Dear members of the jury of the ASC thesis prize,

As her first and second supervisor, we are delighted to write in support of Ine Beljaars, who completed her MA degree in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology at Leiden University in 2014, with an impressive M.A. thesis that was rewarded with a grade of 9- (negen min). Based on original fieldwork, this excellent ethnographic study researched the socio-cultural production and negotiation of difference in the Netherlands today, primarily in relation to people of African and African diasporic descent. Ine studied these processes of difference-making within the context of the Dutch kizomba scene, a dance and music style originating from Angola and Cape Verde. She took an intersectional approach to difference, examining its production and negotiation through the intersections of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, sexuality and class. Ine has demonstrated that music and dance scenes can be analyzed as arenas in which social categories and related identities are actively, if mostly unconsciously, negotiated and reproduced. She illustrates this point through fine-grained ethnographic descriptions of the performative mechanisms through which social categories are (re)produced, making important interventions in existing literature on the performativity of ethnicity and race. Completing the thesis required extensive fieldwork, during which Ine learned how to dance kizomba and utilized detailed and original methods including proprioception and auto-ethnography. She combines careful and empathetic participant observation with a critical approach to the performance and narration of gendered and ethno-racial difference, demonstrating how the micro-politics of small, embodied movements connect to larger transnational mobilities and their macro-political context.

Her careful observation and skillful analysis helped her navigate a highly sensitive topic and enabled her to shed new light on a topic central to current social and academic debates in contemporary Dutch society. This thesis is original, highly relevant both socially and scientifically, well-written and methodologically sound. We have no doubt that you will enjoy reading Ine Beljaars’ thesis as much as we did.

We are available to answer any questions that you may have.

Kind regards,

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The thesis “The Politics of Bodily Mobility and Ethnoracial Performativity in a Culture of Avoidance: Dance and Difference-Making in the Dutch Kizomba Scene”, examines the social production of difference in the Dutch kizomba scene. It analyzed complex processes of identification and exclusion in a context of Dutch xenophobia and exoticization. It linked the transnational mobility of people and popular culture with intimate, micro-level bodily movements to uncover the surrounding performative mechanisms that contribute to and re/produce difference within the scene and the Netherlands more generally.

Kizomba is a recently globalizing music and dance style originating from Angola and Cape Verde. The Dutch kizomba scene is a social site that is mainly comprised out of people of white Dutch, African and African-Caribbean descent. Using an intersectional approach to difference, this thesis has specifically analyzed the production of, and intersections between race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender and sexuality through the modes of narration, performance and embodiment.

The backdrop of this thesis was (and is) the ambiguity prevalent in the Netherlands regarding Dutchness and otherness. While there is an adherence to the belief that all people are (formally) equal, structured inclusions and institutionalized difference is part of everyday life in the Netherlands. The problematic differentiation made between the categories allochtoon (of foreign birth) and autochtoon (of Dutch ancestry), creating an essential difference that can never be overcome, is one example of this ambiguous difference-making.

The production of difference has been examined within the context of performances and performance sites, and draws from Gupta & Ferguson’s (2012) shared and connected spaces and Condry’s (2006) “interaction of paths”, considering those dance schools, nightclubs and other places that have facilitated kizomba’s materialization and proliferation throughout the Netherlands. Additionally, Sterling’s (2010) more political approach of the “performative field”, that included ‘the network of spaces in which performance represents a definite mode wherein the commonalities and differences between participants are worked through, ultimately aiming to reveal the social powers that surround those performances’ (ibid: 22), are employed. In order to study the social powers surrounding those performances, Judith Butler’s concept of performativity (1993) has been utilized. The thesis has demonstrated that performativity is a powerful mechanism of social construction and control, because it usually works unconsciously and therefore goes unnoticed. In this sense, it contributes to producing social difference.
Several different and innovative research methods were employed, including participant observation, mostly in the form of dancing, interviewing, social media analysis, anthropology of the senses, including proprioception and auto-ethnography, mapping the scene, observation and dance diaries (one from Beljaars herself and one from her female dance instructor).

Difference is studied through the analytical concepts of mobility, performance and performativity, thereby intervening in contemporary academic literature. Mobility and difference are closely related subjects because the movement of people, especially movement of others has often evoked the erection of borders and boundaries (Fassin 2011; Yuval-Davis & Stoetzler 2002). In turn, performance/performativity and difference are closely related subjects because the body is an instrument of performance and a site of performativity where similarities and differences between people are actively being played out.
The Politics of Bodily Mobility and Ethnoracial Performativity in a Culture of Avoidance:
Dance and Difference-Making in the Dutch Kizomba Scene

Source: radiosalsaforte

Ine Beljaars

Master Thesis Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology
Leiden University
2014

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 On Kizomba
Ever since a friend handed me a copy of a kizomba CD in 2006, I have been enjoying this Angolan music’s rhythms. As a dancer, I did not only want to enjoy listening to the music, I also wanted to be able to dance to it. Unfortunately, there was no one who was teaching kizomba in the Netherlands at that time. After doing some online research in 2006, I learned that kizomba was becoming very popular in London, England and it was already popular throughout Portugal. In our globalized era, I figured it would be a matter of time before kizomba would find its way to the Netherlands, especially considering the progressive nature of the Dutch Latin scene, where dancers, DJs and other actors are generally very open to cultural change. Dedicated to jump on board as soon as kizomba would materialize in the Netherlands, I have been tracking its flows ever since, and noticed a sudden but steady growth in the Netherlands in 2011. Over the last year kizomba has mushroomed in the Netherlands, using the existing Latin scene as its infrastructure. Being familiar with several Latin scenes in various urban settings worldwide, I was astounded by the speed with which the Dutch kizomba scene was developing. Given my interest in the anthropology of globalization, music and dance, I decided to focus my MA fieldwork on kizomba. Besides exploring the global flows responsible for kizomba’s reterritorialization, I specifically aim to examine the kizomba scene, and how people, especially white Dutch people, within the scene relate to cultural change.

1.2 Difference and The Netherlands
The Netherlands as a fieldwork site proved interesting geographically, politically and academically. Geographically, the Netherlands is a small country with a network of densely populated cities located close to one another. This interconnectedness of Dutch cities, especially the ones located around the Randstad, the Western urbanized part of the country, allow different urban styles to quickly evolve and influence one another, enabling the swift progression of urban music or dance scenes. Regarding such spatial considerations, conducting field research in the Netherlands allowed me to take a broader approach in mapping the kizomba scene in the Netherlands at a particular moment in time, as opposed to delineating the scene of one city which would have been problematic and undesirable because a scene is typically comprised of a network of interconnected spaces and places. An explanation of the scene and how I have delineated the field will be explained in chapter three. Furthermore, the timing was good because the scene already had acquired a
comparatively large infrastructure but was not so large as to be incomprehensible or too
great to grasp.

Besides geographical considerations, the paradoxical state of contemporary Dutch
politics regarding “Dutchness” and otherness intrigued me. On the one hand, the
Netherlands typically presents itself as a modern, inclusive and egalitarian society where all
kinds of people formally enjoy equal rights. However, gendered, ethnic and racial exclusions
are part of everyday life (Essed & Trienekens 2008, Vasta 2007, Yanow & van der Haar
2010). While the Netherlands is said to be in a “culture of avoidance” where there is a
commitment to the idea that “race does not exist” (Essed & Trienekens 2008:55, Verkuyten
1995, Botman et al 2001), there is at the same time a moral panic regarding anything that
diverges from a White autochtoon Dutch norm (Vasta 2007). The discussion around Zwarte
Piet, the blackface “Black Pete” figure, that recurs every year around the winter holiday of
Sinterklaas, is an important example of the Dutch unease surrounding ethnic and racial
topics. In addition to ethnic and racial exclusions, gendered exclusions are also part of
everyday life. For example, the European Commission’s statistics and indicators on ‘Gender
in Research and Innovation’ concluded that from the 21 EU countries participating, the
Netherlands ranked 4th lowest on gender equality (European Commission 2012).

Therefore, I was interested in examining these ambiguities and forms of (structured)
exclusionary processes in a scene where, on the surface, different people seemingly coexist
happily together. I wanted to explore how Dutch people would relate to both themselves as
well as to others in a scene that is comprised out of people of Dutch, Dutch-Caribbean,
Angolan and Cape Verdean descent. I wondered, would the “culture of avoidance” apply to
the Dutch kizomba scene? Because the field is a mixture of a variety of people, I also
wanted to explore the boundaries relating to gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, and how they were
socially produced. Finally, I wanted to scrutinize the underlying ideologies that inform these
boundaries and difference-making processes, as I believe that ideologies are one of the main
-hidden- agents in the reproduction of structured and institutionalized difference.

Structured exclusions evidently produce difference. But what about the hidden
authoritarian structures, the ideologies, that define our behavior in interacting with others?
What about the ideologies that for instance, inform our daily bodily movements, those micro-
aggressions towards others that reproduce difference? What about the ideologies behind
gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, nationality that are prevalent in the Netherlands and
how do they re/produce difference? These questions fascinated me because of the
adherence to the belief that in the Netherlands there are no static (gender) roles that
prescribe (male and female) behavior, while in reality, men and women’s behavior is
circumscribed by the set parameters of gendered rules, as became very obvious within my
field research. The same can be argued for race, whiteness and blackness and the set of performative rules that accompany one’s skin color. For instance, do the same “rules” apply to black and white men and women? Whose sexuality is considered to be more appealing, more threatening and how are these ideas narrated, marketed, embodied, or performed? I seek to address these questions in the Dutch kizomba scene.

1.3 Societal and Academic Relevance

The relevance of this thesis goes beyond understanding the Dutch kizomba scene by and of itself. It broader intent is to explore the more micro-performative aspects of the scene: the balancing act between freedoms and restrictions that inform people’s behavior, and in turn, produce difference. The thesis explores the performative mechanisms that shape, guide, and inform behavior within Dutch society. This is relevant in a time characterized by confusion and heated debate concerning who is Dutch and who is not. Tying into existing literature regarding the paradoxical state of contemporary Dutch society regarding gender, race, nationality and ethnicity, I attempt to uncover the performative mechanisms through which difference is reproduced within Dutch society. I argue that the schismatic and bipolarizing actions of Dutch institutions and the state actually create the opposite of what the Netherlands prides itself to be: an non-egalitarian society that promotes and emphasizes difference.

Academically, this thesis seeks to make two interventions in contemporary academic literature. The first intervention relates to recent research on mobility and its often made connection with nationality and race. Looking beyond obvious, evident boundaries where freedom and restrictions are made and remade, such as national boundaries (e.g. Cunningham & Heyman 2004), I research mobility by taking the body as point of departure instead (Cresswel 2006, Desmond 1993). By analyzing the balancing act between bodily freedoms and restrictions, by examining for instance who is (and who is not) allowed to move how, to what extent, under which conditions, where, when and why, I aim to explore underlying ideologies regarding race, nationality, sexuality and gendered dispositions that are present within Dutch contemporary society.

The second intervention relates to existing literature on performance and performativity, which are most often analyzed through the conceptual lens of gender, sexuality and the body (Butler 1993, 2004, Desmond 1993, Nagel 2003, Sterling 2010). I attempt to extend this perspective by examining the relation of performance and performativity to concepts of ethnonationality and ethnoraciality, as performance within the

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1 For instance: Etnofoor, The Netherlands Now, volume 25, issue 2, 2013
Dutch kizomba scene is often made authentic through notions of race and nationality. For instance, I examine how nationality and race are performed not only through performances but also through marketing and promotion. Who can legitimately claim Angolan-ness, for instance, or how are blackness and whiteness performed and performative?

1.4 Research Question
The abovementioned considerations lead to the following research question:
*Within the Dutch kizomba scene, how is ethnonational, ethnoracial, ethnosexual and gendered difference performed, narrated and embodied?*

1.5 Structure of Thesis
The next chapter introduces the theoretical framework. The analytical concepts of difference, mobility and performance/performativity are presented, and a description of how these concepts are employed is given. Chapter three explains the research methods used and reflects upon its advantages and disadvantages. It also describes how I have delineated the field, using a combination of scholars who have conducted research on “scenes”. Chapter three concludes with a reflection on the methods used. Subsequently, following an illustration of the ambiguous contemporary state of Dutch society regarding Dutchness and otherness, I will briefly depict kizomba’s African roots and its reterritorialization in the Netherlands. I will demonstrate that kizomba reterritorialized through a Dutch-Caribbean network, and as such, the content, form and meaning of kizomba changed. After delineating these macro-movements, chapter five and six expose the micro-movements and micro-politics prevalent in the scene. Chapter five is a partially auto-ethnographic description of how “kizomba appropriate” gender and sexual roles are learned in the dance studio. It demonstrates that the dance studio is a site where gendered, ethnosexual, ethnoracial and ethnonational difference is (generally unconsciously) produced through commodification of the female booty, exoticization of the self through an internalized male gaze, and through racial inversion, wherein romanticized notions of black bodies supposedly facilitate white Dutch to reconnect to the inner-self, the body and even to an alleged pre-modern era. Chapter six provides a partially auto-ethnographic account of the production of difference in the kizomba nightclub by focusing on instances where the body is policed. The first part of this chapter examines how gender and sexuality are policed in the club, whereas the second part of this chapter researches difference-making by examining how black male sexuality is simultaneously deemed desirable yet dangerous at the same time. The final chapter presents the conclusions made in this thesis.
Chapter 2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 Introduction
In order to answer my research question, I needed analytical tools and concepts. The first section of this chapter starts with an overview of the concept of difference. It shows how difference was historically approached as essence, but is now considered a social category. Then I will express my position towards these developments, and explain that I will approach difference intersectionally, studying race, sexuality, ethnicity, class and nation in relation to each other. Hereafter, the analytical concept of mobility is introduced, as well as my employment of the term; dividing between global and bodily mobility. I demonstrate that mobility is an important analytical tool in studying difference, because the movement of people, especially movement of others has often evoked the erection of borders and boundaries (Fassin 2011, Yuval-Davis & Stoetzler 2002). Subsequently, I will introduce the concepts of performance and performativity. I will explain their relationship vis-à-vis each other, as well as in relation to mobility and difference-making.

2.2 Difference, Anti-essentialism and Intersectionality
In our increasingly interconnecting world where spaces and places are shared, borders, boundaries and identities seem ever more blurred. However, at the same time, the idea of the blurring of boundaries often creates profound anxieties about “the other”, resulting in the provocation of more hidden boundaries (sexual, national, gendered, class, race) that nevertheless serve to include/exclude. Therefore, in the “multicultural society” of the Netherlands, analyzing the social production of difference is crucial to understanding and perhaps ameliorating our present day and future society. In fact, Stuart Hall (1993:361) opined that the capacity to live with difference is the coming question of the 21st century.

Within academia, difference used to be approached as essence (Nagel 2003, Young 1986). Essentialist theories center around the ideas that racial, sexual and ethnic features are biologically and/or genealogically inherited (Nagel 2003:54). In this respect, identities are seen as fixed categories one could not alter. One is either black or white, male or female, Dutch or African, gay or straight, catholic or Jewish, etc. Nowadays, essentialist theories and ideas have been dismissed by many scholars and the ideas currently center around the notions of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and nationality as social constructs, which are not only socially defined, but are also historically and situationally interchangeable (Yuval-Davis 2007). They are indeed “negotiated social facts” (ibid:54).

Certainly, due to the world’s increasing interconnectedness and the related blurring of boundaries and identities, approaching difference as essence becomes increasingly
problematic and undesirable. Therefore, and in order to avoid essentialisms, this thesis takes an intersectional approach to difference. Instead of treating ethnicity, race, nationality, sexuality, and gender as distinct and bounded categories, the intersectional approach considers such categories not only as social constructions that are embedded within a particular time/space dimension, but also examines them in relationship to other social constructs (Anthias 2012, Yuval-Davis 2007). The Dutch kizomba scene encompasses a combination of people who position themselves and each other as belonging to different, yet intersecting ethnicities, nationalities, races and sexes. Because these categories overlap in extent and degree, the intersectional approach taken in this thesis focuses on the social production of difference along ethnonational, ethnoracial, ethnosexual and gendered lines. Class is embedded in the analysis where relevant but has no particular focus in this thesis, as the other social constructs have the predominant focus. Ethnosexuality refers to ‘the intersection and interaction between ethnicity and sexuality and the ways in which each defines and depends on the other for its meaning and power’ (Nagel 2003:10). In a similar vein, ethnoracial and ethnonationalism are understood as the intersections and interactions between ethnicity and race, and ethnicity and nationality respectively, and the ways in which each defines and depends on the other for its meaning and power (ibid). Gender in this thesis is understood as the intersection and interrelations between socialized male and female roles, and how these roles intersect with ethnosexuality, race, class and nationalism.

All these social constructs can be seen as sets of boundaries dividing a population according to (nationalist, ethnic, racial, sexual, gendered) practices, identities, orientations and desires (Nagel 2003:46). These boundaries serve as performatives on behavior, as individual and group (sexual) characteristics become the subjects of strong moral and strict social control (ibid:10), structuring desired behavior and socially “punishing” undesired behavior through for instance, scorning or reprise. Every society has its own hegemonic race and class-based gendered and sexual standards and ideologies. People from one group may define members of other groups (i.e. other ethnicities, other classes, other races) to be (sexually) different from, and usually inferior to their own ways of being (sexual), which are viewed as normal and proper. The (sexual) conduct of ethnic others might then be seen as an aberration, leading to oversexed, undersexed, perverted, or dangerous behavior (ibid:9). The notion of “the hypersexual black male” for instance, illustrates at once both sexual standards and ideologies, and simultaneously the inseparability of sex, race, gender and class.

Thus, exploring the ethnonational, ethnoracial, ethnosexual and gendered boundaries in the Dutch kizomba scene informs us about contemporary white Dutch (sexual, racial,
national) norms towards others. Exploring these Dutch norms facilitates in unveiling contemporary processes of exclusion and difference-making in the Netherlands.

