Verdean snacks, which were different from the Portuguese, Cabo Verdean rum, which was different from the Portuguese, our music, different from the

Portuguese... ‘We are different from the Portuguese’, that was always the focus of those kinds of moments and activities. (Gonçalves 2021, translation added)

According to da Graça, besides its social and cultural role the association was focused on promoting the political consciousness of Cabo Verdeans in the diaspora and some board members were strongly influenced by the political ideas of Amílcar Cabral, leader of the PAIGC. In the 1970s, an underground group linked to the PAIGC was even formed to stimulate this consciousness (Graça 2010: 56). As João Silva states in his autobiographical book *De Ribeira Bote a Roterdão*, he and others who helped organise the community played an important social role, and for a quick socialisation of the community they organised cultural and social activities, sports, music and other activities (Silva 2009: 120). It is clear that many activities were inspired by a political consciousness based on the PAIGC party’s ideology: “Amílcar Cabral sent instructions directly to the PAIGC cell in the Netherlands, that I coordinated, and which had as its mission to spread the Cabo Verdean culture in the diaspora, to do everything to make sure it is preserved and nurtured” (Silva 2009: 131, translation added). The PAIGC’s party-ideology played an important role within the association, and this ideology was directly connected to ideas on the socialisation and consciousness of the community, which was also stimulated through nightlife events.

Even though the activities of the Associação can be seen in light of more institutionalised practices, night spaces were fundamental in bringing a community together and making it visible, in order to create a sense of collective self. The Cabo Verdean music and night scene thus developed in parallel and in conjunction to the (political) institutionalisation of the Cabo Verdean community. Many other organisations would follow in their footsteps. These organisations, often linked to the island or to a city of origin, mostly had the same programs and intentions, focusing mainly on football and social-cultural

activities. The organisation of parties was particularly popular amongst these organisations (Pires 2006: 106), and even today there remain organisations and clubs that host live music frequently.

The politics of music

This crisscrossing of pleasure, politics and culture was particularly visible when interviewing Manuel Felipe Rodrigues (1941-2021), a first-generation party organiser who arrived in the Netherlands as a sailor in 1964 and organised many nighttime events during the 1970s and 1980s. Besides organising in the night scene, Rodrigues was one of the founders of the summer carnival in 1982 which has since become an important annual tradition in Rotterdam to this day, and in which groups from the Dutch Antilles, Suriname and Cabo Verde participate, mirroring the carnival parades seen in Cabo Verde. He also brought Cesária Évora to the Netherlands for the first time to perform in Ocean Paradise around 1990, better known as the ‘Chinese boat’, which is located at the Parkhaven in the old harbour area. This was long before she performed in 1992 in the official music hall De Doelen.

Music events that he organised were inspired by political and cultural ideas: “to inspire Cabo Verdeans to have the right to participate in society. This was all part of it, of creating a Cabo Verdean society” (Rodrigues 2021, translation added). It was also a means by which to generate cultural affiliation and to generate a connection to an imagined homeland for younger generations. “People of all ages came. When we started organising parties, we took our children with us to teach them how it was, our culture, our habits” (Rodrigues 2019, translation added). In this sense it is important to note that the parties that Rodrigues organised also had a conscious educational component. Moreover, parties were not only organised for (and attended by) a private audience, but “for everyone, especially to get to know the custom of Cabo Verdeans, as humble people, who like to share with others” and “to

promote the culture of Cabo Verde, for the recognition of us being a people” (Rodrigues 2019, translation added). Rodrigues contracted groups from Cabo Verde to play in the Netherlands as a means of cultural promotion, while also acknowledging that “people simply wanted to dance” (Rodrigues 2019, translation added) and came to enjoy themselves. A distinction needs to be made, however, between party nights, which were mainly occasions to dance, socialise, drink and listen to music, which were also known as ‘festas populares’, and the music performances included in cultural, social and political events. Even though the Cabo Verdean nightlife that we have discussed so far draws clear ideological inspiration from ideas of Cabo Verdeanness and community, it is particularly the cultural events that are more heavily inspired by political ideas based on the (intellectual) legacy of the PAIGC and Amílcar Cabral.

The parties organised by Rodrigues and other organisers within the Cabo Verdean community were located in various places in the city. Unlike the many pubs that were located around the port area and around the Nieuwe Binnenweg, many discotheques and party halls were located more centrally in Rotterdam, at least until the 1980s and 1990s. For example, parties were organised in the banquet hall of the Ton Menken ice rink, which opened in 1978 (and was demolished again in 1996) and which was located next to Central Station. Other banquet halls were also found around the central station, including the Fantastique ballroom and Congrescentrum Engels (‘Conference Centre Engels’). In addition there were also venues located in other parts of the city, such as the Trefcentrum (‘Meeting centre’), which was located in an old candy factory east of the city centre, and the Royal Partycentrum (‘Royal Party Centre’), also located on Marconiplein.

The concept of organising parties was often not complicated. The boss of a hall was usually Dutch, and they would manage the bar. A group of musicians was hired, and partygoers paid a small entrance fee (Rodrigues mentioned 5 guilders, approximately €2) to

pay for the band. For example, Rodrigues explained that organising a party at the Ton Menken ice rink cost only 100 guilders, and you never paid more than 500 guilders for other venues: “the owners of the venue sold their drinks, and the people came to dance. We didn’t profit from the bar ourselves. Food was also sold by the bar, but at the time it wasn’t very expensive — you bought a portion of fries, gave a guilder, even less, and all of this was organised on a voluntary basis” (Rodrigues 2019, translation added).

How music spaces connect to politics is crucial for understanding the construction of a common collective in which shared histories and shared origins are part of an imagination that is transmitted through music. Considering the political context in which the Cabo Verdean diaspora was formed, and how socialisation stimulated a consciousness linked to the home country, it is in the night that this consciousness was stimulated. Borrowing from Fouquet (2016), indeed the spaces in which these activities occur could be considered nightscapes through and in which political, cultural and historical imaginations and ideas circulate, and are negotiated and appropriated. These processes that occur in nighttime spaces are also significant for new arrivals seeking a place in the host society. Anthropologist Néstor Canclini explains the importance of place-making and how solidarity and entertainment are linked:

It is logical that this vulnerable or uncertain condition encourages the maintenance of frequent ties with compatriots in the new country and in the home country. The difficulties of integrating into the host society encourage solidarity networks, emblematic places of encounter and entertainment (parks, restaurants, bars, and clubs). (Canclini 2014: 91)

Location not only serves as a physical place to celebrate something, but becomes part of the symbolic spaces of a community in and through practices of musicking. In the Cabo Verdean

context, music spaces could function as a shelter in which one finds “cultural comfort from the hostile world outside” and where a community is able to “develop their own music and dance cultures” (Sedano 2019: 273), creating a space in which the colonial Portuguese cultural ideology could be questioned through alternative practices of resistance. In this context, security could be found in musical expression. While local music styles were often prohibited by the Portuguese authorities in Cabo Verde, music styles such as *morna*, *coladeira* and *funaná* thrived in the diaspora. During any Cabo Verdean night one could expect these music styles to be played, and it is particularly the *morna*, a melancholy musical style, that serves to express the sentiment of the colonial situation that Cabo Verdeans lived in under the Portuguese. Organiser Rodrigues explained the role of *morna* in diasporic nightlife as follows: “Cabo Verdean people like music; *morna*, they like it because it expresses the feeling of the colonial situation which we lived under the Portuguese. That’s why these people left to find a better life” (2019, translation added). In this context, music functions as a vehicle through which solidarity can be generated and information transmitted, but through which affects can also be spread. In this context, drawing on geographer Ben Anderson (2006) I understand affecting or being affected as “taking place during spatially and temporally distributed encounters” (735) and connected to the idea of hope and possibility, where (feelings of) oppression and melancholy are in tension with the contemplation of a better life abroad.

Music is also actively used to shape a transnational diaspora ‘feeling’ or grouping, connected to the homeland: “the experience of interpretation and listening for the interpreters and listeners triggers individual and collective processes of imagination and of proximity to Cabo Verde, of configuration of memory and experience of identities” (Cidra 2008a: 201-202). The imagination of a shared homeland, and also a history, present and future, was critical to the construction of a common collective. In encouraging listening, dancing, and being together, music played an important role in this process by developing and transmitting

particular narratives and imaginations. Commercial motivations aside, the organisation of nightlife was also linked to political ideas in which solidarity with co-nationals played an important role. The imaginations that are produced are partially constructed through the re-working of histories at home and abroad through music, which was played, listened to and interpreted during the after-hours in Cabo Verdean nightlife. Music played an important role in imagining the homeland within a political context, but also within the context of the host society. It worked to create orders in which specific political and cultural ideas were reiterated in night spaces, and through which, in Appadurai's words, "diverse local experiences of taste, pleasure, and politics can crisscross with another, thus creating the possibility of convergences in translocal social action that would otherwise be hard to imagine" (1996: 8).

