Chapter 7

Celebrating Asymmetries

*Creole Stratification and
the Regrounding of Home in
Cape Verdean Migrant Return Visits*

Heike Drotbohm

Introduction

Hora di Bai	*Time of Departure*
Se bem é doce,	If return is sweet
Bai é maguado;	departure is bitter
Mas, se ka bado,	but, who does not leave
Ka ta birado!	cannot return
Se no morrê na despedida,	if we die in the moment of goodbye
Nhor des na volta	at the moment of our return
Ta dano bida.	god will revive us.
	—Eugenio Tavares[1]

This chapter deals with the ritualized event of return migration in the West African island state of Cape Verde. Once a central node of transatlantic exchange and connectedness, this country has over time drifted to the margins of global interest, particularly since the abolition of slavery. As in many other places that had been part of these transatlantic entanglements, this historical change resulted in the symbolic revaluation of return migration and in a fusion of mobility, identity and the status of a person. As is told in the Cape Verdean *morna*[2] quoted above, only those who left can return and therewith become fully accepted members of this transnational society.

Despite the heterogeneity of the return migrants of the twenty-first century, who return to their country of origin as tourists, successful investors, relaxed pensioners, disillusioned migrants or deportees, *os retornados,* as the returnees are called, by and large enjoy a good reputation. As will become clear in the fol-

lowing, in countries considerably shaped by a transnational livelihood, different types of diasporic return reveal various political, economic, symbolic and social motives. Above all, recent shifts in the global economy have caused an increase in return migration, and its impact has become highly visible in the countries most involved in international migration. Accordingly, remigration has received more and more scholarly attention (Duval 2004; Markowitz and Stefansson 2004; Conway 2005; Harper 2005; Tsuda 2009). Whereas these studies mainly deal with the social background and conditions of return migration, understood as voluntary and complete, this essay examines the ritualized event of migrant return visits and those encounters between visiting migrants and the nonmigrant island population.

In the following discussion I employ the concept of 'home' as an entry into the nexus between different kinds of belonging, using it to frame the dynamics of social relations, identity and locality. I base my interpretation of return visits on the theoretical premise that 'home' is at once an idea and a social construction as well as a place. Seen this way, 'home' builds on experiences of social continuity and solidarity but also implies processes of differentiation, inequality and enforcement. In this regard I refer to the theoretical framework developed by Sara Ahmed and her colleagues in the introduction to their book *Uprootings/ Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*:

> Uprootings and regroundings emerge from this collective work as simultaneously affective, embodied, cultural and political processes whose effects are not simply given. For example, regroundings – of identity, culture, nation, diaspora – can both resist and reproduce hegemonic forms of home and belonging. (Ahmed et al. 2003: 2)

I intend to show that this labour of 'regrounding home' is not only a diasporic project but also involves those who have never left Cape Verde yet nonetheless contribute in their own way to the meaning and reconstruction of 'home'. I will examine this hypothesis by focusing on a particular kind of migrant return, that is, those returns prompted by patron saint festivities, which annually bring thousands of migrants to their country of origin. Despite the fact that this particular type of Cape Verdean return visit constitutes a crucial link within the transnational field connecting the local peasant community to life in different sites of the Cape Verdean diaspora, its content and meaning have not received sufficient scholarly attention.[3] Here the banderona da Campanas de Baixo (hereafter *banderona*), a festivity carried out every year in the rural north of the Cape Verdean island of Fogo, will be analysed with respect to the interaction between groups of people who consider themselves part of the same social structure but live in different places around the world and thus must negotiate different interests, roles and positions.

My observations are based on twelve months of anthropological fieldwork, carried out between 2006 and 2008 on the islands of Fogo and Brava and in Boston, Massachusetts and in Lisbon, Portugal. This fieldwork was conducted as part of a larger research project examining the quality of transnational family relations. In addition to conventional techniques of qualitative social research and network analysis, the integration of my own family life into the local community of Sao Filipe, interviews in transnational households, and visits to the other islands and to family members living in the diaspora were key to understanding divergent perspectives. To examine the social meaning of the *banderona* in this context, in 2007 I participated in the course of events related to the *banderona* in the village of Campanas, which is part of the *Concelo Galineiro* in the north of Fogo. I further grounded my observations through a subsequent stay in the same village.

Mobility, Return and Social Stratification in Cape Verdean History

The two islands of Fogo and Brava lie at the south-western tip of the Cape Verdean archipelago and belong to the group referred to as the Sotavento ('under the wind'). With the larger neighbouring island of Santiago they are part of the so-called 'plantation complex' (Curtin 1990) that in the course of Portuguese colonialism introduced a creole society on these nine formerly uninhabited islands (Carreira 1982). Although the arid climate precluded the establishment of an extensive sugar industry, Cape Verdean ethnogenesis is based on the asymmetric encounter and miscegenation of Portuguese traders and landowners (*morgados*) and Africans deported from the west coast of the continent. In this context Wilson Trajano Filho underlines the crucial significance of the mobility of individual Cape Verdeans, who from the early phase of the archipelago's settlement served to overcome challenges such as resource scarcity and political conflicts (Trajano Filho 2009: 524). Those individuals were responsible for integrating themselves as *lançados* (literally the thrown-out ones) into transatlantic trading networks and eventually gained economic capital, prestige and influence through trafficking in slaves, salt, rice, textiles and European-manufactured objects (Meintel 1984; Rodrigues 2003). As in other parts of the Senegambia, there gradually developed a creole social structure that even today is based on a discursive perception of 'race' and class as key markers of social differentiation.