But how to employ the intersectional approach to difference in practice, in the field? Gupta and Ferguson (2012) suggest that ‘as an alternative to thinking about difference ‘as a given’ and ‘instead of juxtaposing preexisting differences’, it is imperative to question ‘the radical separation between the two – “us” and “them” that makes the opposition possible in the first place’. They posit that ‘an exploration of the production of differences within common, shared and connected spaces’ is pivotal (ibid: 381).

Following Gupta & Ferguson (2012), this thesis examines the production of difference within common, shared and connected spaces, including (1) a kizomba dance company; (2) kizomba nightclubs; and to a much lesser extent, the virtual online kizomba scene. Within these shared spaces, three dimensions are examined, including performance (who is moving and dancing how, where, with whom), narration (what is being said about who by whom) and marketing/promotion (how are parties promoted, are there certain tropes to be found on promotional material, what types of images are being used, etc).

Having illustrated how difference is approached using an intersectional approach and following Gupta & Ferguson’s shared and connected spaces, the next two sections will present the analytical tools through which I examine the production of difference. These include mobility and performance/performativity. Mobility and difference are closely related subjects because they have often evoked the erection of borders and boundaries (Fassin 2011; Yuval-Davis & Stoetzler 2002). Performance/performativity are closely related to difference because we create, maintain, embody, or defy difference through performance, - which in itself is regulated by the structures of performativity (Butler 1993, Desmond 1993).

2.3 Mobility

Mobility and difference are closely related subjects because the movement of people, especially movement of “others” has often evoked the erection of borders and boundaries (Fassin 2011, Yuval-Davis & Stoetzler 2002). But mobility is more than just movement. ‘Urry (2000) has argued for an understanding of mobility that always examines the movement of people in relation to the movement of ideas and things’ (quoted in: Jaffe 2012:678). In addition, Cresswell (2006) notes that ‘the line that connects movement, despite its apparent

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2 The online kizomba scene is mainly used to facilitate in mapping the scene, in exploring and delineating the infrastructure of the Dutch kizomba scene. It is also used to create a personal network (through social media) and to observe (professional) performances.
immateriality, is both meaningful and laden with power’ (ibid:9). Likewise, Desmond (1993) has argued that ‘the parameters of acceptable/intelligible movement...are highly controlled, produced in a Foucauldian sense by specific discursive practices and productive limitations’ (ibid:36). In this sense, mobility transcends movement. In fact, mobility can be understood as selective, meaningful and regulated movement.

This thesis approaches mobility in two ways: focusing on macro-movements, or global mobility; moving from point A to B, as well as on micro-movements, movements at the level of the body. I term this bodily mobility; to have the “free will” or agency to move one’s body. Global and bodily mobility are not only conceptually interrelated, but also physically intertwined, when different bodies from varying parts of the world embrace each other in dance. The foundations of global and bodily mobility are often rooted in combinations of economic and ideological power. Focusing on these two forms of mobility allows for a more comprehensive understanding of what it means when a music/dance travels from one place to the next and when it materializes (thus being performed) in a different location. Because movement is intrinsically connected to certain ideals and ideologies (who is allowed to move where, when and to what extent, relating to both border-crossing as well as to moving one’s body), movement is inevitably political. Therefore, a consideration of the political environment surrounding these global and bodily movements is imperative (Sterling 2010).

**Global Mobility: the macropolitics of movement**

Celebratory narratives on globalization often praise it for promoting and stimulating the free movement of goods, services, labor and capital. Naturally, this is only one side of the story. Tsing (2008) argues that globalization does not create these often assumed free flows of movement, but that it rather creates “awkward connections” (ibid:33). These awkward connections relate to the selective processes of globalization, producing mobility on the one hand and immobility on the other. The selective processes in itself relate to political and economical ideals and ideologies, which in turn influence the flow of things. In addition to the uneven and awkward connections produced by globalization, it also sets forth the double movement of “de/territorialization” (Inda & Rosaldo 2008:12). De/territorialization ‘captures at once the lifting of cultural subjects and objects from fixed spatial locations and their relocalization in new cultural settings’ (ibid:14). De/territorialization is set forth by the material movement of people, especially so by immigration, travel, tourism and diasporic movements, and more increasingly, due to the use of the Internet and social media. After all, ideas and images -and in this particular case-, music (podcasts, YouTube music videos, online radio stations) and dance videos (e.g. on YouTube) roam freely on the web and are accessible to almost anyone with an internet connection.
While de/territorialization refers to a double movement (deterritorializing from Angola, reterritorializing in the Netherlands), this thesis focuses only on the Dutch kizomba scene, and its reterritorialization in the Netherlands. The process of reterritorialization is also referred to as cultural transmission (Desmond 1993). Reterritorialization and difference are interrelated subjects because the mere process of reterritorialization such as kizomba music or kizomba dancing, often provokes questions pertaining to cultural boundaries and authenticity, as was the case in this research, when Angolan respondents claimed that non-Angolans were not “doing it right”. Global mobility and the macropolitics of movement are further explained in chapter four.

**Bodily Mobility: the micropolitics of movement**

Bodily mobility refers to the micropolitics of movement, the intertwining of gestures with symbolisms and ideologies. Drawing on Cresswell (2006), this thesis exemplifies how macropolitics of global movements can play out and be examined on a microlevel; i.e. at the level of the body. Further informed by Desmond (1993), I will argue that examining bodily mobility, and considering bodily movements and their related semiotics, can reveal those underlying ideologies and performatives that produce difference in the Dutch kizomba scene. I thus argue that the micropolitics of bodily movements are a good way to study macropolitics and ideologies of race, nation, sexuality, and gender. By examining for instance who is allowed to move how and where on the dance floor, in a nightclub, in a dance studio; to what extent certain body movements can or cannot be performed, by whom and according to whom within the Dutch kizomba scene, I specifically attempt to explore the ideologies related to gender, sex, race and nationality that are present within the scene and more generally so within Dutch society. Ideologies, especially ethnoracial and ethnosexual ones, are usually hidden from view. However, ideologies are embedded within our behavior, in the way we walk and talk and in the way we present ourselves to and interact with others. Examining performance, in this case through dance (bodily movement), allows an “unveiling” of ethnonational, ethnoracial, ethnosexual and gendered performativity.

**2.4 Performance and Performativity**

Performance and the performance site are, according to Condry (2006), the places where culture is located and created. But in order to understand why particular movements are made (or not made), and what these movements really mean, an analytic that goes beyond performance is required. This is where performativity comes in. Performance and performativity are two closely related concepts, yet there are some important differences that need to be clarified. While performance generally refers to the act of performing that is
usually conducted consciously before an audience, in this case kizomba dancing, performativity refers to the social rules surrounding and informing the performance. In this regard, performativity can be understood as an invisible authoritative power that informs the way people dance kizomba in the first place. Performativity reinforces the existing status quo through the constant reiteration of behavior (Butler 1993). Examining both the performance of social dancing in itself as well as in the performative context in which these performances occur, (Condry 2006, Sterling 2010) enables me to investigate how difference is produced and reproduced both in the scene and more generally so in Dutch society.

The classic works on performance generally focus on staged performances before an audience. Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical model is mainly concerned with the staged performance of an individual before an audience, and how this individual can manage and influence impressions mostly through conscious performance. Turner (1987) took Goffman’s analysis further and argued that ‘cultural performances are not simple reflectors or expressions of culture or even of changing culture but may themselves be active agents of change’ (Turner 1987:24). Indeed, cultural performances are ‘magical mirrors of social reality: they exaggerate, invert, re-form, magnify, minimize, dis-color, re-color, even deliberately falsify, chronicled events’ (ibid:42). Both scholars provide useful insights in thinking about performance. Nevertheless, Goffman’s analysis is mainly focused on the staged individual performance and not on collective and social performances that occur for instance in a nightclub. Turner’s analysis is theoretically interesting but fails to provide more tangible analytical tools required for purposes of this thesis. Instead, I will draw on Condry’s (2006) approach to the re/production of culture through performance and performance sites, and Sterling’s (2010) notion of the performative field.

In his work on hip hop and cultural globalization in Japan, Condry (2006) argues that globalization and localization should be examined through the “interaction of paths”, with paths including hip-hop artists, fans, media corporations, network culture industries, etc. Furthermore, performance and the performance site are key (f)actors in the construction of culture; “taking ‘culture as it is performed” (ibid:18). Following Condry, this thesis examines global-local interactions by contemplating the interaction of paths between dancers, dance company owners, dance instructors, DJs, party promoters, party organizers and social media networks. Approaching kizomba dancing as a social performance, I have explored the sites in which such performances occur, including dance schools, night clubs, and congresses. The performance sites in which performance is observed include a dance company, nightclubs and kizomba congresses.

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3 Music artists, record companies and media corporations are omitted due to the limited scope of this project.
Sterling’s (2010) work on Jamaican popular culture in Japan offers a more political view of performance and globalization. He employs the notion of the “performative field”, with which he means an ‘investigative site that encompasses a network of spaces where commonalities and differences pertaining to class, gender, race and ethnicity between people are played out’ (ibid: 21, 22). Further, the performative field is not necessarily bound to time and place as performances can be differentiated between being in proximal or remote settings. In proximal performance, ‘performer and audience are located within a physically designated space, in which the deployment of the symbolic resources that define the event usually occurs within a restricted time frame’ (ibid). Kizomba parties or nightclubs fall under this category. He continues, ‘in remote settings, the audience, although physically absent, is implied in the reproduction of the work, consuming it after delay’ (ibid). Mass-mediated text and images distributed through for instance Facebook and YouTube are examples of audiences in remote settings. Sterling argues that the ethnographic examination of specific performances allows us to reveal the social workings of power that surround the performance. Sterling’s notion of the performative field is a helpful tool, since he not only considers the performance, but also the social powers surrounding the performance and the performance site; whether they are remote or proximal. These social powers that surround the performance can also be referred to as performative powers. Powers that surround are simultaneously powers that inform, shape or contest. It is this mechanism of the social workings of power that inform kizomba dancing that I am interested in exploring further.

Sterling’s performative field as a site that is surrounded by the social workings of power that in turn shapes or guides our behavior connects to Butlerian practices of performativity.

Although the concept of performativity has been developed and employed by many scholars and across disciplines, the term is often associated with Judith Butler. Thinking in terms of performativity, performance, according to Butler, is ‘not a singular act, but a ritualized production’, one which is dependent on a process of iterability,…’a regularized and constrained repetition of norms’ (Butler 1993:95). The labels and categories that are socially available to us are thus a result or outcome of the process of constant reiteration. This makes us free to perform but only within the parameters of the authoritative structures of performativity. As Nagel (2003) explains, ‘performativity is a powerful mechanism of social construction and control, all the more so because it tends to go unnoticed, be invisible, operate at the level of intuition. Performatives just seem to feel right or wrong. They are difficult to identify or think about because they are so ingrained, presumed, and seemingly “normal”. The invisible and comfortable aspects of gender and sexual performatives are major reasons for the durability and pervasiveness of hegemonic and sexual regimes’ (ibid:52). While it is generally acknowledged that gender and sexuality are both performed
and performative (conscious and unconscious, intended and unintended), I argue that race, ethnicity and nationality, are likewise performed and performative and can therefore be analyzed as such.

Considering that the body is an instrument of performance and a site of performativity, how do kizomba dancers in the Netherlands negotiate the labels and categories relating to gender, sexuality, nationality, race and ethnicity that are available to them? How are bodies moving, where, under which circumstances? How is bodily mobility created or impeded, both practically, on the dance floor, as conceptually? Which structures, institutions, or ideological frameworks are at play? How do people perform whiteness, blackness, femininity, masculinity, ethnicity, nationality? And how do they perform these categories intersectionally? How much space is there for reversing gender roles or reversing racial subjectivities? Where are the boundaries between freedoms and restrictions located? What is at stake? The ethnographic chapters that follow detail such questions surrounding kizomba performances. In these chapters I consider how these micropolitics of movement can help us understand underlying white Dutch ideologies relating to the macropolitics of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, and nationality in the Netherlands. By doing so we can gain insights about the conditions under which boundaries are erected and defended and into the conditions that promote integration and tranquility, pressing questions highly relevant to the Netherlands of 2013/2014 (Essed & Trienekens 2008, Nagel 2003, Vasta 2007, Yanow & van der Haar 2010).
Chapter 3. Methodology

3.1 Introduction
For the preparation and execution of this MA research, I have employed various different research methods. Because difference, mobility, and performance/performativity are often concepts that are related to the body, I needed a wider set of tools than the basics of participant observation, interviewing and observation. The first section describes my dancing in the field, how I learned to dance kizomba and what it entails to conduct research at night. The second part elaborates on dancing in the field, and it explains how my research was inevitably a sensorial research. It explains how I have conducted sensorial research through my body, using the methods proprioception and auto-ethnography. I will briefly touch upon the ethics involved in conducting research with the body. Then, a description of the research methods observation, interviewing and film/photography follow. After this, I will explain how I have delineated and defined the field and consecutively, how I have mapped the scene during the preparation period of my research so that I knew which parties to visit and whom to interview. Following this, a depiction of the importance of social media as a new research tool in conducting research online is presented. Finally, this chapter concludes with a self-reflection on the pro’s and con’s of the selected research methods, and the intricacies that conducting research with my body raised.

3.2 Dancing in the Field
Participant observation has long been the cornerstone of anthropological research. Naturally, dancing becomes the most important form of participant observation for an anthropologist studying a dance scene. Therefore, my own body has been both my informant as well as my instrument of measurement. I have not only researched the production of difference “from a distance”, I have embodied it through hours of practice and nights of dancing with others, ultimately and inevitably becoming part of the scene I was studying. Because my field research took place in the Netherlands, I was able to double my fieldwork period from three months to six months. During the “preparation period” of three months I learned the basics of the dance and developed relationships with people in the field. The last three months of fieldwork were mainly concerned with in-depth interviewing, with dancing along in nightclubs and parties and with mastering the dance, an indispensible facet of researching a dance scene because it increased my credibility and respectability in the field, just as it would with mastery of a new language.
**Learning a New Bodily Regime**

However, I did not dance kizomba before I started my field research. So the first step was to take dance classes. I have about ten years of cumulative dance experience, including classic and Latin ballroom, belly dance, and popular Latin dances such as salsa (LA, NY, Cuban style), bachata and zouk. My previous dance experience enabled me to quickly adapt to a new bodily regime. To do so, I have immersed myself in weekly one-hour kizomba classes at a Latin dance company located in the Western, urbanized part of the country for the duration of 20 weeks. Classes were held in the evening and were given by Jason and Emma, both established dancers and teachers in the Dutch Latin scene. I have conducted in-depth interviews both with Emma individually and with Jason and Emma together as dance couple. Emma has also kept a dance journal for me, providing “emic” insights from her perspective as a female dance instructor. In addition, I have distributed 20 questionnaires among my fellow kizomba students. Complete questionnaires were handed back to me. Even though I had not intended to use them for quantitative analysis, requesting people to fill out the questionnaire proved to be good way to establish personal contact with my respondents, as many approached me afterwards to talk about their perceptions on kizomba. It also resulted in the formation of a group of students going out to parties together, whom I have joined several times. Moreover, it has resulted in an in-depth interview with one fellow student. Additionally, I worked as a volunteer for the same dance company, assisting during “open-days”, boot camps, parties and workshops. I did this to increase my visibility in the field and to gain access to a wider range of kizomba dancers from different cities. Out of my volunteering efforts I have acquired three in-depth interviews with kizomba dancers from other dance schools/cities. I have also kept a dance journal in which I documented my thoughts, feelings and perceptions of the dance and the classes throughout the fieldwork period.

**Nocturnal Research**

After having had about six dance classes I started to evaluate the gamut of kizomba nightclubs and parties being held throughout the country and tried visiting them at least once, because just as with any other (social) dance, mastery comes with practice. During the time of my fieldwork most kizomba parties were centered in and around the city of Rotterdam in the Western, urbanized part of the country, as well as throughout the South of the country, mostly centered in or around the city of Tilburg. Idiosyncratic of this research was that the participant observation was largely nocturnal. Conducting research at night is different from the “normal” fieldwork settings that largely occur during day-time. For instance, in order to enter a nightclub I had to present myself in a certain manner, according to time/place specific
“written rules” such as (formal) dress code, and “unwritten rules” such as performing one’s gender; dressing up “sexy” or “feminine”. Not knowing or not abiding by these “rules” might disturb people in the field to the extent that it makes a fluid immersion in the field difficult or even impossible. An extreme example includes dressing in an offensive manner (too sexy, or not sexy enough), behaving “slutty” or on the other hand “coy”, and getting (excessively) drunk. Chapter six expatiates on such public performances of gender and other social constructs in the club and elucidates how the intersectional production of difference is dependent on continuous balancing acts between freedoms and restrictions.

Nocturnal research also calls for a greater account of personal safety. Even though this research has been conducted in the Netherlands which is considered generally safe, and even though the scene itself might be considered safe, once the party is over at 03:00 hrs and one enters the street at night, precaution is always necessary. I have borrowed a car for the last three months when I frequented many parties in order to increase my personal safety. Finally, a practical concern holds that conducting research at night by dancing in a nightclub can create fatigue when the day-time schedule is not or cannot be adjusted to the nighttime research.