Life and the night in music

Already from the early days of migration, music became a medium through which concerns could be voiced, discussed, but also questioned. Even though music transports listeners to places, this is frequently done not with the purpose of reminding, exciting or pleasing, but rather to remind Cabo Verdeans of their position as foreigners in Dutch society, often as illegal migrants, and to define appropriate behaviour and emphasise the Cabo Verdeanness of these immigrants. Amongst other ways, this is achieved by commenting on experiences in particular important places in the history of Cabo Verdean migration to Rotterdam, such as those of nightlife. The first section of this chapter mainly emphasised the nightclub La Bonanza, which played an important role in the early nightlife of the Cabo Verdeans. In 'Lucy d'Nho Morgode' ('Lucy of Mister Morgode'), a 1980 song by Bana, a conversation takes place between two men from the islands of Cabo Verde who meet each other somewhere in Rotterdam at night and end up going together to a nightclub:

Nacionalidade o que bo e?
Mim e fidju di caboverdeano ...

U ke k bo tem feito desd que bo txiga ki?
Nha vida e rodea ta ospia traboi ...

Nos ba, nos ba,
dança na Martinique
Ka bo preocupa
Virgem Maria ta ramedia

What nationality are you?
I am a child of Cabo Verde
What have you done since you are here?
Walking in circles looking for a job.

Let's go, let's go,
Dance in Martinique
Don't you worry.
Virgin Mary will solve it.

(Bana 1980, translation added)

In this encounter narrated by Bana, one man inquires what the other man's nationality is, and finds himself talking to a compatriot seeking some distraction in the nighttime city. As has been highlighted in the previous chapter on work life, going out, having fun, drinking and partying, or what could be considered the 'pleasure' side of the night, almost appears to be a direct consequence of the activities of the day. Working days are often depicted in music as frustrating endeavours, emphasising the struggle of finding fair jobs or working in unfair or illegal conditions. A continuation of the working day or days spent job-seeking, both of which are found in these same narratives, often seems to be placed in the context of pleasure seeking — visiting bars, dancing, drinking, meeting other Cabo Verdeans or potential romantic company — as a release valve. Often on the weekends this continuum extended towards the nightclubs of Rotterdam, while bars were more often visited earlier at night and during weekdays. Having a hard time finding work during the day, describing life as mainly consisting of "walking in circles", the man invites his new acquaintance to go out to a club in Rotterdam: letting off some steam, interrupting the cycle of boredom and stress that migrant life brought, meeting fellow Cabo Verdeans, and perhaps, a lady, Lucy, to "dance some

reggae with”. Incidentally, Martinique was allegedly a pseudonym for the Latin-American Nightclub La Bonanza.¹⁶

As narratives show, the city is not experienced or recorded equally by all artists — or by their audiences. On some occasions, actual (often playful) discussions arise between artists in songs. These discussions include certain interpretations and visions on the working conditions and the position of Cabo Verdeans in Dutch society, whether Rotterdam is viewed as either an exclusive or inclusive city, if Cabo Verdeans are worthy citizens of Dutch society, and if it is worth living in the Netherlands. Contrasting interpretations and representations of city life reveal issues of citizenship and belonging in relation to Dutch society. It is in this sense that artists generate a particular atmosphere of the night in music, as a practice of assemblage that generates several layers of meaning upon the night. Music assembles particular iterations of night spaces, thus creating imaginations of “the buzz, sensation and feeling of the city centre at night” (Shaw 2014: 93), which are indeed multiple.

In 1974 Bana launched a new album, *Contratempo*, meaning a setback, upset, or difficulty. One of the most popular tracks on this album was ‘Holanda é ca d’bossa’ (‘Holland is not yours’), a testament to the difficulties of integrating into another society’s customs and habits. The song was originally written by Manuel d’Novas, a sailor who had lived for some time in Rotterdam and was well integrated into the Dutch Cabo Verdean cultural scene. d’Novas is known as an ‘emigrant composer’ who understood how to translate common experiences of the Cabo Verdean migrant (Monteiro 2003, n.pag). The song, as can be read below, is hardly positive about Cabo Verdean migrants’ position in the Netherlands:

Amdjor bô txá de falá snêra
Holanda é ka de bósa
Holanda é de Juliana
Holanda é de Holandês

¹⁶ This was explained in conversations with Jorge Manuel Oliveira Lizardo.

e bô é kabeverdian
Ka bô txa nada konfundibe
kordá, bô spiá
Kemá es podê petóbe pa bem nadóde
e txezá ke lime na dente (x2)

You better stop talking foolishness
Holland is not yours
Holland is Juliana's
Holland is for the Dutchmen
And you are a Cabo Verdean
Don't let anything confuse you
Wake up, watch out
Because they can send you back swimming
And you'll get home with seaweed in your teeth.

(Bana 1980, translation added)

The song is a commentary on certain attitudes on the assimilation of Cabo Verdeans in the Netherlands: “you better stop talking foolishness”. It captures the critical position of the composer towards issues of behaviour, but also of citizenship, where becoming Dutch seems an impossibility and Cabo Verdeanness needs to be preserved in the diaspora. In a short analysis of this song, Juliána Braz Dias states that the composer, Manuel d'Novas, reminds Cabo Verdeans that

They are in the Netherlands, but also that they do not really belong there; that at any moment they may need to return home; that their true home is Cape Verde. He tells them to always keep some of their old Cape Verdean habits, even while they adopt new Dutch ways — for example, when he tells them to go ahead and have *krakeling* (biscuits) for a snack, or a Dutch beer. This song enforces the discourse regarding the construction of a Cape Verdean nation, emphasising the importance of maintaining the nation even in the diaspora. (Braz Dias 2008: 185)

This song discusses the lifestyles of Cabo Verdeans in the Netherlands, telling them to enjoy Dutch privileges while realising that they will never really be Dutch because ‘Holland is Juliana’s’ — referring to the then-Queen.

‘Mi também é Holandes’ (‘I am also Dutch’), by Africa Star (1982), serves as a response to *Holanda é ca d’bossa*. While *Holanda é ca d’bossa* denies citizenship status to Cabo Verdeans in the Netherlands, *Mi também é Holandes* asserts the opposite: “remember that my passport is Dutch, I’m married to a Dutch woman”:

Se Holanda e ka di bossa,
Se Holanda e di Juliana
Se Holanda e de holandês,
Mas ta enganado, mas esh ka lembra,
ma mim e holandés
nha pasaporte e holandes,
mim e casado ma Holandeza.

If Holland is not yours
If Holland is Juliana’s
If Holland is of the Dutch.
But you are wrong, don’t you remember
That I am Dutch
My passport is Dutch
I am married to a Dutch women

(Africa Star 1982, translation added)

The song then continues to discuss some very particular conditions for being Dutch:

M tem bizzniss, ntem discoteca [...]
M’ta trabalha na terra, m’tem um bar
I have a business, I have a discotheque,
I work on land, I have a bar.

(Africa Star 1982, translation added)

Indeed, this last fragment refers to the fact that in the 1970s, years worked on land counted towards obtaining a residence permit, unlike years worked at sea. The fragment emphasises how much the singer regards himself as Dutch and belonging there. Not only because he has a

Dutch passport, but also because he works on land and has his own business (a disco or bar). For a majority of Cabo Verdeans, however, owning a property or a business was not a reality, especially not during the early days of migration. Yet even while this song does not reflect a common reality for most Cabo Verdean migrants, it does comment on the perceived need to succeed in the diaspora, and serves to oppose the stories of hardship and failure often found in music written by various other artists. While this song does not emphasise a lavish lifestyle, it does oppose the slightly strict vision of belonging that Bana presents.

Meanwhile, other voices in Cabo Verdean music celebrate a lifestyle of leisure and pleasure, much in line with what anthropologist Alan P. Merriam has argued about the role of music for a community:

Songs could be, however, both forms of social control — reflecting the ethos of a particular culture, in terms of values, sanctions and problems — and a means of challenging norms, through the expression of feelings that could not be spoken in other contexts (Merriam cited in Connell and Gibson 2003: 24).

Indeed, we should not view music practices in this context exclusively as a unifying mechanism, as if to inextricably bind and connect all members of a neatly defined community. Many Cabo Verdean artists wrote songs about Rotterdam, in which nightlife is a prominent theme. Most striking is that a dialogue develops between the composers, in which music becomes a moral playing field upon which behaviours are observed, evaluated and judged by the artists and listeners of the community. It is a way to transmit opinions and is in this way a cornerstone in public debate. Whereas in the chapter on labour, for example, a more dramatic narrative was drawn of the daily rhythms of Cabo Verdeans in the city, in which this rhythm was much more depicted as a struggle from which the night served as a

release, emphasising the hardships of migration, the next song, titled ‘Bem Qu’el Lorge’, criticises these same rhythms and how people spent their time (and money):

Bo deve lembra c’ma bo câ Holandes
Tambem ca bo esquece c’ma bo ta na estrangeiro.
Ganha bo vida ca bo gasta dum vez
Quem guarda siguida ta vive c’onradez

El bem, qu’el largue
El ba dritinho pa Vigmar
Hora quel kabâ
E outra vez pa mar

You should remember that you’re not Dutch
You also shouldn’t forget that you’re abroad
Earn your life and don’t spend it all at once
The one who saves lives with honour

There comes the money
And he went directly to Vigmar’s
When it’s all spent
He’s off to sea again.

