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## POPULAR MUSIC AND CULTURAL IDENTITY IN THE CAPE VERDEAN POST-COLONIAL DIASPORA

*Timothy Sieber*

Popular music is a powerful medium for representing, contesting, and negotiating changing cultural identities within shifting global diasporas. Music indexes continuity and change, sustains and renegotiates connection across transnational space, and reshapes generational relations. Popular music across the global Cape Verdean diaspora – spanning the archipelago, Europe, North America, and Africa – offers a vital musical dialogue on issues of memory, identity, race, and post-coloniality. Today's newer musics, such as cabo-zouk and hip-hop, give voice to realities of diasporic youth within multi-ethnic urban communities of color in the Global North. Cape Verdean youth increasingly identify with a multi-ethnic, transnational black African diaspora, mostly urban-based, but often still retain Cape Verdean ethnic identity. Embracing Africa, their music today spurns Europe and rejects older lusophone frameworks inherited from the Portuguese colonial era.

A 15<sup>th</sup>-century Portuguese colony and slave entrepot established on formerly uninhabited islands, Cape Verde has been deeply creolized and transnational from its origin.<sup>1</sup> By at least the 18<sup>th</sup> century during the colonial period, long before political independence was finally achieved in 1975, Cape Verdeans moved increasingly within the circuit of a broader Atlantic diaspora, linking Europe, Africa, and the Americas, movements that have finally resulted in today's deterritorialized transnation. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century most Cape Verdeans resided outside the archipelago in the diaspora. Today's population estimates are that less than one half of all Cape Verdeans, and perhaps only a third – about 350,000 to 400,000 – live in the archipelago. An equal number reside as emigrants in North America, and almost as many again in Europe

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and Africa. In Europe, Portugal has the largest number (ca. 90,000), but others live in France, Holland, Italy and Germany, with scattered smaller communities in Spain, Luxembourg, and Scandinavia. Outside Cape Verde in Africa, sizable numbers live especially in Senegal (25,000), Angola, and São Tomé and Príncipe. In the post-colonial era, the continuing spread of the diaspora has led to a dramatic diversification of Cape Verdean culture across its ever more expansive global field. This dynamism is especially visible within Cape Verdean popular music and its production, marketing and consumption within widening circles both inside and well beyond the lusophone world.

Emigration, especially on the radical scale of Cape Verde's, always poses challenges to the definition of national cultural identity (C. Monteiro 2003: 29-41). Recent innovations and debates over popular music practices and tastes, in fact, reveal diverse, emerging, and sometimes new constructions of Cape Verdean identity across its broad range of diasporic locations. At the same time, emigrant communities also can have often nostalgic motivations and resources for conserving older, more traditional identities and associated musical tastes. In new states, and recently emerging post-colonial nations in the Global South, like Cape Verde, commercialized, mass produced popular music – as contrasted with “folk” or “classical” forms resorted to by more established, including European, nation-states – arose in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century as a key medium for representation of newly emergent national, and often diasporic identities. As Pina-Cabral has argued (2004), the category of “folk” and the process of folkloricization tend to be “erudite” forms more common in Europe than in other world regions. In other locations, even if popular music is commoditized and commercialized, it still has “the potential to carry images, ideas and icons of enormous political importance between cultures” (Lipsitz 1994: 57).

The past does not offer many post-colonial nations material for celebrating national origins with nostalgic representations of an authentic, pre-modern, peasant past, through resurrection of folk cultural or musical forms, as has been so common in Europe's own diasporic emigrant communities (e.g., Leal, Holton, and Klimt, all in this issue), or on the continent itself (Raposo, Vasconcelos, in this issue). Often, as in Cape Verde's case, the very foundation of the contemporary nation lies in contestation, slavery, colonialism, and what author Manuel Veiga has referred to as an original profound “crisis of culture, communication and identity” in the encounter between Africa and Portugal in the archipelago (2004). If roots or pre-independence sources, both in music and in culture more widely, are to be identified for contemporary nation-building, as in Cape Verde's case, they must be sought in the history of resistance toward the colonizer, or in the early African imports or survivals brought to the archipelago, and conserved there, by sub-

ject populations out of view of the colonizer. These are just the solutions, as we will see, that contemporary Cape Verdeans have adopted in producing and interpreting their recent popular musical developments.