By the end of the eighteenth century life on the islands, shaped by increasing overpopulation, supply crises and devastating famines, was managed by combining local subsistence farming and fishing with strategic networking with coastal areas around the Atlantic Rim. More than in other areas of West Africa, national history in Cape Verde is shaped by collective efforts of integration into global labour market networks, much like what occurred in the islands of the Caribbean. In this phase migration became established as a family or household strategy to take advantage of the global inequality of different economic systems. Men in

particular availed themselves of the opportunity to work in European or North American agriculture or industry in order to sustain the family members left behind (Halter 1993; Rodrigues 2008: 354). From the beginning of the 1960s this option also became realistic for women, many of whom found jobs as domestic workers in Europe or the United States (Grassi 2007). Today, the Cape Verdean diaspora,[4] which comprises more than five hundred thousand people (Carling and Åkesson 2009), outnumbers the population remaining in the country of origin, and it seems impossible to find a person in Cape Verde who does not have personal contacts beyond the islands.

However, a closer look at the inner consistency of this society reveals that it is not simply the contact itself, but the type and quality of the contact that factors decisively into the islanders' livelihood. On Fogo and Brava, which due to their altitude receive more rain than the eastern islands and offer comparatively amenable conditions for farming, most households combine gardening and fishing with seasonal wage labour and migrant remittances. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, agriculture had the greater significance for local economies, and patron/client relations between local families were crucial to their position and economic survival. Today alliances between local households are still cultivated – for instance, in the form of foster relations, the daily mobility of children between poorer and wealthier households, or through the exchange of crops or prepared food. Yet it is the intensity of contacts with the diaspora that contributes to the local differentiation between a precarious and a comfortable way of life (Drotbohm 2009).

Although only a minority of the population receives money regularly, even intermittent amounts contribute to a higher quality of life, as they are used for irregular expenses that the poorer segments of society in particular can hardly afford otherwise (Åkesson 2009). Due to this established effect of the diaspora on local living conditions, social stratification is shaped not only by the common patterns of creoleness but also by the dynamics and the transnationalization of social inequalities, which develop between those who are actively integrated into transnational networks and those whose connections are fragile.

As in many other regions shaped by transnational migration, return visits are an important means of articulating or strengthening the liveliness of social relations that transgress national boundaries. In addition to spiritual or religious rituals, life-cycle rituals such as baptism, marriage and funerals offer welcome occasions to reconfirm familial solidarity and reorder social belonging, which has been transformed due to great spatial and temporal distances (Fog Olwig 2002; Gardner and Grillo 2002; Drotbohm 2010). Transnational studies on the meaning of return visits have mainly concentrated on the migrants while largely ignoring the interests of the communities of origin. In adopting a transnational perspective to understand social encounters in the context of the patron saint festivities, it seems appropriate to examine return visits and the joint realization of the *banderona* as

the collective endeavour to reconstruct a 'home'. This endeavour may take on different shapes and meanings for different groups of actors but nonetheless enacts 'the processes, modes and materialities of uprooting and regroundings' (Ahmed et al. 2003: 2). The following sections therefore discuss temporality and processes within transnational social fields that not only recall social relations as they were (before departure) but revive the present (in the moment of the actual encounter) and try to envision a future that may still prove valuable for those involved.

Cartographies of Social and Mobile Differences

In this examination of patron saint festivities, the construction of two social groups – 'migrants' and 'nonmigrant islanders' – will be contrasted. This simplifying classification refers to the 'strategic essentialism', as described by Gayatri Spivak[5] for capturing the manoeuvring of actors who make strategic use of essentializing categories in moments of social differentiation. However, this does not intend to suggest that these categories reflect fixed and clear-cut social formations. Many individuals belonging to this transnational social field would not fit clearly into one of these categories: traders and businessmen, for instance, constantly travel but also cultivate a permanent presence on the islands. Pensioners are another example: because the right to re-entry is often linked to the length of stay abroad, some of them have lost their right to circular migration, but despite these mobility restrictions they still identify themselves as migrants. The two groups – 'migrants' and 'nonmigrants' – should rather be viewed as 'social constructions and moral imaginations' (Malkki 1996: 382) produced by social encounters with mobility.

In addition to this heterogeneity, migrants also belong to different professional and status groups and foster different kinds of attachments to their country of origin or to the diaspora. While some visitors return to the islands to strengthen their social bonds, update their knowledge and identify changes in the lives of their relatives, others see their stay on the islands as a kind of vacation, expressing the desire to relax at a distance from the everyday stresses of their diasporic existence and instead enjoy their diasporic achievements. Return visits also can be part of an 'ethnic' marriage market, inviting migrants to return and connect to those who intend to migrate but have not yet succeeded in doing so. Especially visitors who belong to the so-called second or third generation of Cape Verdean migrants living in the diaspora may use the occasion of a return journey to their parents' or grandparents' home country to acquaint or reacquaint themselves with it, improve their Cape Verdean creole, and simply enjoy days at the beach. According to Loretta Baldassar, members of the following generations often reorient themselves towards their migrant parents' culture of origin in order to understand their own cultural and social background as territorially bounded. In these moments of return migration, a village can become a key place of cultural identity (Baldassar 2001).