(Voz de Cabo Verde 1969, translation added)

Earning money, spending it, then having to go aboard again to earn money, forms a vicious circle linked to ideas of living a not-so-earnest life. This song reminds listeners of the fact that they are not Dutch and should therefore save money instead of wasting it on drinks, in order to live an honourable life. In ‘Bem Qu’el Lorge’ (roughly ‘Money’s received’), a 1969 song by Voz de Cabo Verde, the group criticises the lifestyles of Cabo Verdeans sailors coming ashore in Rotterdam. In this song, the lyrics connect nightlife to unnecessary spending and drinking, and instead propose a more sober lifestyle. In this vision, Cabo Verdeanness is connected not to exuberance and wasting money on hedonistic lifestyles but to an ideal of living modestly in order to be able to return to the islands and afford a life for your family.

It is striking that Cabo Verdean music not only reminds people of the beauty of the homeland, which has always been a major theme, but that it serves as a voice for the communities that start to take shape elsewhere in the world. One of the prominently discussed

issues is correct (or incorrect) behaviour in these other places, and these are similarly connected to ideas on incorrect behaviour in nightlife contexts. Place is contested through music as criticisms highlight the irresponsible behaviour of fellow Cabo Verdeans in particular venues of the night in Rotterdam. Especially considering the uncertain circumstances in which (initially only male) Cabo Verdeans would find themselves in the city looking for work, often illegally, many songs related to nightlife and leisure are a call to use common sense in these situations, not to exacerbate hardship by spending recklessly, and to position themselves as ‘humble beings’ in foreign society. Nightlife is, in this sense, a luxury that few should afford.

About a decade later another artist, Carlos Vieira, highlights a completely different attitude towards work and nightlife in ‘Nô Ta Da Póff’ (‘We’re gonna smoke a joint’) (1981):

Muit gente na Holanda
Krê traboi ês ka ta otchá
No ta otchá no ka krê
Vida krê nôs ê sô droga

Nô ta dá poff na Bel Ami
Nô ta ba spankál na Sató

Oh menish jam rolá um poff
Ma li dentro no ka ta dál
Sês panhone ês ta matone
Nô ba nô ba Bel Ami

Nô ta passá vid’assim
Sô ta anda dali pra lá

A lot of people in Holland
Want work and don’t find it
We find it but don’t want it
Our lives only want drugs.

We smoke a joint in Bel Ami
And we’ll enjoy in Sató

Oh people I rolled one
But here we can’t smoke
If they find us they’ll kill us
Let’s go to Bel Ami

We'll live our lives like that
From one side to the other

(Vieira 1981, translation added)

Almost completely opposed to the narratives previously encountered, in which work life is approached from a perspective of marginalisation and hardship and where nightlife should be celebrated with some restraint, Carlos Vieira's *Nõ Ta Da Póff* celebrates a lifestyle of leisure, pleasure and drugs. Vieira proposes to go to *Bel Ami*, a club located in the Hague, or to a Cabo Verdean owned disco, *Sató*, which in the 1970s was located in the Weena business district in Rotterdam. The singer boasts that while many of his fellow Cabo Verdeans "want work and don't find it", he and his friends "find it but don't want it", countering the common narrative of struggle and impossibility and refuting the typical port work life of Cabo Verdeans.

Some composers, rather than criticising or glorifying excessive nightlife activities, instead point to what they see as more proper ways of enjoying the night as Cabo Verdeans in the diaspora, such as in 'Viagem de Costa':

Bem escuta realidade de nos terra,
ka bo ser engrato dess manera
desd bo méte pe na estrangeiro
ta toma ness pils, bo esque se bo e fidjo nacional caboverdiano

...

Ben brincá na nôte caboverdiana,
ben dança na baile popular
se bo e caboverdeano,
bem lembra nos pikapada's
e ka bo confude funky ku nacionalidade

Come listen to the reality of our land.
Don't be so ungrateful,
Since you set foot on foreign land,
Drinking pilsner, you're forgetting that you are a child of Cabo Verde.

...

Come play at the Cabo Verdean Night.
Come dance at our dance night.
If you are Cabo Verdean,

Remember our pikapadas,
And don't confuse funk with your nationality.

(Fortes 1986, translation added)

In *Viagem de Costa* ('Coast Travel'), composer Faria Júnior (b. 1948), calls for more attention towards the "reality of our land" and to appreciate Cabo Verdean nationality in the diaspora. The loss of a feeling of Cabo Verdeanness caused by adapting foreign traits and preferences — drinking pilsner, dancing to rock and funk music — is contrasted with what could be considered more 'pure' Cabo Verdean cultural expressions, such as morna and coladeira, which should instead be enjoyed. As the performer of the song, Jacqueline Fortes (b. 1954) mentions in a personal interview, "a lot of people arrive here, they become part of an environment here, and they don't even listen to Cabo Verde's music" (Fortes 2020, translation added). It is in this sense that one should not confuse funk with nationality, or foreign styles with those more traditionally considered Cabo Verdean: "you are Cabo Verdean, don't think you're American or Dutch. It's to remember that this person is actually Cabo Verdean" (Fortes 2020, translation added). The song suggests visiting a more authentic Cabo Verdean nightlife event, the *Pikapada*, which are popular parties that feature live music and/or DJs and often continue until late in the night.

The night can thus be seen as a playing field on which the social relations of the community are negotiated. Discussions about how the night is properly celebrated include themes of tradition, national identity, morality and appropriate behaviour. This evidences how night spaces are inherently dynamic, and are experienced differently throughout a community; what the night or a night space 'means' in terms of feelings of belonging depends on these experiences, on social backgrounds and relations, and the value placed on traditions.

Contemporary Cabo Verdean nights and memory

Initially night spaces served to relieve the pressure of the daily persecution of Cabo Verdeans by the colonial regime and became an instrument for generating Cabo Verdean consciousness in the diaspora. Simultaneously, they provided a means for integrating into the urban spaces of Rotterdam. Early Cabo Verdean nightlife in the 1960s and 1970s was predominantly organised in venues owned by Dutch citizens, and organisers would simply rent a hall. A band would be contracted, either from the Netherlands, elsewhere in the Cabo Verdean diaspora or from Cabo Verde itself, and an entrance fee would cover the costs for rent and the music group. Even so, a collective memory of space has formed over the years in relation to particular locations in the city. Organisers often built relationships with venue owners and would host reoccurring parties at the same location for extended periods of time. The experiences in these common locations have also produced connections with particular places. Since the 1970s there were a handful of venues that were owned and run by Cabo Verdeans, which became important meeting points, and throughout the history of Cabo Verdean migration to the Netherlands, each decade had its places that were significant for the construction of a community.

The next section will focus on the re-appropriation of the memory of several significant night spaces for the Cabo Verdean community, and how they are promoted in contemporary nightlife in terms of belonging. This chapter jumps from the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s to the new millennium. Yet, it bridges the nightlife activities in the 1990s by analysing the collective memory that still exists today, of nightlife venues in the late 1980s and 1990s.

Cabo Verdeans have an active memory of community nightlife and the various locales in which events were hosted. Particular places and memories thereof are mentioned with a sense of nostalgia, where Cabo Verdeans used to meet and have fun together. Music is an

important trans-generational binding element, connecting not only recent migrants with each other and with Cabo Verde, but also with descendants of previous migrants (Pires 2006: 119). La Bonanza and Habanera became the first places where Cabo Verdean music was played and Cabo Verdean men came together to enjoy music during nights out, and where both Cabo Verdean classics and Latin American music more broadly got the crowd going. In the 1970s and 1980s, several Cabo Verdean owned establishments opened in Rotterdam. These included the Butterfly Bar, located on the 's Gravendijkwal, an avenue that runs from Rotterdam's River Maas to the city centre, as well as the Scotch Inn, Tipoiá's café, and Sató discotheque, which was mentioned before. Many of these places, including those owned by Dutch people, are connected by the fact that various Cabo Verdean artists have sung about them over the years, often through various lenses, as we saw in the previous section.

Rotterdam is a city that is in constant movement and (re)construction, and thus these places mentioned before have all been repurposed, changed owners or have been demolished as of today. A nighttime party scene continued to evolve throughout the 1980s and 1990s, establishing new relations between performers, audiences and nighttime venues. Several of these places have since been swallowed up by urban development projects as the city council focused on "the development of prestige projects" in several areas including the city centre (McCarthy 1999: 306). New places arose that took their place though, and became central to the nightlife of the Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam. In the 1980s, several locations opened on the Schuttevaerweg, located opposite the Spangen neighbourhood in Delfshaven district, including SunClub, Blokhut, Scouting, Real Parbo Football Club and Voorwaarts Football Club. Not only was this cluster close to the district in which the majority of Cabo Verdeans have historically lived and still live, but it was also close to the Van Nelle Factory where many Cabo Verdeans that settled in Rotterdam had been working since the 1960s. The area was colloquially known as 'Vanella' by Cabo Verdeans, and served as the main location for

Cabo Verdean parties during the weekends from the 1980s until 2017, when most of the venues were demolished. As current organiser and DJ Arnaldo Soares explains, while the parties in SunClub attracted a somewhat younger audience with the more modern sounds of that decade, such as *zouk* and *swingbeat* in the 1980s, and *cabo-swing*, *cabo-zouk*, and R&B in the 1990s, the other halls in the area attracted an older generation that mostly enjoyed the more traditional Cabo Verdean coladeiras (Soares 2020). These places, and in particular SunClub, will appear in the analysis of several recent events that appropriate the memory of places well-known within the community.