The primary shifts in contemporary Cape Verdean popular music addressed here index several broader recent transformations in Cape Verdean identity and culture globally. First is the increasing insertion of Cape Verdeans, their music, and their culture within a wider transnational African diaspora, located mostly in the urban Global North, that is leading younger Cape Verdeans to shift their racial identification more and more to Black, without losing affiliation to Cape Verdean ethnicity. These shifts have been represented through changes in musical tastes toward more African-based musical forms, both global (such as hip-hop and zouk), and a resurgence of Cape Verde's own less creolized, more African musical forms (such as funana, batuke, and tabanka), mostly from the island of Santiago and with histories of repression by the Portuguese. This has led to reformulations of Cape Verdean musical roots, privileging their African as opposed to European sources. Second, new hybrid cultural forms developed by diasporic Cape Verdeans outside the lusophone sphere have significantly extended notions of contemporary *cabo-verdianidade* far beyond lusophone space to encompass wider cultural contexts. Popular music indexes this shift as well, especially Cape Verdean experimentation and fusion with new musical elements and traditions from well outside the lusophone universe. Finally, we will address the increasing status and public musical visibility of *Kriolu* as an authentic post-colonial national language in its own right, whether in Cape Verde or in the non-lusophone diaspora where it persists in the absence of Portuguese.

"*Cabo-verdianidade* is in one form or another intimately linked to the role of music in the process of consolidation, preservation and extension of what is Cape Verdean, whether in the archipelago or in the diaspora," C. Monteiro (2003: 331) writes, a fact also noted by others who have observed the central importance of music in Cape Verdean life and culture (e.g., Furtado 2002, Shabaka 2002, V. Monteiro 1998). Cape Verdeans are not unique among new nations in using popular music to articulate the rich ambiguities and complex contradictions of national identity and culture and the often clashing elements of continuity and rupture experienced by peoples in post-colonial transition and diasporic dispersal. A globalized, commoditized, consumer-driven, electronically mediated sphere such as popular music may, in fact, offer an especially labile medium for representation of these fluidities of contemporary national identity and culture.

My fieldwork has all taken place in the Cape Verdean diaspora. Along with short periods in Portugal and Mozambique, most of my interviewing and participation in community-based cultural and musical events took place during 2003-2004 in the USA's New England region, and especially in

Boston's Cape Verdean immigrant community. Approximately 400,000 Cape Verdeans live in New England, with an estimated 35,000 in Boston's Dorchester-Roxbury neighborhood where I live and work. Nearby centers of Cape Verdean life in New England, closely linked to Boston, include Brockton and New Bedford, Massachusetts, and Pawtucket and Providence, Rhode Island. Where the world of music is concerned, of course, the local and global are inseparable, as musicians, producers, recordings, and fans, as well as musical discussion and critique, circulate intensely within the diaspora, across New England locations as readily as across the Atlantic to Cape Verde and Portugal and other locations outside the lusophone world.

### **Cape Verdean music: product of the diaspora**

Cape Verdean music today, especially changing, contemporary forms, emerges largely from the diaspora, rather than in the archipelago itself. Obviously the inspiring source of Cape Verdean musical roots, the islands, have relatively less infrastructure for music recording, production, and distribution, and a smaller music market than the diaspora more widely. Probably 90% of the studios that record and produce today's Cape Verdean music are in France, Holland, Portugal or the United States. In New England alone, musicians estimate there are five or six times the number of Cape Verdean studios and music production companies than exist in the whole archipelago.

Today, the Cape Verdean popular music business is thoroughly transnational. Typically, production takes place in one country, recording and mixing in one or two others, and distribution in those and yet other countries. Where the artists themselves reside is yet another variable, but does not need to be in the country where the music is produced, recorded, or even distributed. More popular artists, such as Suzanna Lebrano and Grace Évora, both living in Holland's Rotterdam-based Cape Verdean community, for example, have distribution companies in Holland, France, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Portugal, Mozambique, Cape Verde and the USA. Also, management of the artist can take place in one country, recording and mixing in one or two others, and distribution, tours and promotions in still other countries.

Grace Évora for example, the singer whose hit, "El é Sabim," has recently been quite popular in Portugal, lives in Rotterdam, but is managed by Julio Rosário of Rosário Brothers Music Production Company in Boston. Évora recorded his album, "Grace Évora," in GIVA Tropical Studio in Rotterdam, Studio du Soul in Paris, and at Platinum Studio and Renaissance Recording in Boston. The recording, however, was mixed and mastered at Bastill Studio and Dyam Music in Paris, and finally manufactured in Holland.

Then the Dutch Évora and his American producer completed international tours to Africa, North America, and Europe to popularize the release.