3.3 Anthropology of the Senses: Embodied knowledge, Proprioception and Auto-ethnography

Learning to dance in the dance studio allowed me to embody new movements. But the real understanding of the dance did not settle down into my body and mind until I started going to kizomba parties and nightclubs. Ranging from novice to mastery of the dance enabled me to embody knowledge, and allowed me to “discover” findings I would have otherwise not found. Dance research is inevitably sensorial research revolving around more than just the eyes and ears. It includes touch, but also scent, as two bodies come into close proximity, touching faces and being in each other’s comfort zone. Being new to this dance, I have observed and documented my own thoughts, feelings, excitement concerning anything that is kizomba. I have employed a method called proprioception (Sklar 1991; van Ede 2009), which reflects upon ‘the reception of stimuli produced within one’s own body, especially movement’ (Sklar 1991:72). In relation to this ‘somatic mode of attention’ (Csordas 1993), I have kept a dance diary to document thoughts, feelings and bodily responses. Because kizomba dancing is quite close, it is often considered intimate and sensual. I was interested in internally observing how certain kizomba movements would change my perceptions of the self. I was fascinated to document and analyze my own thoughts, feelings, and bodily reactions, both of the movements in itself as in its connection with a dance partner. I wanted to scrutinize my own ideas and notions of in/appropriate behavior, sensuality and proper performance and
take these ideas as a case study to understand contemporary white, Dutch notions of whiteness, blackness, sensuality, sexuality, in/appropriate movement, dress and demeanor. In this respect, this research has been partly auto-ethnographic. Auto-ethnography includes participant observation that involves a focus on one’s experience as a dancer or other participant’ (Hanna 2010:215).

**Ethics**

Besides the technical complexities that conducting sensorial research raises, including what methods to use and how to utilize them, how to translate corporeal experiences and embodied knowledge into text, and how to deal with questions relating to validity and reliability, conducting sensorial research also raises other intricacies. Being in close proximity with the other gender might raise ethical considerations when one interprets the dance different than the other. Also, as with any other field researcher, spending time in the field means not spending it at home with one’s family/partner. This requires support and understanding from the home front, especially when there is an added dimension of physical proximity and seemingly faded bodily boundaries between self and other.

All names of my respondents have been changed to protect their anonymity. Furthermore, I would like to note that this thesis has been produced from my point of view which is fueled by my own position in Dutch society, namely of a middle-class white Dutch woman in her (late) twenties. This undoubtedly has consequences for the research, interviews, and analysis. Needless to say, I have tried to be as objective and reflexive as possible, but one’s positionality in the field is important to reflect upon. I am aware that the outcomes of the results might have been different, a little or a lot, if I were a woman of color, male, transgender or anyone else. The reality depicted in this thesis is thus influenced by my own positioning and should be considered as such while reading.

**3.4 Observation**

An observation list guided me in observing the production of difference in the Dutch kizomba scene. I have specifically focused on observing the spatial production of difference, and the in-sight production of difference through mobility and through performance.

First, I have examined the spatial production of difference by considering the localities of nightclubs and other kizomba venues. For instance, in what cities are kizomba parties held, in which neighborhoods, in the inner city or outer city? How is it accessible by foot, car, public transportation? What are the costs of entry, etc. Second, as people make space into place, I have analyzed the in-site production of difference through mobility. How do people use space on and off the dance floor? Who moves where? Who is standing where, with
whom? Who is included and excluded? Who dances most? Who does not dance? But also, how is space hierarchically organized? What is the position of dancers (beginners, advanced) on the dance floor? What are the spatial positions of people with different ethnonational descents? Do people mingle or do they ‘stick together’? Do people enter alone or in groups?

Finally, I have observed the in-site production of difference through performance. For instance, whilst dancing, who and what body part were most looked at by the audience? How are people asked to dance? What were the common gestures, symbolisms? How were gender roles enacted, or contested? How do men/women dress and adorn themselves (dress, hairstyle, jewelry, demeanor)? How is sensuality/sexuality enacted on stage and off stage? How are bodily connections made during the dance: how is the connection on upper bodies? Are the heads touching, are the hands of the woman placed in the neck of the man, or on his shoulder and in his left hand? Do women place their bodies in the frame of the male (chest), or do they keep distance? How are proximity and distance negotiated between dancers? What are people’s facial expressions while dancing (e.g. closing of eyes)? Finally, I have observed what kind of musical styles were played (ghetto-zouk, cabo-zouk, cabo-love, zouklove, kizomba, semba…) dependent on particular time and place dimensions.

3.5 Interviewing
Interviews proved especially convenient for learning about the history of kizomba as there was -at that time- almost no English or Dutch information about kizomba available online or in articles, journals, or books. Interviews also proved pivotal in tracing the flows through which kizomba reterritorialized in the Netherlands. I have used structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews. The structured and semi-structured interviews are recorded, the latter ones unrecorded. I used my tape recorder only to fit the purpose of recording stories about the history of kizomba. So in this regard, it did not seem to provide any disadvantage. However, I quickly learned that people withheld the more intimate information until the recorder found its way back into my purse. Most gossip and other informal chit chat was only being shared when the recorder was away. More importantly, I also quickly realized that many interviewees seemed reserved in talking about racial and ethnic differences, especially so when it was being recorded. So using a tape recorder can be advantageous when general information is provided but it can be disadvantageous when sensitive and personal information is to be disclosed.
3.6 Film/photography
This thesis incorporates very little photography and no film. The main reason includes the limited lighting available at kizomba parties, which makes it practically impossible to capture movement. Despite that photographs of staged performances are abundant on the Internet (for example, on Facebook) I have not incorporated these into my thesis because my focus is not on staged performances. My own efforts to make photographs or qualitative film have been unfruitful. I have however called in the help of an acquaintance who is trained to be a photographer/filmmaker. Unfortunately these efforts were also unproductive. Nevertheless, inviting a photographer/filmmaker into the scene proved fruitful for analyzing the embodiment of difference, demonstrated in chapter six.

3.7 Delineating the Field
A “scene” is not a neatly defined or delineated field in the classical sense, as for example a village might be (the boundaries of which are also debatable). So in order to research a scene one first has to delineate it, to find its boundaries. But how to do that? The concept of a scene was first used within academia by Will Straw (1991). According to Straw, a music scene is ‘that cultural space in which a range of musical practices coexist, interacting with each other within a variety of processes of differentiation, and according to widely varying trajectories of change and cross-fertilization’ (1991:273). Bennett & Peterson (2004) present a more recent and more practical approach to music scenes. Their approach is deeply embedded in place, dividing between local, translocal and virtual music scenes. The local scene can be understood as ‘corresponding most closely with the original notion of a scene as clustered around a specific geographic focus’ (ibid:6). Subsequently, they describe the translocal scene as ‘widely scattered local scenes drawn into regular communication around a distinctive form of music and lifestyle’. Finally, the virtual scene is explained as ‘a newly emergent formation in which people scattered across great physical spaces create the sense of scene via fanzines, and increasingly, through the Internet’ (ibid:6,7).

These notions of a music scene facilitate in conceptualizing the Dutch kizomba scene. The kizomba scene emerged out of the existing infrastructure of the Dutch (and more generally so, the international) salsa scene, a music and dance scene increasingly recognized and researched (e.g. Abreu 2007; Aparicio 1998; Berrios-Miranda 2003; Hosokawa 2002; Moore 2010; Pacini-Hernández 2003; Padura-Fuentes 2003; Román-Velázquez 2002; Santos-Febres 1997; Urquía 2004; Washburne 2008; Waxer 2000, 2002). I have chosen to use the term ‘scene’ over ‘subculture’ (Hebdige 1979), because the latter implies that society has one main culture from which a subculture departs. This assumption is overly simplistic because a scene is not only located within society, it is also a reflection of
and simultaneously reflects upon society. Straw’s approach is too theoretical, leaving too much space for interpretation and too little “practical tools” to contextualize a scene’s boundaries. Bennett and Peterson’s approach on the other hand is more useful. It creates a more explicit understanding of the different levels of scenes available. However, distinguishing between local, translocal and virtual scenes necessarily implies that these categories are bounded and that therefore a distinction can be made between, for instance, where the local ends and the translocal begins. However, in the case of the Dutch kizomba scene, the local is made possible through the translocal, because people are willing to drive up to an hour and a half for a party (which basically entails being willing to go almost anywhere in the country). In turn, the translocal (thus including the local as explained above) was promoted through the virtual. Thus the three scenes are more intertwined than Bennett & Peterson’s analysis suggests. Finally, it seems obvious that in this day and age the virtual scene is not an emerging scene but is essential and foundational to the proliferation of both translocal and local scenes, at least so in the Netherlands.

So, with the Dutch kizomba scene, I mean the interaction of paths (Condry 2006) between actors and public places in and through which kizomba is enacted and (re)produced as a cultural form, particularly in the form of movement (dancing) and embodiment but also in terms of narration and marketing/promotion. By actors I mean dancers, dance company owners, dance instructors, party promoters, party organizers and DJs. The production of music with all its relevant actors (producers, record companies, musicians, etc) has been excluded in this research due to the limited amount of time and due to the physical absence of these actors within the public kizomba spaces, such as dance schools, nightclubs and congresses.

3.8 Mapping the Scene

Through my personal acquaintance with the Dutch Latin scene, through online research and through dance friends and acquaintances I had mapped the scene and made an analysis of the key actors and public spaces of the Dutch kizomba scene. I had done so during the preparation period, so that I could spend my time during the actual fieldwork period interviewing these key figures and visiting the main spaces in the scene. I have interviewed the key actors of the 2013 kizomba scene: the people responsible for introducing kizomba to the Netherlands; the people who actively and successfully promoted kizomba; the most popular and well-known dance instructors and DJs during that time, and the most successful party organizers. One of the reasons why I have chosen to do so is because these are the actors that define and shape the contours of the scene and thus the “rules of the game”. This
analysis is superficially engaged in chapter four. It is not deeply embedded within the written thesis itself, but it has shaped my knowledge of the scene in its totality.

3.9 Media Analysis and Social Media Analysis
I have accumulated different kinds of promotional material, such as paper flyers, brochures and leaflets of kizomba parties, workshops and congresses, to analyze the ideologies behind marketing strategies employed, and to examine whether and how difference is re/produced through the distribution of promotional material.

In addition, I have made extensive use of social media in my research, notably Facebook but also including YouTube and Sound Cloud. Facebook assisted me tremendously in submerging in the field. As people use Facebook to actively promote their activities, this form of social media became inevitable in my research. DJs post their new remixes, dance instructors post when and where they are giving workshops and dance classes, and dancers post where they are dancing that evening/week/month through personal status updates or on a party’s event page. Through Facebook-friends, I have received invitations to kizomba parties, congresses and workshops. Also, when I had visited a party where I met new people, we would befriend each other on Facebook. This method in fact resembles the traditional snowball method, only applied online. Through Facebook I also got acquainted with new remixes posted on Sound Cloud and new videos posted on YouTube. I have used Sound Cloud to listen to many kizomba sets that were posted by DJs and to get myself familiarized with the different styles within kizomba music. YouTube proved a viable source for observing and analyzing movement in film. People are allowed to comment on the videos and on each other and this also provides profound data on what is considered in/appropriate movement. Despite that it is difficult to measure, the social function and power of YouTube in shaping people’s perceptions are tremendous, as many of my respondents often referred to movements/videos they had seen on YouTube.

3.10 Conclusion and Self-reflection
Essed & Trienekens (2008) state ‘whereas in the US ethnicity and religion are cross-cutting yet embedded in the old racial distinction between black and white, African American and Caucasian, in the Netherlands ‘race’ is not mentioned, but inherently subsumed, repressed under the coverage of cultural and religious differences’ (quoted in: Essed & Trienekens 2008:63). Race in the Netherlands is indeed considered a delicate and sensitive issue. Therefore, studying race, and particularly so in its intersection with sexuality and gender, was not always easy. Furthermore, having grown up in the Netherlands, I was part of the racial debate that “did not exist”. So before I could study anything relating to difference, I first
needed to scrutinize my own conceptions of race, and learn about my own “whiteness” (Essed & Trienekens 2008). Moreover, examining sensitive issues, such as sexuality, and doing so at nighttime during parties where physical boundaries seem blurred sometimes was tricky.
Chapter 4: Kizomba in the Netherlands

4.1 Introduction
What happens when an Angolan dance reterritorializes in a Dutch landscape where ambiguities regarding ethnic others are prevalent? Which conditions facilitated this cultural transmission? How can studying the Dutch kizomba scene help in understanding white Dutch notions concerning otherness and difference-making?

As kizomba reterritorialized in the Netherlands around 2011/2012 and grew in popularity at a fast pace, it evokes questions regarding the effects of cultural globalization as well as of cultural change in the Netherlands. But in what state is contemporary Dutch society actually? The first section will address this question and demonstrates contemporary Dutch ambiguous relationship with otherness. After this, a brief discussion of kizomba’s roots outside of Europe is presented. Subsequently, following an intersectional exploration of the Dutch Latin scene’s infrastructure that enabled and structured kizomba’s reterritorialization, I will then explore the emergence of a Dutch kizomba scene. Following Condry’s (2006) “interaction of paths”, I will consider those dance schools, nightclubs and other places that have facilitated kizomba’s materialization and proliferation throughout the country. Further informed by Sterling, (2010) I will examine kizomba’s “performative field”, including the network of spaces in which performance represents a definite mode wherein the commonalities and differences between participants are worked through, ultimately aiming to reveal the social powers that surround those performances’, such as dance schools, nightclubs and congresses (ibid: 22). The chapter concludes with a brief description of how the content, form and meaning of kizomba has changed due to its cultural globalization, and how this difference was narrated, performed and marketed in the scene.

4.2 Contemporary Issues in Dutch Society
During a time of heated debate surrounding who is Dutch and who is not and considering the ambiguous Dutch political climate relating to ethnic, racial, religious, and sexual differences, what does it mean that kizomba dancing is so popular in the Netherlands? What exactly is the state or condition of contemporary Dutch society in which kizomba became embedded?

Globalization’s “side-effects”
Inda & Rosaldo (2008) point to the problematic nature and effects of globalization when they state that ‘the very processes that produce movement and linkages also promote immobility, exclusion, and disconnection’ (ibid:6). Usually, we consider globalization’s detrimental “side-effects” to relate especially to experiences in the South. However, in her critical essay on
multiculturalism and the shift to assimilationism in the Netherlands, Ellie Vasta (2007) indicates that, ‘the Netherlands, like many European countries, is experiencing adverse effects of globalization, threats to security and a changing political climate’, the effects of which seem to be ‘more extreme than elsewhere’ (ibid:715). She argues that one of these effects is that over the last few years, there has been a widespread “moral panic” in the Netherlands about immigration and ethnic diversity, which has resulted in heated public debates regarding immigration and integration issues, and cultural and religious diversity in the Netherlands (ibid:713,714).

**The Dutch culture of avoidance**

So, in short, there is a Dutch unease with otherness. What is perhaps more pressing is that several scholars have examined the ‘unwillingness to recognize the exclusionary racist practices and structures within Dutch society’ (ibid: 715, Essed & Trienekens 2008, Yanow & van der Haar 2012). Structural marginalization of immigrants and institutional discrimination are prevalent, yet remain largely unacknowledged in Dutch society. This is largely due to the apparent “culture of avoidance” prevalent in the Netherlands, (Essed & Trienekens 2008:68) and an adherence to the belief that there is no race, and thus no racism (ibid:55). Yanow & van der Haar (2012) concur that the Netherlands has no explicit ‘race’ discourse as race has been deemed taboo since World War II (ibid:2). Nevertheless, they argue that ‘the state, through its policy and administrative practices, does categorize its population along ‘ethnic’ lines, using birthplace – one’s own or one’s (grand-)parent’s as the surrogate determining factor. The contemporary terms that are used to differentiate include *autochtoon* (of Dutch heritage), and *allochtoon* (of foreign birth). The term allochtoon has been expanded in 1999 to differentiate between “Western” allochtoon and “non-Western” allochtoon, and the latter one between first and second generation (ibid).

**The problem with allochtoon/autochtoon**

The division allochtoon/autochtoon might not seem problematic, but they are problematic in their effects because it is a racial discourse, but one in disguise, discursively presenting itself as neutral and objective (Yanow & van der Haar 2012:2,3). Moreover, despite its problematic nature, these terms are arbitrary in nature, and not rooted in geography per se; ‘they serve as a proxy for identity of being more or less distant to the Netherlands in cultural and socioeconomic terms’ (ibid: 19). Nevertheless, the use of the terms allochtoon/autochtoon is ubiquitous in the Netherlands and is found ‘in Parliamentary debates, universities, schools, at workplaces, in city administrative practices and on ‘the street’ (ibid). The meaning of the terms allochtoon/autochtoon centers on place (specifically the country of origin of the
designated person, and this person's ancestors' (ibid:3)), which holds that ‘the stuff of which both allochtonen and autochtonen are made is built in – their identity is essential; and it is eternal – their ‘origins’ are always identifiable. No amount of time will turn an allochtoon into an autochtoon’ (ibid: 20, 21). Therefore, ‘the notion that allochtons can never be ‘real’ Dutch enacts a social distancing or ‘Othering’ (ibid:21). Moreover, ‘if their origins are always identifiable, allochtons can conceivably be returned to ‘where they came from’, literally or figuratively, a place where they are presumably autochtonous’ (ibid:22). Adding to the problematic nature of these constructions is that ‘the terminologies have a scientific aura, serving to convey a sense of neutral objectivity, as if these were all naturally occurring, timeless, universal variables and their classification were the product of scientific investigation’ (ibid:24). ‘The terms and the discourse they serve thereby draw on the power and standing of ‘science’ in the modern world, which in turn enables their masking as state creations and makes it more difficult to challenge their applicability to the persons slotted into each of the categories’ (ibid:24).

So the problem in the Netherlands pertains to institutional processes of racism ‘in disguise’. Racial matters are not necessarily denied, but they are discursively represented in discourses that cover up the issue at stake by presenting it in terms of ethnicity, citizenship, national identity or western superiority and civilization (Essed & Trienekens 2008:52).

Considering this, I wonder how difference is socially produced and otherness is culturally negotiated within the Dutch kizomba scene, a recreational space where different people intentionally come together in close proximity, a site which is generally depicted as fun, and where differences are pretended to be non-existent and/or irrelevant. I wonder, are ethnic and racial matters in the Dutch kizomba scene also matters in disguise? How do white Dutch people position themselves vis-à-vis non-white Dutch? More specifically, how do white Dutch people narrate, perform, embody difference? These questions and others will be explored in the chapters five and six. But first, let us explore kizomba’s global mobility and its macropolitics of movement.