Not all migrants return though. Some migrants have no interest in getting involved in their country of origin, perhaps even viewing any social ties to relatives who stayed behind as burdensome. Others cannot return; they may lack the financial wherewithal to do so, be unable to travel long distances, or have an undocumented residence status in the diaspora. Due to this heterogeneity, a return visit is always both an expression of capabilities and the result of individual decision making. Hence, both migrants and nonmigrants often perceive return visits as illuminating the intensity of migrant solidarities and the quality of their ties to the country of origin.

Re-membering Those Abroad

In current times the realization and performance of the *banderona* cannot be imagined without the involvement of the diaspora. It follows a 'transnational division of ritual space' (Salih 2002), connecting persons from both sides of the Atlantic who contribute to the preparation of the celebration. To understand the inner workings of this transnational ritual, one first needs to know that being the *festeiro,* the *banderona*'s main sponsor, is perceived and expressed as an important privilege. Though a local festivities committee composed exclusively of nonmigrants chooses and announces the *festeiro* for the coming year at the end of the preceding *banderona,* over the last twenty years the position of *festeiro* has been delegated solely to migrants, and not, as one might expect, to wealthy locals. As a rule, requests from *migrantes* and their kin who have a legitimate interest in carrying out the *banderona* are sufficient. That said, the honour cannot be given to just anybody – a *festeiro* or his family is supposed to have descended from the village of Campanas and must also have the financial resources to carry out the festivities appropriately. Disagreements usually arise during this selection, revolving around which family the next sponsor should belong to or whether the family relations between the candidate and the locality are considered acceptably close.

The *festeiro* of 2007 received the honour of 'taking the flag' after his name was submitted for the third time. He had strengthened his chances by way of friendly visits to Campanas, his active participation in the festivities over three consecutive years and his ability to mobilize generous sums. The islanders are well aware that migrants have a strong interest in the position of the *festeiro.* Each year the local committee must assess who has a legitimate interest in the position and who articulates this interest the most effectively. As in the case of the *festeiro* of 2007, rejecting an aspirant's request in one year does not preclude the same aspirant in subsequent years; rather, the rejected aspirant often intensifies his efforts by increasing his visits, collecting higher donation amounts and expanding his level of social networking. With regard to financial expectations, the honour of *festeiro* goes hand in hand with the duty, while away from the islands, to organize several fundraising activities during the preparatory year, such as a *tombola* and several

sponsor dinners, with the aim of mobilizing additional sponsors and obtaining larger sums to send to Cape Verde.[6]

One may wonder at this point why migrants are willing to shoulder the costs, burdens and responsibilities of the *banderona.* Many Cape Verdean migrants, for different reasons, value the festivities as an occasion for a return visit, yet many hesitate to become the *festeiro* due to the enormous financial and organizational demands. However, when analysing this kind of prestige or merit festivity, one should not focus solely on the organizing participants. A closer look reveals that not only the returnees but also the island population articulate a clear interest and exert discernible pressure on their diasporic kin to carry out the *banderona.* Being related to a future *festeiro* first of all alters the local position of the family to which the *festeiro* is connected, since the organization of the *banderona* is done on a family basis. In the course of the preparatory year, the *festeiro* remains in continuous contact with the committee as well as with his kin living on the island, who regularly are informed of the amount of money raised and are consulted about the allocation of these sums. At the same time, the *festeiro*'s kin on the island are in charge of collecting money and food donations, planning and coordinating the preparation of the dishes, and deciding on the working groups (cooks, assistants, etc.) who will produce the feast.

In this preparatory phase it becomes obvious that the *banderona,* like similar celebrations in Latin American peasant communities, constitutes an important element in the design and confirmation of local structures of solidarity and cooperation. Lynn Walter (1981), for instance, describes an equivalent procedure in Ecuador and illustrates the generalized reciprocity as it plays out over the course of the festivities, which can result in relations of cooperation but also exacerbate social hierarchies. Similarly, in Cape Verde the position of those households in close contact with the *festeiro* is heightened. Their members serve as local key persons and enjoy the privilege of deciding upon and distributing different functions and resources, which are also viewed as income-generating activities. Hence, those involved in the *banderona*'s execution foster local alliances that will be to their continued advantage beyond the event itself, for instance in the context of local politics or when hiring local labour forces. Comparable to the *tabanca,* a semireligious network of solidarity on the neighbouring island of Santiago (Trajano Filho 2009: 528), the *banderona* helps to lay the foundation for a cooperative structure that prescribes solidarity and support not only during labour-intensive periods of agriculture but also during life crises, such as diseases or funerals, as well as on such occasions as weddings or the construction of a house.

As the days of the *banderona* approach, charter flights and boats arrive from Lisbon, Porto, Paris, Rotterdam, Hamburg and Boston. In this way the festivities bring together Cape Verdeans from across the Cape Verdean diaspora, therefore constituting an occasion to meet not only relatives and friends living on the islands but also those living in other countries. For some migrants this is a

convenient alternative to making visits to several different countries to meet relatives living in other world areas, whereas others, due to financial, political or visa constraints, lack access to the other countries and thus depend on such events in Cape Verde.