Marketing and listenership normally span multiple national sites across the diaspora, drawing in Cape Verdeans and others. DJ Baby T's dance mix albums, produced by MR Music in Boston, for example, count on thousands of CD or cassette sales each in Cape Verde, Angola, France and the United States, and Boston's Rosário Brothers Music Company expects to have robust sales in the USA, Portugal, Europe more widely, Angola, and Cape Verde. Transnational reach is necessary to sustain the market for the popular music industry.

Cape Verdean music has always been a hybrid music reflecting multiple cultural influences, and the post-colonial period and the spread of the global, deterritorialized transnation has only accelerated that trend. Today's Cape Verdean "traditional" music (see Table 1) is considered to encompass morna, coladera, funana, and sometimes batuke, though the latter two Santiago-based forms have extended their reach and become recognized as national music only in the post-independence period since 1975. What is today being defined as Cape Verdean "traditional" or roots music, when compared with contemporary developments, of course, was considered new and innovative in the 1960s and 70s, and even then reflected many other 20<sup>th</sup>-century influences, and early trends toward internationalization, including movement from acoustic to electric instrumentation, the reshaping in style and arrangements of some genres, such as funana, for example, and the influx of Latin American influences, especially *cumbia* from Colombia, on coladera. Musician Fernando Quejas, quoted in C. Monteiro (2003: 121-122) even cites the early trips of popular musicians to Portugal as early as the 1940s as leading to the first adjustments to more international styles, and accusations by traditionalists of "adulteration" of the music.

Those musicians of the past who are today considered to be the most traditional, and whose music is even referred to repeatedly as *música clássica cabo-verdiana* (probably best translated as "classic Cape Verdean music") or *música tradicional* in C. Monteiro's extensive history of Cape Verdean popular music (2003), were in their own time usually products both of the diaspora and musical innovators who incorporated foreign influences into their music. Many examples could be cited, the obvious ones including the foundational band of the 1960s and later, *Voz de Cabo Verde*, which began in Holland in 1964, performed extensively in France, and standardized modern band arrangements for coladera; its clarinetist/saxophonist and the "father of Cape Verdean music," Luis Morais, who grew up in Dakar and later introduced his instrument into popular repertoires for the first time, and was influenced by cha-cha, merengue and other Latin American beats; and even Manel d'Novas, who as a merchant mariner lived and traveled outside of Cape Verde for most

of his adult life, who visited Peru, Colombia and Puerto Rico, and was strongly influenced by their music, as well as by Brazilian samba and bossa nova. Today's "traditional" music was not necessarily yesterday's, as the line between tradition and innovation continually moves forward.

<i>Morna</i>	A slow-tempo, melodic song genre with poetic lyrics evoking themes of nostalgia, <i>saudade</i> , and loss, often referred to by outsiders as the "Blues" of Cape Verde; featuring a lone singer, male or female, accompanied by acoustic instruments, such as <i>cavaquinho</i> (ukulele), violin, guitar, and piano; probably with origins in Boa Vista.
<i>Coladera</i>	Sometimes <i>koladera</i> or the Portuguese <i>coladeira</i> ; literally meaning a "cook pot," an up-tempo urban dance genre, accompanied usually by satirical lyrics, influenced by Latin American rhythms, first developed in the 1920s, mostly in Mindelo, São Vicente. It is frequently hybridized with zouk to become cola-zouk or cabo-zouk.
<i>Funana</i>	A driven fast-tempo dance music (ca. 140 beats/minute) from the interior of the island of Santiago, prohibited under the Portuguese for its perceived sexuality of its rhythms and associated dance styles, and its links to so-called primitive African <i>badiu</i> culture; played principally with accordion and <i>ferrinho</i> , a metal rod that is scraped with a knife, accompanied by vocals; reformulated and electrified in the post-independence period.
<i>Batuke</i>	Sometimes <i>batuku</i> or <i>batuque</i> ; originally a women's percussive music made from beaten rhythms on cloth, accompanied by male or female improvised singing (sometimes called <i>Finançon</i> ). From Santiago, the archipelago's most African island, and <i>badiu</i> culture; linked to similar <i>lundum</i> forms in Angola on the African mainland. Considered today to be the most traditional of Cape Verdean song genres. Like <i>funana</i> , today it has been adapted to new instrumental and vocal styles.
<i>Tabanka</i>	Sometimes <i>tabanca</i> ; from Santiago and meaning "village", <i>tabanka</i> was originally collective ritual music associated with festivals honoring ancestors and village local identity, played by drums and conch-shell horns, accompanied by choral call and response singing, hand-clapping, chanting, and dancing. Today it is becoming revitalized by pop groups, still played mostly acoustically, considered a deeply African song form, and quite popular on the dance floor.