4.3 The Cultural Globalization of Kizomba

Global cultural flows ensure the movement of a cultural product from one place to the next. Inda & Rosaldo (2008) consider flows to be cultural movements (of people, commodities, capital, ideas), that depend on, and are created by, material and institutional infrastructures (ibid:29,30). In this respect, kizomba’s flows are related to the movement of people such as migrants and travelers, and ideas circulating through social media such as Facebook, YouTube, Spotify or Sound Cloud. Social media has played a significant role in spreading kizomba’s flows nationally and internationally as “sharing”, “liking”, and commenting all make
it easy to quickly disseminate images and video thereby promoting the further circulating of a cultural commodity like kizomba. But how did kizomba flow from Africa to the Netherlands and how was kizomba’s reterritorialization enabled? I will now briefly discuss these flows, and how they became embedded in the Netherlands. I will also discuss the role and function of the Dutch Latin scene, as kizomba mainly reterritorialized through this particular infrastructure. Subsequently, I will demonstrate that kizomba proliferated in the Netherlands through a change in form, meaning and content.

This next section will briefly discuss kizomba’s roots outside of Europe and illuminates its connection with Cape Verde, as both of these cultural flows influence the Dutch kizomba scene.

**African roots**

The word kizomba, meaning “party”, comes from the Kimbundu language from Angola. Kizomba music and dance originated in the streets of Luanda, the capitol of Angola, around 1983 when young Angolans started experimenting with combining the rhythms of several musical styles, including those of Angolan *semba*, French-Caribbean *zouk*, Cape Verdean *mornas* and *coladeiras*, Congolese rhythms, and Western pop music⁴. But the strongest musical influences came from Angolan *semba* and French-Caribbean *zouk*. Semba is considered as something as Angolan national popular music, founded around 1947 and danced to on semba or rebita music⁵. Its beats per minute (bpm) range from 102-140, similar to that of zouk and merengue. *Zouk* was introduced to Angola by the French Caribbean group Kassav’ in the 1980s. Kassav’s tour through Africa in the 1980s not only popularized kizomba in Angola, but aided in popularizing kizomba in other Lusophone countries, including Guinee-Bissau, Mozambique, Cape Verde, Equatorial Guinea, São Tomé and Príncipe, East Timor, Brazil and the territory of Macau. Over the last few years, kizomba has also spread to North-America, Canada, Europe, Australia and even to Kazakhstan⁶. Because Angola was formerly colonized by the Portuguese, most Angolan *kizombas* (kizomba songs) are sung in Portuguese. Some older songs were sung in the Bantu language of the region⁷. Furthermore, Angolan kizombas are generally characterized by a happy melody and a medium paced tempo with bpm ranging from 98-102. Famous Angolan kizomba artists include Eduardo Paím, who is considered to be the founding father of kizomba, Paulo Flores, Yola Semedo, Matias Damásio, Anselmo Ralph and Yuri da Cunha⁸.

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⁴ [www.kizombalove.com](http://www.kizombalove.com)
⁵ [www.kizombanation.com](http://www.kizombanation.com)
⁶ Personal Interviews, 2013
⁷ [www.kizombalove.com](http://www.kizombalove.com)
⁸ Personal Interviews, 2013
Although the word kizomba used to refer to Angolan music and dance, the meaning of the word has changed due to flows of cultural globalization. During my fieldwork, the word kizomba in the Netherlands applied to a variety of musical styles, including Angolan kizomba but mostly referring to the musical styles from Cape Verde: cabo-love, cabo-zouk and ghettozouk.

These musical styles are modern, highly technical urban dance styles which have rhythmic, technical and instrumental similarities with Antillean zouk, also brought to Cape Verde by Kassav’ in 1991 (Hoffman 2008:205,207,210). These days the modern urban dance styles cabo-love, cabo-zouk and ghettozouk are tremendously popular in the Netherlands, not only among people of Cape Verdean descent but increasingly so among people of Dutch and Dutch-Caribbean descent, and especially so around the Western, urbanized part of the country. An explanation for this might be because the majority of Cape Verdean music is typically produced in the city of Rotterdam (Carling 2008, Hoffman 2008).

Even though cabo-love, cabo-zouk and ghettozouk contain slight differences in sound and in musical technicalities, they are overall similar in structure. They also share similarities with Angolan kizombas, which is explained by both music’s “family resemblance” with Antillean zouk (Guilbault 1993). Furthermore, due to the presence of many people of Cape Verdean descent, especially so in Rotterdam, kizomba was utilized as a marketing term to include all those musical styles that shared the “family resemblance” of Antillean zouk.

In short, on its path of cultural globalization flowing from Africa to Europe, kizomba in the Netherlands became an umbrella name to include various relating yet different musical styles. Resultantly, the form, meaning and content of kizomba changed, both as dance and as music.

Kizomba in the Netherlands thus moved away from its Angolan roots, to now include Dutch, Dutch-Caribbean and Cape Verdean influences.

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9 Cabo-love generally has a slightly slower rhythm than cabo-zouk. Ghettozouk is very similar to cabo-zouk but can typically be recognized by a thicker beat and more English lyrics. Ghettozouk is said to be a marketing strategy coined by musician Nelson Freitas to differentiate his music from the other styles.

10 Naturally, there are differences. Cape Verdean kizombas are generally sung in Cape Verdean Kriolu and are characterized by a slightly slower rhythm (than Angolan kizombas), with bpm ranging from 82-88. Cape Verdean kizombas are further characterized by a more dreamy melody and soft vocals for cabo-love, or by a thick and heavily accentuated beat for ghettozouk. Famous Cape Verdean artists include Mika Mendes, Neuza, and Nelson Freitas to name but a few. Although these differences were acknowledged among people of both Cape Verdean and Angolan descent, they were not recognized as being different by ‘newcomers’ to the scene: people with Dutch, or Dutch-Caribbean descent. In fact, they typically interpreted Angolan kizombas as semba’s and I have often (over)heard them complaint over the amount of ‘semba’s’ being played during parties. For many of my Angolan respondents, not being able to distinguish between Cape Verdean and Angolan music was a profound source of contention which stimulated the production of ethnonational difference and the debate surrounding authenticity through the promotion of “Angolan” parties, that were marketed with Angolan flags and Angolan colors.

11 In her ethnographic account of the cultural politics of Antillean zouk, Guilbault (1993) uses the term “family resemblance” to describe ‘how the predecessors of zouk are related to each other and, ultimately, to zouk itself’ (Hoffman 2008:210).
Reterritorialization through a Dutch-Caribbean network

Kizomba reterritorialized through the infrastructure of the Dutch Latin scene. With the Dutch Latin scene I mean to include the interacting paths between all dance companies, studios, instructors, social and professional dancers, show teams and performance groups, DJs, musicians, magazines, party organizers and nightclubs, websites and social media platforms that actively participate in teaching, promoting, and dancing Latin dances in the Netherlands, particularly salsa and bachata, and to a much lesser extent, zouk\(^\text{12}\) in the Netherlands.

The Dutch Latin scene was politically and economically embedded in a “Dutch-Caribbean network”, which meant that most of the money and the power within the scene was allotted among people of Dutch and Dutch-Caribbean descent. The structure of this network can further be divided along ethnonational, racial and gendered lines. For instance, most Latin dance companies in the Netherlands were owned by Dutch and Dutch-Caribbean men, or by a combination of a Dutch/Caribbean couple (usually female/male). Latin, male dance instructors, (including salsa, bachata and kizomba) were typically of Dutch-Caribbean descent. Women were commonly assigned the role of “assistant”, and they were generally of Dutch or Dutch-Caribbean descent. It was uncommon (but not impossible) to see dance instructors in the combination of Dutch male/Caribbean female.

Cape Verdeans, as discussed earlier, accounted for the largest share of kizomba music production in the Netherlands. In fact, Rotterdam accounts for one of the greatest musical production of kizomba worldwide (Hoffman 2008). This makes the Netherlands, and Rotterdam in particular, the forerunner in musical production and in urban developments, where people are constantly looking for new trends in dance and music.

To summarize, considering that kizomba reterritorialized and proliferated through the Dutch Latin scene, the Dutch kizomba scene is also largely structured by this Dutch-Caribbean network of dance company owners, nightclub owners and dance instructors and so it strongly resembles the Latin scene’s infrastructure. However, it departs from the Latin scene musically. Kizomba music production is largely dominated by Cape Verdean men but it does not exclude Cape Verdean women. Angolans also produce kizomba music, but to a far lesser extent\(^\text{13}\). In the Dutch kizomba scene, popular DJs mainly include people of Dutch-Caribbean, Cape Verdean or Angolan descent and the majority of DJs are men.

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\(^{12}\) the Brazilian style zouk, also commonly referred to as zouk-love, not to confuse with the French-Caribbean zouk.

\(^{13}\) As Moehn (2011) informs, as a result of Angola’s civil war (1975-2002), ‘industrial structures for the production and distribution of music were almost non-existent in Angola by the end of the war and remain limited today’.
**New place, New game: kizomba’s creolization**

As stated before, most of the kizomba instructors were of Dutch or Dutch-Caribbean descent. Because people of Dutch or Dutch-Caribbean descent generally do not have a tradition of dancing kizomba, they interpreted kizomba music and dancing differently than people of Angolan or Cape Verdean descent. The Dutch and Dutch-Caribbean interpretations were mostly influenced by videos roaming freely on the Internet and shared through social media, especially those of renowned kizomba and hip-hop dancers Albir Rojas and Sara Lopez\(^{14}\), who is internationally renowned for her big and flexible “booty”. Following these different interpretations, the way that kizomba was being instructed started changing.

One of my respondents, a Dutch-Caribbean male instructor, argued that kizomba needed to be adapted to local tastes before it became adopted in the Netherlands. He commented: “When you see an Angolan dancing, my humble opinion, it is like he is dancing semba, but then slowly. When you see a Cape Verdean dancing, you see him doing only his passada [basic steps]. In a modern kizomba they [referring to Portuguese instructors] try to incorporate elements of the tango, the passada, the semba, all those things. If I look at instructors from Portugal, France, kizomba becomes a mix, it gets an evolution. One big melting pot as I like to call it. For my classes, I take out the elements that I like from everything that I learned, both from the modern Portuguese style as well as the traditional Angolan and Cape Verdean styles. Then, I try to translate that to the people. A traditional kizomba is boring to look at for an average European because it is nothing more than the basic steps. Besides… everybody is doing their own thing, has their own interpretation. My perception is like, you can’t stop that from happening anyway. You can try to hold on but it also happened with salsa and bachata, everything gets a revolution. There will be influences from outside and people will start to interfere with it. So you can better go with the flow. People nowadays want to do modern things. They see Albin and Sara [kizomba instructors from Portugal] on You Tube and think to themselves: “That looks nice, I want to do that, too”. And those other men [referring to Angolans] keep on dancing traditionally. They are grown up with that. Not me. So I have to steal this [element, movement], steal that, take what I like and make a chocolate out of it. I have to try different things with the audience to see ok, they like this, or they want this… and especially the young audience, they particularly enjoy the beat. They don’t care who is singing. They really don’t care. They see tarraxinha [literally: screw drying] on You Tube… they see Sara’s ass and think I want to do that, too. Yeah, and then I prefer that they learn it from me (personal interview Wallace, 2013).

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\(^{14}\) Personal Interviews 2013.
Developments like these contribute to kizomba’s creolization in the Netherlands, moving away from its “authentic” form, to now include Dutch, Dutch-Caribbean, and Cape Verdean influences. Examining global-local connections within Russian MacDonald’s, Melissa Caldwell describes creolization as a process in which different cultural meanings are fused to create new forms (Caldwell 2004: 241). That a dance style changes due to its cultural transmission almost seems inevitable and this process has been explored by many different scholars (e.g. Desmond 1993, Reed 1998, Savigliano 1995). When a cultural flow reterritorializes it becomes a new form of itself, adapted to local tastes, needs, desires. Due to global cultural flows, kizomba also changed in form, content and meaning to adopt to local tastes. One of these changes included the very popular - and considered sexually explicit by outsiders- tarraxinha, especially to the young and urban audience as Wallace stated. However, the cultural transmission of a dance style often provokes questions regarding authenticity, as Urquia (2004) demonstrated in the London salsa scene. Similarly, kizomba’s creolization in the Netherlands was considered a spiteful process by many of my Angolan respondents. One Angolan DJ in the scene referred to the creolization of kizomba to be “painful to his sight and to his ears”, referring to the way people in the Netherlands were dancing, and the Cape Verdean kizombas predominantly played at parties, which he considered not authentic kizombas. Another respondent, an Angolan dance instructor, referred to the way of dancing in the Netherlands as a “rape of the dance”. This symbolism of rape suggests that the dance went from a pure, authentic state, to an impure state that is corrupted with incorrect movements and other wrongdoings. Another Angolan instructor also despitefully acknowledged the creolization of kizomba in the Netherlands and stated it with a sense of mourning for something that was lost and never to come back.

4.4 Conclusion
In this chapter, I have firstly illuminated the ambiguous state of contemporary Dutch politics and society regarding difference, particularly so in relation to ethnic and racial matters. I have demonstrated that ‘race in the Netherlands is not ignored, but that it is discursively represented in discourses that cover up the issue at stake by presenting it in terms of ethnicity, citizenship, national identity or western superiority and civilization’ (Essed & Trienekens 2008:52). In light of the Dutch unease concerning otherness, it is interesting to explore how and why an African dance became commodified in the Netherlands. This led me to describe kizomba’s African roots and explored its flows to the Netherlands. After this, I analyzed the structure of the Dutch Latin scene and how kizomba embedded in its Dutch-Caribbean network. This was followed by a description of the change in meaning, content and form of the dance due to its cultural transmission in the Netherlands.
This chapter has demonstrated the main macropolitical structures relevant to the Dutch kizomba scene. The following chapters will dive into the scene itself and will examine on a micro-political level how questions of race, and otherness (including gender, sexuality, class, nationality) are negotiated in the scene.
Chapter 5. Disciplining the Body

5.1 Introduction
This first ethnographic chapter is divided between two main sections. The first part of the chapter, titled “The Public Performance of Sensuality” is a partially auto-ethnographic description of the production of gendered and sexual difference in the dance studio. It demonstrates that the public performance of sensuality is dependent on the gendered and sexual rules that are learned in the dance studio and that are internalized within the body. It shows that the performance of sensuality in the dance studio is mostly concerned with the collective encouragement of the individual training of the undulating pelvic motion, which ultimately contributes to commodification of the female booty and resultantly, in processes of self-exoticization, reflecting trends found more generally in contemporary popular culture.

Three examples support my analysis. In “My first kizomba class”, I describe how the “appropriate” female gender role and its accompanying appropriate movements is learnt, according to the rules of the dance studio. Following this, “Disciplining sensuality” will display the intricacies and ambiguities experienced by publicly performing the undulating pelvic motion, which was initially considered by many female students as an inappropriate movement. This leads to the third example, “You can do it, put yo’ back into it”, where I provide an analysis of the intricacies of contemporary commodification of female booties, more generally found in popular culture, but not excluding the kizomba scene, and how this ultimately leads to processes of female self-exoticization. I argue that this is problematic because self-exoticization works as an inverted and discursive performative that maintains it authority by presenting itself as a self-rewarding participatory system, providing for instance, social advancement, increased perceived sexual prowess and desirability, and greater perceived liberties pertaining to female sexual and bodily mobility for women who participate in this pathological mechanism that is based on ideologies of male desire. After this analysis, a brief discussion on the thresholds of two types of movements is presented, after which the second section of the chapter is introduced.

The second part of the chapter called “Black body, white mind”, is an ethnographic analysis of the distinction white Dutch respondents made between the alleged “black body” as opposed to “the white mind”. Discursively represented as compliments for being “more in touch with their inner selves”, something that was romantically praised by white Dutch people who supposedly were “stuck in their heads and had lost contact with their bodies”, this section illustrates how racial inversion or “positive” othering produces ethnoracial and ethnonational difference. Several interviews with white Dutch respondents support my claims.
5.2 The Public Performance of Sensuality

Why do Dutch women dance kizomba? And how do they publicly perform sensuality? What are the rules for appropriate and inappropriate movement, and how are they defined, decided, instructed and internalized? How do women “learn” an appropriate gender role?

According to my data, one of the reasons why white Dutch women want to learn how to dance kizomba is because the dance provides the space to express a part of the female identity that everyday Dutch society does not allow. The first attention that draws most kizomba dancers to the dance, are the female buttocks. In order to execute this movement, a woman needs to overcome the embodied shame she might experience when performing this movement in public. Overcoming this shame provides freedoms and liberties, not only for white Dutch women, but for any woman who is subject to gendered and sexual performatives. In order to dance kizomba, a woman needs to embrace her own sensuality and so in this way, kizomba dancing provides a space to be a different part of the self, one that she cannot be during the day and at most other public spaces in the Netherlands.

The first section of this chapter is comprised out of three main parts. In “My first kizomba class”, I describe how the “appropriate” female gender role and its accompanying appropriate movements is learnt, according to the rules of the dance studio. After that, “Disciplining sensuality” will display the intricacies and ambiguities experienced by publicly performing the undulating pelvic motion, which was initially considered by many female students as an inappropriate movement. This leads to the third example, “You can do it, put yo’ back into it”, where I provide an analysis of the intricacies of contemporary commodification of female booties, more generally found in popular culture, and how this ultimately leads to processes of female self-exoticization.