In these moments of arrival, it becomes clear that besides responding to 'local' interests, as described above, the *banderona* also serves as an occasion for fostering transnational social relations. The island population makes efforts to host as many visitors as possible, who arrive from neighbouring islands as well as foreign countries. Hosting guests from abroad is seen as an opportunity to foster or initiate social contacts, and hence becomes part of the flow of people, goods and information that connects the island with the rest of the archipelago and its surrounding world. Since these interests usually are communicated efficiently, visitors arriving from the diaspora are expected to bear the considerable cost of additional baggage in order to provide gifts such as clothes, table and bed linens, and whatever else is necessary to ensure their family and friends are well equipped during the feast days. Consequently, before and during the festivities, it is not only the migrants who stand out from the local island population – the people related to migrants likewise set themselves apart by means of their newly received trendy clothes and jewellery. The younger generation in particular appreciates this practice: several times a day they return jointly to their houses, critically examining the new clothes, shoes and shawls before returning to the festival. Later, as they stroll through Campana's small streets wearing their new attire, the visualization and ostentatious display of material abundance highlights the differences between those households that host friends and relatives during the festival days and those that lack any connection to the diaspora. These differences exist throughout the year, but they become particularly obvious during the time of the festivities.

Negotiating Creole Asymmetries and Status Positions

In Campanas the three main days of the *banderona* are the festive highlight of the year. Just as on the other islands – where patron saint festivities are by contrast much more commercialized and more strongly shaped by political party affiliation and connected to the international Cape Verdean music scene[7] – a typically quiet village is transformed for a few days into a noisy party affair. The quality of the party is measured by the influx of visitors, the head count of slaughtered animals, the number of pots filled with traditional Cape Verdean food, the quantities of donated alcohol, and the size and beauty of São João Baptista's altar.

The ritual chronology[8] of the *banderona* is already centuries old. It begins with a Catholic mass for the feast's patron saint on Friday evening. While the women pound corn for traditional corn meals such as *xerem, catxupa* and *jagacida* in huge mortars (*pilões*), the *coladeiras*[9] (singers), accompanied by drummers

and young men on wooden hobbyhorses, move processionally back and forth through the village streets, which are lined by hundreds of spectators and connect the upper and lower parts of the village. Their return signals the start of one of the festival high points – the ritual slaughter of several bullocks, goats, pigs and poultry amid the shouts of spectators and the songs of the *coladeiras.* Another key event of the day is the appearance of masked thieves who show up, snatch a huge portion of meat and disappear before being caught by the youth and carried back to the village. At the end of the feast the *bandeira*, the feast's flag, is blessed by the local priest and run up the feast's pole (Figure 7.1). Together the *kordidjeru* (head of the deciding committee) and the *juiz* (a performer playing the figure of the judge) make the final decision on who will be allowed to take the flag and hence receive the honour of sponsoring the following year's *banderona.* As onlookers applaud, the next *festeiro* grabs the flag and runs jubilantly through the village. Later the flag will be placed on the altar of São João Baptista, where requests by those in need will be made.

An examination of the *banderona*'s historical background reveals continuities as well as transformations in the inherent creole social structure. Félix Monteiro, who studied the *banderona* of the island of Fogo during the 1940s, in his article 'Bandeiras da Ilha do Fogo', subtitled 'o senhor e o escravo divertem-se' ('the master and the slave entertain themselves'), describes the origins of the ritual as

Figure 7.1. A *bandeira,* the feast's flag, is run up the feast's pole. (Photo by Heike Drotbohm, 2007)

an encounter between the white aristocratic upper class and African slaves. After slavery had ended in colonial Cape Verde, the *festeiro,* as the master or sponsor of the feast, likewise fulfilled his obligation to celebrate his wealth, generously distributing it by hosting a costly, lavish festival. As is common in patron/client relationships, the demonstration of wealth and power simultaneously served to reaffirm the loyalty of his subordinates (Monteiro 1958: 10).

Returning migrants, even during the early stages of Cape Verdean colonial history, integrated themselves and their interests into this ritual festivity. In her ethnography on the early, nineteenth-century phase of Cape Verdean transatlantic relations as they extended from the archipelago to North America, Marilyn Halter describes how Cape Verdean men worked in New England's cranberry bogs and returned annually during the break in the growing season. Throughout the weeks of their stay, their homecoming was celebrated in a prodigal manner. Baptisms and marriages were arranged, and the local patron saint was ritually thanked for their safe journeys (Halter 1993).

These historical shifts reveal that over time, different actors have used the *banderona* to revive the foundation of a (post)colonial nation. As the result of a historical dynamic between mobility and sedentariness, the festivities are occasions for contemporary islanders and migrants to remind each other of their social positions, rights and duties. Certain roles are still celebrated in the festive moments in order to play out the historically grounded creole stratification on stage: positions such as master, judge, horseman, singer and thief are revived in a performative manner. Thus the participants demonstrate that belonging to a certain social class, imagined in relation to variants of mobility, is the key marker of social difference. This needs to be seen as opposed to the mixing of cultures of origin, that is, a creole mode of imagining cultural encounters, or the ethnic identity that is the main marker in many other West African societies.

This class-related aspect is celebrated vividly during the ritual peak of the festivity, when the local saint, São João Baptista, is worshipped. Many migrants from the island of Fogo retain an intense connection to São João Baptista, who is believed to spread health, strength and success among his adherents. In this moment of worship the *festeiro* and certain others hold small-denomination American currency (one-, five- and ten-dollar bills) high in the air and then, to the cheers of the crowd, deposit them bill by bill on the saint's image (Figure 7.2). The sum collected in this manner is afterwards handed over to the local feast committee.

