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Curaçao *Tambú* Parties in the Netherlands

NANETTE DE JONG

I walk into the dimly lit sports hall, which, for the evening, has been transformed into a vibrant dance club. It is located near the city centre in the Hague, Netherlands, and pulsates with the familiar rhythms of the *tambú* drum, a national emblem on Curaçao. This *tambú* drum is central to the evening's event, which appropriately is named '*Tambú* Party'. This get-together has its roots in Curaçao, and more specifically in the stickdance *kokomakaku* and the sacred ritual *Montamentu* (which were discussed in the previous chapter). During the times of slavery, when *kokomakaku* fighting sticks were replaced with texts, a new, secular performance genre emerged, which took its name from its accompanying *tambú* drum. By the twentieth century, this secular *Tambú* had become so widespread, it was adopted as popular entertainment at private parties on the island, giving birth to the *Tambú* party that we know currently. During the months of November, December, and January, *Tambú* parties have become so popular on Curaçao that today these three months are commonly known as the *Tambú* Season. With the large number of Curaçaoans migrating to the Netherlands, it is unsurprising that this *Tambú* party would eventually travel to Europe, recognised as a way for Curaçaoans living in the Netherlands to connect with one another and with the memories of home.

I attend this evening's Dutch *Tambú* party with the expectation that it would be similar to the *Tambú* parties I frequented on the island of Curaçao. I anticipated seeing a live band, comprising the drummer and *chapi* players, standing on a small stage or huddled together in a corner of the large dance floor, always a safe distance from the dancers (*chapi* is the percussive instrument made from the metal end of a garden hoe, indigenous to Curaçao). The dance floor would be large, able to accommodate the several dozen couples who carefully follow the *Tambú* dance steps, with one foot kept firmly on the floor while the other would repeatedly hit the ground; and the audience would be young, attracting persons primarily in their late teens or early twenties, all eager to relax and enjoy the party for what it had become: a chance to socialise and 'have a good time'.

What I discover, however, is something very different. The age of the party-goers is varied – both young and old are in attendance – and the

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Tambú is no longer a couples-only dance. In fact, single dancers far outnumber the couples that night. Some uniformly are following the rules of *Tambú* dance, but many others are not. With participants no longer following synchronous movements, the dance floor has instead become a sea of jagged, seemingly unconnected dance moves. The band, too, is no longer confined to a space separate from the dancers. Instead, several band members step right on to the dance floor as they play, with the solo singer assuming the additional role of master of ceremonies for the night, introducing the songs and sharing personal anecdotes in-between numbers.

Perhaps the most surprising discovery, however, revolves around the party-goers themselves. The Dutch *Tambú* party has attracted an ethnically diverse group of attendees. Curaçaoans may be the majority in attendance, but they are also joined by Angolans and Moroccans, Nigerians and Congolese, and Turks and Ghanaians – all emigrants, and all finding in the *Tambú* party a needed sense of community and release. As party-goer Joseph from Nigeria explains it: 'Here in Holland I want to belong but as an immigrant that's just not possible. . . . I come to these parties because it is one of the places, one of the few places, where I do belong. Where I can be completely me' (personal communication, 2009). Or as Edson from Angola says: 'In Holland we're outsiders, every one of us. We don't fit in. But here? Here [at this party] we are like one' (personal communication, 2009).

What becomes immediately apparent is that the Dutch *Tambú* party has emerged as a matrix of diversity: a meeting place for different cultures, dances, and ages. It has transcended inclusive connections to Curaçao, signifying instead a wide and fluid range of belongings, as well as a multiplicity of diasporas. Attending the Dutch *Tambú* party reminds us that 'diaspora' is a formation in process, able to change to accommodate new political, social, and cultural contexts. It is a space where both hybridity and heterogeneity can co-exist, intertwining with multiple – and at times paradoxical – attachments and detachments that challenge the hegemony and boundedness of a single assumed 'homeland'. Attending this party is a reminder that who we are is produced in relation not only to where we have been but also where we are now and who we are currently with. For the immigrants living in the Netherlands, the *Tambú* party allows for that self-discovery process to be thrashed out and enacted. In the interim, new allegiances are created and asserted. To borrow from James Clifford, the Dutch *Tambú* party 'articulates, or bends together, both roots and routes to construct . . . forms of community consciousness and solidarity and maintain identifications outside the national time/space in order to live inside, with a difference' (1994, 308).