“My first kizomba class”

I was twenty minutes early for my first kizomba class. I opened the door and walked up the stairs. With every step I took, I heard bachata music playing louder and louder. Being the first one to arrive, I found myself a seat at the bar which directly overlooked the dance floor and the bachata class being taught. Feelings of excitement and anxiety ran through my body. I was here by myself, I did not have a dance partner. I did not know what to expect of others and what’s more, I did not know how my body and mind would react to the intimacy of the dance. As the minutes passed, people gradually came in. Most people entered alone, like me. There were only two couples, out of 30 people in total. The male/female ratio was perfectly balanced which meant that everyone would have a dance partner. I looked around but did not see one familiar face. Scary. With whom would I want to dance first? Shall I ask someone to dance or should I wait until someone asks me? I was looking for someone with a
nice energy, friendly face, not too tall, not too short. Considering that kizomba dancing is quite close and intimate, I quickly felt an aversion towards dancing with most men here, especially the ones who were much older than me. Whilst observing the men in the room, I noticed that there was ‘only’ one black man, which, considering the urban location of the dance school and the demographic mark-up of the Dutch Latin scene, surprised me. However, the class was not completely white Dutch either. It was a mixture of people of white Dutch, and Asian-Caribbean descent. The instructors on the other hand were of Dutch-Caribbean descent.

The bachata class ended, which meant that the kizomba class could begin. We stepped onto the dance floor and after a short introduction by the teachers, we were divided by gender. The men had to stand behind Jason, our male dance instructor, whereas the women had to stand behind Emma, our female dance instructor. Both were demonstrating the relevant basic steps. After some practice, we ‘partnered up’ to do the basic steps in pairs. But before we began, we were to position our bodies properly and focus on the connection. Right from the beginning, Jason and Emma emphasized that without a good connection it is very difficult for the “gentleman” to lead the “lady” and for the “lady” to follow the “gentleman”, as males and females were commonly referred to within the kizomba classes. But a good connection requires closeness. So to get into proper connection, the woman slightly leans forward and presses the left side of her chest (including her breasts) into the right side of the man’s chest. Then, the woman should drape her left arm around the man’s right shoulder and place her hand around his neck. The woman’s right hand is held in a ‘massage grip’ on shoulder height, or is placed by the man on his chest with his left hand.

Getting into this dance position immediately provoked reactions among my fellow dance students, mostly in the form of laughter, a clear signifier for awkwardness and discomfort. I personally noticed an inner aversion to place my hand around someone’s neck and touch the bare skin of a man unfamiliar to me. So I placed my hand on my dance partner’s shirt. I looked around to find other women doing the same. In fact, I saw no woman placing her hand onto the bare neck of the man.

The rest of the class was spent on practicing the basic steps together in pairs. When the class was over, I asked one of my fellow students why she did not place her hands around the man’s neck. She reacted with a big frown of disapproval and a strong voice: “Are you kidding me? I am not going to touch a neck! That’s way too intimate!”

Despite that I did not find the basic steps nor the movements technically very complicated, I did experience emotional boundaries related to the physicality of the dance. I felt some hesitation to be in close proximity with these men, although I noticed with some
men it was easier than with others. But maybe it was also a question of growing accustomed to it. After the first class was over I went home, wondering what I had gotten myself into.

“Disciplining sensuality”

Indeed, I, and other people needed some time to get used to this new way of dancing and of being close to someone else. The next few classes centered around learning isolated body movements for the women, particularly kizomba’s “famous” undulating pelvic movement, whereas the men focused on leading. We were divided across the room again, women standing behind Emma practicing the pelvic movement while the men stood behind Jason practicing their leading.

Emma stood in front of us and demonstrated how our isolated pelvic movement should look like. We were all in awe. Emma’s way of moving was mesmerizing. She moved in a smooth, undulating fashion, using only her lower body to wave to the beat of the music and keeping her upper body still. According to Emma the pelvic movement is pivotal for kizomba’s sensuality and beauty\(^{15}\). Therefore, being able to fluidly undulate forward-backward is given ample attention. Emma was standing in front of us: “Place the feet under the knees. Squat down a little and slightly bend the knees. Turn your pelvis out. And come back up again, replacing the pelvis in the center again. It is supposed to hurt a little bit, especially in the beginning. So when it hurts, you are doing it right”. We were all standing behind Emma, practicing. Down, out, up, in. And again. After we had tried to execute the body movements standing still, we now had to walk around, making it, as Emma called it, “a sexy walk”. We were walking around “sexy”, yet feeling visibly uncomfortable, trying to execute the undulating movement by pushing our pelvises out whilst simultaneously stepping into the ground on the exact beat of the music. This movement, which seemed so fairly “natural” and wave-like, is quite difficult to execute without full body control and the ability to isolate one’s body parts. I looked around to see how other women were doing. Some were giggling or laughing out loud, grabbing each other, whilst others turned red, and some even slouched, all signs of discomfort, shame and embarrassment. Still other women were able to execute this movement, but kept their movements small and barely visible, again signifying some level of discomfort and/or shame. All the while, we were aware of the men on the other side of the room who were looking at us with apparent pleasure. After a few minutes of practicing “walking sexy”, I started to feel a stinging pain in my lower back. I saw other women stroking or touching their lower backs as well. I suppose we were doing it right, then. Finally we stopped and Emma explained that she practices her sexy walk in her living room.

\(^{15}\) The pelvic movement is mostly executed (or most exaggeratedly at least) by women, but men are typically encouraged to practice this movement as well because it enhances the ability to connect and to lead the woman better.
while holding coffee. Practicing our smooth sexy walk -without spilling coffee- would be our assignment for the next few weeks.

Most women experienced varying degrees of discomfort regarding the public performance of sensuality. Emma also recorded this discomfort of performing sensuality in her dance diary. She stated that in order to dance kizomba, one needs to have a certain open-mindedness. So why were these women uncomfortable? Perhaps women were not used to performing sensuality in this way, using these particular body parts, executing these kinds of movements, doing so in public, in front of a group of strangers, or even in the bright lights of a dance studio. The example of the women’s initial discomfort regarding the public performance of the pelvic movement illustrates how not only certain ideas, but also underlying ideologies pertaining to sex, race and nation surround and inform bodily mobility in the Netherlands. In fact, the micropolitics of movement, turning red, laughing, giggling, slouching and making one’s movement small are all signs of discomfort, anxiety and I would argue particularly the emotion of shame. Shame is a strong emotion, which can be divided under the primary emotion of fear. Fear in this respect may allude to a fear of rejection, or a fear for social punishment. As good or moral behavior is desired in society, immoral or wrong behavior is undesired because it is usually coupled with social punishment and hence, with feelings of shame (Foucault 1977). In this sense then, shame, fear, anxiety all work as performatives, signaling the brain to stop the behavior one is executing and it scripts people’s behavior according to set values, norms and ideologies that are present in the society in which they are performed (Desmond 1993). So, the collective emotion of shame found in the dance studio, specifically related to the undulating forward-backward movement, works as a performative that tries to keep women’s mobility in place.

The fact that many women were aware of the men who were watching while practicing the undulating movement undoubtedly contributed to experiencing discomfort. However, women soon realized moving in this manner was not only allowed, it was encouraged, not only by the instructors but also by the male audience in the form of compliments and smiles and so the shame disappeared. Furthermore, they soon realized that performing this movement also carried with it certain benefits, such as increased desirability and resultantly, upward social positioning within the dance studio. Therefore, the discomfort and shame was soon overcome when these women noticed that their movements were not followed by any form of social punishment. Some time was needed to get used to the technique of the movement and of moving in this way in public, in a space outside the home, or even the bedroom. By practicing the technique and by experiencing positive social
conditions in which these movements occurred, these women, including myself, grew more confident in the dance.

“*You can do it, put yo’ back into it*”!

The pelvic movement was considered part of mastering the dance. According to Emma, this movement is also pivotal for kizomba’s sensuality and beauty, and in turn, sensuality and beauty were considered vital for kizomba. Emma was not the only one who opined this. Many respondents and other instructors have answered in a similar fashion. The importance of women’s “assets”, that is, what they are able to do with their booties, was often emphasized during classes, boot camps, workshops and congresses by various instructors. Some suggested making the movements big and clear, yet others preferred to keep it small and “graceful”, a clear signifier of the intersections between mobility, gender, sensuality and class. Nonetheless, the movement in itself ought to be made in order to create a dance that is “sensual and beautiful”. This message was not only made clear during my kizomba class, it was made clear throughout the entire scene. For instance, most parties offered a 60 minute workshop before the party started. Some of these workshops, referred to as “lady styling”, solely focused on this movement for women. So women needed to practice their pelvic movement in order to be considered “sensual and beautiful”, which also meant if they could not or would not execute this movement, they, as well as the dance, were considered less sensual and less beautiful. This can be considered a double movement; one that is at once empowering because it requires one to overcome the initial sense of shame. Additionally, once the technique is embodied, it can provide other liberties and benefits, such as social advancement and increased perceived sexual prowess and desirability. Nevertheless, it is also female unfriendly because it contributes to commodifying women’s booties, a process that parallels contemporary hip-hop and popular culture.

*Liberating Assets*

On the one hand, many female respondents stated that they experienced an increased sense of self-confidence as well as feelings of sexiness on route to mastering the pelvic movement. Having full body control and thus being able to fluidly undulate was considered a desirable technical skill through which one could better connect to the dance partner and the music. Due to bodily control and flexibility, this movement would enhance the ability to get “into the flow”, considered by many respondents the ultimate goal to achieve with a dance partner during a dance. Women who had full body control were often considered better dancers and hence, they were often (asked to) dance more. In this respect, being able to execute the pelvic movement can indeed be considered empowering because it not only provides increased levels of self-confidence, it also allows for a greater
amount of time spent on the dance floor, connecting with many different people and increasing the level of joy during an evening of dancing (surely, it is no fun standing on the side lines all evening). It also generally attracts the better male dancers, which was an aim for many female dancers as it increases their feelings of desirability and social positioning within the club or the scene more generally so. Additionally, female respondents have also professed a sense of liberation, of freedom to move, to perform sensuality legitimately without receiving stigmatization or other repercussions that women often bare when they are considered “too” sexual in public, such as harassment or even rape. So for many of my female respondents, kizomba dancing provided a combination of bodily, gendered and sexual freedoms that their everyday life did not allow.

Discursive Liberties

However, through the collective encouragement to train the pelvic movement, the movement pur sang to be sensual and beautiful and thus lady-like, contributes to the commodification of the female booty. The fact that beauty and sensuality are mostly ascribed to women’s assets is discursively empowering and liberating because these movements are structured by male desirability. In this sense then, women embody this desirability and work it out through processes of self-exoticization. They have internalized the disciplining male gaze.

These processes are not excluded to the kizomba scene. It is a process paralleling mainly black hip-hop culture and more increasingly so white contemporary pop music culture as is demonstrated by an increasing amount of “twerking” pop stars such as Rihanna, Nicki Minaj, or even the white Miley Cyrus and Iggy Azalea. Twerking, the ability to “booty pop” by squatting down low and explicitly thrusting the pelvis, is a highly popular and contemporary dance move that can be observed on staged performances during concerts, in popular music videos on national TV, in nightclubs and on YouTube. The craze around twerking fueled a process of “mystification” of the shape and size of the female booty, as well as the skills that booty supposedly has, as if it were an actor separated from the female herself. The female booty is also a recurring trope in song lyrics and music videos. Flo Rida’s “Can’t Believe It”, for instance, is a song dedicated to the female booty only and entirely. The video displays many different “asses” walking around or dancing, while the heads or faces of the women who are attached to those booties are conveniently cut off. In fact, throughout history, there has been hitherto no other body part than the female booty that has been commodified, commercialized, exploited to the extent that is occurring today. Of all female body parts, the booty is probably also the only body part that carries so many different labels in contemporary popular culture: apple booty, apple yams, thick or juicy ass, a fanny, a fatty, a badonkadonk, a bubble butt, a ghetto booty, or a money maker to name but a few.
In this sense, kizomba dancing falls in line with the contemporary trend of commodification and self-exoticization found in contemporary popular culture. Being able to fluidly undulate produced an increased social positioning because men would perceive those women to be more sexually appealing, thereby implicitly encouraging self-commodification through internalizing the male gaze and its concurrent ideologies.

With this example I argue that despite the proclaimed liberties women supposedly enjoy nowadays, such as twerking, female bodies are disciplined and navigated not in the direct sense through surveillance, but through an internalized male gaze through which women exoticize and commodify themselves (Desmond 1993, Foucault 1977). The problem is that through embodied ideologies and the bodily adherence to the performatives they produce, women unconsciously reproduce gendered and sexual difference through their own bodies. This is problematic and alarming because it is an inverted and discursive performative that maintains it authority by presenting itself, the self-exoticizing performative, as immediately forwarding benefits (such as social advancement, increased perceived sexual prowess and desirability) and liberties for women who participate in this inverted and pathological mechanism that is based on ideologies of male desire.

Weeks went by and the dance figures became more complicated. Hence, an increasing amount of attention was paid to leading-following, coupled with the proper bodily connection. Without a good connection, many moves could not even be executed. Men were reminded of the importance to lead “clearly” and “decisively”, women were reminded to connect with their dance partner and to not anticipate to the male’s movement by “not thinking”, but only by “feeling” and “reacting”. Such phrases might seem innocent, but ‘as Daly describes for classical ballet (1987/88), through these movement lexicons such as feeling or reacting, ‘cultural ideologies of gender difference are reproduced, as discourses of dance are often rooted in ideas of natural gender difference’ (quoted in Reed 1998:516). Furthermore, ‘movement lexicons of males and females often demonstrate the ideals of gendered difference in action. In the Cuban rumba, for example, male dancers use dance as an arena for exhibiting strength, courage, and bravado, while women’s dance is generally softer, subtler, more cautious, and graceful (Daniel 1995)’ (quoted in: Reed 1998:516).

Despite that many weeks of classes had gone by and despite the emphasis placed on proper connection, some new figures proved tricky as I noticed people still keeping a distance, women more so than men. According to Emma, you cannot dance kizomba if you cannot be close to people. So this too requires an open-mindedness. She also stated that it is imperative for women to be able or at least to be willing to surrender yourself completely to the man who is leading you and to trust him and to let him lead you. Emma stated the
importance of the question: Can you dance, move, react without thinking? My research suggests that these issues were considered thresholds, especially for beginning kizomba dancers and particularly so for women, because they were the ones who had to “follow”.

An example of movements where connection and trust was pivotal, yet proved difficult in class, included the ‘circulo’, and the ‘caida frontal’ (literally: fall forward) (see figure 1, and 2, respectively). For example, to lead the woman into the ‘circulo’, the man gently sweeps with his left foot the woman’s right foot behind her left ankle. Because the woman should have leaned forward in the first place, she would now fall forward unless both man and woman press their counterweights into each other’s hands (the woman’s right hand, the man’s left hand). Now, with this proper connection, the woman can lean forward without falling, completely supporting on and trusting the man. The man is now walking sideways in a circle, slowly displaying the lady to an audience.

The caida frontal and the circulo were definitely not the class’ favorite. Many women questioned the strength and the trustworthiness of the man they were dancing with (“I don’t know if he can hold me, maybe he will let me fall”). Another threshold for women was the fact that while leaning forward, their booties would ‘stick out’. They felt as if they were presenting themselves to the audience too sexily.
But there were also respondents who perceived this threshold as a personal challenge to overcome, especially white Dutch men and women. One of my respondents remarked: “A current theme in my life is to learn to trust others and ehm… letting go of control and having faith that things will go well. I wanted to find out if I am able to do that. Because I think that when I loosen my control over things, and that is the theme of my life, that things will go wrong. And I noticed that with kizomba I could learn this but in a different way, (through dancing). Almost some sort of coaching. Therapeutic is too strong of an expression but I thought hey, this is really a challenge for me to do this; to trust someone else, that the other can do it, too, and that you do not always need to take control yourself…” (personal interview Connie, white Dutch woman in her late forties). Apparently for Connie, kizomba was something more than a dance, it was some sort of psychotherapeutic medium to learn to trust other people and to dare to let go and loosen up. During the interview she also stated that she particularly enjoyed the soothing rhythm of the music, and the fact that one can close the eyes while dancing. According to her, this intensified the feeling of connection she made with the person she was dancing with and it enhanced the ability to “feel” the other’s intentions and react accordingly through the body.

5.3 Black Body, White Mind

Connie is not the only white Dutch respondent who considered kizomba a form of coaching or even therapy to get more in touch with herself. Others answered in a similar fashion: “For me it’s really some sort of therapy because I can be in my mind, and then, when I go dancing, I become empty. Then I am in touch with my feelings” (personal interview Jan, white Dutch male in his late twenties).

The differentiation between being in one’s head and being in one’s body is a distinction often made by white Dutch kizomba dancers. Another white Dutch male answered the question “Why do you dance kizomba?” as follows: “First of all I really like dancing, but why particularly kizomba because it’s a dance in which I can give much of myself. Yeah, if I dance, I am actually more present, I am just engaged with the music and with my partner and yes, it is actually only feeling, sensation. During the day I am very rationally occupied because I develop software for big companies so I am in my mind all day. So I just like it that when I go dancing, I can clear my mind completely and that I am only occupied with feeling. That is what I find in kizomba” (Personal interview Albert, white Dutch male, mid-forties).

For these and other respondents, kizomba dancing was a way to relax, to clear or ease the mind and to enjoy bodily movement in connection with another person. My respondents stated that they particularly enjoyed the music, because they found the rhythm to be relaxing and soothing, especially so compared to salsa music’s faster rhythm.
However, making the distinction between being in one’s mind versus being in one’s body is tricky because of its mutually exclusive and hierarchical nature, dividing not only between head/body and ratio/emotion, but more indirectly between developed/underdeveloped, modern/traditional, male/female and white/black.