Even though Cabo Verdean-owned venues were scarce, and the ones on the Schuttevaerweg, for example, were owned mainly by Dutch-Surinamese organisations, one cultural producer describes two centrally located venues in the 1990s:

Fountain Paradise [...] was unprecedented. It had a Cabo Verdean owner, just like Zu King, in the same street near Annabel, King's Place, on Hofplein, where BAR is now located. That block, called Schieblok, is where you had Fountain Paradise and Kingsplace, which became a Cabo Verdean domain in the 1990s. (Rodrigues 2019, translation added)

Indeed, a series of nightclubs emerged in the 1990s near the central station, whose owners were Cabo Verdean and which became immensely popular among the Cabo Verdean population in Rotterdam. Several other venues have also played an important role in Cabo Verdean nightlife, often connected to cultural, political or sporting associations. The 1990s, in this sense, were marked by two regions; the block near central station, and Vanella.

A sacred place: SunClub

In a recent song, ‘Bolo ku Pudim’, by one of the most famous contemporary Cabo Verdean artists, Nelson Freitas, born in Rotterdam, an encounter at the Vanella area is narrated:

Mbem paxoná
Pum loira na Vanela Bnitinha
Dicidi fka má ela
Nha passaporte kaduká

I fell in love
With a blonde at Vanella, pretty.
I decided to stay with her,
My passport expired.

(Freitas 2019, translation added)

As the above lyrics in Freitas’s song demonstrate, the artist engages with memories of nightlife in Rotterdam that are strongly linked to a particular place in the city. This can be explained not only by the fact that these places, in contrast with other temporary locations, have served for an extended period of time as a nightlife venue, but also because of the necessity for people living in a diaspora to “engage in creating places, transforming the urban landscape of contemporary cities” as both “symbolic and material expressions of local and translocal connections” are created (Ehrkamp 2005: 361). It is on the local level that spaces are created in which “some sense of being a citizen is made possible”, which is often done in “everyday spaces of the city” (Kalandides and Vaiou 2012: 264). Kalandides and Vaiou refer to citizenship here not as an institutionalised status related to the nation-state, but instead argue that citizenship “works at the scale of everyday life in the city and links with the right to live in it and to develop daily routines and practices that contribute to produce/create urban space and in turn mobilise processes of inclusion and belonging” (2012: 264). The everydayness of spaces such as Vanella and its importance in popular memory showcase the importance of community spaces for generating a sense of belonging in the diaspora, particularly at night.

Freitas' song refers to the Cabo Verdean 'zone' of the city known as Vanella, rather than specifically to any of the clubs that existed there. It is a testimony of the area's popularity even today in the collective nighttime memory, and in fact, in contemporary nightlife, one way of 'theming' an event is to re-appropriate the memory of one particular nightlife location as a way of inviting guests to re-experience place. This is reflected in an advertisement on 'DJGuide.nl', a popular website for the promotion of nightlife events in the Netherlands:

Saturday, June 30, we bring you back to the 80s / 90s / 00s when SunClub was a phenomenon in Rotterdam for many Cabo Verdeans. Remember how fun going out with your friends used to be in the then-popular SunClub venue? Parties such as Tcholda, Dominginhas, Ribeira Alta, Santiago, Maense were super fun! [...] The best classics from the 80s / 90s / 00s in Pakhuis, which will be transformed into SunClub. In addition, the best Coladeira, Funaná, Zouk Love, R&B and house music! We'll make sure you move. The nice people, the atmosphere of the past and the beautiful warehouse location take care of the rest and we'll make SunClub Reunion a unique party .
(Remember the good old times!! 2018)

SunClub, located in the Vanella area, was an event hall that had been used for Cabo Verdean parties since the 1980s until January 2017, when it was forced to close. The SunClub reunion was organised in 2018 by two Cabo Verdean DJs who used to be regulars at the venue. Several party organisations that had been established by immigrants from the same place of origin (these include Ribeira Alta and Santiago) and football clubs (Maense) had used SunClub and several other neighbouring venues as their main party location since the start, establishing long-term relationships with the renters over time. Several organisers regard these venues, and in particular SunClub, as a home port and part of Cabo Verdean history in

Rotterdam. As organiser Hermes Delgado mentions, it was seen almost as a “holy place” (Delgado 2020, translation added). He argues that, “Cabo Verdeans go to parties everywhere, but when it’s a Cabo Verdean party, it had to be in SunClub” (Delgado 2020, translation added). DJ and organiser Arnaldo Soares confirmed that when organisers tried hosting an event at another location, visitors would “look around and say, ‘what is this? This is not SunClub!’. It was hard for DJs to get people on the dancefloor because they were ill at ease” (Soares 2020, translation added).

Contemporary nightlife directed towards Cabo Verdeans or organised by Cabo Verdeans still comes in diverse forms; from traditional morna performances in small-scale venues such as restaurants and bars to larger parties which include DJs and international artists and take place in popular city centre venues. As seen in the previous example, a common phenomenon in the Cabo Verdean night scene is that of contemporary commercial organisers drawing on the history of Cabo Verdean nightlife in Rotterdam by organising events that invoke reflection on common memories in these places. These are memories that have been collectively shaped in particular places in the city, and they are in this sense memories of place. The following commercial text demonstrates the relation of yet other places, memory and community:

Lembra in the Thalia Lounge is a household name since the previously sold-out edition. It turned out to be a party that a lot of 25-plus people were waiting for: with many memories of the atmosphere, the people, and mostly the golden years of Cabo Verdean music.

Lembra brings visitors back to the time of parties in Fountain Paradise, Imperium, Palace, Ocean Paradise and the golden years for bands like Livity, Rabelados and Gil & the Perfects. Whomever recognises this should feel invited to relive these days. The Lembra

band accompanies the popular band Cabo Verde Show, the tough boyband Jocel and the Cabo Verdean Diva Dina Medina with their greatest hits from the eighties and nineties. DJ Triumph and Sir Edward will spin the best (disco)tracks from those years and an airline ticket to Cabo Verde can be won. (Metro Netherlands 2014, translation added)

The landscape of nightlife venues changed over the years in part because many of the previous venues are not available anymore. Contemporary organisers seek more centrally located, often more upscale venues for their events. Thalia Lounge – now called Club Villa Thalia – where Lembra was hosted, is a popular venue in the city centre of Rotterdam with a young and ethnically diverse audience. Even so, the Cabo Verdean music event Lembra promotes the collective memory of Cabo Verdean nightlife spaces. The advertisement connects specific venues – Fountain Paradise, Imperium, Palace, Ocean Paradise – to a particular atmosphere and memories of the so called ‘golden years’, glorifying the 1980s and 1990s in which many Cabo Verdean artists found fame and Cabo Verdean party nights and shows were still extremely popular within the community. As organiser Jorge da Veiga explained, in this time period many Cabo Verdean artists produced their greatest hits and the Cabo Verdean night scene thrived thanks in part to this reason. The organiser’s marketing strategy for this reason focused on “bringing back the feeling of that time” (da Veiga 2020, translation added). It is not, however, exclusively a feeling of time, but also a sense of place which is produced in this advertisement, demonstrating that historical places of community are still actively imagined and appropriated as places of community and belonging, while demonstrating their present relevance for commercial nightlife organisers.

In an interview with Danilo Tavares, perhaps the most important contemporary producer of Cabo Verdean music in Rotterdam and the bassist of Rabelados, a group that also

launched the musical careers of artists like Suzanna Lubrano and Beto Dias (Nogueira 2016, 447), he confirms the feeling of the time that Lembra refers back to:

We also played in Rotterdam, that was ... yeah... Especially the band Livity, wow... They have done so many beautiful performances. I can also speak of this, because I often went to these shows, it was always a blast. Always a full house, 1500 people, and in those times there was not as much violence as now, it was always a joy, for everyone. We had Fountain Paradise here, Kings Place, we had Imperium, that was one of the most known places. (Tavares 2020, translation added)

Drawing on collective memory is a common practice in the party scene, which is also visible in the name of the promotion, which translates to ‘remember’. But if reference to a time in history brings memories back to life, it is place that specifies and situates these memories, suffusing them with the emotion and atmosphere of that place. The ability of place to be situated in memory comes through its familiarity to a person, invoking sentiments of nostalgia. There are several elements that create and refer to a symbolic ‘us’ in the event’s logo in Figure 20.