The idea of 'interpretive diasporas' is introduced in this chapter to describe the way in which these different immigrant communities join 'as one' (to use Edson's words) at the Dutch *Tambú* parties. Although diasporas may have developed out of nationally distinct boundaries, they are also entrenched in the contexts of where they settle. As we shall see, at Dutch *Tambú*, the formation of community and the process of interpretation become analogous, with these parties the medium by which the two concepts 'community' and 'interpretation' come together in a meaningful way.

The Ritual Structure of the *Tambú*

The *Tambú* on Curaçao is itself built around a tradition of unity, binding numerous communities together through an open, interpretive understanding. The *Tambú* grew out of the stickdance *kokomakaku* and its development into the religious ritual *Montamentu*. As discussed in the previous chapter, differences were not just tolerated in *Montamentu*: they were embraced and affirmed. Since its inception, *Montamentu* supported the cultural multiplicity in Curaçao's society, and both acknowledged and celebrated that plurality. It became a refuge for African deities as well as spiritual ancestors, all of whom were welcome to attend a *Montamentu* event simultaneously, as a community. Its binary structure was one key to this appeal: the first section, called *habrí*, offered an open-ended invitation to the deities and ancestors, while its second section, the *séru*, offered attendees the opportunity to communicate with the spiritual world. Although a song in *Montamentu* might be sung in honour of one particular deity or ancestral spirit, performed with the specific hope that that single deity or spirit might attend the ritual, all deities or spirits are welcome to join the event. *Montamentu* did not discriminate – and this 'open door' policy, available via its binary structure, promised participants near limitless access to the supernatural.

While *kokomakaku* laid the foundation for the eventual development of the sacred *Montamentu*, it also helped inspire the formation of secular versions, including the *Tambú* party. When *kokomakaku* was banned and forced underground during slavery, the sticks were replaced with words, and song texts became the new weapons of attack – it assumed the title *Tambú* after its accompanying drum.

Since emancipation, this secular *Tambú* continued to grow in popularity and function. It became tantamount to a local newspaper, sharing the

island's latest gossip and community news. More recently, *Tambú* songs are written to expose the perceived misconduct of dubious politicians as well as the extramarital affairs of community leaders. 'No one is safe from *Tambú*' is the common saying on Curaçao.

Radio has been instrumental in making the secular *Tambú* a popular commodity in the twentieth century, particularly among the island's teenagers, who have come to revel in it as a form of party music. The island is dotted with late-night snack trucks, open year-round from about 10 p.m. to daybreak. During *Tambú* season, managers from these snack trucks try to cater to the teenage crowd by playing the popular *Tambú* hits from the radio or by even hiring a popular *Tambú* band. A young seventeen-year old explains his involvement in the *Tambú* parties: 'That's where all my friends hang out in December. It's the place we go when we are in a party mood. We relax, have a few drinks' (Felix 2003). Older Curaçaoans remain wary of the parties, however, complaining that the events promote unhealthy and unwanted activities from drinking and gambling to carousing and fighting. When occasional acts of violence do mar the spirit of the *Tambú* season, government officials and regional church groups are quick to link them to *Tambú*.

Whatever its performance context or function – be it sacred ritual, stickfight, or party music – the event maintains the same performance practice. This includes the continuance of its binary form. During the *habrí*, the lead singer (called *pregon*) communicates the performance-specific message of the song, be it a reference to a particular deity (as with *Montamentu*) or a bit of gossip from the neighbourhood (as is common in the party *Tambú*). The audience stays quiet during the *habrí*, giving undivided attention to the singer, careful not to miss even a word. No dancing or hand clapping is allowed. The accompanying instruments, too, follow specific performance protocol during the *habrí*: the *chapi* is expected to serve as timekeeper, freeing the single *tambú* drummer to improvise.

