The Challenged Authenticity of a seemingly Idyllic Island: Understanding Dutch Immigration on Bonaire through the Lens of Sound

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Understanding Dutch Immigration on Bonaire through the Lens of Sound

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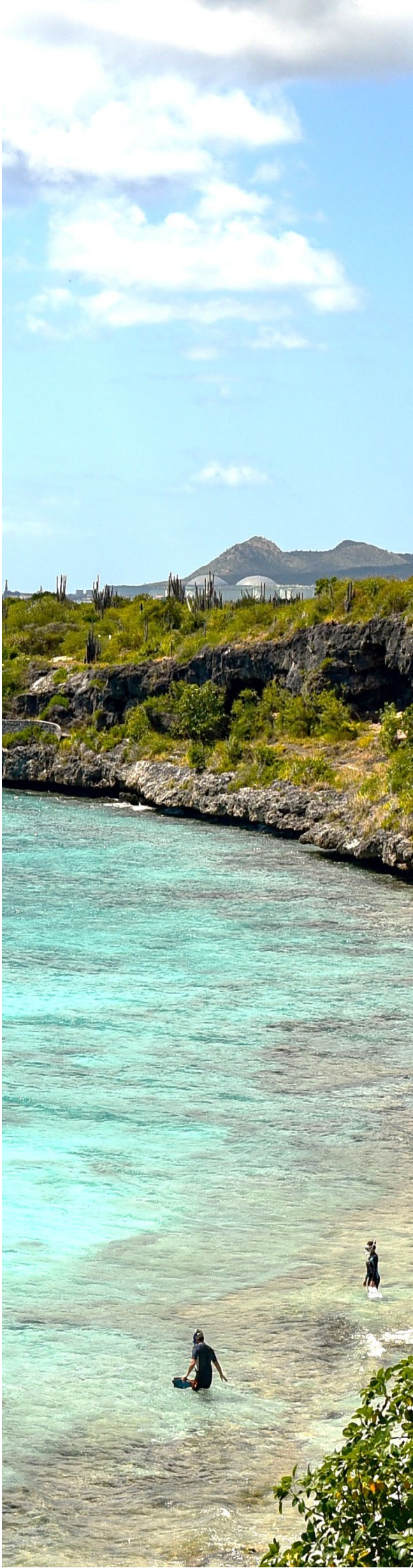

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Thesis Abstract

Bonaire became part of the Netherlands as a special municipality on the 10th of October 2010. Since this institutional change, Bonaire has experienced an influx of Dutch immigrants, leading to significant transformations on the island which has sparked debates about the loss of Bonairian authenticity. This thesis explores these cultural differences through the concept of acoustemology, as proposed by Steven Feld. The perception of noise and sound is culturally dependent. This division between noise and sound contains a hierarchy of sounds, that is parallel to the hierarchy in the dominant meaning-making process that comes from a European Dutch hegemony on the island. What is considered noise on Bonaire is shaped through a Western lens. This implies that immigrants who relocate to Bonaire unknowingly bring their cultural perspectives on noise and sound with them. However, they do this unknowingly, which is the result of what Gloria Wekker calls white innocence. Drawing on two months of fieldwork, this research explains these connections through the lived experiences of several Bonairian Locals. Their realities from the base of the practice of soundscaping that is used to illustrate how perspectives on sound may differ between cultures. These soundscapes were placed on a map to contextualise Bonaire as an interconnected space. The research adopts a multimodal approach in another way, featuring an ethnographic film that highlights the issues faced by local participants and explores the evolving relationship between them and the European Dutch researcher, employing visual ethnographic methods. The study employs self-reflexivity to analyse this dynamic. The argument made is that an understanding of the local Bonairian lived experience can be obtained through the lens of analysing sound and this understanding is essential in the building of relationships between Bonairian locals and Dutch immigrants.

Link to the Soundmap of Bonaire:

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1GKGWBGd_MIfk1ExasltrFyPUTwby7O8&usp=sharing

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Thank you

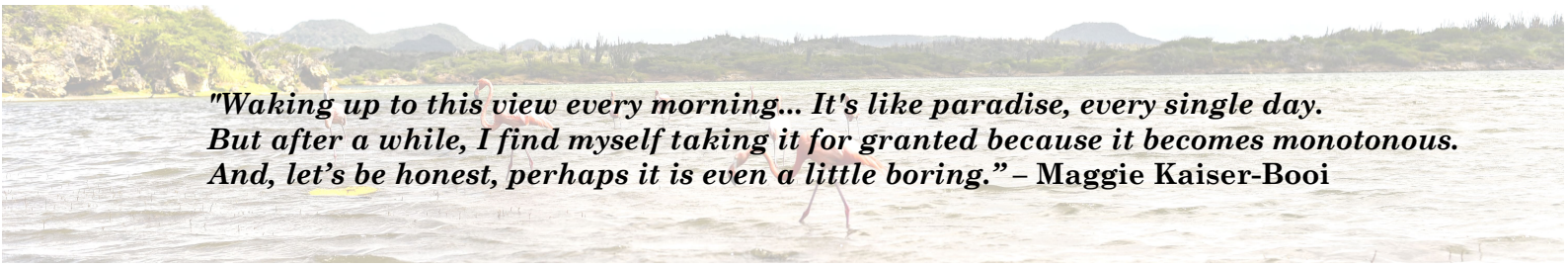
Masha Danki

Dankjewel

Table of contents

It was the heart of winter in the Netherlands, when I departed for Bonaire. Upon arrival, I was immediately greeted by a sunny and idyllic paradise. The warm climate, breathtaking views, and friendly people I encountered aligned perfectly with the expectations set by online marketing. However, it took me some time getting used to the pace of the island, which I will illustrate by sharing an incident from the third day on the island. I had rented a scooter, which unfortunately broke down within a few days. Stranded on the side of the road, I found myself in an unfamiliar place with two bags of groceries and the scorching sun on my skin. To make matters worse, I had an appointment that afternoon, and I was determined not to be late. Filled with anxiety and frustration, I called the rental company and explained my predicament to the person on the other end of the line. He casually assured me that he would arrive within an hour. When he finally showed up, he chuckled, lit a cigarette, leaned against his car, and remarked, "You sound a little bit stressed." Due to the fast-paced lifestyle I was accustomed to in the Netherlands, this situation was quite stressful for me. However, my stress seemed quite amusing to him. "Time on this island flows differently compared to the mainland," someone remarked later that afternoon. In the end, I have to admit they were right. While the passing of time in each moment felt slow, the days themselves seemed to fly by. During my time on the island, I was able to unwind from the stressful life I had in the Netherlands, where my days were filled with appointments and tightly-packed schedules. Therefore, it is not surprising to me that many of the Dutch individuals who initially planned short visits to Bonaire eventually choose to extend their stay or come back later.

Introduction



"Waking up to this view every morning... It's like paradise, every single day. But after a while, I find myself taking it for granted because it becomes monotonous. And, let's be honest, perhaps it is even a little boring." **– Maggie Kaiser-Booi**

Bonaire has been a popular destination for the Dutch since The Dutch Antilles ceased to exist in 2010. The island (along with Saba-- and St. Eustatius) became part of the Netherlands as a 'special municipality' or 'public body.' Before 1948, the islands of were part of the Dutch kingdom as colonies along with Aruba, Curacao and St. Maarten. From 1948 onwards, the six islands were part of the Antilles until Aruba left in 1986. The 10th of October 2010 (often referred to by the locals as 10-10-10) is a symbolic date for the new state of their island. Since then, Bonaire has gained popularity among the Dutch, attracting both vacationers and those seeking extended stays or permanent residency. In this thesis, the focus will be on examining the cultural disparities between European Dutch immigrants and Bonairian locals, utilizing the concept of sound as an analytical framework. By exploring how sound operates as a marker of cultural difference, the aim is to shed light on a cultural inequality that arises from a phenomenon known as 'white innocence.' I conducted this research through an immersive ethnographic approach and with audiovisual methods during a nine-week period of fieldwork on the island.

During my stay on Bonaire, some aspects of the culture profoundly impacted my mental well-being in a positive way. The unhurriedness and refraining from the tendency to plan all social activities were new to me. After three weeks on the island, as I traversed the Kaya Grandi, the main road from Hato - my place of residence - to Playa (Kralendijk), I encountered instances where drivers would halt their cars in the middle of the road for various reasons. Rather than growing impatient or exhibiting nervous gestures, I found myself calmly waiting, unaffected by the delay. Things that would typically irritate me in my previous fast-paced life did no longer have the same effect on me. But moreover, island life does not allow to step out of it because one cannot leave so easily This means that Bonaire is, in essence, also a community. To illustrate this point

[1] All photographs in this document were made by me during fieldwork. All the individuals in the pictures that were photographed outside of the public space gave permission for the photograph being taken.

with an example, in the supermarkets, every so often things like dairy-products would run out. I found myself in conversations that entailed: “Have you seen eggs anywhere these weeks?” to which the reply was: “no, I think the shipping container is delayed again.” Sometimes I had to knock on the door of my neighbours to ask if they had some milk left. These interactions created a sense of connection and solidarity, as we were all in the same situation. This differs from my experience of modern-day society in the Netherlands, where I think it is considered normal to keep to oneself, reflecting a more individualistic approach to life. The dairy shortage also exemplified what I perceived as a ‘limitation of options. In the Netherlands, there is always another store to visit for a specific product, and there are countless (delivery) services available for almost anything. The same goes for job opportunities, experiences, and hobbies - the options seem limitless. On Bonaire however, experienced a lack of endless options in terms of products, places to go, and activities to engage in. This limitation of options compelled me to live day by day and go with the flow, embracing whatever the day had to offer - an unhurriedness that I had not been able to experience while constantly moving from one option to another. Therefore, it is not surprising to me that many individuals who initially planned short visits to Bonaire eventually choose to extend their stay return later.

Losing authenticity

The previous paragraph aimed to capture my interpretation and understanding of "Bonairian authenticity". This is a term that emerged through my literary research prior to the fieldwork and in my interactions during my stay on the island. It signifies a perceived sense of cultural integrity that is associated with the local identity and way of life on Bonaire. With the growing European Dutch population, Bonaire is undergoing significant changes. The Dutch influences are pervasive throughout the island, and traces of the Netherlands can be found everywhere. Staying with the example of the supermarkets: If I ever felt homesick all I had to do was go spend some time in Van den Tweel. This store is almost an exact replica of the Albert Heijn. This distinct Dutch presence on the island is draws in Dutch immigrants in particular. However, living day by day becomes more challenging as the population increases. The influx of people results in the need for more rules, policies, and overall, a stricter way of life. The expectation to make appointments and adhere to Dutch scheduling culture within organisations and government institutions adds to this change. These transformations significantly impact the private and public spheres of Bonaire's inhabitants. In their

work *Bonairiaans Erfgoed* (2021), Gert Oostindie et al.[2] write that although Bonaire is still sparsely populated compared to the other islands, the changes have been rapid in the past couple of years (171/172). This rapid transformation has been described as being perceived as threatening to that authenticity of the island in works by Oostindie and other scholars, but also by interlocutors of this research. Additionally, Oostindie has written more than once that poverty has been the red thread throughout Bonairian history. In 2022, the Bonairian trade union filed a lawsuit against the Dutch government to address income inequality between the Caribbean municipalities and other Dutch municipalities.[3] On the 13th of May 2023, hundreds of people demonstrated on the streets of Bonaire against the indecision of the Dutch government to instigate a social minimum on Bonaire.[4]

Even though the economic situation has become better over the past century, Bonaire is still very much financially dependent on the Netherlands. This is in stark contrast with the rich immigrants that move to the island and therefore the social-economic differences are even more extensive. This is one of the reasons the Bonairians have created the slogan 'Nos kier Boneiru bèk' (We want Bonaire back)[5] which was introduced by James Finies[6]. This indicates the sentiment that the Bonairian locals want more attention for their own culture, values and language. Over the past couple of years, the dialogue has turned towards accusations of recolonisation, apartheid and modern slavery. The Bonairians feel like they, and their culture, are unseen and misunderstood in the large scales of immigration to their island, especially by the Dutch.[7]

[2] The contributing authors to this chapter are Liliane de Geus, Stacey Mac Donald, Gert Oostindie, Alex van Stipriaan and Nicole Vermeer