Figure 20: Lembra promotional logo, Courtesy of Jorge da Veiga

It is worth noting that Lembra, written as it is in a classic retro font, is contained within the green, yellow and red colours of the flag that Cabo Verde adopted after independence, which is also associated often with socialist and pan-Africanist politics. The flag reflects themes of solidarity and mutual assistance within the diaspora and the homeland and thus echoes particular values and affiliations towards these places. The background includes album covers of artists in their heyday that will be familiar to the party-going generation of the 1980s and 1990s, who are targeted by the event.

The albums visible in the background of the Lembra logo show familiar faces: Gil & the Perfects, Beto Dias, Cabo Verde Show, Splash and Bulimundo, each of which have histories and stories in the Netherlands since the 1980s. Some artists came to the Netherlands at an early age or were born there, while others often performed in the Dutch Cabo Verdean diaspora or recorded their albums at one of the many recording studios in Rotterdam and its surrounds. For example, Gil Semedo, from Gil & the Perfects, came to the Netherlands at only six years old, in 1980. At fifteen years old he participated in a classic Dutch television talent show called ‘the Soundmix Show’, as a young imitator of Michael Jackson and finishing second after Marco Borsato, who would go on to be arguably one of the most successful Dutch singers. Semedo’s later creations, a combination of modern and traditional Cabo Verdean sounds, became known as *caboswing* and would soon conquer not only the Cabo Verdean night and music scene in Rotterdam, but diasporic music circuits worldwide (Nogueira 2016: 208). Groups originating from the Cabo Verdean islands, some of which are featured in the event poster, could often be found visiting Rotterdam to record and perform for periods of time. Bulimundo, for example, recorded several albums at Black Power Records in Rotterdam, incorporating Dutch-based artists such as Suzanna Lubrano and Milena Tavares as background vocalists. Organiser Jorge da Veiga booked several artists visible on the Lembra logo to perform at the actual event. On the photo in Figure 21 we see a

crowd gathering in front of the stage for the perennially popular artist Beto Dias (b. 1971), at the prestigious *Maasgebouw* in the south of Rotterdam.



Figure 21: Beto Dias at Lembra Evento 2017, photography by Sean Hitchens ©

Lembra, whether phrased as an imperative or as a question ('remember?') calls the recipient to actively remember specific experiences related to this historic music scene, during which many Cabo Verdeans flooded music halls and other venues to attend performances and shows by these popular groups. What this event builds is indeed a nostalgia of place through common references in music and historical spaces of community. This is even more relevant in night spaces, as these were historically the places where people would be able to meet other Cabo Verdeans after a week's (or day's) work and socialise, drink and dance. (Live) music played an integral part in this experience as a highly valued cultural reference and symbol, connecting music, space and memory, and as such its realisation in the present provokes feelings of nostalgia towards these times and places. It can even be said that a sense of Cabo Verdeanness in the diaspora was created in these night spaces, where Cabo Verdean events have become inseparable from certain places. Lembra adopts a particular narrative by

depicting these nighttime venues as places of mythical proportions, while presenting both performance and place simultaneously as the collective memory of nightlife for the community.

As Brah mentions, it is important “to be attentive to the nature and type of processes in and through which the collective ‘we’ is constituted”. As such, she asks several questions: “who is empowered and who is disempowered in a specific construction of the ‘we’? How are social divisions negotiated in the construction of the ‘we’? What is the relationship of this ‘we’ to its ‘others’? Who are these others?” (Brah 1996: 184). Nightlife events play an important role in the construction of a collective self, drawing up the borders of a community. In this context it is important to understand that the Cabo Verdean islands are both geographically, culturally, ethnically and economically divided, often generalised in the separation between the *barlavento* (windward) and *sotavento* (downwind) islands.

As such, in the context of the Lembra event, the organiser explains that the title was carefully chosen to attract an audience not limited by the distinction between the windward and downwind islands of Cabo Verde. Referring to *barlavento* variations of Cape Verdean creole, he states:

Normally one would say, ‘lembra temp’, remember the time. But in the windward islands it’s ‘lembra temp’, and the downwind islands say, ‘lembra tempo’. So if I had promoted the event as ‘lembra tempo’, people from the windward island would not go there, and vice versa. That’s why I kept it plain. I just look at this business-wise, I look at which people mostly come to my events, and I adjust my promotion accordingly. (da Veiga 2020, translation added)

When promoting an event, even the dialect chosen for the wording matters in attracting a particular audience. This calls into question the use of the term ‘community’ as it casts light on racial and cultural divisions within the Cabo Verdean community precisely by excluding difference. It is also true that second- and third-generation Cabo Verdeans identify with a broad Cabo Verdean identity more than with that of one island. In either case, people are able to identify more easily with this ‘neutral’ form of Cabo Verdean creole than with regional variants. This bypassing of regionalisation could be considered an identity-building experience in the diaspora that is never fixed but always influenced by events that narrate and construct a shared history and identity. In the construction of a ‘we’ multiple narratives (economic, political and cultural) collide in order to create and define the diasporic community. In the previous subchapters, the role of political processes in the homeland that impacted the diaspora were discussed, especially in relation to the construction of nightlife spaces as spaces of belonging in the context of first generation migrants. In the discussion above, however, the role of commercial nightlife in constructing and imagining spaces of belonging in the twenty-first century becomes more visible. Commercial organisers not only use the idea of an existing, imagined diasporic community, but promote a particular narrative, in effect shaping a collective sense of self, demonstrating how the construction of this is intersected by both political, cultural and commercial flows, often almost indistinguishably. Simultaneously, these events are also relevant in the production of new places of belonging in which the idea of community is celebrated.

New opportunities, new styles

Party concepts like the ones previously discussed, in which particular times are remembered, are less frequent nowadays. This is partly explained because many familiar venues have closed over time and younger generations do not associate as strongly with the more ‘traditional’ nightlife concepts that older generations experienced and organised, as is

expressed by several DJs and organisers (Soares 2020; Delgado 2020). As renting venues has become more expensive, promoting more ‘traditional’ nights out has become commercially challenging. Being able to organise these parties in the more popular — and more expensive — city-centre venues often means creating a commercially successful formula that includes a broader audience, taking into account the preferences either of different generations or of a more culturally diverse audience. This means, for example, hosting events in venues with multiple halls in order to play different music styles, or including different genres in the programming of an event. Whereas previous generations prefer genres as *coladeira*, *funaná* and later *cabo-love*, *zouk* and *cabo-zouk*, the younger generations favour more contemporary genres such as *afrohouse*, *R&B* and *kuduro* (Lopes 2020; Soares 2020; Delgado 2020). Nightlife organisers, DJs and performers often overcome this challenge by cooperating to create commercially successful concepts that attract a broad Cabo Verdean audience.

Great value is attached by promoters to the historic and nostalgic locations mentioned in this chapter. However, in interviews with the aforementioned DJs and organisers reference was also made to several problems that occurred in the Vanella area including alcohol abuse and violence that would occur at nightspots (Soares 2020; Lopes 2020). Local news broadcaster RTV Rijnmond also reported violence and shootings, as well as the discovery of firearms (RTV Rijnmond 2006; RTV Rijnmond 2007; Terlingen 2011). The Vanella area is located on a business park, and over time the Rotterdam municipality decided to close several party locations in the area, with a view to future developments of the business park (RTV Rijnmond 2011) which are still ongoing. As the former district mayor of Delfshaven District mentioned in a personal interview, although several party centres such as SunClub were originally to be relocated to a nearby area, this did not materialise as project developers withdrew due to economic uncertainty in 2018 (Gonçalves 2022).

Several contemporary commercial organisers also mentioned in interviews that they view(ed) these locations as an obstacle towards the scene's growth and inclusion into city-centre nightlife and acceptance by popular venues (da Veiga 2020; Lopes 2020; Delgado 2020). They refer to them as simple and poorly decorated party venues in an industrial area, surrounded by farmland, and they emphasise its non-professional organisation and unglamorous image. Indeed, since the beginning of the twenty-first century the region has been swallowed up by industrial development, and presently the venues are surrounded by dull offices and vacant lots, as well as a highway which crosses over the area. Yet Gonçalves (2022) also highlights that due to the closure of clubs in the area, affordable venues for organising nightlife have disappeared, which problematises access to parties for a lower-income segment of nightlife audiences.

When the first Cabo Verdean music group, Voz de Cabo Verde, was contracted to play several evenings a week in the South America-themed nightclub La Bonanza, they agreed to play a variety of styles — from cumbia to coladeira — that fit the venue's Latin American décor, while their own Cabo Verdean identity played a subordinate role for the group. The celebration of this identity was for the most part reserved for parties directed towards and hosted by Cabo Verdean communities in the various diasporas. Some years later, in the same manner, Cabo Verdean organisers started organising events that were predominantly directed towards members of the diaspora. Contemporary organisers have a better understanding of the landscape of nocturnal venues and often have access to different cultural worlds. These include national or regional identities — Dutch, Cabo Verdean, African, and other cultural imaginaries such as 'Urban' or 'Hollywood', which they are able to integrate into events.