The second section (the *séru*) commences with a wave or vocal call from the *pregon*. This lets audiences know that they are now free to dance; and lets the deities or spirit world know that they are now welcome to join the event. In the *séru*, the musical roles of the *chapi* and drummer are reversed: the drummer now is expected to maintain the downbeat, while the *chapi* provides quick, respective triplet phrases, interspersed with episodes of improvisation. During the *séru*, the *pregon* is joined by the *coro* (chorus), who respond to the solo singer in a standard call-and-response manner. The dancing, done with one heel grounded in place while the toes of the

free foot rhythmically stomp the ground, adds its own complex rhythm. Audiences and *coro* are also free to handclap during the *séru*, adding yet another rhythmic dimension to its already dense texture.

   This binary form connotes a definite structural symmetry. The two sections can be repeated as often as the *pregon* desires, but the *habrí* and *séru* must always be presented as a pair – never singly, and never out of order. The traditional *tambú* and *chapi* rhythms from both the *habrí* and *séru* sections are transcribed in Figures 7.1 to 7.6, as are the handclapping and dancing rhythms from the *séru*.

Figure 7.1 Musical transcription of the standard rhythm performed by the *tambú* during the *habrí* section
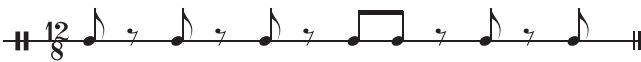
Figure 7.2 Musical transcription of the standard rhythm performed by the *chapi* during the *habrí* section

Figure 7.3 Musical transcription of the standard rhythm performed by the *tambú* during the *séru* section

Figure 7.4 Musical transcription of the standard rhythm performed by the *chapi* during the *séru* section

Figure 7.5 Musical transcription of the standard dance rhythm from the *séru* section
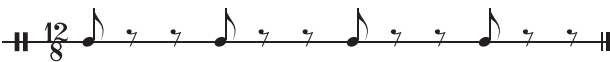
Figure 7.6 Musical transcription of the standard hand clapping rhythm from the *séru* section

Since the party *Tambú* is, like *kokomakaku* and *Montamentu*, a symbiotic process, it seems reasonable that it would adapt to its new surroundings upon arrival to the Netherlands. Yet, within its new European setting, the *Tambú* party has remained a ritual of unity, its binary form again allowing for differences to unite. Just as the Curaçao *Tambú* welcomed the different deities and ancestors into its ritual fold, so too did the Dutch party version easily – and capably – invite participation from any number of immigrant groups.

The Netherlands: The Presumed Land of Opportunity

Kobena Mercer argues that minority diasporic persons represent 'a reminder and remainder' of imperial histories; as being 'all too visible' members of a racialised minority, while at the same time made 'invisible, marginal and silenced' by ongoing acts prejudice and marginalisation. Yet, 'we are here because you were there', Mercer powerfully prompts (1994, 7), his words ringing with particular relevance when discussed in relationship to Curaçao. Although Curaçao assumed some autonomy in 2010, it remains firmly tied politically and economically to the Netherlands. Curaçaoans hold Dutch passports; the Netherlands education system is widely used; and Dutch remains the official language of the island. As the colonial head, the Netherlands continues to be regarded on Curaçao as a golden land of economic opportunity and prestige. It is little surprise, then, that Curaçaoans, when searching for a better life, would choose to relocate to the Netherlands.