Table 1 – Traditional Cape Verdean Popular Song Types. Sources: Lobban 1995, V. Monteiro 1998, Furtado 2004, Sympatico 2004, Mathe Lexikon 2004.

As Paul Gilroy has remarked in relation to Afro-Anglo forms: "The unashamedly hybrid character of these Black African cultures continuously confounds any simplistic (essentialist or anti-essentialist) understanding of the relationship between [...] folk cultural authenticity and pop cultural betrayal" (Gilroy 1992: 99). As Perrone and Dunn point out, of course, these

generalizations not only apply to Anglo-African forms, but also to a wider range of Afro-Latin hybridities (Perrone and Dunn 2001: 26), which would include the Cape Verdean. Additionally, in Cape Verdean music as in other African popular forms, the two-way, cross-Atlantic history of influences between Africa and the Americas is centuries old, but especially intense in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Roberts 1982), explaining the intense backflow of broadly Afro-American influences such as jazz, R&B, and soul, not to speak of zouk from the French Antilles, and other Afro-Latin influences on Cape Verdean music. In other words, even before independence from Portugal, Cape Verdean music had long developed in a diasporic context extending well beyond lusophone space, appropriating musical elements from the Americas as well as Africa.

Cape Verdean music continues to show extraordinary vitality and development, as today's artists continue to move into new genres and languages. Cape Verdean bands in New England, who play at clubs, restaurants, and private parties, such as Vuca Pinheiro's *Sambalança*, are adept at playing Brazilian samba, Jamaican reggae tunes, and even some R&B songs, along with Cape Verdean numbers. The same happens in Lisbon's Cape Verdean clubs; at Lisbon's *En'clave*, Leonel Almeida's band mixes some samba, reggae, and rhumba with *coladera* and *morna*, as does Calu's band at Club B. Leza. Artists in all corners of the diaspora show influences from non-Cape Verdean musical forms and have increasingly incorporated those into a broader Cape Verdean musical repertoire, with musicians, listeners, and dancers all enjoying the new variety.

Today's most significant trend is the ascendancy of zouk rhythms. Originating in the French Antilles, especially Guadeloupe and Martinique in the 1970s and 1980s, zouk became popular among Caribbean emigrant communities in France in the 1970s and in Holland in the 1980s, and through African migrant communities in Europe – then the center of contemporary African popular musical production globally – its popularity spread to Africa, including Cape Verde. Cape Verdean musicians in Holland and France, as well, began to incorporate zouk rhythms into their own repertoires, especially in *coladera*, so that now zouk rhythms underlie most contemporary Cape Verdean popular dance hits. If there is a dividing line today between “traditional” and “modern” Cape Verdean music, it is this presence or absence of zouk in the music. This line also marks a significant generational divide, as well, since it is mostly younger people, especially those who frequent Cape Verdean clubs and purchase popular music, who decidedly prefer zouk to the more traditional forms (Maio 1999: 1).

The adoption of zouk by Cape Verdean musicians in Europe, both upbeat dance forms and slower, more romantic, melodic forms that are called “love,” as in “cabo-love,” or “zouk-love,” connected and identified Cape



Verdeans in Europe, as it also does in the United States, with broader transnational African/Caribbean identity communities. Eventually this has led to the creation of entirely new hybrid song genres not accepted by all segments of the Cape Verdean community, such as cabo-zouk, cola-zouk, and cabo-love. These musical forms are popular all over the Cape Verdean world, and dominate club music heard in Cape Verde, Portugal, Holland, France, and the United States – especially in clubs frequented by young people and designed for dancing. Even at Lisbon’s *En’clave* club, between sets of more traditional coladera, morna, and funana played by Leonel Almeida and his band, a DJ fills the long pauses with the newer cabo-zouk, with even some hip-hop included.

Among Cape Verdeans in the USA, a similar trend began with rhythm and blues, soul music, and hip-hop, musical genres more characteristic of the African-American black populations that Cape Verdeans were increasingly associated with in the United States through local racial categorizations of Cape Verdeans as “Black” and through emerging patterns of racial segregation in housing. Cape Verdeans increasingly lived in Black neighborhoods amongst African-Americans and black Caribbeans, especially Haitians and Jamaicans. Whether we speak of zouk or hip-hop, once the new musical idioms enter into Cape Verdean music in one location, they are quickly disseminated to all corners of the diaspora. Music penetrates global borders quickly through customary channels of mass communication, especially radio, television, the Internet, and the multinational marketing of recordings.