The spiritual motivations that are apparent at this juncture of the festivities also must be addressed. Far more than the islanders, the migrants use the occasion of the *banderona* to address their personal saint. Many migrants, while in diaspora and particularly in times of crisis or disease, express a *promesa* (a solemn promise) to return to their home country and give thanks to their patron saint in the village of Campanas. They understand *tomar a bandeira* (to take the flag) to be an act of faith and a public affirmation of their affiliation to their 'spiritual

Figure 7.2. *Coladreiras,* drummers and the *festeiro,* donating small-denomination U.S. bills. (Photo by Heike Drotbohm, 2007)

home'. In this context Zlatko Skrbiš asserts that home visits usually interweave secular and spiritual aspects, and that these visits' emotional density makes them comparable to pilgrimages. Drawing from his observations of the Croatian diaspora, he illustrates how the interplay of national and ethnic-diasporic identities creates a feeling of nostalgia directly connected to a certain sacralized place (Skrbiš 2007).

Spiritual and social motives are inextricably connected in this key moment of the ritual worship of São João Baptista. The migrants' placing of dollar bills on the patron saint becomes a significant manifestation of a symbolic exchange whereby money made by those migrants is rechanneled to the locality of origin. Hence, in this ritual the migrants enact their promise to the patron saint as well as their continued commitment to the local community. Additionally, this ostentatious display of the migrants' powerful position serves to demonstrate and affirm the status shift that they achieved in the course of their migration and now uphold through sustained affiliation to their former home country. In particular the sponsors of the *banderona,* who distinguish themselves from the other celebrants by wearing more formal attire, often a suit and tie, are those who provide the larger sums. Often they understand their migration-related successes in the context of a collective life-making and therefore feel a strong obligation to thank, recompense and symbolically redirect their revenues to their localities of origin.

Hence, migrants fulfilling their *promesa* to the patron saint express spiritual and social loyalty with their monetary contribution. One migrant interviewee, a woman in her sixties who returns to Fogo annually, expressed it this way:

> For some it's mainly practical things, they want to thank those who helped to organize the journey, who offered information or things, or housing maybe. For others it's the mental support, not to travel on your own, leaving, but also arriving within a network of people who accompany you in their minds. When we refer to San Jon, this is what we are thankful for.

Several migrants directly attributed their social upward mobility and successful integration into more than one society to the assistance they received from those kin who stayed behind. While some emphasized practical aspects of support in the organization of the journey or the arrival phase, others highlighted the moral backing they experienced at the moment of departure from the islands, which they valued as crucial to their success in the diaspora. Therefore, celebrating with foreign currency (for instance, the U.S. dollars mentioned above) is a way to underscore the relation between the project of migration and their individual gains as well as the formation of new social asymmetries. In these moments, migrants perform as the providers and those living on the islands as the receivers.

Beyond this, the charity expressed in this kind of donation can also be seen in relation to the status claims often articulated by return migrants. Luin Goldring has described the typical need of migrants to display their upward mobility at the moment of return by exhibiting consumer goods. Many migrants eagerly anticipate occasions during which they can transform the investments they have made over the course of migration into social recognition and prestige.

> The community is not only a source, but a key context in which social and money capital can be deployed as status claims, and translated into status through appropriate valorization by a community who speaks the same language of stratification. (Goldring 1997: 184).

This can refer to different types of migrants – not only the successful returnee who wishes to celebrate his gains, but also those who have experienced a loss of social and economic status. Especially in the case of visitors who have not achieved a financially comfortable position in the diaspora but instead must work several jobs to fulfil their duties in both the country of settlement and the country of origin, the ritual moment can be an opportunity for regaining recognition, an example of the 'status paradox of migration' (Nieswand 2011). These returnees, many of whom cannot afford to return to Cape Verde annually, appreciate their participation at the *banderona* as a moment of compensation.

Taking into account the diverse motives and modes of return, it is important to discuss social asymmetries as they are enacted during the days of the *banderona,* since these reveal an important ambivalence in these ludic encounters. The *festeiro* and other main sponsors accept their positions as patrons and are able to celebrate their duties, but not all visitors returning from the diaspora have the means to comfortably contribute so liberally. During their home visits, many migrants are confronted with the obligation to be generous and cover all eventual costs, even beyond the main days of the celebration. The idea that migrants are expected to demonstrate or confirm their status position can result in direct requests by nonmigrants – be they family members, friends or others – who openly ask for or lay claim to gifts in the form of money, clothes or other kinds of support as if it were an assumed and expected exchange.

Especially during the three main days of the *banderona,* migrants can hardly distance themselves from these requests, since the islanders use the festivities as an occasion to remind the migrants of their (actually or allegedly) privileged position. Although most migrants are aware of their particular position and duties and, hence, accept that they are expected to demonstrate generosity, many complain about the blatant manner in which their donor position is assigned. During the few weeks of their home visits, many of them go through their entire savings and leave the islands with empty suitcases, or as one person said, 'half naked'. Otherwise, they have to endure being referred to as 'cheap' (the English term has been absorbed by Cape Verdean creole) or *ingrót* (unworthy).