Over 140,000 Curaçaoans (which is about half its population) today live in the Netherlands. This sizeable emigration from Curaçao is, to again borrow from Mercer, but an inheritance of the Netherlands' colonial past. Curaçaoans' relocation began small, comprising primarily domestic servants or nannies who accompanied Dutch proprietors during the slavery years, followed by the children of Curaçao's elite who travelled to the Netherlands to study following emancipation. The 1954 Charter for the Kingdom of the Netherlands promised citizenship to all persons living in the Dutch 'West Indian' colonies (Suriname and the Antilles), and with that charter, Curaçaoan emigration increased. Yet, again, this was primarily Curaçao students and young professionals from upper-class backgrounds.

This demographic, however, changed dramatically during the 1980s, when Curaçao's economic recession was at its height. Shell Oil, the

island's largest employer, closed in 1985, and this single-handedly ignited a mass emigration of Curaçaoans into the Netherlands. In contrast to earlier migrations, this flow of Curaçaoans was dominated by youths and lower-skilled labourers. The Dutch complained that their arrival placed considerable strain on already limited resources. Incoming Curaçaoans were met with considerable resentment by the Dutch, which, in turn, resulted in a rise in overt racism, with Curaçaoans facing increased discrimination especially in areas of housing, employment, and education. Despite the certain prejudice faced in the Netherlands, Curaçaoans continued to emigrate in large numbers. This sustained influx was initially looked upon by the Dutch government as a temporary matter, but the reality was that the vast majority had settled in the Netherlands permanently.

Curaçaoans were not alone in relocating to the Netherlands during the economic hardships experienced in their home nations. Persons from other Dutch Antilles also emigrated in large numbers to the Netherlands during the mid to late twentieth century, including those from Aruba, Bonaire, Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten, as well as from Suriname, formerly known as Dutch Guiana. During this period, there was also a large number of immigrants arriving from Indonesia, which also has colonial ties to the Netherlands.

The largest immigrant groups to come to the Netherlands, however, were from Turkey and Morocco. They arrived initially as labour migrants after the Second World War, their residence considered again temporary by the Dutch government. Most, however, remained after their work contracts finished, with many sending for family members to join them. Today there are close to 400,000 Turks and 400,000 Moroccans residing in the country (Crul 2018). Yet, among the fastest-growing immigrant groups are the Somalis, Ghanaians, Ethiopians, Nigerians, and Congolese, with some fleeing the pogroms or civil unrest in their home countries, while others arrived simply in search for a better life (Baron 2020). The overall rate of immigration has been so high that today in the Netherlands it is estimated that one out of five persons living in country has an immigrant background or has been born into a family wherein at least one parent is an immigrant (Salentin & Schmeets 2017, 1).

The majority of the recent rises in immigration have been youths under the age of twenty-five. With respect to Curaçao, that demographic is even more narrowly defined: most are between the ages of twelve and twenty-one. This increased number of immigrant youths brought substantial

changes to the urban nightlife scenes across the Netherlands, including the induction of ethnic youth parties – social gatherings organised by and for one single ethnic group. The *Tambú* parties gained popularity initially as part of this nightlife trend, developing alongside Turkish parties, Moroccan parties, and Surinamese parties. These ethnic youth parties supported the musics and dances that heralded from their aligned countries. By dancing to familiar musics at these allocated parties, party-goers communicated, shared, expressed, and celebrated individual memories of and connections to 'home'. Such parties helped to bind party-goers to their respective immigrant communities while at the same time separating them from other ethnic groups, creating what Rotterdam party organiser Ted Langenbach coined 'party apartheid' (see Boogaarts 2008, 1284).

One *Tambú* singer from Curaçao remembers the influential position these early ethnic parties served in his community. 'We had no choice but to start our own parties', he explained before sharing stories about being refused entry into some of the popular clubs across the Netherlands. 'Curaçaoans, well, all foreigners, were having troubles getting into night-clubs. If we wanted to party, where were we going to go? We had no choice but to start our own parties' (personal communication, 2009). For Curaçaoans who struggled for self-definition in the Netherlands, the Dutch *Tambú* party proved a particularly powerful move. Curaçaoans needed to create new connections – and disconnections – with the Netherlands and Curaçao. Because *Tambú* held a controversial position back on Curaçao, scrutinised by the island's Dutch government as well as by local Curaçaoans, these parties served as an effective medium for both rebelling against the Netherlands and breaking with Curaçaoan norms and expectations. From that perspective, the *Tambú* parties allowed for a needed strategy of resistance among the Netherlands' Curaçaoan community, where cultural authority was actively sought.