Wherever they live, Cape Verdeans are small minorities. Music promoters have also long sought consumers and audiences outside of Cape Verdeans themselves, and the newly emerging stylistic hybridities help promote their music’s popularity among wider audiences outside lusophone countries and populations. It is generally recognized that the diaspora is leading to widening of the market for Cape Verdean music, including recordings and musicians (C. Monteiro 2003: 313). The most successful recent Cape Verdean artists, in fact, have been those whose music has not only been appreciated by *Kriolos*, but also by non-lusophone peoples.

Suzanna Lebrano’s 2003 receipt in Johannesburg of the Kora award for the Best African Female Artist had much to do with her singing a wide range of song genres, including soul, rhythm and blues, and especially zouk, and because although she sings mostly in *Kriolu*, she records many songs in English, and mixes French, Spanish, and Dutch into the lyrics of others. Even the grande diva of Cape Verdean music, Cesária Évora, has ventured in her recordings into other rhythms, especially Latin American ones, toured with a back-up band that includes Latin American musicians, recorded duets with a Slovakian artist, and has sung in French and Spanish, as well as *Kriolu* – but never in Portuguese. Her popularity, of course, as she has acknowledged

many times, first emerged outside the lusophone world in France, and spread from there to the rest of Europe, before eventually reaching Portugal.

The 1980s and 1990s also saw the emergence of the new marketing category of “World Music,” whose audience was always centered in metropolitan countries in the Global North, and this opened up some new marketing opportunities for Cape Verdean and other African artists. Few Cape Verdean artists, however, have benefited much from the new category. Most of the “World Music” that white Europeans and North Americans tend to follow does not encompass music that is popular in most immigrant communities (Sieber 1994). João Mendes, of the famed “Mendes Brothers” and principal of MB Recording in Boston, pointed out in fact that the “World Music” category poses a problem for Cape Verdean music: “If it’s not Latin or reggae, it’s world, and if it’s world, that’s a problem – you can’t get it sold.” He noted further that even Cesária is mostly marketed as a “jazz artist,” rather than world musician for this reason.

As in transnational populations everywhere, Cape Verdeans can and do also take pride in musicians who achieve success completely outside traditional Cape Verdean genres, such as Izé’s remarkable fame as a French-language rapper in Paris, or hip-hop artist Dje Dje in the USA, who raps both in *Kriolu* and English. Antonio “TC” Cruz in Portugal, produced by MB Records, now sings mostly American R&B pop songs in English. For some, “Cape Verdean music” is that produced and performed by Cape Verdeans, no matter what the genre or language of the lyrics.

### Cape Verdeans in the African diaspora

Cape Verdeans in the diaspora are mostly located in northern nations and in cities where they are small minorities with incentives to identify collectively with wider populations of racial-minority immigrant populations, usually within some kind of cosmopolitan African diasporic conglomeration that encompasses all Caribbeans and Africans, if in Europe, and with these populations and African-Americans as well, if in the United States. As Juan Flores has remarked, though his concern was with the parallel situation of US-based Puerto Ricans rather than Cape Verdeans, this coalescence results from the common ghettoization, marginalization, and exclusion experienced by all these groups (Flores 1997: 182-3), who form a “fabric of 3<sup>rd</sup> world cultures co-habiting [...] inner city neighborhoods and institutions,” leading to a “crossing and blending of transmitted colonial cultures” (Flores 1997: 177). Rivera’s work on the evolution of hip-hop culture in New York City stresses similar lateral collaborations and hybridities among immigrant communities of color there (1996), especially between African-Americans and Latinos.

Fradique's study of African immigrant youth in Lisbon makes the same points about the creation of wider pan-ethnic urban communities forming a "post-colonial culture characterized by dislocation, emigration, multiculturalism and multilingualism" (2003: 63): "The African diaspora," she argues, "rises as a force allowing the emergence of new social movements based in a post-colonial, transnational culture, that comes from similar experiences of austerity and oppression lived by different communities in different countries [...] that result in specific cultural products, among them hip-hop culture and rap" (Fradique 2003: 63).