The above-discussed historical background is relevant to understanding these tensions and their social constellation because it has created a particular moral economy in which relations of dependency between local families and the support of poorer by wealthier ones are common. However, only in certain very poor local households does the material aspect of the festivities and support strategies predominate. In such cases the feast above all serves to tackle these asymmetries, test loyalties and claim solidarities. The moral evaluation of material differences, as it surfaces during the *banderona,* reminds returnees that the success of their migration is based in part on the functioning of their transnational social networks and on the support by those left behind. Therefore many are confronted with obligations of generalized reciprocity, comparable with those linked to the 'moral economies' of peasant societies (Thompson 1963), which they must fulfil during their home visits yet remain unable to dissolve in any final way.

Home as a Contested Resource

The question of why Cape Verdeans living in the diaspora accept the above-ascribed roles has still not been answered completely. Are migrants for the most part satisfied that it has become expected of them to adequately support the kin they have left behind in the islands? Should moments of recognition and the

social compensation of their efforts be considered one of the main motives for a return visit? In addition to the reasons and interests already illuminated, I interpret the acceptance and the endurance of status ascriptions also as articulated claims for social integration and legitimized membership in these transnational social fields under circumstances of rapid economic transformation.

One the one hand, return visits are only temporary stopovers and therefore also only temporary negotiations over the integration and participation of some in the lives of others. On the other hand, however, short visits can also be related to the idea of an eventual final return, which many migrants take into consideration. For instance, a female migrant around sixty years old told me in a spontaneous conversation:

> See, some years ago, we came here for visiting family, for enjoying some nice days, celebrating a big party and our patron, San Jon. Today all this is different. Since our situation in the US became unclear, I try to come more often. Maybe I will live in Fogo, sooner or later, who knows how things will turn out over there [in the US].

I often heard similar comments connecting return visits with the idea of an eventual permanent return. Some migrants who spent their younger years in Cape Verde and left the islands as adults have enjoyed numerous achievements that stabilized and enriched their lives in the diaspora. But many migrants, particularly those who have not obtained U.S. citizenship, still consider conditions abroad to be uncertain and keep open the question of where they will spend their remaining years.

Financial and real estate crises, along with the resultant soaring liabilities, have troubled migrant populations in particular. Pension adjustments also have dampened the outlook on living out one's 'sunset years' in Boston, New York or Lisbon. In some cases, the time limits on green cards and other temporary residence permits make a final return after retirement probable. In addition, undocumented migrants are threatened by the ever present possibility of deportation (Drotbohm 2011). All of these motivations combine to fuel ideas of an eventual permanent return. For these reasons many migrants may feel obliged to keep in touch with and maintain their social presence in their community of origin.

In this light, it becomes obvious that the social act of constituting or reviving 'home' is profoundly shaped by life conditions in other places and is particularly meaningful to those persons and groups who are in a vulnerable position. In a comparable context, Nadje Al-Ali and Khalid Koser state:

> Despite the unsettling of previously rooted and fixed notions of home, people engaged in transnational practices might express an uneasiness, a sense of fragmentation, tension and even pain. Everyday contestations of

> negotiating the gravity of one's home is particularly distressing for those who are vulnerable, for example the poor, women, illegal immigrants and refugees. (Al-Ali and Koser 2002: 7)

Therefore, many visitors seize the occasion of their visits and their particular position during the *banderona* not just to demonstrate their financial and social superiority, but also to confirm their solidarity and willingness to support the islanders. In this way they control their local visibility, marking their position within these village communities and articulating their claims of social belonging. Simultaneously they examine the conditions for an eventual permanent return.

The island population also surveys these global transformations critically. Against this background they use the *banderona* to display their own particular power by highlighting the conditions of social integration and therefore also those of return. 'Home' in this context appears to be an increasingly contested resource that commemorates the contingencies of a successful life, which refers to more than one place of living but whose achievements remain ephemeral. Both the visitors who envision returning to stay and those who have remained behind and become receivers of transnational support make use of this resource: 'home'. The latter demonstrate that communities of origin set up their own rules of social integration, which go along with high expectations and articulated conditionalities.

Conclusion

Whether viewed as a privilege, emotional need or obligation, return visits constitute an important element in the configuration and design of transatlantic Cape Verdean livelihoods. Especially the contingencies resulting from the most recent phase of globalization, as well as new inequalities that have evolved during this phase, have contributed to the social landscapes and national images in the countries of origin. As the above account illustrates, islanders and migrants alike use the *banderona* to foster their border-crossing networks and raise issues of transnational social asymmetries – not for the purpose of questioning such networks and asymmetries but rather to affirm and conserve them. In this particular case, the historical overview that has been presented contextualizes the origins of the *banderona* in a postslavery and postcolonial society. Accordingly, the contemporary ritual reveals a historically grounded social stratification that is both enacted and celebrated during the festivities.

Notwithstanding the historical particularities of Cape Verde, similar shifts can be observed in other world regions: the former ethos of return, which many migrants cultivate in a nostalgic romanticization of their country of origin, has in recent times yielded to real and sometimes enforced ideas of an eventual permanent return. Against this background the festivities can be understood as a continuing desire to hold on to a 'home' and the regrounding as a particular kind of

cohesion at this particular place. This desire and cohesion inform Cape Verdeans' attempts to adapt to the changing social conditions that arise from the physical, social and at times emotional distance caused by emigration.