In this context, current Cabo Verdean organisers often do not exclusively organise events labelled as 'Cabo Verdean', whether through music programming or through other content or directed exclusively towards the Cabo Verdean community. Instead, contemporary

organisers focus more frequently on opportunities within the broader nightlife scene, including a broader target group and (cultural) content. This often includes organising events that are not accessible only to Cabo Verdeans but to a multi-ethnic crowd, either from Lusophone countries, or including Antilleans, Surinamese and other nationalities. Often a more cosmopolitan, 'high-class', image is transmitted in promotional material for these events, where luxury iconography and young, well-dressed people are prominently featured. Organisers often work with concepts that are popular in regular nightlife, such as VIP tickets and tables, and thus create a more exclusive and glamorous character. As organiser Jorge da Veiga explains, he uses his multicultural experiences to introduce new elements to his events:

During my studies I travelled a lot, to Brazil, Surinam, Dominican Republic, Miami, USA, New York, where I got a lot of influences from. So, if I could organise a Cabo Verdean party, how would I do this? I tried to put all these influences into an event. In Miami, for example, you had hostesses with the same clothes, hair dress, shoes who received people. So, I looked at locations, how to do promotion. I put my flyers in an exclusive envelope. I had a team of 10 hostesses, gorgeous ladies. Besides Cabo Verdean music, I also introduced other genres to my event. (Veiga 2020, translation added)

The ideas reflected in the citation above are all incorporated in an event called Bella Vista Club, created by the organiser of Lembra. The event reflects implications for the multiplicity of identities and how identifications with particular cultural scenes are visible and are incorporated in the context of multi-placedness, where events incorporate various cultural worlds. This includes the imagination of multiple worlds and lifestyles and their expression in nightlife events. Even though Bella Vista club receives a more culturally diverse audience, seventy percent of its audience is Cabo Verdean. Cultural references within the event's

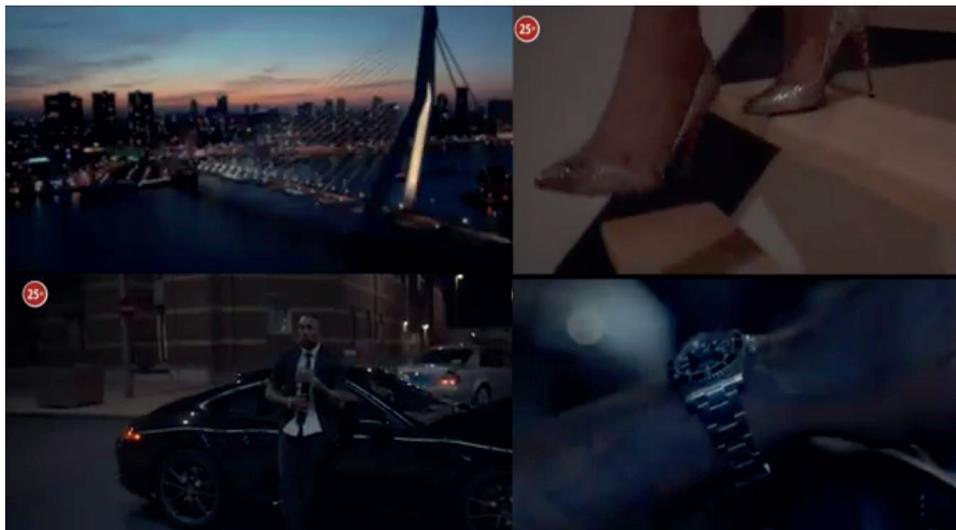


Figure 22: Promotional Video for Bella Vista Club ‘Heels & Ties Edition’ — A glamorous event hosted in a metropolitan city. Stills retrieved from YouTube.com

promotion are not inward-looking or strategically directed towards a Cabo Verdean audience, instead showing a more ethnically diverse, though predominantly black, audience in promotional material.

This suggests the inclusion of Cabo Verdean nightlife into a Dutch (and predominantly Afro-) club scene. Not only is this multiplicity of imaginaries visible in events organised exclusively by people with a Cabo Verdean background, but also in collaborations between organisers with different cultural backgrounds where, for example, a Cabo Verdean DJ hosts a hall within a broader R&B event.¹⁷ Both organisers and audiences are able to switch between more traditional scenes and hybrid scenes. Not only does this include intercultural ambidexterity, but also an intergenerational fluidity; as new sociabilities and mobilities emerge from social, cultural, historical and political interfaces between music and migration, new forms of generational interaction are also created from this intersection (Varela, Raposo

¹⁷ In an interview DJ Hermes Delgado speaks very positively of his cooperation with R&B Café, an event organised by Bonbon Entertainment, a large player within the R&B Scene.

and Ferro 2017: 128). While Afro house might become mainstream for a new and younger generation of Dutch Cabo Verdeans, presenting a new way of identifying with Cabo Verdean culture and descendants, there is a simultaneous consciousness present of past cultural references that are being re-appropriated at contemporary nightlife events.

Nightlife practices evidence the entanglement of politics, culture and commerce in the construction of spaces of belonging. Nightlife was, and still is, a means to signal cultural affiliation and generate a connection to the imagined homeland for younger generations, while simultaneously seeking integration into the Dutch context. Night spaces, in this sense, also play an important role in the construction and positioning of migrant communities towards both the local and the global, towards the host society and the homeland. Present nightlife events reconstruct and re-imagine past nightlife experiences through commercialised promotional narratives. The importance of places that are remembered, reappropriated, and reimagined brings to light the community's intimate connection to particular locations in the city as communal nightlife spaces.

Conclusion

This thesis set out to examine how urban night spaces have been, and how they are currently produced, imagined, experienced, and narrated among the Cabo Verdean migrant community in Rotterdam. Night spaces are produced in intersecting and overlapping ways. Indeed, the simple act of ‘getting together’ as a community does not ‘produce’ a night space *per se*. Instead, I argue that one must take into account not only what goes on at night, but what flows through it. With reference to Cabo Verdean night spaces in Rotterdam, these are particularly produced through an interweaving of specific narratives and representations. In this context, night spaces are essential for generating a collective sense of self, which is supported by what I have described as processes of cultural and political myth-making.

An important finding in this study is that the city spaces in which Cabo Verdean myth-making occurs, and in which the construction of a diasporic identity takes place, are simultaneously integrated into a network of community spaces, providing for a localised sense of belonging. The myths of the community can be found in the political ideas that inspire nightlife events, in music and other cultural expressions that are enjoyed together, or in the sharing of stories of lives lived in similar and shared ways. Yet this study also highlighted that the ways in which night spaces are experienced by Cabo Verdean migrants, or narrated for that matter, are hardly ever homogenous. How these migrants are able to navigate the city, during day or night depends variously on their legal status, economic position, or gender. As such, the production of space is also always indicative of a certain exclusion from space.

When discussing the various representations found in the community’s cultural expressions, such as in music, whether these construct imaginations of the homeland or narrate life in the city of Rotterdam at night, it is important to recognise from what perspective these representations are produced. Considering that the first migrants to arrive to



Rotterdam were male sailors, cultural productions both from the start of migration, as well as contemporary events, unevenly reflect the male perspective. It is important to emphasise that this determined the lens through which the community's story was created. This, I argue, has essentially shaped the image of the community's history, its important figures and events, as well as popular representations of everyday life.

The construction and development of the community in Rotterdam is mainly attributed to male pioneers, who admittedly were the first to arrive and who played a hugely important role in this. However, attention must be drawn to the fact that the stories of female migration and their importance for community-building often remain unrecognised in contemporary narratives. This is also relevant considering the role of female pioneers such as Tomázia Teixeira. Capturing and recognising their endeavours is particularly urgent considering the age of first-generation migrants. I have highlighted that several female cultural producers recognise the importance of these endeavours and in this sense seek to bring balance to the stories of migration that circulate. The urgency of this should also be reflected in future academic work.

This thesis highlighted issues of domestic violence, work-life balance and the invisibility of women with regard to their contributions to the community. I contend that women's roles in political life and in community organisations, such as in the cultural and religious sphere, are significant yet often unconsidered and overlooked. Nocturnal work also deserves more attention, taking into account its often informal and clandestine nature, such as in nightclubs or in sex work. As such, future studies will have to continue to explore these themes.

The archive of music that has been constructed in cooperation with Jorge Lizardo, of which a selection of songs is included in this thesis, provided a unique insight into the

narratives of Cabo Verdean migration to Rotterdam. As far as my knowledge goes, it is particularly unique because no other migrant group has so extensively sung about the Netherlands, nor about a Dutch city in particular. The music that emerged during the course of this research sheds light on life in the city in different ways: artists sing about their sadness and the longing for home, about the hardships of life in migration, but also about their experiences in the city at night. The stories found in music describe daily rhythms of work and going out, from a multitude of perspectives. However, I have found that Cabo Verdean music about Rotterdam is particularly distinctive in that it contributes significantly to processes of place-making. It uniquely reflects on and generates representations of very specific places which were important during the times in which that music was written. As such, I argue that Cabo Verdean artists trace places and routes through the city and uncover daily and nocturnal rhythms, echoing particular atmospheres.