[3]https://nos.nl/artikel/2456257-consumentenbond-bonaire-start-rechtszaak-tegen-nederlandse-staat-om-armoede

[4] https://nos.nl/artikel/2474962-demonstratie-op-bonaire-tegen-ongelijkheid-met-nederland

[5] Oostindie, Gert, and Alex van Stipriaan. Antilliaans erfgoed 2: nu en verder

[6] https://caribischnetwerk.ntr.nl/2020/10/11/bonaire-tien-jaar-een-gemeente-van-nederland-een-decennium-van-protesten/

[7] This paragraph comes out of the research proposal I wrote prior to conducting this research

In Gloria Wekker's analysis of the Dutch mentality she describes it as a manifestation of "white innocence," which refers to an epistemology of ignorance among Dutch white people who fail to recognize the ways in which they benefit from racial hierarchy. In this thesis, I argue that this concept can also be applied to Bonaire. Following the dissolution of the Dutch Antilles in 2010, the island became an integral part of the Dutch kingdom. In their work "Antilliaans Erfgoed," Gert Oostindie and Alex van Stipriaan emphasise the importance of understanding the cultural heritage of the islands in relation to the diaspora and its connection to the Netherlands (1). While this thesis does not specifically focus on colonial history, it is essential to acknowledge that the long-standing relationship with the Dutch has shaped the current state of the island. The legacies of colonialism continue to influence Bonaire's cultural landscape and societal dynamics. Applying Wekker's concept of 'white innocence shows that this hierarchal dynamic is still present on the island today. Building upon Wekker's theory I analyse this phenomenon through the lens of sound. Before delving into this, it is important to clarify the terminology used in this thesis. I employ the term 'European Dutch' to distinguish between individuals from Bonaire and those from the European Netherlands, since both groups are part of the Dutch Kingdom. Additionally, I refer to the inhabitants of Bonaire as 'Bonairian locals' since this is the term most commonly used by the participants themselves.

Sound as a lens on culture

Expanding on the concept sound, it is essential to examine its implications within the evolving environment of Bonaire. As previously stated, the island's private and public spheres are undergoing transformation due to factors such as population growth and increased immigration, resulting in for instance more traffic, more bars and more buildings. In short, I would say that this increase causes more noise on the island. Noise is an inherent aspect of what we perceive as sound. However, the precise distinction is ambiguous as "one group's unpleasant noise can be another's positive sound" (Littlejohn 40)."[8] Andrew Littlejohn poses the question of what sound is in his text 'Sonic Ethnography' (2021). In this thesis, I will not delve into the technical dimensions of sound discussed by Littlejohn and other scholars, nor will I provide an in-depth analysis of how sounds resonate within our bodies (although that does not mean that I do not take it into consideration). Littlejohn suggests that "it is often more productive to ask how such formal and informal accounts of sound have changed and interacted as part of

[8] Andrew Littlejohn 'Sonic Ethnography' (40)

that social activity than to assume them to be transparent mirrors of reality (which is not the same thing as claiming that no such reality exists)" (44). While I acknowledge the existence of sound and noise beyond culturally influenced perceptions and understandings, my research focuses ln how sound can help to understand the cultural differences between Bonairian locals and European Dutch migrants. Therefore, I employ sound as a tool to analyse cultural differences instead.

In this introduction, I started with an illustrative vignette on my own position as a Dutch researcher and parts of my cultural experience of Bonaire. But in order to understand the cultural differences between the European Dutch and the Bonairian locals, I explored this in the dynamic between me and three Bonairian participants. Throughout my research, I cultivated a relatively close relationship that made them trust me with their opinions, views and beliefs. I would meet these participants once or twice a week for a duration of nine weeks. Furthermore, I conducted interviews with thirteen other residents, to broaden my insights into the island. In multiple of these conversations, noise and sound were brought up as topics to explain the cultural differences that my interlocutors experienced.

In anthropology, the concepts of culture and cultural difference have been widely discussed and debated. Clifford Geertz wrote in 1973 on culture that it "is composed of psychological structures by means of which individuals or groups of individuals guide their behaviour" (11). While Geertz's notion has been influential, the discourse on culture has evolved since then. The aim of this thesis is not to delve into the entire debate, but rather to explore cultural difference through the lens of sound. By examining how different groups or individuals perceive their environment and engage in specific behaviours, we can come to insights into their distinct cultural perspectives. It is crucial to acknowledge that people do not all interpret the world in the same way. As mentioned earlier, what European Dutch individuals consider as noise may differ from the perception of local Bonairians. For instance, someone who has lived in Amsterdam for years might have a different opinion about the current level of traffic noise on Bonaire compared to someone who has been a long-term resident of the island. Gaining an understanding about this, can help to get an insight into why Bonairian locals may feel their island is losing its authenticity and how this corresponds with the behaviour of the European Dutch on the island. This is why this thesis focuses on sound as a way of building an interpretative bridge over the cultural differences I - as a European Dutch ethnographer - encountered during this research; I aimed to gain a better understanding

of the livelihoods of the Bonairian locals that participated in my research. Therefore, I came to the following research question.

> ***How can the experienced cultural differences by Bonairian locals between them and European Dutch immigrants on Bonaire be understood through sound?***

This research aims to answer the aforementioned question by utilising multiple multimodal and ethnographic research methods. Various interview techniques were employed to establish connections with the participants and gain insights into their perspectives. Both on-record and off-record conversations were documented through audio and visual recordings, alongside personal field notes. To substantiate the contents of these conversations I made audio-recordings in the form of soundscapes. In chapter three these recordings are included and I explain how this use of multimodality leads to a more interpretative form ethnography as they can be interpreted through multiple cultural lenses.

This thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter contextualizes the current (post)colonial state of Bonaire, highlighting the issues around immigration of the Dutch addressed in this introduction. Furthermore, I draw onto the academic debate surround sound scaping and understanding sound to explain its relevance to cultural differences. The second chapter explains the reflexive process of selecting research methods and establishing a dynamic relationship with three main research participants. I elaborate on how reflexivity is crucial in this research as my own integration as a European Dutch researcher was involved. This chapter also explores ethnographic filmmaking. The visual aspect of this audio-visual ethnography adopts a reflexive ethnographic approach. The camera played a dual role in my fieldwork: symbolizing the time and effort invested by both the participants and the researcher, and providing visual material that serves as a reflexive tool for analysing cultural difference.

The third and final chapter connects the gathered information from literature and the research participants to several recorded soundscapes. These soundscapes serve as evidence to argue how sound can be employed to comprehend the issues raised by the European Dutch immigration on the island. Mapping these soundscapes to their respective locations emphasizes the importance of understanding Bonaire as an interconnected space, rather than a collection of isolated elements and problems.

Research limitations and ethical considerations

Not much (anthropological) research has been done on the island of Bonaire. One of the more important anthropological works that has been written about the island was Ank Klomp's *Politics on Bonaire* in 1986. She considered the relationship between the Bonairian people and the European Dutch living on the island already complicated back then. Another person of importance in the past fifty years is the Bonairian writer Boi Antoin, who has been collecting an archive of cultural materials. Moreover, there is Hardly any literature that connects the islands to each other. Most research focuses more heavily on a single island, and that focus is uneven. 'Curacao and Aruba have been taken significantly more into consideration than the other four islands have. So, there not much material from the colonial period of Bonaire and the island has always been the underdog to its bigger siblings Aruba and Curacao.[9] Moreover, I heard that there is a 'knowledge-problem' on Bonaire on multiple occasions during my fieldwork: Several people I spoke to in different contexts mentioned the problem that researchers do come to Bonaire in order to collect knowledge, but it is taken and not shared. Taking this all into consideration, I worked together with the Terramar Museum, an institute that is actively trying to change this by providing knowledge to the local population of Bonaire through activities like workshops and presenting collections that are closer to the local perspective. I agreed to share my research with them so I don't only take from the island, but also give something back.

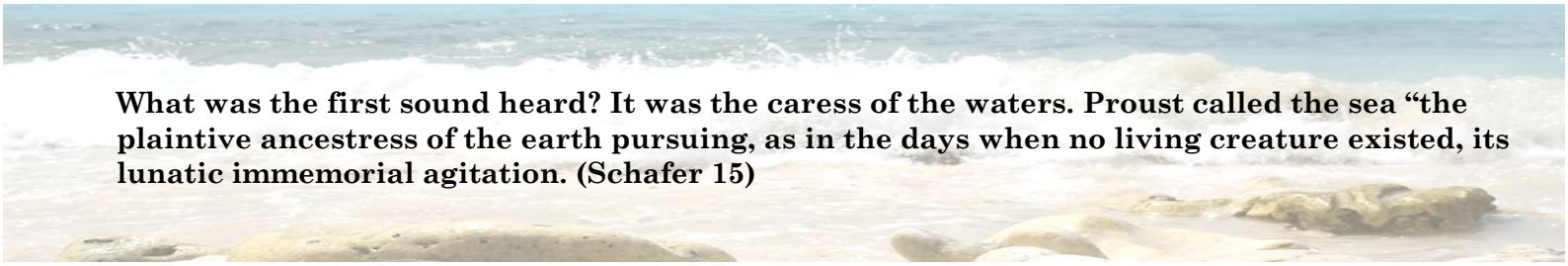
I worked as a European Dutch researcher to study a non-western community. I am aware of the implications that entails and therefore this research is in both a self-reflexive format as in a multimodal one. In subsequent sections of this thesis, I will draw upon the work of Martin Munro – "Listening to the Caribbean," – where sound is utilized as an analytical tool within the Caribbean context. At this point, I would like to make an initial reference to Munro who references Éduouard Glissant. Glissant has written about the Caribbean people's distrust towards ethnography which "comes not from the displeasure of being watched, but from the resentment of not watching in turn" (Munro 179). I appear in the filmic output of this ethnography as I went through a journey that was amazing but also awkward. In this way, I offer a turn to those who worked with me on this project to also watch me. Furthermore, I sought to make the outcome of this research interpretive by incorporating soundscapes that were recorded at locations selected by my participants. In this sense, I aimed for a collaborative ethnography.

[9] The text in this paragraph was written for research proposal I constructed prior to conducting this research

Due to the nature of this research and the small community of Bonaire, ensuring participant anonymity was not a feasible option. Therefore, at the outset of the research, I obtained their informed consent, in accordance with the guidelines set by the American Anthropological Association. Five individuals completed a consent form, while those whom I interviewed only once provided verbal consent, which was recorded in audio format.

It is essential to acknowledge that Bonaire is a small island, spanning only 288 square kilometres, where interdependency among its inhabitants is inherent. Additionally, cultural diversity extends beyond the Bonairian-Dutch dynamic, encompassing individuals of various nationalities, languages, and cultural backgrounds. This research focuses specifically on the Bonairian-Dutch dynamic due to my own position as a European Dutch researcher working with Bonairian locals, thus limiting statements about the cultural dynamics between other groups. However, this does not diminish the relevance of other dynamics. This research acknowledges the interactions between different cultural groups while concentrating on one specific dynamic. Therefore, the analysis of Bonaire's sounds within this research is centred on the Dutch-Bonairian dynamic.

Chapter 1: How sound can serve as a lens



What was the first sound heard? It was the caress of the waters. Proust called the sea "the plaintive ancestress of the earth pursuing, as in the days when no living creature existed, its lunatic immemorial agitation. (Schafer 15)

As an island, Bonaire is surrounded by water on all sides. It is almost hard to 'escape' the sounds of the sea. Murray Schafer, the pioneer in bringing the concept of the soundscape into recognition, addressed the sea as the first thing in chapter one 'The Natural Soundscape' of his work *The Soundscape* (1994). Schafer took the natural soundscape as a starting point and argued that the other sounds of modernity interfere with these natural sounds. So, the sounds of modernity 'polluted' the health of the sonic environment for him. Therefore, his stance is called sonic naturalism (39) by Andrew Littlejohn in his text 'Sonic Ethnography'. What is important to note here is that Schafer's concept of the soundscape entails a hierarchical distinction among sounds, as he expresses a preference for certain sounds over others. To acoustically make sense of a place like Bonaire is to take into account that not all inhabitants perceive the island in the same way. Looking at sound on Bonaire in the framework of cultural differences, I want to refrain from taking a hierarchical approach to what sounds are preferred and which are considered noise.