Both the social constellations and the tensions that surface in the course of the *banderona* throw light on the challenges of the migrant/nonmigrant dynamic, which may increase in the future. In many countries shaped by a transnational livelihood, the most recent diversification of return migration needs to be considered, as the social differentiation among the actors coexists alongside new hierarchies and dependencies. If the trend of increasingly strict border regimes and rising deportation rates continues even as migrants' exclusion from citizenship rights becomes more common, the so-called 'countries of origin' will soon face new challenges.

Future transnational studies therefore need to answer several questions resulting from these changes. What happens to families that have spread their livelihood and the allocation of tasks and duties across different places and economies, and now, due to such changes, are obliged not only to rejoin their economic forces, but also to do so in the face of a differentiated fabric of values and societal roles? What macroeconomic consequences can be detected in the case of societies that obtain large portions of their GNP via their diasporic affiliations? In cases of the return of poor or forgotten migrants, how will their reintegration take place in societies that in fact rely on the financial support of migrants? Lastly, what consequences do these kinds of conditionalities and transformations have for those in the diaspora who would like to return but cannot, due to their altered circumstances, comply with the expectations of their kin?

Considering these changes it becomes apparent that a return 'home', once valued and praised in many places along the Atlantic Rim, may soon be judged in a more critical manner. In a dramatic change from previous decades, it is no longer predictable whether societies of origin will consider returnees a benefit or an economic burden. Therefore, the question of whether a migrant's return can continue to be regarded as the kind of rebirthing proclaimed in the *morna* that opened this chapter, and furthermore whether such a return will be able to maintain its validity, desirability and congenial acceptance by those who have never left the islands, remains open for future consideration.

Heike Drotbohm currently is a guest professor at the Institute for Social and Cultural Anthropology at Freiburg University (Germany). She specializes in globalization and migration-related research issues, with a regional focus on Afro-Atlantic societies (West Africa, the Caribbean, Brazil). After earning her Ph.D. on Haitian spiritual belief in Canada, she worked in Cape Verde on the intersection between transnationalism, migration policies and family life. Subsequently she held interim professorships as well as fellowships in renowned international

research centres. Her publications include the coedited special issue 'Deportation, Anxiety, Justice: New Ethnographic Perspectives', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* (41(4), 2014) and the coedited volume *Anthropological Perspectives on Care. Work, Kinship, and the Life Course* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

Notes

1. http://www1.umassd.edu/specialprograms/caboverde/etavares.html
2. The *morna* is a Cape Verdean song genre based on melancholic melodies and texts, drawing from the Portuguese *fado* and Brazilian *modinha.* In Cape Verde, the elder generation especially enjoys these laments, which always contain an element of *sodadi* (longing) and *sakrifis* (sacrifice, suffering), and have been taken up by younger generations in the form of more recent music genres. Eugenio Tavares (1867–1930), originally from the island of Brava, is considered the most important composer of the Cape Verdean *morna* (Lobban and Lopes 1995: 55).
3. Félix Monteiro (1958), who published an early article on these festivities on the island of Fogo, did not mention external actors having a particular position within the feast's social structure. In the context of the *tabanca,* semireligious solidarity networks on the Cape Verdean island of Santiago, comparable patron saint festivities are important because they include the possibility of uniting persons involved in the network once a year (Semedo and Turano n.d.; Trajano Filho 2009: 528).
4. Each of the nine inhabited Cape Verdean islands has a tendency towards specific migration destinations that is the result of historical migration patterns. For instance, the two eastern islands of Sal and Boa Vista have huge diaspora populations in Italy, while Sao Vicente, one of the northern islands, has a sizable migrant population in England and the Netherlands (Carling 2001: 7). In the United States, larger Cape Verdean migrant communities can be found in the areas of Boston, Brockton and Long Island (Meintel 1984; Halter 1993).
5. For a summary of 'strategic essentialism' see Morton (2007: 126).
6. During such dinners, sympathizers and sponsors are invited to contribute to the project by means of either fixed or voluntary amounts (usually USD 40–100). According to the main sponsor of the *banderona* in 2007, each of the sponsoring events raised a sum of approximately USD 2,000–3,000.
7. For the *festa do primeiro de Maio* in the town of Sao Filipe, or for the Cola San Jon on the neighbour island of Brava in mid June, thousands of migrants return each year via chartered flights and boats from different places of the Cape Verdean diaspora. Unlike the *banderona* de Campanas de Baixo, these festivals charge visitors an entry fee and host beauty competitions, cockfights, horse races and soccer matches.
8. The three main days of the *banderona* take place on the last weekend before Carnival.
9. Like the *morna,* the *coladeira* is a music or song genre associated with a certain rhythm and dancing style.

References

Ahmed, S., C. Castaneda, A.-M. Fortier and M. Sheller. 2003. 'Introduction. Uprootings/ Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration', in S. Ahmed, C. Castaneda, A.-M.

Fortier and M. Sheller (eds), *Uprootings, Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration.* Oxford: Berg, pp. 1–19.

Åkesson, L. 2009. 'Remittances and Inequality in Cape Verde: The Impact of Changing Family Organization', *Global Networks* 9(3): 381–98.

Al-Ali, N., and K. Koser. 2002. 'Transnationalism, International Migration and Home', in N. Al-Ali and K. Koser (eds), *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home.* London and New York: Routledge, pp. 1–14.