Some composers were also critical of the ways in which Cabo Verdeans are treated in the port city, others were critical of how Cabo Verdeans behaved in the port city, and still more were critical of this criticism. As such, this study called attention to the importance of music as an instrument of community self-reflection and discussion. It must be underlined, however, that it does so only from a particular position. Indeed, in reflecting on daily life in migration, whether this is with regard to work life or nightlife, music about Rotterdam is almost exclusively composed by men. On the one hand, this means that what is being sung about in terms of the livelihood of women in migration is minimal. On the other hand, it is important to recognise that what is being sung about is a delineated version of a certain reality.

Music, in this context, reflects a romanticised or idealised version of particular lifestyles and occurrences. Although, for example, artists sing comically about the sex workers that Cabo Verdeans would talk to in front of Habanera nightclub, or about the desire



to consume alcohol or drugs, this says little about the actual consumption of these goods and as such it lacks a critical notion towards these issues. Alcohol and drug abuse, for example, severely affect households and families, yet these issues are not reflected on in the music. Future studies should continue to explore these topics, both considering real-life situations as well as how cultural productions, such as in theatre, deal with these concerns.

Ultimately, this study has highlighted how, while maintaining awareness of the history of migration and its associated imaginations of both the homeland and diasporic identity, younger generations of Cabo Verdeans renovate and innovate the ways in which Cabo Verdeanness is dealt with. The engagement with both traditional and modern cultural products is a constantly creative process, influenced by the rich cultural and ethnic makeup of the city that produces ever more new forms of expression at night. Assisted along the way by the ever-developing character of the city of Rotterdam, the engagement with particular night-spaces is constantly updating, and this will continue to occur in the future, endlessly changing the diasporic layout of Cabo Verdean Rotterdam.

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Summary

This thesis sets out to examine how urban night spaces have been, and how they are currently produced, imagined, experienced, and narrated among the Cabo Verdean migrant community in Rotterdam. The history of the Cabo Verdeans in Rotterdam begins with the arrival of the first sailors in the fifties. In later years they begin to settle in Rotterdam and work ashore. This was followed in the 1970s by a stream of women's migration. This allowed for the growth of the community, and different places in the city quickly became important spaces for the community, both in public (in streets, neighbourhoods and squares) and private (in restaurants, community centres, bars and nightclubs). This thesis focuses on the development and importance of nightlife and night spaces. These are often underexposed and overlooked as important spaces for migrant community building, activism and belonging.

Night spaces are produced in intersecting and overlapping ways. Indeed, the simple act of 'getting together' as a community does not 'produce' a night space per se. Instead, one must take into account not only what goes on at night, but what flows through it: night spaces are produced through an interweaving of narratives and representations. Night spaces are essential for generating a collective sense of self, which is supported by processes of cultural and political myth-making.

The chapter *Myth Making In The Rotterdam Diaspora* addresses the activities that take place in the city where a (conscious) effort is made to produce or maintain diasporic identities or narratives. It zooms in on a series of interrelated issues; the history and legacy of record label Morabeza Records, cultural activism in contemporary hip hop, and the cultural religious celebrations of São João Baptista. What these cultural manifestations have in common is that each claims its space(s) in the city, and these spaces have since been embedded in memories of the city. The city spaces in which myth-making occurs, and in which the construction of a



diasporic identity takes place, are simultaneously integrated into a network of community spaces, providing for a localized sense of belonging. Myths can be found in the political ideas that inspire nightlife events, in music and other cultural expressions that are enjoyed together, or in the sharing of stories of lives lived in similar and shared ways. Yet the ways in which night spaces are experienced, or narrated for that matter, are hardly ever homogenous. How one is able to navigate the city, during day or night, depends, for example, on one's legal status, economic position, or gender. As such, the production of space is also always telling of a certain exclusion from space.

The chapter *The Routines Of Work Life In And Around The City* traces the routes that have been taken from Cabo Verde to Rotterdam and within Rotterdam itself, zooming in on the experiences of the city, especially since the start of migration. It traces important places related to the labour migrant experience such as boarding houses, employment agencies, but also the bars visited after a day spent working or looking for work. This process involves working with an archive of musical material in which these places are meticulously described through experiences and stories. The archive of Cabo Verdean music on Rotterdam, of which a selection of songs is included in this thesis, provides a unique insight into the narratives of Cabo Verdean migration to Rotterdam. It is particularly unique because no other migrant group has so extensively sung about the Netherlands, nor about a Dutch city in particular. The music that emerged in this research shed light on life in the city in different ways: artists sing about their sadness and the longing for home, about the hardships of life in migration, but also about their experiences in the city at night. The stories found in music describe daily rhythms of work and going out, from a multitude of perspectives. Cabo Verdean music about Rotterdam is also distinctive in that it contributes significantly to processes of place-making as it reflects on and generates representations of very specific places which were important

during the times in which that music was written: it traces places and routes through the city and uncovers daily and nocturnal rhythms, echoing a particular atmosphere.

When discussing the various representations found in cultural expressions such as music, whether these construct imaginations of the homeland or narrate life in the city of Rotterdam at night, it is important to consider from what perspective these representations are produced. Considering that the first migrants to arrive to Rotterdam were male sailors, cultural productions both from the start of migration, as well as contemporary events, reflect the male perspective. It determined the lens through which the community's story was created, essentially shaping the image of the community's history, its important figures and events, as well popular representations of everyday life. The construction and development of the community in Rotterdam is mainly attributed to male pioneers, who admittedly were the first to arrive and played a hugely important role in this. However, the stories of female migration and their importance for community-building, as well as the role of female pioneers, often remains unrecognized in contemporary narratives. Capturing and recognizing their endeavours is particularly urgent considering the age of first-generation migrants. Women's role in political life and in community organizations, such as in the cultural and religious sphere, are significant, yet often unconsidered and overlooked. Several female cultural producers recognize the importance of these endeavours and in this sense seek to bring balance to the stories of migration that circulate. This thesis highlights issues of domestic violence, work-life balance and the invisibility of women with regards to their contributions to the community.

In Cabo Verdean music on Rotterdam, some composers were critical of the way Cabo Verdeans are treated, others are critical of how Cabo Verdeans behave in the port city, others are critical of this criticism. Music serves as an instrument of community self-reflection and discussion, yet it does so only from a particular position. Indeed, in reflecting on daily life in



migration, whether this is with regards to work life or nightlife, music about Rotterdam is almost exclusively composed by men. On the one hand, this means that what is being sung about in terms of the livelihood of women in migration is minimal. On the other hand, that what is being sung about is a delineated version of a certain reality. As such, music reflects a romanticized or idealized version of particular lifestyles. Although, for example, artists sing about going out in particular Rotterdam nightclubs, or about the desire to consume alcohol or drugs, this says little about the actual consumption of these goods and as such it lacks a critical notion towards these issues.

The chapter *Dancing Down Memory Lane: (Re)Experiences Of Cabo Verdean Nightlife* builds towards a discussion on music and experiences of nightlife in its more common sense, meaning dancing or clubbing, seen over a time period spanning the start of migration to the city until now. It examines how certain night scenes are remembered, but also how elements of historic night life are reused, reworked, and re-experienced in contemporary nightlife events. While maintaining awareness of the importance of the history of migration and its associated imaginations of both the homeland and diasporic identity, younger generations of Cabo Verdeans renovate and innovate the ways in which Cabo Verdeanness is dealt with. The engagement with both traditional and modern cultural products is a constantly creative process, influenced by the rich cultural and ethnic makeup of the city that produces new forms of expression at night. Also considering the ever-developing character of the city Rotterdam, the engagement with particular night-spaces is constantly updating, which will continue to occur in the future, changing the diasporic layout of Cabo Verdean Rotterdam.

Samenvatting

Dit proefschrift onderzoekt hoe urbane nachtruimtes ('night spaces') in heden en verleden worden geproduceerd, verbeeld, verteld en ervaren door de Kaapverdise gemeenschap in Rotterdam. De geschiedenis van de Kaapverdianen in Rotterdam begint met de komst van de eerste zeelieden in de jaren vijftig. In latere jaren beginnen ze zich in Rotterdam te vestigen en aan wal te werken. In de jaren zeventig volgt een stroom van vrouwenmigratie. Deze momenten zorgden voor de groei van de gemeenschap in de stad en de vorming van verschillende plekken in de stad die belangrijk werden voor de gemeenschap. Dit betreft zowel openbare (straten, buurten en pleinen) als private (restaurants, gemeenschapscentra, bars en nachtclubs) ruimtes. Dit proefschrift richt zich op de ontwikkeling en het belang van het nachtleven en nachtruimtes. Deze worden vaak onderbelicht en over het hoofd gezien als belangrijke ruimtes voor community building, activisme en verbondenheid.

Nachtruimtes worden op doorkruisende en overlappende manieren geproduceerd. Inderdaad, de simpele handeling van 'samenkomen' als gemeenschap 'produceert' niet per se een nachtruimte. In plaats daarvan moet men niet alleen rekening houden met wat er 's nachts gebeurt, maar ook met wat er door nachtruimtes stroomt: Nachtruimtes worden geproduceerd door de verweving van verhalen en representaties. Nachtruimtes zijn essentieel voor het genereren van een collectief zelfgevoel, dat wordt ondersteund door processen van culturele en politieke mythevorming.