Littlejohn writes that "what people perceive as 'noise' or sound varies culturally" (41). According to David Novak, noises typically refer to sounds that resist interpretation and consist of unintentional and unwanted sonic experiences. This last notion of noise is something that most scholars seem to agree on, but it remains unclear what 'unintentional and unwanted' means in different contexts. Furthermore, the question of who determines which sounds are deemed unwanted is of equal importance. Therefore, I will be using Steven Feld's concept of acoustemology, which serves as both a continuation and a critique of Schafer's Soundscape theory. Feld highlights Kellman's critique of Schafer's work, noting that the soundscape is not neutral and is influenced by Schafer's personal preferences for certain sounds (Feld 214)[10]. This limitation in Schafer's analysis restricts the practice of listening, as urban sounds are often reduced to

[10] For more in-depth knowledge of this theory, I point towards *Rethinking the Soundscape, A critical Genealogy of a Key Term in Sound Studies*, By Kellman himself. (2010)

mere noise (Feld 217). In the context of Bonaire, Shafer's approach is not productive because, for example, to the blurred division between nature and culture on the island. Which I will elaborate on later in this chapter. First, I elucidate the parallels between the analysis of sound and the understanding of cultural difference on Bonaire to establish connections about the broader construction of culture on the island, particularly in relation to the impact of Dutch immigration. Before I go into the analysis, I provide a brief overview of the cultural context of Bonaire and the enduring hierarchical structures that persist within its modern-day society. By understanding this context, we can better grasp the underlying power dynamics and social inequalities that shape the island's cultural landscape.

Hierarchy in the meaning-making process

As mentioned briefly in the introduction, the history of Bonaire has been shaped by colonialism and slavery, which continues to influence contemporary power dynamics on the island. While I will not delve into the intricate details of how the (post)colonial hierarchy of Bonaire is precisely constructed through policy-making and other formal aspects (although I acknowledge its significance), it is important to recognize the presence of multiple histories on the island, with the dominant narrative being the Dutch Western perspective. In their work *Ongemak* (2022), (literal translation: discomfort) Gert Oostindie and Wouter Veenendaal point out how it repeatedly becomes evident how greatly the lived experiences of the Netherlands and the islands differ (5). They further mention the disengaged Dutch government and that when it does intervene, policies are typically determined with insufficient consideration for the specific circumstances of the islands. Furthermore, they explain how the Caribbean realities are some sort of 'blind spot' for the average Dutch person. Consequently, the decision- and meaning making process is primarily driven by individuals who hold perspectives that significantly diverge from those of Bonaire's residents.

To explain how the Bonairian locals feel that their realities are being misunderstood, I will refer to an article published by Veenendaal and Oostindie in 2018 called 'Head versus heart: The ambiguities of nonsovereignty in the Dutch Caribbean'. It incorporates quantitative research consisting a survey conducted on the Dutch Caribbean Islands in 1998 and 2015 which reveals local perspectives on the Dutch presence. The findings demonstrate a discernible increase in discontentment towards Dutch presence; in 1998, 25,9% of participating Bonairians agreed that the Dutch have knowledge of the local culture, which was reduced to only 3,1% in 2015. Moreover, 45,3%

of the Bonairian population that participated in the research agreed that the Dutch have respect for their culture in 1998. In 2015, this had gone down to 5,8%. 73,7% Bonairian locals believed there are too many European Dutch people living on the island in 2015 and this number has only grown in the years that followed.

"Sometimes I feel like I live on an island that is part of an anthropological experiment with as variable the exposure to Dutch influences"[11] (242). Journalist Trix van Bennekom wrote this about Bonaire in 2012 after living on the island for over a decade. Her book *De Tragiek van Bonaire* (The tragedy of Bonaire) was only published two years after the constitutional change of 2010, but already at that time, she described how the 'vernederlandsing' (Dutchification) makes for a challenging coexistence on Bonaire. Van Bennekom specifies that she is not referring to the European Dutch that had been living on the island for an extended period. Instead, she focuses on a specific subgroup of newcomers she refers to as "fortune seekers."; who, according to her, mostly associate with other European Dutch people, don't learn the language, complain about Bonairian negligence for appointments and tell each other that they are being discriminated against as Makamba's[12]. Van Bennekom claims that these are the same European Dutch that are opinionated on immigration in the Netherlands and that these immigrants should integrate more.

"As with most of Europe, the Netherlands has no explicit 'race' discourse" (227). Dvora Yanow and Marleen ter Haar write in their text on the Netherlands' identity discourse.[13] They describe that the current classification of 'our own' and 'foreign' is the autochtoon/allochtoon distinction and this is still a racist discourse, but in disguise. An allochtoon is a person out of place; either them or their parental heritage is from a foreign (read: non-western) place. Çankaya & Mepschen state in their article that the word "*allochtoon* is the common-sensical way to refer to a non-white person, irrespective of whether he or she is a Dutch national" (627). They state that how postcolonial Dutch immigrants from – among other places – the Caribbean have been treated in the Netherlands, prove how racialised the Dutch discourse is. Taking this into regard on top of the fact that there has been an ongoing discussion on immigration and integration

[11] Free translation from Dutch: "Soms bekruipt me het gevoel dat ik op een eiland woon dat onderdeel is van een antropologisch experiment. Met als variabele de blootstelling aan de Nederlandse invloed."
[12] Makamba: means Dutch person in Papiamentu, but is mostly used as an insult.
[13] Yanow, D, and M. van der Haar. "People Out of Place: Allochthony and Autochthony in the Netherlands' Identity Discourse — Metaphors and Categories in Action

since the refugee crisis in 2016[14], I would argue that Dutch society is indeed not post-racial. Therefore, I find it ironic but not surprising how the problem on the Dutch territory on the other side of the ocean seems to be the integration (or lack thereof) by the Dutch themselves.

I refer to the concept of white innocence by Gloria Wekker, which is about the Dutch ignorance of racial hierarchies: the process of Dutch people not knowing and also not wanting to know. She writes that "they [the Dutch] think of themselves as being this small, ethical, colour-blind nation" (2). In the second half of this chapter, I will explain how I connect this hierarchy and how it can be analysed through the connection between cultural difference and sound. Wekker believes this naïve Dutch view is the result of four hundred years of Dutch imperial rule remaining mainly unacknowledged in the dominant meaning-making progress. (2) I argue that an analysis of sound can show how this is the case on Bonaire, which I will further substantiate in this chapter.

A hierarchy in the perception of sound

Now that the context of the hierarchy on Bonaire is clearer, Feld's concept of acoustemology, which emphasizes a mode understanding the world through sound, can illustrate how these hierarchal dimensions in the previous part of this chapter and the discontent of the Bonairian local population can be understood through this concept. "… acoustemology refuses to sonically analogize or appropriate 'landscape', with all its physical distance from agency and perception" (15). On Bonaire, the dominant perspectives and influences predominantly stem from the Dutch context. Consequently, this can potentially result in a Western interpretation and evaluation of which sounds are deemed as noise. To illustrate this with an example from musicology, I refer to Novak as he discusses the formal categorical division of periodic and nonperiodic waveforms; a theory initially developed by Hermann Helmholtz in 1885. In the context of this thesis, the significant aspect to extract from this theory is that Helmholtz reflected upon Western music theory in which tonal consonance and harmonic development over timbre have a higher status than some "noise-making percussion instruments". As Novak states, "The aesthetics of noise, then, correspond to different cultural valuations of sound, and reflect historical shifts in discourses of musical innovation" (127). Although

[14] As has been thoroughly discussed by various scholars like for example De Genova who explores the racial angle on the migrant crisis in his text "The Migrant Crisis' as racial crisis: do Black Lives Matter in Europe?' I want to not that I am aware of this debate and take it into consideration in the building of my argument. However, I will not substantiate it further here as it is not the topic of this thesis.

this theory may be outdated, it serves to show how the dominance of Western cultural ideals can and does shape the perception of desirable sounds.

Martin Munro's work *listening to the Caribbean* (2022) addresses the issue of how "representations of sound found in colonial travel chronicles, ethnographies and other narratives produce the sense of an 'imperial ear that is analogous to the 'imperial gaze' that Mary Louise Pratt writes about'" (28). The imperial ear refers to a biased and culturally specific way of perceiving and evaluating sounds, shaped by colonial and dominant Western ideologies. It reflects a tendency to prioritize certain sounds over others, considering some as desirable and others as undesirable or disruptive. This perspective can overlook or devalue the significance and meanings of sounds that do not conform to Western standards. Connecting this to Wekker's notion of Dutch imperial meaning-making, it becomes clear that the cultural understanding of what is understood as sound and noise on Bonaire is biased through a Western view upon the island. Taking this into consideration, it is not hard to fathom how Bonairian locals feel misunderstood and disrespected, as Oostindie and Veenendaal have demonstrated in their earlier mentioned numbers. New people moving to the island may take this Western bias with them unknowingly and understand the (acoustic) world around them through culturally learned perceptions of noise and desired sounds. Bonairian locals, for that matter, might have a different view on which sounds are wanted and which are not. Still, the Western understanding is the dominant one, since the government is Dutch and is imposing cultural hegemony on Bonaire. Of course, this discrepancy is in essence not only about the sounds of the island but about the many ways that this hierarchy in cultural difference manifests. However, I focus on how to understand these discrepancies in connection to sound and noise. Munro writes that opening up to the auditory elements "will constitute a quite radical and revealing shift in the study of region its history and cultures." (30) I aim with this thesis to build on his statement to offer an analysis through sound on contemporary dynamics between the European Dutch and the Bonairian local zoomed-in specifically on the island of Bonaire. I echo Munro in the sense that this practice neither erases nor negates centuries of visually dominant writing on the Caribbean. By emphasizing the auditory aspect, it offers an additional approach to reimagining and mapping the territory (30).

Considering this act of mapping, it is important to pause and provide an explanation of how Bonaire should be comprehended as an interconnected space. This will further contextualise how culture (difference) on Bonaire can be understood.

Therefore, I will explain this interconnectedness in the next section while elaborating on how mapping can be a fruitful tool of analysis.

Interconnected space

Let us return to the opening of this chapter and the sea: the beaches, corals, and fish hold great significance for various communities residing in Bonaire. The local Bonairian population attaches significant cultural value to the natural aspects of their island. Bonaire is known as diver's paradise, one of the last unspoiled places on earth, the true Caribbean experience[15]. These phrases are used as the marketing tactic that is used to lure tourists to the island. It seems to work, as this specific kind of nation branding[16] has led more than 173 thousand tourists to the small island in 2022. The space of the island is not only changing due to immigration. These changes are also connected to tourism who are lured in by how Bonaire's nature and culture is marketed. In this last part of the chapter, I will illustrate why it is important to understand the sounds in the context of the island as a space, as everything is interconnected.

On Bonaire, it is challenging to delineate the boundaries between nature and urbanisation, as they intertwine and overlap. To illustrate this, I want to refer to the map of Bonaire that I was supplied with by the Terramar Museum[17]. They created it by engaging with people on the streets in both Kralendijk (the capital) and Rincon (the oldest settlement) and made a distinction between Bonairian locals, European Dutch residents, and tourists. All the people they spoke to were asked to put a sticker on the map on sites that considered to be Bonairian heritage. A substantial number of respondents pointed to Rincon and Slagbaai Park as crucial cultural heritage sites on the island. Rincon is primarily preserved by its inhabitants, while Slagbaai Park falls under the protection of Stinapa Bonaire, a foundation commissioned by the island government for nature preservation. This example highlights the challenge of establishing clear divisions in various aspects of the island as it shows how many Bonairian locals chose nature preserved areas as the most important cultural heritage. Moreover, the oldest piece of culture, Rincon as the oldest settlement, is being preserved by guarding the nature around it[18].

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[15] i.e., this standard touristic website: https://wanderingourworld.com/visit-bonaire-caribbean-destination/

[16] Oostindie and Veenendaal address this nation branding in their work *Ongemak* (2022)

[17] https://terramarmuseum.com/about-us/

[18] I spoke to Julianka Clarenda, the director of Echo, a nature preservation and conservation centre that is linked to Rincon. With her help, I gained a broader understanding of how Bonaire's nature and culture is interconnected. Moreover, she gave an insight into Rinconeiru culture in the

This was the map provided to me by the Terramar museum. As is visible, most people put their sticker in the northern half of the island, either in Rincon or in Slagbaai Park, to mark what they think it is Bonaire's most important cultural heritage. The blue stickers were put down by Bonairian locals.