That people still think in these “old” dichotomies (Young, 1986) became instantly clear when I asked Jan: “Is there a difference between dancing kizomba with white women or with black women”? Jan answered promptly and excitedly: “Yes, absolutely. Black women are more dominant in the dance. Yes that’s true. They know, I mean... dominant and yet sensing so you can dance more together with them so to say, there is teamwork, connection”. A bit puzzled I asked: “Do you also prefer dancing kizomba with a black woman”? to which Jan replied with a softer voice: “Usually it’s better I think”. “Why is that, you think”? Jan: “I don’t know, culture I think. They are more sensing people, I think. Us Westerners are all in our heads, they [those Westerners] cannot feel” (personal interview Jan).

Jan made the distinction between being in his head and going into his body but he articulated in a way that he unconsciously and unintentionally provoked ethnoracial stereotypes and contributed to the process of othering. Indeed, by claiming that “us Westerners are all in our heads, they cannot feel”, he places (white) Westerners, including himself, in a category of pure ratio, mainly concerned with mindful activities. These “Westerners” allegedly would have moved so far away from the body and the bodily, that they cannot feel anymore. They have become alienated from their bodies, something that Ferguson (1999) describes as an apparent characteristic of modernity.

Unfortunately Jan is not the only one who reproduces racial and national dichotomies. Connie produced a similar response when I asked her: “Why is a Dutch person attracted to kizomba”, she answered in a similar vein: “Well, maybe also the need for which we in the Western world have alienated from... We in the West are so distant that we eventually... yeah that’s it's nice for yourself to be closer to people and dancing is one form of that. We in the Western world do not touch each other anymore. If you hold someone’s hand for too long it becomes uncomfortable. And ehm... maybe we are secretly a little bit jealous of the non-whites so to say, what they get out of dancing, what happens with someone when... or... we are very much in our heads of course. Often. And they are very much in their bodies, or in their hearts, or soul, or however you want to call it. They generally make a lot more connection, and that will not always be the case, but generally they are a lot closer to their inner selves. We are very much so a think society. Kizomba is a way to completely let go. Of course it is nice to have a brain, but the fact that those brains always predominate, well we have realized now that it’s not the way to become happy. If you live from the heart and use
your brain in connection with that, that is the way to become happy and not the other way around” (Personal Interview Connie)

Connie tried her best to articulate her thoughts subtly. I could tell by the way she carefully selected her answers that she was aware of the delicacy of the answer and that she might have been afraid that it might “come out wrong”. She carefully chose her words and I honestly believe she had no intentions to divide, or fall back onto old dichotomies distinguishing between black bodies and white minds. Unfortunately, she did phrase her words in such a manner that it creates dichotomies, dividing between “us” and “them”, “rational” versus “emotional”, “modern yet alienated” versus “traditional” but closer to their inner selves. She also romanticizes black people by stating that they (still or always have) lived “from their hearts”, “they generally make more connection” and “are a lot closer to their inner selves”. She discursively “compliments” them by suggesting that “we Westemers” should take an example of that, by combining the supposed Western rational mode with some “living in the heart”, contributing to racial inversion.

It is remarkable that when I asked her earlier about her personal experiences with kizomba, she answered that kizomba was some sort of therapy for her to learn to let go of control, to relax more, and to learn to trust other people. This type of answer does not produce difference per se. There was nothing wrong with this answer, it did not discriminate or stereotype. Interestingly, when I asked her a more general question that basically asked the same thing, but now had the word “Dutch” in it (“why is a Dutch person attracted to kizomba”), she produced completely different answers that were embedded within notions of nationalism, modernity, racism and sexism. These answers did stereotype and divide, producing ethnonational, sexual and racial difference.

5.4 Conclusion

As this chapter has demonstrated, the dance studio is a site where gendered, ethnosexual, ethnoracial and ethnonational difference are mostly unconsciously produced through commodification of the female booty, exoticization of the self through an internalized male gaze, and through racial inversion, wherein romanticized notions of black bodies are presented through which a white Dutch person supposedly can reconnect to a pre-modern era, the inner-self and the white body.

As a learning environment, the dance studio has demonstrated that learning to perform gender, sensuality and sexuality proved to be an often contradictory and confusing experience for many of my female respondents, as such performances are susceptible to certain rules which are themselves flexible and time/place dependent. Moreover, these rules are informed by particular ideologies that serve to navigate or structure (female) behavior in
public spaces. From the ideologies at play within the dance studio, and more generally so within Dutch society, we can infer that female sexuality in the Netherlands is a contradictory notion, that is at once restrictive, suggesting that it ought be confined to private spheres (blushing, feeling ashamed), while at other times it can be liberating.

“Black body white mind” demonstrated that the experienced alienation felt by many of my Dutch respondents, caused by the alleged ever present ratio, the being in the head, can be considered a characteristic of modernity. The fact that many of my Dutch respondents have answers that all reflect these issues of modernity, might explain kizomba’s growing popularity in other Western nations throughout the world. Many of my respondents have stated that they enjoy dancing kizomba because it allows them to relax, surrender, connect, get into the flow. In this regard, the current popularity of kizomba is a trend that resembles the globalizing yoga trend, a topic increasingly researched throughout various disciplinary fields (e.g. Bourne 2010, Askegaard & Eckhardt 2012, Hoyez 2007). Kizomba can only be danced well when there both dancers completely surrender themselves to each other and the music, without thinking, but more importantly, without judgment. Perhaps this is a need what people living in the Netherlands are looking for. Two strange bodies are literally intertwined for about one to three/four songs, depending on whether the connection feels right. Two bodies are touching, connecting, having to react to each other’s movement. A “smooth” kizomba can only be achieved with the right kind of energy, an open-mind and open body to be willing to listen with the body. Listening to someone else’s bodily intentions and reacting accordingly is not possible when thoughts enter the mind. One needs to drop into somatic mode of attention, completely being in the body so that one is able to react to very subtle indication of movements. When two bodies are intertwined, moving on the same rhythm and getting into the same energetic wavelength, a spiritual connection may arise. This experience is commonly referred to as getting into the flow. It is this very experience that most of the regular kizomba dancers want to attain. Many respondents opine that getting into the flow is addictive because it feels so nice. This might also be one of the reasons why kizomba is currently disseminating globally. So from this perspective, dancing kizomba addresses a spiritual need, to be more in the moment, mindful, together in unity.

Yet, this “mindful” moment does rest on the general idea among many of my white Dutch respondents that mindfulness can best be reached in the arms of an ethnoracial other. The way kizomba dance students narrated ideas about themselves and others produced ethnoracial and ethnosexual difference. This occurred particularly through processes of othering, including essentialist stereotyping, romanticization and exoticization. These particular forms of difference-making rely on racialized and sexualized images of the other,
that supposedly ranks the white Dutch person on top, ultimately rational, modern, and superior, while a black person would supposedly be closer to nature, their inner selves, and living in their hearts. Although I am positive my respondents did not intentionally essentialize, they nonetheless did by phrasing their ideas as such. Differentiating between a supposed rational white mind versus a sensing black body suggests a distancing and social othering that in essence cannot be overcome, thereby resembling the differentiating made between allochtoon/autochtoon. This is problematic, especially so as these thoughts often go unnoticed, and remain unquestioned in their validity. In this way, they become performative and contribute to the structural production of difference in the Netherlands.
Chapter 6. Policing the Body

6.1 Introduction
Mirroring the first section of chapter five where I examined the public performance of sensuality in the dance studio, the first section of chapter six, titled “Policing Gender and Sexuality in the Club”, is an auto-ethnographic account of the public performance of gender and sensuality in the club. It examines first and foremost the production of gendered and sexual difference, but it also considers its intersection with racial and class performatives. I argue that the freedom to move, or the freedom to “be” in the club, is defined by gendered and sexual performatives, whose authority and existence are reiterated through policing instances of the body, generally executed by males over females.

Two cases support my analysis. The first example, “Girl, make it sexy!” demonstrates the so-called accorded freedoms to move, while the second case, “You’re not allowed to dance like that!” exemplifies the limits to (my) mobility. In both instances, my gendered performance is policed by men. In this sense then, the performance of female sexuality can be considered highly ambiguous and conflicting (Reed 1998).

The second section of the chapter, called “Black Hyper-sexuality and “Dangerous” Desirability”, is an ethnographic account of the intersectional production of racial and sexual difference that demonstrates that policing is not only done by black men towards white women, but also the other way around: white Dutch women policing the movement of black men. It particularly concentrates on the production of difference through provocation of racial essentialisms and embodied micro-aggressions towards others, specifically towards black men. I argue that even the unintentional and unconscious forms of difference-making contribute to racial and sexual performatives that serve to maintain structural and institutional racism prevalent in the Netherlands.

Two examples serve to clarify my point. The first one termed “Blood transfusion”, alludes to white essentialist notions of the black body, which -as opposed to white bodies-allegedly has rhythm flowing through its blood. Supposedly, rhythm is naturally inherent to the black body only, as the question of the blood transfusion clarifies. The second example “Bag lady” details how ideas about the other are not only prevalent in the mind, but in fact are deeply ingrained within the body. In this case, provocation of difference leads to unconscious bodily reactions that are called micro-aggressions, such as a white woman who grabs her bags when being in a room with black people, reproducing difference non-verbally.
6.2 Policing Gender and Sexuality in the Club

In the kizomba nightclub, the performance of female sensuality can be regarded a balancing act between freedoms and restrictions. On the one hand, it is generally considered that in a nightclub one is “free to be”, or “free to perform”, because it is a public space to let go, to loosen up, a place where anything goes. To an extent this may be true. However, the following cases clarify that one is only free to be within set parameters that surround and inform the movements that are made. The public performance of female sensuality is therefore bounded by hidden and invisible “rules” or performatives, that structure behavior on and off the dance floor.

The first example “Girl, make it sexy!” demonstrates the so-called accorded freedoms to move, while the second case “You’re Not Allowed to Dance Like That!” exemplifies the limits to my mobility. In both instances, my gender role is policed by men. I demonstrate that the social dancing rules, or performatives of the public performance of sensuality, are dependent on the convergence of a variety of factors, including particular time/space dimensions, dress and demeanor, and music and movement.

“Girl, make it sexy”!

One evening I wanted to blow off some steam and decided to go salsa dancing in a city where kizomba had not yet materialized. I went to a dance studio well known for hosting weekly Tuesday night salsa parties which I had been frequenting on and off for about five years. Because kizomba was not yet taught in this dance studio and because its virus had not spread to this city yet, I thought this evening would be dedicated to dancing salsa. I was wearing comfortable clothes: black slim-fit jeans, a grey sleeveless top, and bronze-colored dance shoes; something that I understood as a casual outfit suitable for a Tuesday evening.

I entered the studio at around 22.00 hrs and greeted my acquaintances. One of them included Dwight, an Indonesian-Dutch man in his 50s. We chatted some, and then danced together. The dance floor, which was about 100 square meters, was completely packed. People were dancing, laughing and having fun. Until the DJ put on a kizomba song. The dance floor went empty, with just two couples remaining who danced kizomba. Naturally, they got much attention from the people standing on the sidelines. An empty dance floor is horrible for a DJ, so after one song the DJ played salsa again, and alternated it with bachatas. Then, I saw an acquaintance from kizomba class entering the party. We greeted each other and we decided to dance the next kizomba song together, if, -considering its unpopularity here- there would be a next song. Luckily for us, after a while the DJ indeed played one more kizomba song, and Rick and I danced together, being the third couple on the dance floor dancing kizomba.
While dancing, I felt very self-conscious. At this time, I only had about six kizomba classes which meant that I was still ‘thinking’ about the steps as opposed to dancing ‘naturally’ without thinking. What made it worse was that I had the feeling that the audience eyes’ were piercing in my back. The large, empty dance floor was brightly illuminated and surrounded by mirrors on one side and the audience on the other sides. I knew this audience was used to salsa shows (dance performances). Therefore, they tended to have a critical perspective. This made me very aware of my own “performance”. I tried to “relax”, not to think about the steps, and to surrender myself to Rick’s leading. This was not easy because he was clearly enjoying the spacious floor and the attention, as he was throwing in all kinds of movements, slides, and other dips and tricks, making it more difficult for me to dance without thinking. After the song was over, I walked off the dance floor to get a drink. But before I reached the bar my acquaintance Dwight came to me, grabbed my hips, and said: “gurrrrll, you need to mooove those hips while you’re dancing kizomba, that’s part of the dance! You gotta practice it at home gurrrlll Make it sexy!”

I was quite surprised by Dwight’s remark. Initially I was a little shocked by his forwardness to grab me by the hips and demonstrating the movements I should have made. According to Dwight, kizomba was a “sexy” dance that should be performed “sexily”. The level of sexiness of the dance was directly related to the manner and amount of one type of movement made, executed by one body part: the undulating movement of the pelvis. According to Dwight, I was not performing kizomba “right” because I was not undulating enough. In this sense, Dwight’s comments can be interpreted as a critique on my dancing skills but they are first and foremost a critique on my gendered performance. Indeed, I am not performing my part as a woman right, because allegedly in kizomba dancing, the woman should sexily undulate her pelvis.

The perspective that kizomba should be danced with big and sexy undulations can undoubtedly be ascribed to the circulation of the mass-mediated images through Facebook and YouTube, especially of the “famous” booty of Sara Lopez. Considering that Dwight is on Facebook it is very probable that these images influenced his perceptions on a so-called proper female kizomba performance. Moreover, being a regular salsa dancer, Dwight had observed many salsa shows and had therefore developed a “critical audience perspective”. In this light, my “incorrect” movements might be ascribed to his ideas about the correct execution of staged performances, which are typically characterized by exaggerated movements. With this comment Dwight thus accorded me freedoms to move, to “be” more sexy and more feminine. But even though Dwight’s remarks might seem liberating, they also
have a policing effect on my gender role. Through positive reinforcement, Dwight encouraged me to perform my gendered role more, to “be” more feminine and sexy.

After my initial consternation caused by Dwight’s forwardness, his comments did encourage me to explore the boundaries of my gender role, and the parameters and rules that surrounded and informed the movements made and allowed on the dance floor in general. During the next few parties, I decided to play with different undulations in order to explore the circumstances for receiving social critique, at times dancing modest and coy, at other times with big undulations and with more explicit thrusting. I also played with dressing “up”, and dressing “down” to explore gendered, sexual and class boundaries. The following case exemplifies the limits of my performed gender role.

“You’re not allowed to dance like that”!
One night I went to a kizomba nightclub in Rotterdam together with my friend Angie, wearing a tight low-rise, straight-leg blue jeans with a black sleeveless top, my bronze-colored dance shoes, make-up and my hair up tight in a pony tail. This outfit (including my make-up) was considered casually sexy by standards of the Dutch kizomba scene. By Rotterdam clubbing standards it would have likely been considered not sexy enough but considering it was a weekday, this outfit sufficed. My dancing improved steadily, so I was “thinking less” and dancing more easily.

My friend Angie and I were standing by the bar, chatting, drinking a beer and watching people dance. A man stood next to me and ordered a beer as well. Apparently, Angie and I had already “broken” one gendered rule because this man commented on us drinking beer. His comment made clear that drinking beer is a faux pas because it is not very lady-like. From here on we started chatting. His name was Michael. Considering we were in a kizomba nightclub, I asked him how long had he been dancing kizomba. He said that he danced his own version of kizomba, so I was curious what this was. He told me he could show me, but that I needed to dance with him. We danced, and indeed, it was not the kizomba I had learned in class. I asked him what exactly are we dancing? He answered that it was “his” mixture, referring to his ethnonational descent: some Antillean zouk steps combined with some Surinamese dance steps. He joked that in order to dance this type of dance, you only need one tile, because people dance in such close proximity. We danced two songs on one tile and then went back to Angie who had fun watching us. The three of us chatted some more until Jesse, an acquaintance from dance class, asked me to dance. But before Jesse and I stepped onto the dance floor, he introduced me to his girlfriend.

Having danced many weeks with Jesse in class, I felt comfortable dancing in his frame. We had been taught the same dance figures so I knew the figures he might lead me
in, which created a sense of trust. Dancing with Jesse felt comfortable and pleasurable, more so than with Michael because Jesse was more familiar with the dance (as I knew it) and provided me more space than just one tile. Jesse kept plenty of room for me to move (some men keep such a tight hold that there is barely room to move) which also meant that there was not much physical connection. In this respect, it was a very “decent” kizomba. When the song was over, I returned to the spot where Angie and Michael were still standing and talking together. They both looked at me smiling. Apparently, they were talking about me. Michael, whom I had known for about 20 minutes by now, bluntly told me: “If you were my girlfriend I would not allow you to dance like that”. I asked him “what do you mean”? He responded that my movements were “too sexy”, implying that I executed the pelvic undulation too sensually, at least for his taste.

This puzzled me. Contrary to the dance studio where Dwight told me that I needed to move more sexily, now I was suddenly dancing too sexily. This remark surprised me also because dancing with Jesse felt so comfortable to me, it did not feel like we were crossing any (sexual) boundaries. With his particular way of leading, Jesse provided space from our mid-section down till the feet. There was ample space between our crotches and there was no sexual intent. Because I felt comfortable with Jesse’s leading and with his personal energy, I trusted him to lead me which ensured that I could surrender myself to his leading and to the dance. As a result, I did not think about dancing, I was just dancing. Consequently, aided by the crowdedness on the dance floor and the club in general and the barely lit nightclub, the level of my self-consciousness had gone down to a minimum and I was “in the flow”. I had been practicing the undulating movement of the pelvis at home, “without spilling coffee”, and apparently the training paid off.