Whereas earlier immigration policies in the Netherlands could be regarded as multicultural in their basic approach, this changed with the tragedies of 9/11. Foreigners suddenly were viewed collectively as danger-ous, and cultural diversity was seen as a threat. Populist politicians like Pim Fortuyn began campaigning widely for 'zero migration', arguing that 'the Netherlands is full' and 'multiculturalism has failed'. New immigration policies were soon instituted, and by 2005 'all persons not born within the European part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands' were required to pass a Dutch language and culture course prior to being allowed to enter. If they passed the compulsory course and were allowed entrance into the Netherlands, the expectation was that they would integrate fully into

Dutch society. Should they fail to assimilate within a specific time-period, the immigrants faced heavy fines and possible deportation.

Because Curaçaoans were Dutch citizens, they had full mobility to the Netherlands. Yet, the institution of these 2005 policies quickly denied them of these rights. Citizenship, instead, became linked to perceived levels of integration, which transformed Curaçaoans and other Dutch nationals into colonial citizens. This made them vulnerable to exploits of discrimination, and, when anti-immigration rhetoric, as propagated by Dutch political leaders, increased, so too did acts of violence and racism imposed against Curaçaoans and the other immigrant communities.

The Netherlands had emerged an increasingly hostile place for immigrants to live. Immigrants suddenly became the scapegoats of the general social discontent felt across the Netherlands. Immigrants were targeted for encroaching on already-limited government and private resources. And they were pinpointed as threats to Dutch cultural values, national cohesion, and traditional patriotism. Curaçaoans, Angolans, Moroccans – they all found themselves caught in the similar, marginalised position of an inferior Other, as foreigners with 'thick accents', darker skin tones and 'strange customs'.

Introducing 'Interpretive Diaspora'

The term diaspora comes from the Greek word for 'scattered'. As the definition suggests, diaspora involves persons who have found themselves 'scattered' from original homelands. Being part of a diaspora, however, is not necessarily limited to the replacement of one society for another. Rather, it can articulate numerous journeys and a 'dwelling-in-travel' between a multiplicity of physical, social, and cultural sites (Clifford 1997, 36). In the words of Homi Bhabha, this 'scattering' can also imply a 'gathering':

I have lived that moment of the scattering of the people that in other times and other places, in the nations of others, becomes a time of tethering. Gathering of exiles and emigres and refugees . . . Also the gathering of the people in the diaspora: indentured, migrant, interned; the gather of incriminatory statistics, educational performance, legal statues, immigration status – the genealogy of that lonely figure that John Berger named the seventh man (Bhabha 2000, 292).

According to Bhabha, with such a gathering, new loyalties are forged, and different communities come together, creating new narratives of

belonging. This analysis is helpful in discussing the phenomenon of the Dutch *Tambú* parties. Curaçaoans' experiences of discrimination and prejudice have connected them to other immigrant groups across the Netherlands; and, together, they form an intangible yet significant sub-community, which can be mobilised and strengthened at these Dutch *Tambú* parties.

The notion that 'diasporic communities' ascend from ongoing negotiated processes is hardly unique. However, the way a diasporic community is claimed at these Dutch *Tambú* parties is novel in that it challenges hegemonic notions that diaspora is attached to a single community or to a single location. At the Dutch *Tambú* events, party-goers from Curaçao connect with those from other diasporas, all of whom unite around shared experiences of marginalisation and prejudice. Their shared experiences emerge as the markers of a new, extended diasporic community, a temporal position of 'oneness'. From that standpoint, the Dutch *Tambú* parties provide its partygoers with an innovative 'cultural map of meaning', upon which they can claim new points of belonging (Cohen 1995, 444).