This map was a project by Lianne Ijmker and her intern Tirza. They made a video to accompany and substantiate the map.

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This blurriness in divisions extends beyond spatial considerations of nature and culture and also applies to people and their identity. Ank Klomp wrote in 1986 that "most Caribbean societies are characterised by sharply drawn interval divisions based on class, color, and often ethnic differences… On Bonaire, while such distinctions are not totally absent, they are of minor importance" (1). Oostindie and Veenendaal confirm that this was the case in the latter part of the twentieth century and add that that there was no significant struggle over determining the true identity of a Bonairian (53). However, they note that presently, Bonaire is experiencing growing resentment towards the increased Dutch presence, as evidenced by the (movement like "Nos kier Boneiru bèk" (We want Bonaire back). This signifies that the dynamic is undergoing a process of transformation as the divisions were originally less distinct.

Initially, Bonaire was divided into six neighbourhoods, each with its own characteristics. However, these identities are becoming less distinct as the island undergoes transformations with the construction of new buildings, streets, and the expansion of existing neighbourhoods, as well as the emergence of new ones. Nevertheless, it is essential to grasp the spatial structure of the island in order to comprehend Bonaire's history and its connection to the current cultural dynamics influenced by Dutch immigration. To substantiate this with an example I refer to Bonaire's role in the Dutch salt production. One notable cultural heritage site, known as

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sense of how the village is in some ways very different from Playa and the rest of Bonaire in terms of beliefs and values.

[19] Video: https://youtu.be/wR2GHWfaKB0

the 'slave huts,' situated in the southern bay of the island, continues to attract a substantial number of tourists. During the first half of the 19th century, enslaved individuals would make a weekly journey from their homes in Rincon to the saltpans and return on foot towards the end of the week. In the latter half of the century, the enslaved population was relocated closer to Kralendijk, in a neighbourhood now referred to as Tera Kòra.[20]

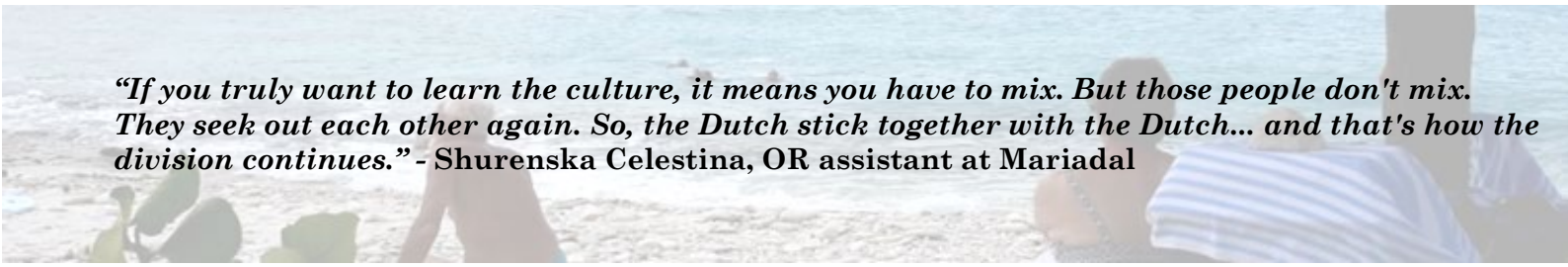
The specific historic context of the 'slave huts' illustrate this since this history is still in play in the location of new buildings and the differences between Rincon and Kralendijk. When one is aware of the geographic structure of the island and its history, it becomes more feasible to understand the inhabitants and their perspectives. Kimberley Powell has written in her text 'Making Sense of a Place: Mapping as a Multisensory Research Method', "we can just tell one story at a time"[21] (553). I want to address the importance of these multiplicity of stories that all coincide and how they are affected by the interconnectedness on Bonaire. Moreover, Cristina Gasseni notes in her text 'Skilled Landscapes: mapping practices of locality' how mapping spurs reflections on differing local perceptions of the landscape. Therefore, I explore in chapter three the practice of mapping the sounds to show how multiple perspectives can co-exist at the same time and to elucidate the relationships between them.

Both Grasseni's understanding of spatial awareness through mapping and Steven Feld's concept of acoustemology, which centres on comprehending the world through sound, emphasize that knowledge emerges from embodied engagement with the world. The understanding of sound on Bonaire is influenced by Western bias, stemming from a general Dutch ignorance of racial hierarchies. I undertake an analysis of cultural differences as a European Dutch ethnographer and so it is imperative for me to refrain from categorizing specific sounds as either noise or not. By doing so, I aim to avoid falling into the trap of the imperial ear, as described by Munro[22]. As Andrew Littlejohn explains, acoustemology creates a feedback loop between skilled listening and gaining insights about the world and its inhabitants. The subsequent chapters of this thesis examine these insights that I have gathered

[20] This information is described by Oostindie et al in his work Antilliaans Erfgoed. I confirmed it with the help of Frans Booi, a Bonairian scholar and philosopher who supported my research.

[22] Munro takes on a multidisciplinary approach that offers interesting insight into the history of the Caribbean. For an analysis that extends over multiple Caribbean Islands I point towards Munro's work as it offers a substantial overview and analysis of the Caribbean Soundscape. He argues that it often escaped classification and control and it is still an evolving, dynamic phenomenon (28).

Chapter 2: The reflexive process of adapting and finding applicable ethnographic research methods



"If you truly want to learn the culture, it means you have to mix. But those people don't mix. They seek out each other again. So, the Dutch stick together with the Dutch... and that's how the division continues." **- Shurenska Celestina, OR assistant at Mariadal**

In this chapter, I reflect on the fieldwork process with my main three participants to discuss how I arrived at my research methods, while also presenting some initial findings that highlight the cultural differences encountered with my participants and the local community. As Charlotte Davies notes in her work *reflexive ethnography*, it was once not uncommon for anthropologists to first choose the community in which they would conduct ethnographic fieldwork and then begin searching for a specific research topic (32). This ethnography is a rather reflexive one as I served as my own proxy within the social dynamics established as a European Dutch researcher engaging with local Bonairian participants. By referring to myself as a "proxy," I mean that I assumed the role of a participant-observer while also representing the European Dutch community in this research.

Like previously mentioned, I collaborated with three key participants who feature prominently in the ethnographic film that accompanies it. Additionally, there were others who played significant roles throughout the entire research process. Some of the interactions or interviews with those backgrounded participants were brief but did still provide valuable perspectives or prompted me to reevaluate my own stance on certain topics. All these individuals were identified through snowball sampling[23], a method that involved seeking referrals from initial contacts. In conjunction with the three main participants, Audy Flores, Jolanda Janga, and Shurenska Celestina, an ethnographic approach was employed to engage with their daily lives. This involved utilizing various

[23] As explained by Alan Bryman in Social Research Methods (415)

research methods, including multiple types of interviews, participant observation, as well as audio and video recording methods.

A social bubble

"I found it quite remarkable, I would say, that even after 2.5/3 years, some Bonairians still assume that because I am white and Dutch, I must have a preference for 'Dutch music,' you know. Well, if there's one thing I dislike, it's Dutch music. And I even told him, 'No, if that's what I wanted, I would have stayed in the Netherlands.'" – Marieke van Breda, OR assistant at Mariadal

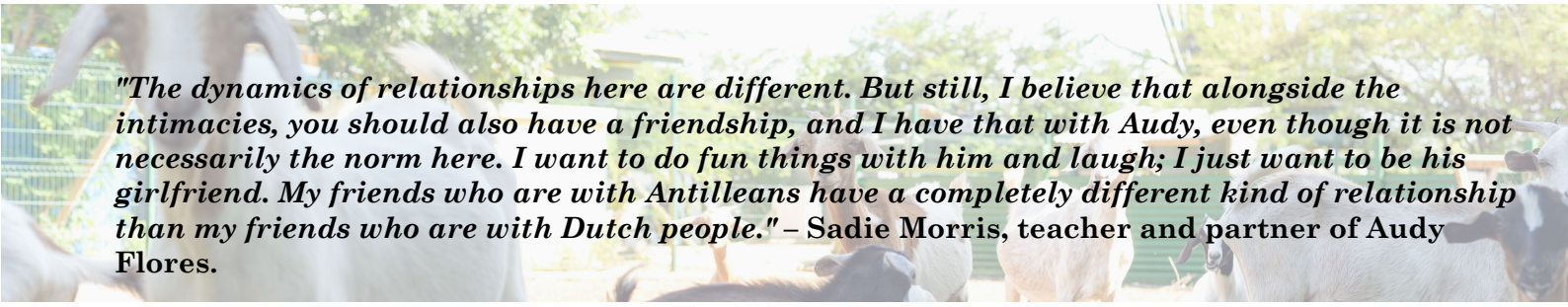
According to Davies and her research on reflexive ethnography, the traditional approach to ethnographic study involves "going and living among" the subjects of study. However, in contemporary research, this method may not always be applicable. In the case of my research on Bonaire, I did not immediately find myself living among the local population I needed to connect with the most. Instead, I found it relatively easy to connect with other European Dutch individuals, which presented a temptation to remain within familiar cultural circles. To illustrate this, I provide an example of my experience of the local Snacks in comparison to a fairly new but well-known venue on Bonaire called BarP. This establishment operates from Wednesday to Saturday every week and primarily attracts a young European Dutch clientele. Inside, the partygoers can be found dancing to Dutch HIP HOP music and consuming overpriced Amstel Bright, a light beer introduced by the Dutch brand Amstel specifically for the Caribbean market. During my research, I visited BarP on one occasion. Although it was not a venue that particularly aligned with my personal preferences, I did not experience any sense of alienation since no one even looked at me twice in this sea of European Dutch white people.

The Bonairian locals, with some exceptions, tend to frequent local 'Snacks'. These are bars, often owned by individuals of Chinese heritage, where one can enjoy various types of stews and where beverages are generally more affordable. However, my visit to the Snacks presented a different experience than to Dutch venues like BarP. Accompanied by a friend of Chinese descent who grew up in the Netherlands, we received prolonged stares from the individuals present upon entering. In some incidents, some individuals attempted to initiate conversations with her in Papiamentu while ignoring my presence. Nevertheless, the initial hesitation dissipated rather swiftly as we

demonstrated our openness to socialize and engage with the local community. I made an effort to engage in small talk using my best Papiamentu, which immediately broke the ice. It is important to note that the Bonairian locals we encountered were not unwilling to allow us into their world after we made some effort even though they initially approached the situation with a certain degree of scepticism.

Davies refers to Radcliffe-Browns structural functionalism, which was influential in the development of anthropological theory. Even though I am aware of the criticisms this theory faced over time, I refer to it because of its emphasis to live among the people studied and to need to acquire competence in the native language to understand the local perspectives (Davies 69). Because of the relatively short fieldwork time I had available for this research, I did not manage to become fluent in Papiamentu. However, the A2 level I obtained to involve myself in basic conversation did help me connect to people and show my effort to respect their language and culture. Structural functionalism is a holistic approach that takes into account the complexity of a society as interconnected and interdependent. Since This school of thought has been criticised of its downplaying of power dynamics, I also refer to Laura Catalán Eraso who wrote about the illumination of intercultural dynamics between participant and researcher while challenging the power relations in that relationship. On the small island that is Bonaire, there are only so many (local) social circles and often those circles overlap. The difficulty was probing these in order to find a way in; I needed to get people to trust me as a European Dutch researcher and filmmaker while maintaining "a degree of distance as to not 'go native'". (Eraso 3). To do this, I attempted to not present myself any differently than I would do in the Netherlands. This meant in terms of physical attributes like clothing but also in my behaviour. Moreover, I opted to reflect on the partiality of reality represented in both my film and my thesis through inserting myself and my experience as a component.

Research Participants



"The dynamics of relationships here are different. But still, I believe that alongside the intimacies, you should also have a friendship, and I have that with Audy, even though it is not necessarily the norm here. I want to do fun things with him and laugh; I just want to be his girlfriend. My friends who are with Antilleans have a completely different kind of relationship than my friends who are with Dutch people." **– Sadie Morris, teacher and partner of Audy Flores.**

I set up connections with my research participants through contacts I established while still in the Netherlands. These contacts included an anthropologist working for the Terramar Museum, the founder of a Bonairian development program, and my hostess who was renting a room to me. Before going into the details of my research methods, I will provide a brief description of my main participants.