Baldassar, L. 2001. *Visits Home: Migration Experiences between Italy and Australia.* Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

Carling, J. 2001. *Aspiration and Ability in International Migration: Cape Verdean Experiences of Mobility and Immobility.* Oslo: University of Oslo Press.

Carling, J., and L. Åkesson. 2009. 'Mobility at the Heart of a Nation: Patterns and Meanings of Cape Verdean Migration', *International Migration* 47(3): 123–56.

Carreira, A. 1982: *The People of the Cape Verde Islands: Exploitation and Emigration.* Hamden, CT: Archon.

Conway, D. 2005. 'The Experience of Return: Caribbean Return Migrants', in R. Potter, B. Robert, D. Conway and J. Phillips (eds), 2005. *The Experience of Return Migration: Caribbean Perspectives.* Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 1–25.

Curtin, P.D. 1990: *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Drotbohm, H. 2009. 'Horizons of Long-Distance Intimacies: Reciprocity, Contribution and Disjuncture in Cape Verde', *The History of the Family. An International Quarterly* (special issue: Families, Foreignness, Migration, Now and Then) 14(2): 132–49.

———. 2010. 'Haunted by Spirits: Balancing Religious Commitment and Moral Obligations in Haitian Transnational Social Fields', in G. Hüwelmeier and K. Krause (eds), *Traveling Spirits: Migrants, Markets and Mobilities.* Oxford and New York: Routledge, pp. 36–51.

———. 2011. 'On the Durability and the Decomposition of Citizenship: The Social Logics of Forced Return Migration in Cape Verde', *Citizenship Studies* (special issue: Subjects of Citizenship) 15(3/4): 381–96.

Duval, D.T. 2004. 'Linking Return Visits and Return Migration among Commonwealth Eastern Caribbean Migrants in Toronto', *Global Networks* 4(1): 51–67.

Fog Olwig, K. 2002. 'A Wedding in the Family: Home Making in a Global Kin Network', *Global Networks* 2(3): 205–18.

Gardner, K., and R. Grillo. 2002. 'Transnational Households and Ritual', *Global Networks* 2(3): 179–90.

Goldring, L. 1997. 'Power and Status in Transnational Social Spaces', in L. Pries (ed.), *Transnationale Migration.* Soziale Welt, Sonderband 12. Baden-Baden: NOMOS, pp. 179–96.

Grassi, M. 2007. 'Cabo Verde pelo Mundo: o género na diáspora cabo-verdiana', in M. Grassi and I. Évora (eds), *Género e Migraçãos Cabo-Verdianas.* Lisbon: Imprensa de Ciências Sociais, pp. 23–62.

Halter, M. 1993. *Between Race and Ethnicity: Cape Verdean American Immigrants, 1860–1965.* Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Harper, M. 2005. 'Introduction', in M. Harper (ed.), *Emigrant Homecomings: The Return Movement of Emigrants, 1600–2000.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 1–15.

Lobban, R., and M. Lopes. 1995. *Historical Dictionary of the Republic of Cape Verde,* 3rd ed. Metuchen, NJ, and London: The Scarecrow Press.

Malkki, L. 1996. 'Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization', *Cultural Anthropology* 11(3): 377–404.

Markowitz, F., and A.H. Stefansson (eds). 2004. *Homecoming: Unsetting Paths of Return.* Lanham, MD: Lexington.

Meintel, D. 1984. *Race, Culture, and Portuguese Colonialism in Cabo Verde.* New York: Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, Syracuse University.

Monteiro, F. 1958. 'Bandeiras da Ilha do Fogo. O Senhor e o escravo divertem-se', *Claridade. Revista de Artes e Letras* 8: 9–22.

Morton, S. 2007. *Gayatri Spivak: Ethics, Subalternity and the Critique of Postcolonial Reason.* Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.

Nieswand, B. 2011. *Theorising Transnational Migration: The Status Paradox of Migration.* London: Routledge.

Rodrigues, I.F. 2003. 'Islands of Sexuality: Theories and Histories of Creolization in Cape Verde', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 36(1): 83–103.

———. 2008. 'From Silence to Silence: The Hidden Story of a Beef Stew in Cape Verde', *Anthropological Quarterly* 81(2): 343–76.

Salih, R. 2002. 'Reformulating Tradition and Modernity: Moroccan Migrant Women and the Transnational Division of Ritual Space', *Global Networks* 2(3): 219–31.

Semedo, J.M., and M.R. Turano. n.d. 'Cabo Verde', in *O Ciclo Ritual das Festividades da Tabanca.* Praia: Spleen Edições.

Skrbiš, Z. 2007. 'From Migrants to Pilgrim Tourists: Diasporic Imagining and Visits to Medjugorje', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33(2): 313–29.

Thompson, E.P. 1963. *The Making of the English Working Class.* London: Gollancz.

Trajano Filho, W. 2009. 'The Conservative Aspects of A Centripetal Diaspora: The Case of the Cape Verdean Tabancas', *Africa* 79(4): 520–42.

Tsuda, T. 2009. 'Introduction: Diasporic Return and Migration Studies', in T. Tsuda (ed.), *Diasporic Homecomings: Ethnic Return Migration in Comparative Perspective.* Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 1–20.

Walter, L. 1981. 'Social Strategies and the Fiesta Complex in an Otavaleno Community', *American Ethnologist* 8(1): 172–85.