Abdel from Morocco responds to questions about his participation at the *Tambú* dance party: 'Everyone here', he says, pointing to himself and the other partygoers at the club, 'We're all outsiders in Holland. We don't fit in – none of us. But at this party? We're insiders' (personal communication, 2010). Abdel's words remind us that the *Tambú* parties represent a trans-cultural space in the Netherlands, where different immigrant groups converge on each other, interacting and merging, fusing in ways that enables them to combat experiences of isolation and forge new networks of belonging. In other words, the parties have allowed these different, marginalised immigrant groups to reclaim the immigrant experience as a strategy for empowerment.

The new spaces of belonging that emerge are created at the intersection of several diasporas: Caribbean, African, and East European; their geographic, cultural, and linguistic differences collapsing to give rise to a hybridity and transnationality that enables allegiance to a number of new communities. In that context, a parallel imaginative construction of an 'interpretive diaspora' emerges, one united around the shared experience of 'not fitting in', which may be felt individually, but is made meaningful when interpreted as part of a community.

This concept of 'interpretive diaspora' is a reapplication of Stanley Fish's 'interpretive communities'. Fish's theory revolves around the reading of texts. Readers, according to Fish, interpret what they read in relationship to the community to which they belong. Readers 'determine the shape of what is read' not by construing a text's 'true' meaning but rather through the accepted

assumptions, values, and mores already embedded within their lived communities (1980, 171). A text's meaning, therefore, is acquired not through the isolated interpretation of an individual, Fish argues, but rather via the collective interpretation conducted by a community. The 'truth' of a text is thusly constructed, agreed upon, and validated by this interpretive community.

This perspective suggests that individual experience, too, assumes value and meaning when interpreted within a community; that meaning and value may be brought into being through the interpretive strategies of an individual, but that they are given life via the validation accorded to them by an interpretive community. The immigration experience can be interpreted in a variety of ways, and from a variety of perspectives. Yet, at the Dutch *Tambú* parties, those variegated interpretations and views are joined together, and private experiences of marginalisation are reworked and shared against wider experiences of displacement, allowing for what Audre Lorde calls 'the transformation of silence into language and action' (2001). From this perspective, the Dutch *Tambú* party represents a systematic retelling of immigrant experiences that is diverse, yet also coherent and candid. Party-goers' stories are dynamic, and, though their experiences may overlap and even coincide, their stories remain distinct and personal, thereby disrupting essentialised recountings of 'one' immigrant experience in the Netherlands.

Although the immigrants attending the *Tambú* parties may be united around shared understandings of oppression and racism, this does not mean that the party-goers view themselves as a homogenous social group (nor should they be examined as such). Their own diasporic uniqueness does not disappear at *Tambú*. In fact, with *Tambú's* distinct binary form and its 'open-door' policy of acceptance, these Dutch parties offer room for party-goers to share and celebrate in their individual diasporic histories while also acknowledging their collective immigrant reality. As is witnessed at the Dutch *Tambú* party, during the *habrí* section, the audience members follow the traditional protocol of standing at the side-lines, swaying gently to the drum rhythms. Also in accordance with tradition, party-goers only begin dancing once the *séru* section commences. At the start of the *séru*, Curaçaoans in attendance take to the floor carefully following the rules of *Tambú* dance, with their feet stomping and arms outstretched. The non-Curaçaoans in attendance, however, join in the *séru* with the dances from their own home regions. Michel from the Democratic Republic of Congo, for example, jumps to the floor with what he calls 'the latest [Congolese] soukous moves' (personal communication, 2008) and Abi, who is from Ghana, joins with a dance that combines hip-hop and traditional high life.