Michael’s comments made me wonder what factors determine the movements that are, or are not allowed. Naturally, the undulating pelvic movement is encouraged and stimulated in the dance studio, a space where people are practicing. So a dance studio is a relatively single-minded place: people come to learn to dance. There might be people who have other agendas, but for the most part people come to learn and therefore need to practice. In this respect then, it is a “safe” public environment to practice and to play with one’s sensuality. The nightclub on the other hand, is a different public place in which people with varying agendas come together. Different people come with different intentions to a nightclub, ranging from recreation to socializing and dancing, to finding a romantic or sexual partner. I was not familiar with Michael’s intentions. However, his comment suggested two things. One, there is, apparently, a perfect amount of being sexy; not too little and not too much. The second suggestion was that I had overdone it.
The abovementioned examples of Dwight and Michael demonstrated the freedoms (everybody is undulating their pelvis) and restrictions of the dance (you should undulate, but not too much), and thereby the boundaries of performing female sensuality in the nightclub. Because the boundaries seemed so elusive they created ambiguity on my part. The ambiguous experience of performing sensuality is a recurring struggle for many women, as many scholars have indicated. Reed (1998) for instance, points out that ‘dance is often an ambivalent and problematic performance site for women as it demonstrates contradictory and ambivalent attitudes about female sexuality’ (ibid:517). She continues by explaining that ‘Cowan (1990) discusses how female sexuality is regarded in northern Greece as both pleasurable and threatening. In dancing, women are encouraged to display their beauty, energy, skill, sensuality, and even seductiveness, while they are simultaneously viewed with suspicion for drawing too much attention to themselves or failing to maintain self-control (Cowan 1990:190). Because of the inherent ambiguity of bodily actions, there is often no consensus on what distinguishes “a ‘legitimately’ sensual and pleasing gesture from one that ‘goes too far,”’, and thus, for women, the pleasures of dance are often ambiguous (Cowan 1990:190-91, quoted in: Reed 1998:517).

In kizomba dancing women are also encouraged to display their beauty, skills and sensuality, as we have seen during the dance classes and from my encounter with Dwight. Yet, simultaneously, women should be careful drawing too much attention towards themselves, as Cowan’s findings in Greece and Michael’s case illustrated.

These examples illustrated that the performance of female sensuality is bounded by certain rules, the boundaries that serve as limits to mobility. But what are those rules and how are they decided? Coming next, I argue that these rules and their embedded ideologies are inextricably related to and dependent on place and class. Moreover, there are different rules pertaining to the intersections between place and dress and demeanor, place and time, and place, music and movement. Looking at these three sets of place-bounded rules allows an understanding of difference-making, particularly gendered, ethnosexual and class difference but also including ethnonational and ethnoracial difference through the public performance of female sensuality.

Dress and Demeanor

First of all, borders and boundaries of a nightclub are different than those of the dance studio. Generally, in order to enter a nightclub, one has to be “dressed up”, which can be understood as magnifying one’s gender, sexuality and class. Typically, there were two gendered categories available in a kizomba nightclub: male or female. At kizomba parties, men generally magnified their masculinity, sexuality and class through dress and demeanor. Examples included wearing tight upper-body clothing, wearing perfume and jewelry such as
(thick) necklaces, bracelets and watches, etc. The majority of men were “buff”, muscular, or in good shape and many were tattooed. Women also generally dressed in a way that magnified their femininity and sexuality, including high heels (7cm and up), tight clothing (mostly hot pants, leggings, treggins [a thicker kind of legging], or slim fit jeans) with a tight top, perfume, and jewelry such as earrings, bracelets, necklaces. Finally, hairstyle was an important characteristic of dressing up for women, making it big and curly, straight, tying it up to wear it on one side (usually the left side so that there would be no hair in the guys' face while dancing), tightly pulled back in a high pony tail, or in a fancy bun or upsweep. So, in short, the club can be considered a public space where gender, sex roles and class are magnified.16

**Place and Time**

The rules for dress and demeanor are further informed by particular time/place combinations. Overall, parties organized by dance companies and hosted within the dance studio were generally considered “classier”, with people dressing less overtly sexy (that is, less emphasis was placed on the body or on body parts). Such parties usually started between 21.00 – 22.00 hrs, until 24.00 – 02.00 hrs. Parties organized by dance companies but located in nightclubs were considered more urban, where people experience more freedom to dress up, by generally dressing sexier. These parties usually occurred from 22.00 hrs until 02.00 – 04.00 hrs. Finally, parties organized by a third party, so not a dance company but a party organizer, or an individual dance instructor, were generally considered most “urban” and popular, where people dressed overtly sexy, women accentuating their booties, and men their toned bodies. These parties usually started a little later, around 23.00 and 23.30 hrs (doors are usually opened at 22.00) until 03.00 - 04.00 hrs.

**Music and Movement**

Another significant characteristic of the way people executed their movements was the kind of music played at parties. For instance, there was a significant difference between urban parties that played a lot of tarraxinha (literally: screw driving), an electronic musical derivative from kizomba that emphasized the beat to which (generally younger) people danced in closer proximity with more pelvic thrusting, undulation and body contact, and

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16 Kizomba parties were customarily frequented by black and white people from the lower to upper-middle classes. However, typically, the most common form of dress and demeanor could have generally been attributed to representing lower-to-middle class dress style. In this sense, I found it interesting to notice that many upper-middle class people, especially whites, engaged in what Desmond calls “slumming”, ‘a temporary excursion across lines dividing social classes in the search for pleasure’ (ibid: 1993:43). Apparently, “slumming”, like twerking, provides class, sexual and gendered liberties that everyday upper and middle class boundaries typically does not allow.
between kizomba parties that mostly played cabo-zouk or cabo-love, where the general atmosphere was more romantic. The type of music played depended on a variety of factors, including the DJ playing that evening, the location of the venue, the party’s or party organizer’s reputation, and on the crowd that was present.

A DJ evidently has a strong influence on the type of music being played. The most popular kizomba DJs in the Netherlands were broadly divided along gendered and ethnonational lines. Most DJs were either Cape Verdean men, Dutch-Caribbean men or women, or Angolan men. Cape Verdean DJs typically played more Cape Verdean kizombas, such as cabo-zouk, cabo-love, and ghettozouk and some ‘home-made’ tarraxinha’s, whereas Angolan DJs played predominantly Angolan kizombas, and also much more semba, kuduro and Afrohouse. DJs were considered an important feature of a kizomba party, and they partly predetermined what kind of evening it would become. Many of my respondents expressed a clear preference for the style of one or two DJs and many stated they were willing to drive up to an hour and a half for a party where that particular DJ was playing. Generally, there were two “camps” among regular kizomba dancers: adherents of Cape Verdean and Dutch-Caribbean DJs, and adherents of Angolan DJs. Commonly, parties where Cape Verdean or Dutch-Caribbean DJs played had a more intimate atmosphere, due to the lower beats per minute of the music played (80–88bpm), but also because the venues were normally darker inside, which promoted closing their eyes while dancing and getting into the flow. Many places also had a machine producing smoke that deteriorated that little sight there was left. On the other hand, parties where Angolan DJs played were generally more upbeat, due to the faster pace of the music and a predominant focus on partying and having fun. Also, these parties were typically more lit, especially when the DJ played semba, a faster paced couple dance with less body contact and more dips and tricks, or kuduro where mostly Angolan men gathered either in a circle or line to dance.

To summarize, this section demonstrated that the public performance of gender and sexuality in the kizomba nightclub was a balancing act between freedoms and restrictions. I have illustrated that the public performance of female sensuality was an ambiguous and contradicting experience, due to the policing of my movements by men. Accordingly, I argue that the freedom to move, or the freedom to be in the club, is defined by gendered and sexual performatives, whose authority and existence are reiterated through such recurring policing instances. These policing instances themselves show the underlying gendered and sexual ideologies present in the club, and perhaps more generally so in Dutch society: women should be sexy in public, but not too sexy, and women should be “feminine” (ordering for instance wine, as opposed to beer), the performance of which might also be confusing.
because its “proper” performance is connected to particular place/time dependent rules. Receiving commentary for ordering a beer, grabbing me by the hips demonstrating me how I should move, or telling me that I would not be “allowed” to dance like that if I were your girlfriend, seem innocent and not very problematic at first sight. However, the problem with such comments is that they reproduce gendered and sexual difference in an almost invisible way (Nagel 2003, Butler 1993). What makes it even more problematic is that most of these “policing instances”, where I am told how to be(have) as a woman, are most of the time unconscious and unintended, which makes it even more difficult to question and to alter them.

But naturally, these policing instances do not only apply from men to women, they also work the other way around, as the next section will make clear. Questioning gendered and sexual performatives becomes perhaps even more elusive in the Netherlands when we place race in its intersection with gender and sexuality on the analytical foreground. Here it becomes clear that white Dutch women participate – albeit often unconsciously and unintentionally – in othering, thereby ultimately contributing to the maintenance of structural and institutional racism in the Netherlands.

### 6.3 Black Hyper-sexuality and “Dangerous” Desirability

As mentioned in the introduction of this chapter, the second section analyzes the intersectional production of racial, sexual and gendered difference and illustrates how policing is not only done by black men towards white women, but also the other way around: white Dutch women policing the movement of black men. It particularly concentrates on the production of difference through provocation of racial essentialisms and embodied micro-aggressions towards others, specifically towards black men. I argue that even the unintentional and unconscious forms of difference-making contribute to racial and sexual performatives that serve to maintain structural and institutional racism prevalent in the Netherlands.

The first case exemplifies the production of ethnoracial and sexual difference through white essentialist notions of the black body, which –in contrast to the white body- allegedly has rhythm flowing through its blood.

#### “Blood transfusion”

It was a Friday night and I was at a kizomba/bachata party (80/20%). It was relatively early, 23.00 hrs, and the party was far from started. I looked around to see only one couple dancing kizomba, a very tall white Dutch man with a significantly smaller Asian looking woman whom I both recognized from salsa parties. Their dancing looked a bit uncomfortable due to their
difference in height. The other people at the party were seated in couples or in small groups in the corners and against the walls. I ordered a drink at the bar. A white Dutch woman in her late forties or early fifties came to stand next to me and ordered a drink as well. We started chatting. Elsa asked me if I also came here alone and if so, whether I wanted to sit with her to talk a little bit. We sat down somewhere in the middle of the line of chairs so that we had a good overview of the dance floor.

There were some more people dancing now, but overall, it was still very quiet. It might have been due to other parties being organized this evening, or because this one particular party was not promoted very well via social media unlike most other kizomba parties. We were both looking at the tall man who was still dancing with the much shorter woman. Elsa pokes me in the arm and remarked: “That sure doesn’t look right does it, such a long, stiff, white man with such a tiny little woman. It just doesn’t look pretty. You’ve got to have feeling for it. There is no flow! Dark men are able to do that better, they have a natural feeling for it”. I thought to myself, well that’s interesting, and so I asked her “Why do you think that is”? “Well”, Elsa replied, they’re just grown up with that, it is just in their blood”. “In their blood?!”, I asked with supposed surprise. “Yes, of course. Dark men are just born with a sense of rhythm, it is just in their bodies, in their blood. They have passion and feeling. Most white men don’t have that”. I asked: “Ok, so what if a white man gets into a car accident in which he loses a lot of blood and receives a blood transfusion from a black man, is the white man than able to dance with rhythm”? She laughed out loud by my seemingly absurd question and answers “Of course not!” Pretended to be confused, I asked: “But then it is not in their blood“?! Elsa replies abruptly “well…uhm…..yes…. uhm…. no… “ She started laughing again “Well, you know what I mean”!

Elsa probably meant that black people in the Netherlands are typically seen as being better dancers than white people, due to their cultural upbringings in which musical festivities and dance activities are more prevalent and common than in the Netherlands. This prevalence would allegedly lead to a more “natural” sense of rhythm, because music and dance were being embodied from a young age. But she did not say this. Elsa’s remark suggested that she was ingrained with the idea that black people are born with rhythm and that rhythm is located somewhere in their bodies. In this view, white people on the other hand, are supposedly not born with rhythm, and therefore they do not have rhythm located in their bodies. According to Elsa, rhythm was some “thing” innate to black bodies and it could not be transferred to a white body, not even with a blood transfusion. Elsa’s remark of rhythm being located in the body reminded me of Evans-Prichard’s ethnography on the Azande, in which he describes that the Azande allocate mangu, a material witchcraft-substance, to the
bodies of certain persons which can be found inside their bodies after autopsy (ibid 1976:226). But of course, rhythm cannot be found in a black body after autopsy, neither does rhythm flow as a substance through “black blood”.

Elsa’s deep-rooted conviction that black and white bodies are different, and that there is a innate, ‘natural’ difference between these bodies that cannot be overcome illustrates how racial ideas are so deeply embedded in the mind that they just seem to feel natural or logical and that their validity often goes unquestioned. This way they become performative. However, the notion that black and white bodies are naturally different enacts a social distancing or othering that resembles the allochtoon/autochtoon debate. As mentioned earlier in chapter four, ‘the stuff of which both allochthons and autochthons are made is built in – their identity is essential; and it is eternal– their ‘origins’ are always identifiable. No amount of time will turn an allochthon into an authochthon’ (Yanow & van der Haar 2012:20,21).

When I tried questioning her thoughts by suggesting the idea of a blood transfusion, Elsa experienced discomfort. Her discomfort suggests that the performative mechanism tries to keep itself in place, by not wanting or not being able to reflect upon one’s own conviction. Her “shutting off” is a sign that the limits of performativity have been reached. In fact, through shutting off, the performative mechanism keeps itself in place, along with the deep-rooted conviction that there is an insuperable difference between black and white bodies.

Elsa was not the only white Dutch person who presented such essentialist notions, so I do not wish to suggest that this is only her deep-rooted conviction. Elsa’s case is not a case of individual racism. It is however an example of how Elsa is a part of a complex whole in which she grew up and through which she developed ideas and knowledge about herself and others. But growing up in a “culture of avoidance” as Essed & Trienekens (2008) call the Netherlands in terms of race and otherness, has implications for positioning the self vis-à-vis the other. She does not realize she is reproducing difference. Elsa came by herself to the party, which she herself later described as bold because none of her friends or family danced Latin dances (including kizomba). In this respect, it might be brave, a sign of modernity, independence and gender equality that she leaves her (white) husband and daughter at home to go dancing once a week, as she told me later. On the other hand, she comes to dance with a black male, because in her eyes, he is the one with rhythm, thereby ultimately, yet unconsciously and unintentionally participating in a process of othering and difference-making.

But while the production of difference is made evident through narration, the next and final example shows that difference-making also occurs through processes of embodiment. Ideas about difference are often so deeply ingrained in the body that it automatically and
unconsciously responds to difference. These ideas about difference are thus embodied and reproduced through the body. Therefore, the last example illustrates that difference is not only re/produced through essentialist ideas and narratives about the other, but that difference is also reinstated through bodily actions. The next case exemplifies how internalized ideas about difference are embodied and how the body, like the mind, is scripted to react to difference.

“Bag lady”
I was talking to a white Dutch fellow anthropology student named Laura about my fieldwork. As an amateur photographer/filmmaker, Laura proposed to join me one evening of kizomba dancing so that she could try to make photographs and/or a short film. Being still in training, she reckoned that filming movement in a setting with limited natural light would be good practice for her. If she succeeded, I could incorporate her photographs or film into my thesis. I took her up on her offer and picked her up one week later to drive to a party together.

Once in the car, I asked her how she was feeling to go out on a weekday. Being a mother and a little older than most students, she replied that she hadn’t gone out in a long time, and felt a little nervous. She did not know what to expect because she was neither acquainted with kizomba nor with kizomba parties. She said she could imagine a friendly and relaxed atmosphere because she danced tango and was familiar with social tango evenings. I explained her that kizomba parties were different from tango parties, for a variety of reasons. For one, the kizomba party I was taking her was a very popular weekly concept, frequented by a young and urban crowd ranging in the ages from 20-40 years old. Also, the venue is generally dimly lit so as to promote a feeling of intimacy. On top of that, people dance in close proximity and there can be more body contact, depending on both dancers’ intentions.

We entered the party at around 22.00 hrs and it was already packed. After I had discussed what would be the best spot to film or shoot pictures with the party’s organizer, Laura and I went to the back of the club where she could prepare her equipment. She asked me: “Isn’t there a wardrobe where I can safely leave my coat, bag and things?” I replied “No, but you can just leave your things here, on the window sill, or you can put them in the corner over there. It doesn’t matter where you put your things because it’s safe either way, people won’t steal”. She looked at me as if I had lost my mind. After all, we were in a large urban city that had an image of being violent and unsafe, and in many white minds this is partly due to the large proportion of non-white Dutch people residing in the city. I tried reassuring her and told her nothing was going to happen.
Even though she did place her things in the window sill, I could tell she did not feel comfortable doing so. I got her a drink and she set up her equipment in front of her belongings. Laura told me to go dancing so that she could make photographs or film. I danced several songs and then informed how she was doing. She said she had difficulties shooting film because it was too dark inside. So from that point on, she had nothing left to do. We were standing next to each other on the sideline of the dance floor, which in social dancing terms means that you would like to dance.

Several -black- men "approached her" and asked her to dance, whom she all declined. I told her: “Have fun, go dancing, just try to follow!” and after the fifth request by -another black- man, she consented. “Will you look after my stuff”, she asked, and she went onto the dance floor. While dancing, she alternately looked at her bags, at me, and back at her bags again, excitedly yet anxiously, with her eyes wide open. She looked like she was having great fun yet experiencing great anxiety at the same time. There she was, dancing, with an unfamiliar man who was touching her in places she was not used to in tango dancing; her lower back, the in-and outside of her knee, the face, the upper body. After the song was over she came to me and I asked her about her dance. “Oh my God! I felt that he was touching me everywhere, He was so close, his legs were between my legs, pushing my legs out or to the side. He was pushing his fingers in my lower back, and he wanted me to place my hand around his neck”.

The tone of her voice and her body language made clear that she was freaked out. She faced the dance floor with a frown of disapproval and her arms tightly crossed. Then, she stood in front of her bags and things, protecting it from some perceived proximate danger. Agitatedly, she asked me whether my partner was alright with me dancing kizomba. After all, she opined that it was very close, even to the point of outward disgusting: “The way that people dry-hump against each other, and how they are touching each other, is completely disgusting. It is like foreplay, but then with many different people! One song these woman are dry-humping this guy, and the next song they’re dry-humping that guy! I can understand if your partner would not be very comfortable with you dancing kizomba, especially because most of the men are black and there seems to be such a lack of restraint. If you’re dancing so close so often, I think it can be really dangerous for a relationship”.