Shurenska Celestina, known as Shu, was born in Curaçao to parents from Bonaire. She spent sixteen years living in the Netherlands before moving to Bonaire almost a decade ago with her partner and four-year-old daughter. She also has two older children who reside with their father in the Netherlands. At the time of the research, Shu was 44 years old and worked as an OR-assistant at Mariadal, the hospital on Bonaire. Shu prefers a straightforward and no-nonsense approach and therefore wanted me to state very clearly what I needed from her. However, the truth was that even I was unsure about what exactly I needed from her at that point. Davies highlights that participants should be aware that research is an ongoing discovery process with unpredictable outcomes from the outset. (47) About ten minutes into our first conversation, Shu stated, "I want to help you out because I am not afraid to express my thoughts." Shu assumed that the research would solely involve a series of interviews, prompting me to reassess my approach and find alternative ways to connect with her beyond just asking questions. Later in this chapter, I will elaborate on those methods.

My initial impression of Audy Flores, my second participant, was quite different. Audy is a warm-hearted individual who went above and beyond to ensure my comfort. He was quick to refill my glass as soon as I placed it down. Audy, a sixty-year-old musician, was born in Bonaire and has lived in various Latin American countries. He seized every opportunity to retrieve his guitar from his car and serenade us, even performing in the middle of a restaurant on one occasion. Audy is currently in a

relationship with Sadie Morris, who hails from Aruba but has spent most of her life in the Netherlands. Both Audy and Sadie are lively conversationalists; during our initial meeting, I discovered it was challenging to stay focused on the intended topic. While I needed a more relaxed approach with Shu, I realised that meeting with Audy and Sadie for interviews required a higher level of structure.

Jolanda Janga, the third participant in this research, eagerly awaited my arrival at the gate, waving with enthusiasm each time I visited her home. At 35 years old, Jolanda works at a daycare centre and also provides babysitting services (including for Shu). Initially, Jolanda was the most challenging participant to establish a connection with, likely due to the fact that she had never been to the Netherlands, unlike my other participants. Engaging in conversations with someone who shares my native language but possesses a significantly different worldview was a completely new experience for me. Our conversations were often marked by misunderstandings as I struggled to comprehend her perspective on the world. At times, I would attempt to explain European Dutch concepts to Jolanda, such as "eigen risico" (the personal deductible European Dutch people have to pay for our health insurance), but she had no frame of reference for understanding it. On Bonaire, healthcare is provided free of charge. To effectively communicate with Jolanda, I realized that I needed to put in extra effort to understand her world and her point of view. In the next section I will explain how I explored gaining this understanding though multiple ethnographic interview-, observant-participation- and audiovisual approaches.

Interviewing[24]

"I do appreciate that you're conducting this research, but I'll say it again, learn Papiamentu and do it again. Do it again so that local people can participate in their own language. Because then you will capture all those emotions and everything." **– Shurenska Celestina**

Throughout my research, I employed various forms of interviewing. I conducted semi-structured, unstructured, photo-elicitation and 'moving' interviews (as a variation on walking interviews). In this part of the chapter, I will explain how each of these helped

[24] The transcriptions from conversations in this chapter are all freely translated from Dutch, as well as all the quotes in this thesis.

gain a better understanding on Bonairian perspectives and furthermore, offered me a way to connect to these three research participants.

When sitting down to interview, I needed to find balance in how much I steered the interviews into topics I wanted to discuss as to be aware of my own European Dutch view that brought me to these topics and not to let our conversations be dominated by that. Therefore, I used both unstructured and semi-structured interviews. In the latter I would prepare questions but as Alan Bryman notes in his work *social research methods*, give the interviewee "leeway in how to reply" (Bryman 468). Amy K. Way, Robin Kanak Zwier, and Sarah J. Tracy wrote in their text about dialogic interviewing as a method and how this can induce transformation in the person being interviewed. My goal was not to change the perspectives of my interlocutors but rather to find a way to flow into the culture gap between us together through critical dialogue. Utilising the method of 'probing questions' Way et al. propose; which "prompt participants to reflect on, explain, and modify initial statements," (723) I would ask questions like in the following example:

> Audi: Everyone is welcome to come and live here, as long as you have respect for us Bonairians.
> Me: Do you feel like that is happening now?
> Audi: Well, it's starting to decrease, you know. Less respect.
> Me: Why do you think that is?
> Audi: Because they come with all that weird behaviour…

Furthermore, I would sometimes use what Way and Zwier describe as 'mirroring': summarising and repeating what my participants said to allow them to hear their thoughts from someone else and create a safe environment to elaborate on them. In the following example I attempted to understand what Jolanda was trying to tell me while also making her reflect on repeating someone else's opinion instead of voicing her own:

> Jolanda: It's changing because now we have all received privileges, just like in the Netherlands. But I'm quoting someone else now.
> Me: So, you mean that you're not sure what the privileges of the Netherlands are, and that's why you're repeating what you've heard from someone else?
> Jolanda: Yes, because I have never been to the Netherlands.

In order to establish a conducive environment for open communication with my participants, I aimed to create a sense of safety and acceptance during our interactions. Given that our conversations were conducted in Dutch, I often found myself assisting them with vocabulary to enable them to articulate their thoughts effectively. As Way and Tracy emphasize, effective "dialogue is facilitated when participants feel accepted rather

than defensive" (726). At one point Jolanda asked me: "Can I say Makamba?" which is a term used derogatorily to refer to European Dutch individuals. She was not directly speaking to me but was rather alluding to specific behaviours she had encountered from a person of European Dutch background. I reassured her that it was permissible to express herself in whatever manner she deemed necessary, while also emphasizing that I would communicate my boundaries should she ever accidentally cross them. In another instance she was looking to say: "if you don't master your own language, it is hard to learn a new one." However, she could not seem to be able to recall the word and looked at me questioningly: "dominate?" I smiled: "master".

I also conducted photo elicitation interviews to help me step away from my own biased view upon certain well-known sites of the island and ask my participants what their thoughts on them were. I took pictures of all the phenomena that stood out to me those first three weeks: Van den Tweel, the many scooters that were parked in Kralendijk centre, the Slave Huts, the goats, the donkeys, James Finies' 'Nos Kier Boneiru Bèk'-signs on the side of the road, et cetera. I had read about these things before going to Bonaire and now I had experienced them myself but I still viewed them through my own western perspective. As Douglas Harper wrote on photo elicitation that the purpose of this type of interviewing is that two people looking at identical objects both may see different things[25] (22) Presented below is one picture I used in the interviews that I will elaborate on with an example from the elicitation interview with Shu:

Upon showing Shu the picture of the scooters, her reaction was immediate and accompanied by a sigh. Leaning on her elbow, she promptly remarked, "That's in front of Trocadero," referring to a bar/restaurant depicted in the background of the photo. According to Sarah Pink and her work *Doing Visual Ethnography,* "Photographic interviews can provide a context where ethnographers and research participants discuss images in ways that connect or compare their experiences of realities."[26] (112) What struck me the most about this interaction was the deviation from my intended discussion regarding the prevalence of young European Dutch interns and white tourists riding scooters on the island. Instead, Shu immediately shifted the focus to the bar in the back of the photo. The picture led her to share a story about how Trocadero organizes karaoke nights that predominantly attract European Dutch individuals. Interestingly, our conversation eventually circled back to the same train of thought: the notion of European Dutch individuals occupying space and its impact. "It's a pity," she lamented, "in the

[25] Harper. Douglas. Talking About Pictures: A Case for Photo Elicitation.
[26] Pink. Sarah. *Doing Visual Ethnography* (2021)

past, we used to go to Karel's karaoke where locals would also participate. The karaoke at Trocadero is mainly for the Dutch, and locals don't frequent it as much." This exchange highlighted that the elicitation interviews not only provided me with diverse perspectives but also deepened my understanding of the participants' viewpoints.

The final interviewing method I employed was suggested by Shu within the specific context of a focus group, which she arranged by inviting a Bonairian relative and two friends—a German and a European Dutch individual. Although these participants came from diverse backgrounds, they were all women who were already acquainted with one another, sharing similar age groups and social circles, which is not how a focus group generally should be constructed according to Davies (105/106). However, the analysis of social dynamics within the group proved to be a valuable learning experience, despite this homogeneity, each participant felt comfortable expressing their views and opinions openly. Marieke, the European Dutch participant, shared an anecdote about a mutual friend who had remarked, "I spend the whole night with them, the locals." This statement sparked a passionate discussion on the use of the word 'them'. Marieke perceived it as a lack of integration and a form of 'othering'. This exchange exemplified how a focus group enables the collective construction of meaning and sense-making around a phenomenon, as proposed by Bryman (502). Marieke's perspective stirred debate. Both Dinaida and Shu, the Bonairian locals in the group, appeared unaffected and still believed the person in question was somewhat integrating. Dinaida stated, “if someone talks with me, I will talk with them. I want to maintain that openness." Shu

voiced her opinion on the matter that other people's ignorance is something she remains unbothered by as "it says something about them and not about me."

This viewpoint, along with other topics explored during the focus group, provided a direct understanding of the contrasting lived experiences between Europeans and Bonairians. These insights allowed me to draw connections to the statements I previously discussed by Veenendaal and Oostindie. Marieke serves as an example of a European Dutch immigrant who actively engages with the local culture and discourse, making her concerned about those European Dutch individuals who fail to do so. In contrast, Shu and Dinaida have become accustomed to the lack of adjustment displayed by many immigrants, as it has become a normal part of their daily realities.

Participant-observing while moving with my participants through their worlds

"I have the advantage as a European Dutch person that I can choose to participate in something and respect it at times, and at other times, explicitly choose not to. Because ultimately, I am still a European Dutch person. But then again, you can also benefit from that because eventually, it is understood that you are not taking part in a certain thing." **– Arjen de Wolff, Former Director of Stinapa**

To establish a deeper connection with my participants and gain further insight into their lives, I requested them to select two activities or places for us to engage in together. Originally, I had planned to conduct walking interviews, but due to safety concerns and limited sidewalks outside the central area of Kralendijk, this approach was not feasible on Bonaire. Additionally, the weather conditions often made walking uncomfortable. Consequently, the walking aspect of the plan was replaced with driving to the locations chosen by the participants. However, this adjustment did not invalidate the initial rationale behind my desire to walk. Kate Moles argues that different modes of transportation (walking, cycling, driving, sitting still) offer distinct experiences of the world (1). The notion of experiencing a "third space" while moving through it serves as an epistemological starting point for a mobile method that is attentive to spatial, cultural, and theoretical considerations, and it allows for a site of praxis where method and theory can meet. (3). Through driving together with my participants, they were inclined to show me significant places on the island that they deemed important for me

to see or that supported their arguments during the interviews. Furthermore, Moles emphasizes the significance of embracing unconventional methods to amplify the voices of marginalized individuals (5). These short driving trips provided an alternative mode of communication that was mutually beneficial for both me and my participants.

Throughout my research, I encountered numerous captivating instances of misunderstanding and cultural disparity, particularly during the initial phase. It is worth noting that my research participants displayed remarkable understanding and patience as I navigated the process of familiarizing myself with their culture, customs, and modes of communication. To illustrate this point, a particular moment with Jolanda stands out that exemplifies the interaction dynamics between the researcher and the participant. Our connection was initiated during our car ride together.

During the drive, Jolanda encountered numerous acquaintances along the way. Driving on Bonaire differs significantly from the experience in the Netherlands. From my perspective, it seemed that there were two main roads (Kaya Corona and Kaya Grandi) serving as priority routes, while vehicles from smaller roads had to wait for others to stop out of courtesy. In such instances, a brief honk or wave sufficed to express gratitude. This practice extended to familiar faces and apparently even to individuals deemed attractive. Consequently, Jolanda found herself intermittently sounding the horn. As we ascended Lagoon Hill, a temporary uncomfortable silence fell in our forced conversation - or at least it felt that way for me, as Jolanda did not appear to mind). Awkwardly, I remarked, "I must admit, before coming here, I had never seen so many cacti." Yolanda cast an amused sidelong glance and retorted, "When I land at Schiphol this summer, I will take a look around, call you, and say, 'I must admit, I had never seen so many Makambas before.'" My face flushed, and laughter ensued. I admitted my ignorance and acknowledged the naivety of my comment, which she found amusing. Soon after, Jolanda began pointing out houses along the roadside, which all seemed to belong to her family members or friends. The act of showing me her surroundings served as a means for her to express her profound attachment to the island and her sense of pride in it. By physically moving through the space together, she was able to effectively show me this. This interactive experience not only facilitated a more seamless conversation but also enhanced my comprehension of her unique perspective and world.