Dance transcends time and place, making it vital to the transmission of social knowledge in oral cultures from one generation to the next. On Curaçao, dance is central to how *kokomakaku* and *Montamentu* have assumed their power, and to how collective historical knowledge has taken root on the island. In *Montamentu*, specifically, it is through dance that devotees can assume the required trance state that allows communication with the spirit world. Yet, as a *Montamentu* spiritual leader explains it, attaining trance is not crucial for devotees to extract spiritual gratification from the event. Rather, it is the mere physical activity of dance that brings atonement. 'We dance out our problems at *Tambú*', he clarifies. 'For those who can't dance, they will live with great difficulty' (personal communication, 2001).

Transferring this leader's assessment of dance to the Dutch *Tambú* parties, we see that, similarly, it is not the traditional *Tambú* dance moves that give the party its strength. Rather, it is the communal activity of dancing that ensures atonement. With the *séru* section, all party-goers are invited to 'dance out their problems', but do so through the dances that are most personally meaningful to them. The *tambú* drum and *chapi* together provide the rhythmic anchor around which different party-goers groove, and the visual effect is stunning. The kicks of Angolan *kizomba* and the shaking shoulders of Ghanaian high-life join with the sudden leaps and twirls of Turkish *erzurum* and the foot stomps of *Tambú*. On the dance floor, individual histories of 'there' connect with the collective experiences of 'here', helping the party transform into an alternative social structure that transcends binary prescriptions of here/there, either/or. Instead, the interconnectedness of their lives is on display, and with it, the parties become a hybridised space of protest, where wider discourses of resistance and anti-racism can be claimed.

Concluding Thoughts

The *Tambú* party in the Netherlands transcends its role as a single Curaçaoan tradition or Caribbean-specific phenomenon. It serves, instead, as a bridge that connects persons from a variety of cultural backgrounds and home locations. It establishes new alliances that push the party beyond the limits of a single Curaçaoan or Caribbean diaspora. By attending the event, party-goers acquire agency to fight against assumed invisibility, powerlessness, and voicelessness. They take claim to a transnational cultural circuit that allows them to imagine and develop a wider diasporic imaginary, wherein multiple stories of resettlement and renegotiation – what Avtar

Brah calls 'the lived experiences of locality' (1996, 192) – can be reinterpreted, not as a single experience but as a collective force.

This chapter confirms that diasporic communities experiencing prejudice and racism require creativity for survival. The *Tambú* party represents one such creative response to the difficult circumstances that come with living in the diaspora. The *Tambú* party, like other Caribbean traditions, is not an object meant to remain intact, nor is it meant to be practiced only by its makers. Its roots are with slavery, and it developed out of the determination of enslaved Africans to confront oppressions, to recreate a sense of community in an unfamiliar land, and to maintain perceived links to 'home' while staking claim to a 'new world'. Intrinsic within the Dutch *Tambú* party, therefore, is a comparable critique of the colonial position as well as a similar resolve to survive. Curaçaoans emigrating to the Netherlands have found themselves at a juncture where such a reconceptualization of identity and difference is as urgent as ever. In its resurrection, the Dutch *Tambú* party evokes the same long-standing tradition of subverting the inflexible categorisations of colonialism by insisting instead on a rhizomatic network that emphasises the multilayered interrelationships possible among Netherlands' immigrant communities.

In attending the Dutch *Tambú* party one is immediately struck by the sense of urgency that surrounds it. Party-goers' commitment to overcome and transcend adversity at these parties is compelling. There is deep concern among them to use this event as a means for addressing the oppression and discrimination they experience as members of racialised groups, and for promoting new friendships and alliances. Saskia, a Curaçaoan woman who relocated to Amsterdam in 2008, perhaps explained it best. She admitted that she never attended *Tambú* parties while living on Curaçao. However, in the Netherlands the parties assumed new purpose and relevance, the parties' capacity to extend the boundaries of inclusion now recognised by Saskia as a welcome and much-needed resource. Turning to a favourite quote from Saskia: 'It's not like I chose to go to the *Tambú* parties. It's more like the parties chose me' (personal communication, 2010).

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Discography

All of these recordings are self-recorded and self-distributed, and as such have no record labels.

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