Laura clearly experienced personal boundaries, so we decided to call it a night. Despite that the pictures or film were not successful, her remarks give fruitful insights into the production of difference through the body.

Laura felt a little nervous but excited when we were driving to the party, but it quickly turned into profound anxiety when she entered the club. Her anxiety arose out of a
combination of factors: the dimly lit dance floor gave her an initial sense of insecurity. The lacking of a wardrobe fed on this insecurity, because she would need to leave her bags unattended in a dark room, making it more difficult to look after the belongings. The predominantly black people present intensified her anxiety, because, in combination with the abovementioned characteristics, she associated a dark room filled with black people with danger and crime. Lastly, Laura considered people’s movements and forms of interaction inappropriate, which added to her overall sense of being out of place.

Analyzing Laura’s case illustrates two important points. The first elucidates how ideas about the ethnoracial other are often -unconsciously- so deeply rooted, not only in the mind but also in the body, that they are indeed fully embodied, but also evoke bodily reaction. Being in a dark room with black people, especially black men in an urban city supposedly equals danger, to which the body reacts by grabbing and protecting the bags. In this sense, the body is scripted to react to difference. The problem is that these automatic and unconscious bodily reactions work as performatives, reinstating difference through their enactment. Indeed, every time a white woman grabs her bags when a black man comes near her, she unconsciously reinstates difference through her bodily actions. These small, everyday verbal or behavioral derogatory and insulting acts towards people are referred to as “micro-aggressions” (Burdsey 2011, Pittman 2012).

The second point ties into the first and it shows the interconnection of race, sex, gender and class and how the crossing of these boundaries provokes bodily reaction. Laura considered people’s movements and forms of interaction inappropriate, which added to her overall sense of being out of place. This raised boundaries related to the intersection of race, sexuality, gender and class, using phrases such as “disgusting”, “lacking restraint”, “foreplay”, and “dry-humping”, thereby differentiating between a proper way and an improper way of being sexual. Laura’s remark demonstrates that the people in this club were “too sexual”. Indeed, the man she was dancing with was “touching her everywhere” and overall, the people who were dancing obviously “lacked restraint”. In fact, dancing kizomba might even be “dangerous to my relationship”, suggesting that black male sexuality is so powerful that I might fall victim to it. But in addition to being too sexual, women were also not performing their gender “right”. Laura’s remark that “these woman are dry-humping this guy, and the next song they’re dry-humping that guy”, implied that this was not very lady-like or classy. In short, according to Laura, dancing kizomba equaled sexual debauchery, depicting black men and women as oversexed, immoral and uncivilized. She perceived them to be hypersexual, and this hypersexuality was an immediate threat, which she embodied and made visible through her body language (tightly crossing the arms, frowning, turning down the head). By disapproving and disregarding the movements made as inappropriate and unrestrained she
not only placed the other as sexually debauched but the self as being supreme with superior morale and proper sexuality.

So what can we conclude from these examples? Both Elsa as well as Laura’s case illustrated that the production of ethnoracial and sexual difference often occurs unconsciously and unintentionally. Evidently, this is problematic because people are not aware of their own discriminatory practices, yet they contribute to structural and institutional racism in the club, but more generally so in Netherlands. The reactions in both cases also informs us about underlying Dutch racial and sexual ideologies. In both instances, the idea of the superior white person as being more developed and rational (Elsa), with superior morale and proper sexuality (Laura) prevails. Again, the problem is the level of unawareness among white Dutch people, as is evinced by my respondents who do not consider themselves to be racists. After all, how could you be a racist when you enjoy dancing with so many different people?

6.4 Conclusion
In the final chapter of this thesis, I have demonstrated and argued that the production of difference in the club often occurred unconsciously and unintentionally. Sadly, this does not prevent difference-making from happening.

I examined two main forms of difference-making in the club: (1) Gendered and ethnonsexual difference was produced by men who were policing the movements of the female body. (2) Ethnoracial difference was produced through provoking essentialist notions dividing between black and white. Also, ethnoracial, sexual and gendered difference was produced through bodily micro-aggressions: scripted bodily reactions to otherness.

On a final note, examining racial issues in a “culture of avoidance” is relatively uncomplicated and accessible when comments are verbalized because these are easily recognized, documented and analyzed. However, embodied notions of difference are a lot less straightforward to examine and analyze. Nevertheless, I believe that studying sensitive issues such as race in the Netherlands through embodied reactions is a fruitful way to study racial difference, especially so because often race is sexed and sex is raced (Nagel 2003), and so the body will always be present in the equation. Nonetheless, much work obviously needs to be done in the Netherlands before we can all really be equal.
Chapter 7: Conclusion

This thesis has examined the social production of difference in the Dutch kizomba scene. Using an intersectional approach to difference, I have analyzed the production of, and intersections between ethnonational, ethnoracial, ethnosexual, and gendered difference through the modes of narration, performance and embodiment.

The backdrop of this thesis was the ambiguity prevalent in the Netherlands regarding Dutchness and otherness. While there is an adherence to the belief that all people are (formally) equal, structured inclusions and institutionalized difference are part of everyday life in the Netherlands. The problematic differentiation made between the categories allochtoon (of foreign birth) and autochtoon (of Dutch ancestry), creating an essential difference that can never be overcome, was one example of this ambiguous difference-making. In addition, I explained the problematic situation regarding the Dutch unwillingness to recognize the exclusionary racist practices and structures within Dutch society. Structural marginalization of immigrants and institutional discrimination are prevalent, yet remain largely unacknowledged in Dutch society. This is largely due to the apparent “culture of avoidance” prevalent in the Netherlands, and the concurrent adherence to the belief that there is no race, and thus no racism.

Examining sensitive issues such as race and sexuality in a “culture of avoidance” required a combination of analytical and research tools. I have studied difference through the analytical concepts of mobility, performance and performativity. As has been mentioned in chapter two, mobility and difference are closely related subjects because the movement of people, especially movement of others has often evoked the erection of borders and boundaries (Fassin 2011; Yuval-Davis & Stoetzler 2002). I have approached mobility in two ways: focusing on macro-movements, or global mobility; and exploring micro-movements, movements at the level of the body, or bodily mobility. Informed by Cresswell (2006) and Desmond (1993), I have examined the surrounding parameters that inform and structure mobility.

Regarding the study of performance and performance sites, I have drawn from Gupta & Ferguson’s (2012) shared and connected spaces, and Condry’s (2006) “interaction of paths”, considering those dance schools, nightclubs and other places that have facilitated kizomba’s materialization and proliferation throughout the Netherlands. Additionally, I have employed Sterling’s (2010) more political approach of the “performative field”, that included ‘the network of spaces in which performance represents a definite mode wherein the commonalities and differences between participants are worked through, ultimately aiming to reveal the social powers that surround those performances’ (ibid: 22). In order to study the social powers surrounding those performances, I have utilized Judith Butler’s concept of
performativity (1993). According to Butler, performance is performative, which means that performance is ‘not a singular act, but a ritualized production’, one which is dependent on a process of iterability,…‘a regularized and constrained repetition of norms’ (Butler ibid:95). I have also demonstrated that performativity is a powerful mechanism of social construction and control, because it usually works unconsciously and therefore goes unnoticed.

I have employed several different research methods, including participant observation, mostly in the form of dancing, interviewing, social media analysis, anthropology of the senses, including proprioception and auto-ethnography, mapping the scene, observation and dance diaries (one myself and one from my female dance instructor).

After I delineated the contemporary political condition of Dutch society in chapter four, I briefly described kizomba’s cultural globalization from its African roots to its reterritorialization in the Dutch Latin scene. I explained that the Dutch Latin scene is embedded in a Dutch-Caribbean network which is generally divided along ethnonational, ethnoracial and gendered lines. For instance, most dance company owners and dance instructors were males of white Dutch or Dutch-Caribbean descent. As kizomba reterritorialized in this Dutch-Caribbean network where most of the instructors are of Dutch or Dutch-Caribbean descent, I demonstrated how the form and content of kizomba instructing changed and, concurrently, that kizomba creolized (Caldwell 2008). Along the way of kizomba’s cultural transmission, the meaning of kizomba changed, now also reflecting Dutch, Dutch-Caribbean, Cape Verdean influences. Having analyzed the global flows and the relevant political-economic infrastructures of the Dutch kizomba scene, chapter five and six engaged in a micro-political approach to the production of difference.

The first part of chapter five auto-ethnographically described the production of gendered and sexual difference in the dance studio. Demonstrating that the public performance of sensuality was dependent on and informed by the gendered and sexual rules that were learned in the dance studio and internalized within the body, it showed that the performance of sensuality was mostly concerned with the collective encouragement of the individual training of the undulating pelvic motion, which ultimately contributed to commodification of the female booty and resultantly, in processes of self-exoticization. This was often experienced as sexually liberating. Yet, despite the liberties it may provide, I argued that in the end processes of self-exoticization through commodifying the own booty works as a demeaning performative because it is based on a disciplining and internalized male gaze. I demonstrated that this process parallels contemporary trends found in popular culture, specifically in hip-hop such as “twerking”.

The second part of chapter five is an ethnographic analysis of the distinction many white Dutch respondents made between the alleged “black body” in opposition to “the white
mind”. Discursively represented as compliments for being “more in touch with their inner selves”, something that was romantically praised by white Dutch people who supposedly were “stuck in their heads and had lost contact with their bodies”, this section illustrated how racial inversion or “positive” othering produced ethnoracial and ethnonational difference by provoking old dichotomies that distinguished between black and white, emotional and rational, and body and mind. Additionally, this section explained how kizomba dancing addressed the need among many white Dutch respondents to be mindful and to reconnect with the self and analyzed it through the concurrent discursive notion that black bodies were supposedly more in touch with their bodies (because they allegedly would be closer to nature). Considering this, black bodies supposedly facilitated the alienated white body to reconnect to itself.

The first part of chapter six is a partially auto-ethnographic account of the public performance of gender and sensuality in a kizomba nightclub. It examined the production of gendered and sexual difference, but it also considered its intersection with racial and class performatives. I argued that the freedom to move, or the freedom to “be” in the club, was defined by gendered and sexual performatives, whose authority and existence were reiterated through policing instances of the female body. The second section of the chapter is an ethnographic account of the intersectional production of racial and sexual difference that demonstrated that policing was not only typically done by black men towards white women, but also the other way around: white Dutch women policing the movement of black men. It particularly concentrated on the production of difference through provocation of racial essentialisms and embodied micro-aggressions towards others, specifically towards black men. I argued that even the unintentional and unconscious forms of difference-making contribute to racial and sexual performatives that serve to maintain structural and institutional racism and inequality prevalent in the Netherlands.

The research question of this thesis asked: Within the Dutch kizomba scene, how is ethnonational, ethnoracial, ethnosexual and gendered difference performed, narrated and embodied? This thesis has demonstrated several forms of difference-making in the Dutch kizomba scene, including the embodied production of ethnoracial and ethnosexual difference through micro-aggressions enacted through the body, exemplified by for instance Laura who grabbed her bags when she was in a room of supposedly “hypersexual” and “dangerous” black men. The intersection between ethnoracial and ethnosexual difference has not only been embodied, but also narrated in several cases, that Elsa’s case of the blood transfusion exemplified. Moreover, the commodification and (self)exoticization of the female booty produced gendered and ethnosexual difference that were both embodied, performed and
narrated, as bodily movements were verbalized in dance class, practiced and internalized. Additionally, the production of ethnonational and ethnoracial difference was often closely related and interdependent, as stereotyping and essentializing between “us Westerners who are in our heads” and “the non-whites who are in their bodies” (see personal interview with Connie, chapter 5) demonstrated, among others. Closely related, narrated racial inversion was another process of difference-making examined in this thesis.

This thesis sought to make two interventions in contemporary academic literature. The first intervention related to recent research on mobility and its often made connection with nationality and race. Looking beyond obvious, evident boundaries where freedom and restrictions are made and remade, such as national boundaries (Cunningham & Heyman 2004, Fassin 2011, Yuval-Davis & Stoetzel 2002), I researched mobility by taking the body as point of departure instead, focusing on bodily mobility and the parameters that surround and inform mobility in the Dutch kizomba scene. I have analyzed the often contradictory and ambiguous balancing act between bodily freedoms and restrictions by considering the disciplining of the female body in the dance studio, and by exploring the policing of bodies in the nightclub. I have attempted to explore the performative mechanisms behind these authoritarian performative structures that navigate the movements that are made. I have done so by examining for instance who was (and who was not) allowed to move how, to what extent, under which conditions, where, when and why.

The second intervention related to existing literature on performance and performativity, which are most often analyzed through the conceptual lens of gender, sexuality and the body. I attempted to extend this perspective by examining the relation of performance and performativity to concepts of ethnonationality and ethnoraciality. The first case I would like to demonstrate is the intersection between the performativity of whiteness as well as the performativity of Western-ness, as a supposed “neutral” replacement for Dutchness. These racial and national performatives are highly related to Essed & Trienekens (2008) “culture of avoidance”, and are reiterated through the distinction many white Dutch respondents made between the alleged “black body” as opposed to “the white mind”. Discursively represented as compliments for being “more in touch with their inner selves”, such racial inversion or “positive” othering produces ethnoracial and ethnonational difference. The performative nature lies in the fact that these white Dutch assumptions often go unquestioned by the Dutch themselves, recreating their existence and validity by means of ignorance and avoidance. Another clear example of racial performativity included Laura’s case, the white Dutch photographer who protected her bags from a perceived danger in a kizomba nightclub where many black people were present. Her case illustrated how ideas
about the other can be so deeply ingrained in the body that encounters with an (in this case perceived dangerous, hypersexual) other leads to unconscious bodily reactions (micro-aggressions), reproducing difference non-verbally. Although not a case of individual racism, Laura’s actions do participate in the reiteration of ethnoracial and ethnosexual difference. As Butler has argued, performativity is ‘not a singular act, but a ritualized production’, one which is dependent on a process of iterability,…‘a regularized and constrained repetition of norms’ (Butler 1993:95). Laura’s reaction happened unconsciously but this unconsciousness lies at the very core of performativity. Every time a woman grabs her bags when she passes by a black male, she (unconsciously or not) reinstates difference and contributes to the enactment of the racial performatve.

Besides all the wonderful things I have experienced and the great people that I have met during my field work, I also found myself bedazzled at times by the bluntness and seeming insensitivity with regards to racial matters. What I found most problematic is that many of my white Dutch respondents were not aware of their verbalized essentialisms and how these verbalizations or actions contribute(d) to the production of difference. Many respondents considered themselves liberal, modern, free-spirited and open-minded people who have no problem with different ethnicities, races, nationalities, sexes or classes. They would not consider themselves racist and it is also not my intention to call them racist. Therefore, I want to point out that the examples in this thesis are not cases of individual racism. However, their unintended ignorance or unawareness does produce difference (even though they might not be aware of it), and so the culture of avoidance regarding racial matters in the Netherlands and in the kizomba scene, remains.
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The politics of bodily mobility and ethnoracial performativity in a culture of avoidance: dance and Difference-Making in the Dutch Kizomba Scene, examines the social production of difference in the Dutch kizomba scene. It analyzed complex processes of identification and exclusion in a context of Dutch xenophobia and exoticization. It linked the transnational mobility of people and popular culture with intimate, micro-level bodily movements to uncover the surrounding performative mechanisms that contribute to and re-produce difference within the scene and the Netherlands more generally. Kizomba is a recently globalizing music and dance style originating from Angola and Cape Verde. The Dutch kizomba scene is a social site that is mainly comprised out of people of white Dutch, African and African-Caribbean descent. Using an intersectional approach to difference, this thesis has specifically analyzed the production of, and intersections between race, ethnicity, nationality, class, gender and sexuality through the modes of narration, performance and embodiment. The backdrop of this thesis was (and is) the ambiguity prevalent in the Netherlands regarding Dutchness and otherness. While there is an adherence to the belief that all people are (formally) equal, structured inclusions and institutionalized difference is part of everyday life in the Netherlands. The problematic differentiation made between the categories allochtoon (of foreign birth) and autochtoon (of Dutch ancestry), creating an essential difference that can never be overcome, is one example of this ambiguous difference-making. The production of difference has been examined within the context of performances and performance sites, and draws from Gupta & Ferguson’s (2012) shared and connected spaces and Condry’s (2006) “interaction of paths”, considering those dance schools, nightclubs and other places that have facilitated kizomba’s materialization and proliferation throughout the Netherlands. Additionally, Sterling’s (2010) more political approach of the “performative field”, that included ‘the network of spaces in which performance represents a definite mode wherein the commonalities and differences between participants are worked through, ultimately aiming to reveal the social powers that surround those performances’ (ibid: 22), are employed. In order to study the social powers surrounding those performances, Judith Butler’s concept of performativity (1993) has been utilized. The thesis has demonstrated that performativity is a powerful mechanism of social construction and control, because it usually works unconsciously and therefore goes unnoticed. In this sense, it contributes to producing social difference. Several different and innovative research methods were employed, including participant observation, mostly in the form of dancing, interviewing, social media analysis, anthropology of the senses, including proprioception and auto-ethnography, mapping the scene, observation and dance diaries (one from Beljaars herself and one from her female dance instructor). Difference is studied through the analytical concepts of mobility, performance and performativity, thereby intervening in contemporary academic literature. Mobility and difference are closely
related subjects because the movement of people, especially movement of others has often evoked the erection of borders and boundaries (Fassin 2011; Yuval-Davis & Stoetzler 2002). In turn, performance/performativity and difference are closely related subjects because the body is an instrument of performance and a site of performativity where similarities and differences between people are actively being played out.