In their seminal work *Writing Culture* published in 1986, James Clifford and George E. Marcus explored the concept of self-reflexivity in the context of ethnographic writing. Utilising a self-reflexive approach in written ethnographic accounts “worked to specify the discourse of informants as well as that of the ethnographer, by staging

dialogues or narrating interpersonal confrontations" (14). The aim of this theory is to encourage ethnographers to engage in conversations with the people they study: seeking their input and perspectives on the research findings instead of the researcher presenting themselves as an authoritative voice. This collaborative approach should challenge the power-imbalance[27] between researcher and researched previously mentioned. To facilitate this process, I shared the preceding paragraph recounting our road trip with Jolanda and requested her feedback on its accuracy. In response, she provided the following voice note:

> Jolanda: I read that text and started laughing. It's actually a good description of that day! But it wasn't awkward at all! Oh my god, I feel so sorry that you found it awkward. It wasn't awkward, it was just a moment of silence.

Afterwards, I sent back that apparently, I had perceived the silence as awkward, while she seemed not to mind. However, I was pleased that she acknowledged my accurate description of the moment, indicating a shared understanding of certain events despite our initial differences and varied experiences of that silence. This is importance to me because this signifies that in my recollection and understanding of certain interactions, I interpreted social cues like they were intended, regardless the cultural difference and my own initial awkwardness. In the following paragraph, I will further explore another moment using audio-visual methods for analysis instead of relying solely on recollection and fieldnotes.

Audio/Visual methods

"I'm not camera-shy. I love the camera and the camera loves me. Tomorrow, Mandy and I are going to Klein Bonaire. So, we will see you in the next clip! Cut!"
– Jolanda Janga

Engaging in unfamiliar social contexts during my research has inevitably led to moments of awkwardness, such as the one described with Jolanda. Recognizing the value of capturing and sharing these experiential dynamics, I incorporated audio/visual methods that allowed for documentation. While I did not record the aforementioned

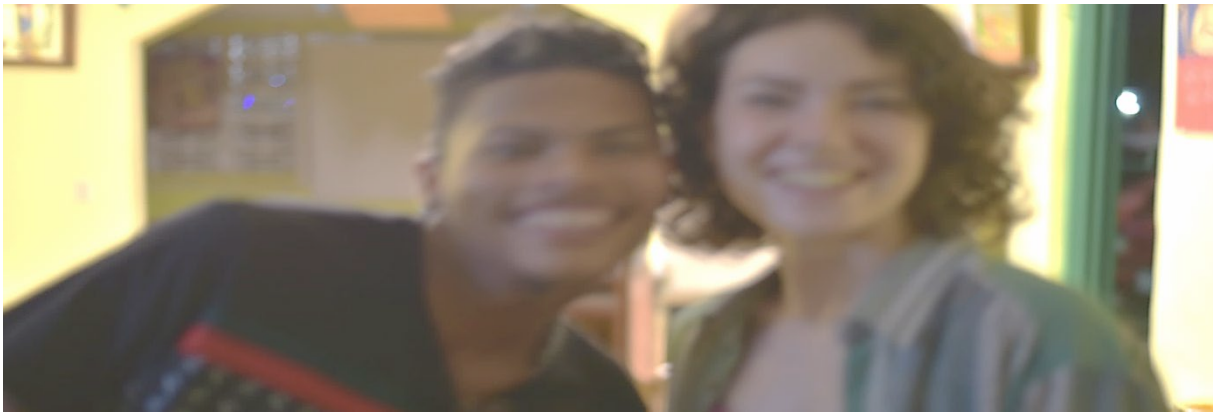
[27] In the subsection 'A Social Bubble' I referred to Eraso who wants to defy intercultural dynamics between participant and researcher while challenging the power relations in that relationship.

conversation with Jolanda, I did record a similar moment with another participant. As Andy Lawrence explained "It is not possible to represent a moment of fieldwork for all those involved because of the difficulty in sharing experience, but we can aim to evoke a sense of it through an illusion of proximity that might introduce others to our way of seeing"[28] (20). I might not always be able to convey my experience of Bonaire in words: the constant sound of the sea, the music, getting used to hearing a multitude of languages around me. Therefore, I invite people who engage with this project to also engage with an ethnographic film made as an extension of this research to allow them to step the dynamics I build with my research participants. Peter Ian Crawford writes in his text 'film as discourse' that "Ethnographic poetics, novels and films are seen as possible alternatives to 'traditional' ethnographic accounts which 'have failed to convey cultural differences in terms of *full-bodied-experience*" (72). This research encompasses not only my recollection of events but also of my interlocutors. By recording from my perspective and being recorded with my participants, I aim to represent the ethnographic experience while enabling viewers to analyse the dynamic through their own cultural lenses. "Our own feelings are embedded in a film, coexisting with the sentiments of the people who are the main focus of the documentary work." (Lawrence 21) To exemplify this, I will recount a specific event that is also captured in my ethnographic film, enabling a comparison between the written account and the audio-visual one.

The first participant that I started filming with was Audy. Our relationship developed relatively quickly, creating a sense of comfort that allowed for the introduction of the camera into our dynamic. He invited me to one of his performances with his Mexican band at the Divi Divi Bar, one of the few bars that has a Bonairian owner. The tiny place was packed with a diverse crowd consisting of Bonairians, individuals from other former Antilles, European Dutch, Americans, and a few Latinos. Everyone was engaged in drinking, smoking, and singing along. A group of elderly locals had gathered with plastic chairs in the doorway, observing the scene, while younger men lingered nearby, chattering on the hoods of their car. As I stumbled over my words while attempting to order a drink in Papiamentu, the bartender grinned at me and responded fluently in Dutch. Audy was delighted that I came and he and his band engaged with the camera enthusiastically. Audy even made a special announcement that the next song was for me, to which I awkwardly shuffled around on my feet and stuck up my thumb

[28] Lawrence, Andy. *Filmmaking for Fieldwork* (2020)

with a smile, unsure of how to carry myself in this situation. To occupy my hands, I lifted the camera and began recording the band, which caught the attention of a local teenager. Despite his limited command of Dutch and my struggles with Papiamentu, he managed to inquire about the camera, and I offered a stuttering response. I then handed him the device, and he nervously laughed, clearly fascinated by something he had likely never held before. The resulting footage was blurry and shaky, but the teen's eyes shimmered with excitement.



Above: the blurry picture Audy took of me and the local teenager who wanted to try my camera that night. The quality of the picture reflects on the footage we shot. However, this makes this project truly a collaborative filming moment. Including a picture of myself in this thesis again serves the purpose of self-reflexivity.

After the performance, Audy approached me and insisted on playing a song for me in the parking lot. It was one of the more awkward moments to me during my fieldwork, as I was uncertain how to respond. Quickly, I passed the camera to my friend, who recorded the entire exchange, capturing Audy's incredible passion for his music while simultaneously attempting to make me feel special but also my uncomfortable response to it.

Not only this particular interaction, but also other encounters discussed in this chapter are incorporated into the film produced as part of this research. The conversations I had with Audy regarding respect of the Bonairian culture and part of the focus group with Shu are captured within the film. I purposely choose a mix of instances to illustrate the dynamics for a reason that is twofold.

Firstly, having both descriptions of interactions in a written ethnography and an audiovisual one shows how the two media differ in conveying the message as well as they extend each other. A written medium allows for me to voice my own thoughts, feelings and sensorial experiences of those moments. However, showing them in a film

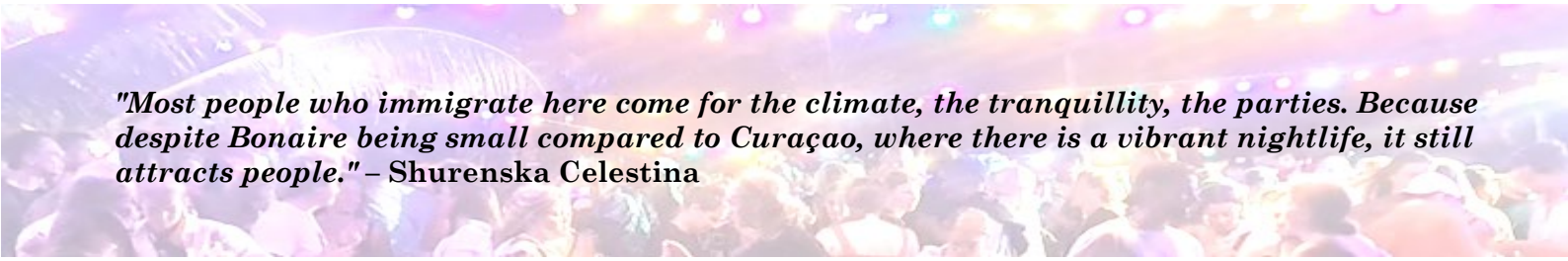
puts the viewer in the room with us through the object of the camera itself. This allows me to even more step away from authoritative ethnographic writing that Clifford and Marcus are so against. The camera has its own viewpoint as Dziga Vertov wrote in his manifesto 1984 "I am kino-eye, I am a mechanical eye. I, a machine, show you the world as only I can see it" (17). Christian Suhr refers to Vertov to make clear that he as an anthropologist is not this mechanical eye. Suhr notes that even though ethnographic film has been recognised as a platform for cross-cultural dialogue and collaboration (Suhr 377), a mechanical eye is different from the human eye. Unlike the human eye, which is subjected to embodied experiences, the camera eye shows visual information without this complex subjectivity, according to Suhr. Building on this theoretical framework, my written text already presents a subjective perspective based on my experiences as a European Dutch ethnographer. However, the inclusion of the camera, particularly as I appear in the film myself, offers a distinct viewpoint that I believe allows for greater interpretation and multiple perspectives.

Secondly, not all the experiences described in this chapter are part of the film and vice versa. This is due to the layered and complex nature of my research. Many conversations took place without recording devices as they were focused on building relationships. Furthermore, not all recorded conversations are necessarily pertinent for illustrating my argument to the audience. "Filmmaking of fieldwork is more than using the camera and sound devices to gather data on location. It is about a collection of procedures and skills involved in cinema praxis that can inspire our thinking and transform our ability to understand the world" (Andy Lawrence 17). During my fieldwork, I engaged in various experiments with different camera angles and technical choices, such as using a tripod or handheld shooting. The final film output comprises of a diverse range of shots, serving the purpose of providing multiple perspectives. The stable interview shots are composed and neutral, while the moments where I handed the camera to others resulted in shaky footage, but this authenticity adds to the organic nature of the film. The selection of clips for the ethnographic film was a collaborative process involving both myself and my research participants. Each participant had the opportunity to view two or three versions of the film and provide feedback on how they wished to be (re)presented. Moreover, I sought feedback from other individuals who were involved in the research, on one of the later versions. To ensure a comprehensive perspective, I also collected responses from a diverse group of viewers who had not been part of this project in any way, encompassing varying gender, age, cultural background,

skin colour, and occupations. This allowed me to assess whether the film effectively conveyed the message and argument of my research.

Reflecting on the earlier comment of the complex and layered nature of this research, I note that my research goes in two directions. On one hand, I explore the concept of cultural difference through my interactions with research participants and engage in constant self-reflection as an ethnographer. On the other hand, I aim to demonstrate how these cultural differences can be understood through the concept of acoustemology, utilizing soundscapes that are presented within the context of a visual map of Bonaire. Constructing this map involved collaboration with the research participants I built a relationship with through the used methods described in this chapter and other interlocutors, as previously mentioned. In the next chapter, I will bring sound and these dynamics together in the analysis of soundscapes that I recorded in places recommended to me by my participants.