In het hoofdstuk *Myth-Making In The Rotterdam Diaspora* worden activiteiten onderzocht die plaatsvinden in de stad waar (al dan niet bewust) wordt getracht diasporische identiteiten of verhalen te produceren of in stand te houden. Er wordt ingezoomd op een reeks onderling gerelateerde kwesties; de geschiedenis en het nalatenschap van platenlabel Morabeza Records, cultureel activisme in hedendaagse hiphop en de cultureel-religieuze



vieringen van São João Baptista. Wat deze culturele uitingen gemeen hebben is dat ze elk hun plek(ken) in de stad claimen en dat deze plekken zijn ingebed in de herinneringen van en aan de stad. De stadsruimtes waarin mythevorming en de constructie van een diasporische identiteit plaatsvinden zijn geïntegreerd in een netwerk van gemeenschapsruimtes, wat zorgt voor een gelokaliseerd gevoel van verbondenheid. Men vindt mythen onder andere in politieke ideeën die het nachtleven inspireren, in muziek en andere culturele uitingen die gemeenschappelijk worden geconsumeerd, of in het delen van verhalen over levens die op vergelijkbare en gedeelde manieren worden geleefd. Toch zijn de manieren waarop nachtruimtes worden ervaren en hierover wordt verteld zelden homogeen. Hoe men zich overdag of 's nachts door de stad kan bewegen, hangt bijvoorbeeld af van iemands rechtspositie, economische positie of geslacht. Zo wordt de productie van ruimte ook altijd gekenmerkt door een uitsluiting van ruimte.

In het hoofdstuk *The Routines Of Work Life In And Around The City* worden de routes geschetst die zijn afgelegd van Kaapverdië naar Rotterdam en binnen Rotterdam zelf. Hierbij wordt ingezoomd op ervaringen van en in de stad, met name sinds het begin van de migratie. Er worden belangrijke plekken belicht die sterk verbonden zijn met de ervaringen van arbeidsmigranten, zoals pensions, uitzendbureaus, maar ook de barretjes die worden bezocht na een dag werken of na de zoektocht naar werk. Hierbij wordt gewerkt met een archief van muziek waarin deze plekken vaak op minutieuze wijze worden beschreven aan de hand van ervaringen en verhalen. Het archief van Kaapverdise muziek over Rotterdam, waarvan een selectie van lieden in dit proefschrift is opgenomen, geeft een uniek inzicht in de verhalen van de Kaapverdise migratie naar Rotterdam. Het is vooral uniek omdat geen enkele andere migrantengroep zo uitgebreid over Nederland heeft gezongen, noch over een Nederlandse stad in het bijzonder. De muziek die in dit onderzoek naar voren komt, belicht op verschillende manieren het leven in de stad: Artiesten zingen over hun verdriet en het

verlangen naar huis, over de ontberingen van het migrantenleven, maar ook over hun ervaringen in de stad 's nachts. De verhalen die zijn opgetekend in muziek beschrijven het dagelijkse ritme van werk en uitgaan, vaak vanuit een veelheid aan perspectieven.

Kaapverdiaanse muziek over Rotterdam onderscheidt zich ook doordat het een belangrijke bijdrage levert aan processen van place-making, omdat het reflecteert op en representaties produceert van zeer specifieke plekken die belangrijk waren in de tijd waarin deze muziek werd geschreven. Muziek traceert plekken en routes door de stad en legt tegelijkertijd de dagelijkse en nachtelijke ritmes bloot die een bepaalde tijdssfeer weerspiegelen.

Bij het bespreken van de verschillende representaties in culturele uitingen als muziek, of deze nu het thuisland verbeelden of het nachtleven in de stad Rotterdam, is het belangrijk om te benadrukken vanuit welk perspectief deze representaties worden geproduceerd. Gezien het feit dat de eerste migranten die naar Rotterdam kwamen mannelijke zeelieden waren, weerspiegelen culturele producties al vanaf het begin van de migratie het mannelijke perspectief. Het bepaalde de lens waardoor het verhaal van de gemeenschap tot stand kwam en vormde in wezen het beeld van de geschiedenis van de gemeenschap, zowel wat betreft belangrijke figuren en gebeurtenissen, evenals representaties van het dagelijks leven. De opbouw en ontwikkeling van de gemeenschap in Rotterdam wordt vooral toegeschreven aan mannelijke pioniers, die als eersten aankwamen. De verhalen over vrouwelijke migratie en het belang hiervan voor gemeenschapsvorming, evenals de rol van vrouwelijke pioniers, worden vaak niet erkend in hedendaagse verhalen. Het vastleggen en erkennen van hun inspanningen is bijzonder urgent gezien de leeftijd van eerste-generatie migranten. De rol van vrouwen in het politieke leven en in maatschappelijke organisaties, zoals op cultureel en religieus gebied, wordt vaak over het hoofd gezien. Verschillende vrouwelijke culturele producenten erkennen het belang van hun inspanningen en proberen in die zin evenwicht te brengen in de verhalen die circuleren. Dit proefschrift belicht kwesties als huiselijk geweld, de balans tussen werk en



privé en de onzichtbaarheid van vrouwen met betrekking tot hun bijdragen aan de gemeenschap.

In de Kaapverdise muziek over Rotterdam zijn sommige componisten kritisch over de manier waarop Kaapverdianen worden behandeld, anderen zijn kritisch over het gedrag van de Kaapverdianen in de havenstad, weer anderen zijn kritisch op deze kritiek. Muziek dient als instrument voor zelfreflectie en discussie in de gemeenschap, maar doet dit vanuit een specifieke positie. Sterker nog, als men het dagelijkse leven in migratie beschouwt, of dit nu gaat om het werk- of het nachtleven, wordt muziek over Rotterdam bijna uitsluitend door mannen gecomponeerd. Aan de ene kant betekent dit dat de levens van migrantenvrouwen amper worden bezongen. Anderzijds is hetgeen waarover gezongen wordt een afgebakende versie van een specifieke werkelijkheid. Als zodanig weerspiegelt muziek een geromantiseerde of geïdealiseerde versie van bepaalde levensstijlen. Hoewel artiesten bijvoorbeeld zingen over het uitgaan in Rotterdamse nachtclubs, of over het verlangen om alcohol of drugs te consumeren, zegt dit weinig over de daadwerkelijke consumptie van deze waren en ontbreekt het dan ook vaak aan een kritische blik op deze kwesties.

Het hoofdstuk *Dancing Down Memory Lane: (Re)Experiences Of Cabo Verdean Nightlife* betreft een discussie over muziek en ervaringen van het nachtleven in een meer reguliere zin: Dansen of uitgaan vanaf het begin van de migratie naar de stad tot nu. Het onderzoekt hoe bepaalde nachtszenes worden herinnerd, maar ook hoe elementen uit het nachtleven van eerdere generaties worden hergebruikt, her(be)werkt en opnieuw worden ervaren in hedendaagse nachtevenementen. Terwijl jongere generaties zich bewust zijn van het belang van de migratiegeschiedenis, de verbeelding van het thuisland en de identiteit van de diaspora die hiermee is verbonden, vernieuwen zij de manieren waarop Kaapverdië wordt behandeld en verbeeld. De betrokkenheid van jongere generaties met zowel traditionele als moderne culturele producten is een constant creatief proces, beïnvloed door de rijke culturele

en etnische make-up van de stad die 's nachts nieuwe vormen van expressie voortbrengt. Met betrekking tot de continue ontwikkeling van de stad Rotterdam, verandert ook de verbinding met bepaalde nachtruimtes. Dit zal zich ongetwijfeld voortzetten in de toekomst, waardoor de diasporische lay-out van Kaapverdisch Rotterdam blijft veranderen.



Curriculum Vitae

Seger Kersbergen was born on 14 February 1993 in Delft, The Netherlands. He received a bachelor's degree in Latin American Studies in 2016 and a research master's degree in 2018, graduating with the distinction *cum laude*. In his master's thesis, titled 'Masculinidades: revisitando o sertão na literatura e cinema brasileiros', he researched the relationship between landscape, national identity and masculinity in Brazilian cinema and literature. Seger started his PhD research at LUCAS (Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society) in June 2019, under the supervision of prof.dr. Frans-Willem Korsten, dr. Sara Brandellero and dr. Kamila Krakowska Rodrigues. His PhD study was part of Night Spaces: migration, culture and IntegraTion in Europe, a collaborative research project funded by HERA. Drawing on his previous work on spatial practice and landscape, his research focused on the Cabo Verdean community in Rotterdam, investigating how Cabo Verdean migrants (have) navigate(d) and imagine(d) the city of Rotterdam, producing both spaces of belonging and resistance. His main focus is on spaces of music-making and music-sharing. Together with Sara Brandellero he published an article in *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture* on belonging and cultural activism in Cabo Verdean diasporic night spaces in Rotterdam. Seger also contributed a chapter on nighttime diasporic memory practices to the upcoming book *Sonic Signatures: How Migrant Music Constitutes the City at Night*. He is currently working as a lecturer at LUCAS, Leiden University, particularly on themes of urban imaginations and imaginaries.