Chapter 3: Sounds of Bonaire



"Most people who immigrate here come for the climate, the tranquillity, the parties. Because despite Bonaire being small compared to Curaçao, where there is a vibrant nightlife, it still attracts people." **– Shurenska Celestina**

In this chapter, I explore the knowledge gathered from my participants' perspectives, which I analyse through the lens of sound as defined in chapter one. The examples I choose to highlight in chapter two, such as Shu's story of the karaoke bar, the road trip with Jolanda involving honking and traffic noise, and Audy's musical performance at the Divi Divi bar, all have connections to sound. Furthermore, language, briefly touched upon in chapter two, played a significant role in this research. Participants expressed frustration regarding the Dutch population's limited proficiency in speaking Papiamentu. It is important to reiterate that this research was conducted in Dutch, as stated in the final part of the introduction. Additionally, I revisit the theme of the indistinctiveness of nature and culture discussed in chapter one, examining it through the lens of sound as well. I will first discuss a specific example from my research that addresses the sound/noise debate directly while also illustrating the impact of immigration on Bonaire. This particular case served as a pivotal moment, leading me to recognize the potential of sound as an analytical tool. Secondly, I will introduce the map I created, which incorporates various soundscapes. Finally, I will highlight select soundscapes to support and strengthen my argument.

Noise Complaints

In the elicitation interviews, I incorporated a video-elicitation technique using a recorded interview segment with Arjen de Wolff, old-director of Stinapa and a European Dutch resident who has been living on Bonaire for years. De Wolff resides in Rincon with his wife, Jude Finies, who is the director of the Terramar museum that supported my research. Jude Finies is also a cousin of James Finies, the initiator of the "Nos kier Boneiru bèk" movement.

During the interview, De Wolff welcomed me into his kitchen, offering me an espresso and a cigarette. As we settled in, he leaned back in his chair and lit a cigarette himself.

Prior to commencing the formal interview, we engaged in a natural conversation about his life in Rincon and his connection to the Finies family. Our discussion eventually turned to the topic of Dutch integration on Bonaire. De Wolff expressed his opinion that the European Dutch can be tedious and provided an example of the Dutch making noise complaints. Here is a translated excerpt from the interview transcription:

> De Wolff: "You see that neighbourhoods are growing and that new buildings are placed on sites where there were none before. But perhaps that place has been a party site for years that used to be in the *mondi*. The *mondi* is a meadow, far away from civilization where people could organise parties. And now all of a sudden, a Dutch investor put down a few carton walls which he sells as villas and some European Dutch people move in who endure nuisance from this. So, you see that nature and this environment and buildings and then specifically buildings housing new immigrants, that those things get closer to one another. So, lack of planning, lack of direction, lack of… and you know I find it difficult to accuse people of their behaviour. I am not a big fan of loud noises myself. I have that tic from Amsterdam that I have lived in apartments with five neighbours for far too long. But I learned here that that is my problem and that I experience that as a nuisance. And that I cannot demand from others that they adjust to the fact that I experience it as a nuisance."[29]

During the elicitation interview, De Wolff voluntarily broached this topic and drew a connection for me between immigration, the transformation of private and public spaces on Bonaire, and a specific example related to noise. Therefore, I decided to include this piece of footage in the elicitation interview since the topic of the European Dutch complaining, had already come up several times in conversations that I had had with several other Bonairian locals.

When I shared this specific video clip with Shu, she watched it attentively and remained silent, her eyes fixed on my laptop screen. Her reaction to De Wolff's perspective on the issue was rather positive, and she expressed that many European Dutch individuals do not respond in the same manner as he does, by taking personal responsibility. "He explains it well," she says and then added:

> "That is exactly what I mean. In my job, I encounter Dutch people as well that only stay here for a year. And there are certain unwritten rules already in place. I try to convey these rules to them: we are now on this island. This is how we do things here and it won't go differently. You get it? (...) and often they come to me with the comment: But in the Netherlands, but in the Netherlands… And I say no, we are not in the Netherlands. We are in Bonaire."

[29] This piece of interview is also part of the ethnographic film

In the ethnographic film that accompanies this thesis, I put a scene in which Jolanda states the noise complaints of European Dutch neighbours have increased since 10-10-10. In another scene, Shu describes how she went to a comedy show where she encountered European Dutch people who were measuring decibels. In the same interview – a part of the conversation that is not in the film – she elaborates that when there are noise complaints, party licenses tend to get taken away. Connecting this to the immigration growth of the Dutch, I want to refer back to what I argued in chapter one; the decision- and meaning making process is primarily driven from the European Dutch perspective. What is considered noise is determined culturally, as has been established. Consequently, what is considered noise on Bonaire is shaped through a Western lens. This implies that immigrants who relocate to Bonaire unknowingly bring their cultural perspectives on noise and sound with them However, they do this unknowingly, as the Netherlands knows an ignorance of racial hierarchies, which Wekker has named white innocence. I will elaborate on this through one detailed example that is was written about by Veenendaal and Oostindie, as well as observed during my research and was commented on by Audy and Sadie. This particular example will serve to elucidate how the soundscapes I recorded aid in comprehending the intricate interconnectedness of Bonaire and shed light on how cultural differences manifest within those soundscapes.

Donkeys

Let me provide another example to further illustrate this point. A subject of contention on Bonaire is the Donkey Sanctuary, an establishment created by a Dutch couple to provide refuge for sick, injured, and orphaned donkeys. During my visit to the sanctuary in January 2023, the owner informed me that nearly eight hundred donkeys were currently residing there. The presence of donkeys on Bonaire dates back to the 17th century when they were brought by the Spaniards for hard labour. Over time, they have become a part of Bonairian culture and nature. However, due to their large population, the donkeys often pose ecological issues and contribute to traffic accidents. Additionally, given Bonaire's dry and warm climate, finding sufficient food can be challenging for these animals. The establishment of the sanctuary aimed to address this issue. In response, another organization, the Donkey Protection League, emerged advocating for the donkeys to remain in their natural habitat. The conflict escalated to the extent that the police became involved, although no legal actions were taken. Oostindie and Veenendaal describe this example in *Ongemak* and state that this is how the Donkey

Sanctuary became the symbol of the arrogance of European Dutch people showing the local population how it's done (101). Not only the donkeys, but also other wild animals such as goats, iguanas, dogs, flamingos, and various bird species roam the streets of Bonaire which that don't escape the discussion either. uring one of my early interviews, I raised the topic of the Donkey Sanctuary with Audy, unaware of its contentious nature. Audy immediately expressed a strong opinion, stating, "It's a scam designed by a Dutch individual to make money." Sadie interjected, countering Audy's claim: "That's not true, Audy. Or at least, that wasn't the intention. The Dutch couple genuinely believe they are doing good for these donkeys."

This example illustrates how differently the European Dutch and the Bonairian locals see the island and its issues. Moreover, drawing on Sadie's comment: the European Dutch genuinely believe they are doing good. Connecting this again to Wekkers' white innocence: initiatives like the donkey sanctuary show how the Dutch enforce their views unknowinlingly and sometimes with the best intentions.

One evening on a weekday, I was sitting in the backyard of my temporary home on Bonaire I made a conscious effort to attentively listen to my surroundings. The sound on Bonaire differed greatly from what I was accustomed to in the Netherlands, particularly in Leiden where I reside. I am accustomed to the constant presence of trains, traffic, seagulls, and people conversing on the streets. However, in Hato – my neighbourhood on Bonaire – it can be remarkably quiet. On this particular night, following a warm day, the prominent sounds were the loud chirping of crickets and distant music emanating from a nearby party. Occasionally, the barking of dogs could be heard, but there was a distinct moment when a donkey's braying added to the auditory landscape. To capture this experience, I recorded the soundscape as a means of attempting to encapsulate the essence of that moment.

With the constant stimuli of sounds and noises in the Netherlands, I am used to mentally filtering those out. The peace and quiet on Bonaire were a welcome change that added to the improvement of my mental health as I described in the introduction of this

thesis. It comes to no surprise to me that European Dutch moving from the business of the Netherlands to the calm of Bonaire, need some time to adapt to the sounds that are part of their new environment. However, these noises are differently culturally charged. What might have been noise in the Netherlands, are here another sound that belongs to their surroundings.

Drawing on the examples of the Donkeys I want to illustrate that the soundscapes may signify hold varied significance for different individuals. When someone listens to the soundscape I recorded in Hato that night, their interpretation and assigned meanings may be influenced by their own cultural contexts. For those familiar with the history and discourse surrounding the donkeys, which are deeply embedded in Bonairian culture, the soundscape may evoke connections to colonial history, contemporary Bonairian culture, and the ongoing debates regarding Dutch influence on the island. However, for someone unaware of these contextual factors, the soundscape may simply convey the image of a distressed donkey. I do not deem this last interpretation is necessarily untrue. It is just one interpretation of reality.

Referring to Feld's concept of acoustemology, I draw upon his research in the Bosavi rainforest region of Papua New Guinea, described in his work "Acoustemology." While I won't delve into the specific details of his research, it is noteworthy that Feld emphasized the need for cognitive tools to comprehend the interplay between nature and culture in the rainforest. He highlights that "to the Bosavi ears and eyes, birds are not just birds," as they hold spiritual significance for the local community. Similarly, the donkeys on Bonaire can be likened to the birds in Feld's ethnography. Without the necessary mental equipment, the meaning of the braying donkey in the soundscape may be interpreted in just one way, whereas its meaning can be layered and complex for others.

On the following page I have included an image of the map featuring the soundscapes I have created. Four specific soundscapes have been highlighted and among them is ‘Night in Hato’ which I just extensively discussed. Additionally, there is a soundscape recorded in Slagbaai Park, capturing both natural and touristic sounds. Furthermore, two soundscapes showcase the contrasting nightlife scenes on Bonaire: one from Wingson, the bar described earlier in Chapter Two, and another from a bonfire gathering predominantly attended by Dutch individuals. To listen to these soundscapes, please follow the provided link, which will direct you to an interactive map.

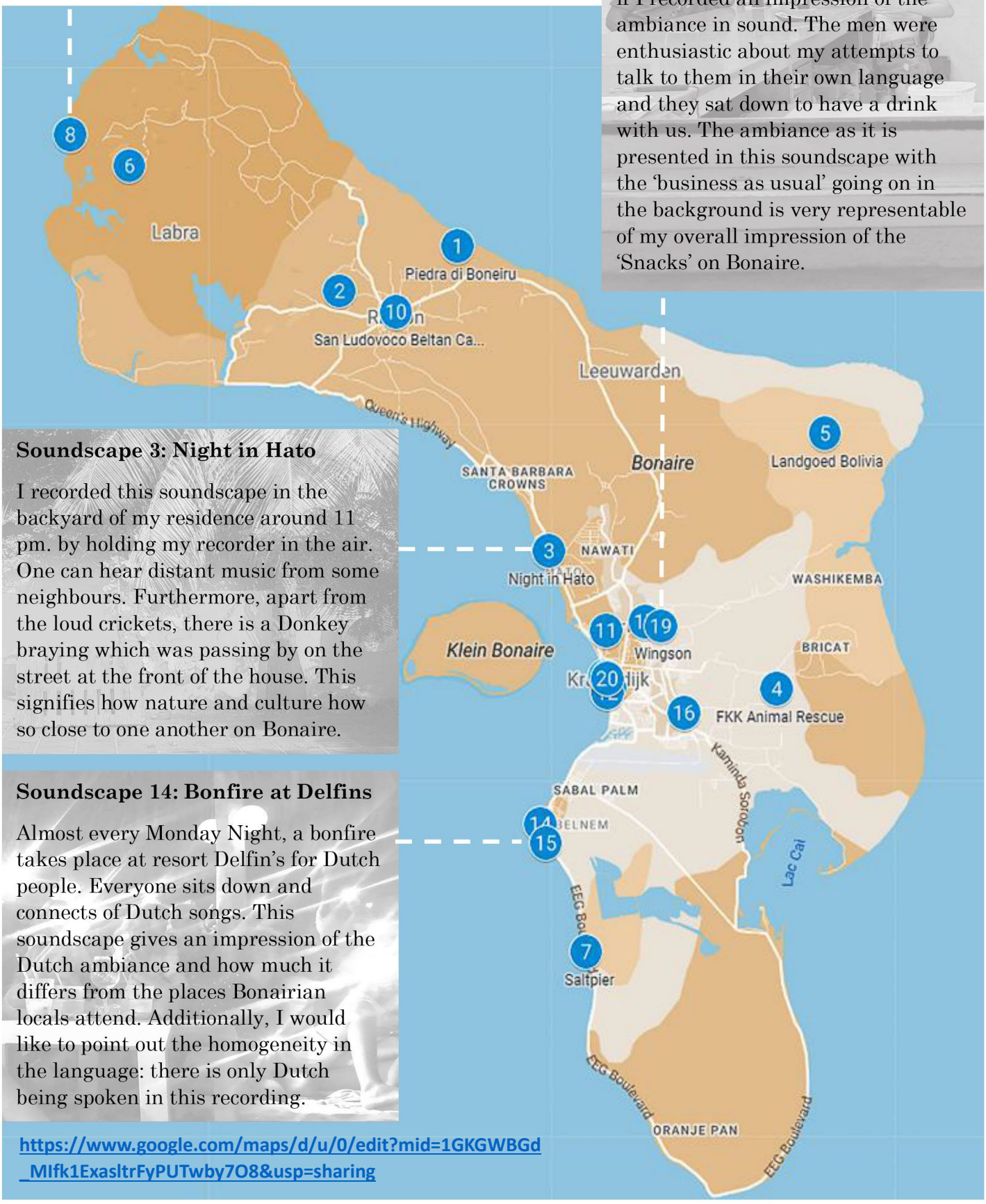
https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1GKGWBGd_MIfk1ExasltrFyPUTwby7O8&usp=sharing

Soundscape 8: Playa Funchi in Slagbaai Park

Here one can hear the sea, as I was located on a beach during this recording. Slagbaai park is an important nature reserve on Bonaire and moreover a popular touristic attraction. On Playa Funchi, on the northern outskirts of the island, I only encountered European Dutch people.

Soundscape 19: Having a beer at Wingson

In this soundscape one can hear a multitude of languages. Upon entering I had talked with the people inside of the bar to exchange pleasantries and asked if it was okay if I recorded an impression of the ambiance in sound. The men were enthusiastic about my attempts to talk to them in their own language and they sat down to have a drink with us. The ambiance as it is presented in this soundscape with the 'business as usual' going on in the background is very representable of my overall impression of the 'Snacks' on Bonaire.



Soundscape 3: Night in Hato

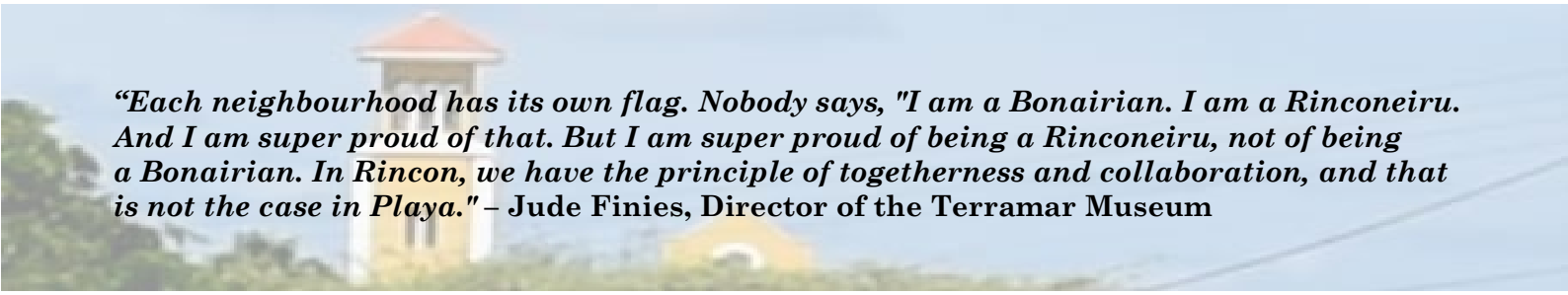
I recorded this soundscape in the backyard of my residence around 11 pm. by holding my recorder in the air. One can hear distant music from some neighbours. Furthermore, apart from the loud crickets, there is a Donkey braying which was passing by on the street at the front of the house. This signifies how nature and culture how so close to one another on Bonaire.

Soundscape 14: Bonfire at Delfins

Almost every Monday Night, a bonfire takes place at resort Delfin's for Dutch people. Everyone sits down and connects of Dutch songs. This soundscape gives an impression of the Dutch ambiance and how much it differs from the places Bonairian locals attend. Additionally, I would like to point out the homogeneity in the language: there is only Dutch being spoken in this recording.

https://www.google.com/maps/d/u/0/edit?mid=1GKGWBGd_MIfk1ExasltrFyPUTwby7O8&usp=sharing

Sound-Mapping Bonaire



"Each neighbourhood has its own flag. Nobody says, "I am a Bonairian. I am a Rinconeiru. And I am super proud of that. But I am super proud of being a Rinconeiru, not of being a Bonairian. In Rincon, we have the principle of togetherness and collaboration, and that is not the case in Playa." **– Jude Finies, Director of the Terramar Museum**

The inclusion of this map[30] aims to facilitate an interpretative ethnography that is grounded in the interconnected space of the island. As highlighted by Cristina Grasseni, "Western spatial conventions are often part of how people describe and order the world and also define 'place', and 'they become therefore part of the data rather than tools for analysis" (715). To ensure a collaborative representation, I involved the research participants in the selection of recording sites, thereby allowing the map to reflect Bonaire as perceived by local Bonairians. During the road trips I previously mentioned, I requested Jolanda and Audy to guide me to their preferred locations. Jolanda led me to Lagoon Hill, where I captured a sound-scape of Landgoed Bolivia (Bolivia Estate). Audy took me to the Indian[31] inscriptions, situated near *Piedra di Bonairu*. Additionally, we visited their favourite bars and restaurants, where I later returned to record corresponding soundscapes.

While striving to maintain an unbiased approach, I aimed to record all the sounds present in the spaces without favouring any particular ones. However, I encountered challenges during certain recordings, such as strong winds or interruptions from people approaching me. This is evident in some of the recordings where these factors are audible. For instance, when attempting to capture a nature soundscape atop the Bandaris, the wind made it nearly impossible. Similarly, while recording at the Divi Divi bar, I was approached by someone shortly after starting the recording. In some soundscapes, I moved around the space to capture a variety of sounds, while in others I remained stationary to avoid prioritizing certain elements over others, such as birds over car sounds. Additionally, nearly all the locations discussed in this thesis are represented on the map, including a passing reference to the Karaoke bar at Trocadero.

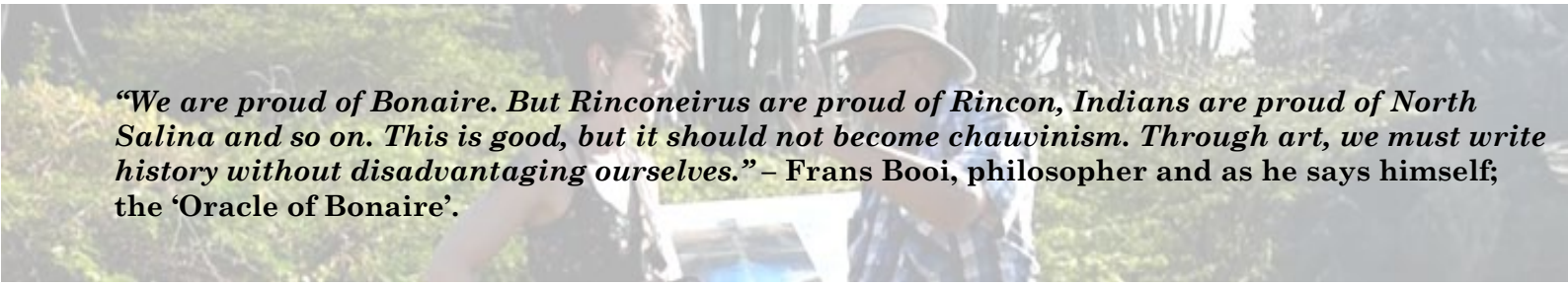
[30] The map was created using Google My Maps to provide accessibility and comprehensibility for individuals interested in Bonaire and seeking to expand their knowledge, Bonairian locals who want to explore their island in a different way, or others who might be interested.
[31] Referring to native people. The people of native heritage I spoke to (Audy Flores and Frans Booi) both referred to themselves as of Indian heritage.

As discussed in chapter two, the inclusion of both written descriptions in an ethnography and audiovisual content demonstrates the differing ways in which these media convey messages and complement each other. In line with this perspective, I have chosen to contextualise examples provided by participants through the use of soundscapes. This multimodal approach enables the various outputs of this research to refer to one another and mutually enhance their significance. Intertextuality, as poststructuralists argued, is seen as a means to generate a hyperreality.[32]. According to Norman K Denzin 'ethnographic texts circulate like other commodities' (XIII) While acknowledging the significance of self-reflexivity, he emphasises the need for ethnography to remain grounded in the 'world of lived experience'. It is precisely for this reason that I chose this multimodal approach. The ethnographic film allows for a self-reflexivity while the soundscapes are more interpretative. Denzin writes that "a reader creates a world of experience" through interpretation (238). I want my reader to experience the island of Bonaire themselves through these soundscapes and interpret it through their own cultural lenses. If the soundscapes are then placed in context of this thesis and the ethnographic film, their meaning changes. To substantiate this, I refer to Paul Henley and his text 'Seeing, Hearing, Feeling' in which he writes that soundscapes are almost always culturally marked. "This insight of the sound designers can therefore be used by ethnographic filmmakers to evoke not just a generic sense of space, but also a sense of place, i.e., a sense of space that is culturally specific to the particular location where the film has been shot" (58).

The map featuring soundscapes serves not only to emphasize the interconnectedness of Bonaire but also to provide an understanding of the island as a small community with a population of just over 22,000 that have to live together. while going through a transformative period with fast-paced changes As Henley suggests, the soundscapes and map offer an overall sense of place, complementing the ethnographic film. Additionally, the interpretative nature of the soundscapes, as exemplified by the donkey example, contributes to the project by providing different cultural perspectives. The combined modalities aim to guide the reader/viewer/listener towards acquiring the necessary mental equipment, as described by Feld, to bridge the worlds of experience between Bonairian locals and European Dutch individuals.

[32] Referring to, for instance, Jean Baudrillard and his theory on hyperreality

Conclusion



"We are proud of Bonaire. But Rinconeirus are proud of Rincon, Indians are proud of North Salina and so on. This is good, but it should not become chauvinism. Through art, we must write history without disadvantaging ourselves." **– Frans Booi, philosopher and as he says himself; the 'Oracle of Bonaire'.**

After this multimodal approach and analysis, I now return to my research question:

> ***How can the experienced cultural differences by Bonairian locals between them and European Dutch immigrants on Bonaire be understood through sound?***

Listening to sound can tell us many things about a place. However, we may not always have the knowledge and the tools to signify them. I could not have made a sound analysis of Bonaire without all the people on Bonaire that put time and effort in handing me those tools and pointing me towards this knowledge. The concept of sound helped to illustrate how there is a hierarchy in culture on Bonaire. What is considered noise and sound predominantly stems from a western view because of the meaning-making process on Bonaire determined by the European Dutch. Wekker's concept of white innocence illustrates that the European Dutch way of thinking and the ignorance that is encapsuled in it, stems from centuries of imperialism that is now not correctly addressed: a process of not knowing and not wanting to know. Consequently, the European Dutch immigrants take their cultural views with them and impose them on the Bonairian locals – often unknowingly.

The aim of this thesis is not to explicitly discourage European Dutch people to not move to Bonaire. I simply opt for a more conscious practice of immigration. Bonaire is not the same as the Netherlands, as my participants have repeatedly told me. In chapter two I extensively described how I connected to these local Bonairian research participants which is also reflected in my film, which is aimed to show the struggled the Bonairians have, but also to show the connections we built. This was a new experience for me that involved a process of trial and error. With the self-reflexivity of this research,

I want to illustrate that making the conscious decision to adjust and learn, makes the people in the new environment of Bonaire are willing to adjust to you, with you. If we want to make sense of this environment, we need the mental equipment to make sense of this new place. This does not mean we should throw our own cultural background out of the window but it means to broaden our mental scope and be open to a different reality.

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