Such lateral adaptations, hybridities, and changing representations are an entirely different process, Flores (1997) underscores, from assimilation to the host countries' dominant cultures. If anything, this kind of wider transnational identification can even involve resistance to host country dominant culture. No doubt the groups and new hybridities involved in culture and identity vary from location to location within the diaspora, and Cape Verdean ethnic group formation varies as well. For example, the Cape Verdean community in Boston exists apart from any envioning Portuguese emigrant community, and seldom defines itself in any kind of lusophone manner, but in New Bedford, Massachusetts, Portuguese emigrant communities exist alongside Cape Verdeans, and the two communities mix to some degree. In Portugal, the large Cape Verdean community mixes in many ways with the wider Portuguese host society.

Whatever the familiarity with Portuguese language, culture and even music, however, Cape Verdeans everywhere seem to make a strategic choice where their post-colonial identity is concerned – to emphasize the independent, non-Portuguese elements of their culture and traditions as central to their identity. This does not mean that many Cape Verdeans do not understand or even enjoy many features of Portuguese culture – including cuisine, language, and even music. Many also settle within Portuguese areas, whether on the continent or near Portuguese emigrant communities abroad. Many of the older generation, especially the educated elite in the diaspora, were educated in Portugal, and know its history and culture quite well. Post-colonial Cape Verdean identity, however, is *strategically* defined to emphasize what is culturally unique and independent in *cabo-verdianidade*.

Especially for the younger generations, and for those living outside the lusophone world, however, cultural exchanges in popular music encompass mostly lateral creative fusions and hybridities, connecting with other national groups caught in similar post-colonial, diasporic situations. This context offers new opportunities for pan-ethnic organizing within local status systems, promotes new forms of racial identification and political organizing based on color, and enhances cross-ethnic immigrant entrepreneurial business – including the recording and entertainment industries that produce and dis-

seminate music, that in turn serves to give charter to these new identifications. The resulting wider, pan-ethnic identifications are no barriers, either, to new assertions of national identity, which also seems to be happening in the Cape Verdean case. These wider cosmopolitan identifications can still accompany Cape Verdeans' formulation of a new, strong contemporary national and ethnic identification within post-colonial and often non-lusophone contexts. Cape Verdean identity does not melt away.

Of course, new assertions of national identity within emerging transnational contexts are refracted through varying local conditions. The particular musical streams borrowed by Cape Verdeans from host societies do vary by location – for example, zouk fusions that are more common in Holland, and hip-hop in the USA. Cape Verdeans in the USA are also more likely than those from other countries to draw on rhythm & blues and jazz as well. Whatever the borrowings might be, however, they are diffused quickly to Cape Verdean musical consumers throughout the global diaspora. Music's capacity for rapid electronic transmission perhaps differentiates it from other localized, more quotidian cultural practices that vary across diasporic locations – underscoring the great power music has as a unifying force.

In Rotterdam and Paris, the effects of musical exchanges between Cape Verdeans and francophone Caribbeans has already been mentioned in the infusion of zouk into Cape Verdean music. In addition, musical clubs in Rotterdam and Paris, as well as Boston, mix musics and audiences from various nationalities. In Paris, for example, at the Bateau L'Alize Club a wide mix of musics and audiences occurs on special "Zouk and Cabo Love Crossing Nights," including a wide mix of music from the French and English Caribbean, Cape Verde, the US, and Angola. Those on the dance floor can choose among "Zouk, Cabo Love, R&B, Reggae, Funana, Dancehall, Kuduro" (Zouker 2004). DJ's from the Antilles, Cape Verde, and France all take shifts. In Boston at Estelle's Mirage Club, two weekend club nights that used to be called "Haitian Nights" are now marketed through fliers to a wider immigrant audience as "Club Creole," with a mix of "creole," African-linked popular musics, including "[Haitian] conpa, zouk, funana, and more." The flier from another club in heavily-Cape Verdean Taunton, Massachusetts, the Rosaland Ballroom, advertises a "Top Class night Club" every Friday with Cape Verdean DJ Amilcar and Haitian DJ Mangolé, promising an even wider musical spectrum that encompasses African-American forms: "zouk, samba, reggae, merengue, hip-hop, kuduro, coladera, funana, house, techno, and more." Boston's newest and most elegant Cape Verdean restaurant, named "Restaurante Cesaria," now moving steadily toward being more of a supper club, is planning now to market Cape Verdean food and music to a wider group of "island" peoples, including "Jamaicans, Puerto Ricans, and Dominicans," and also "southern African-Americans," according to John Barros, one

of the owners. He believes that Cape Verdean culture “resonates with a lot of folks – our *morabeza*, the connections between people, the sense of community.”<sup>2</sup> Cesaria’s owners also advertise the restaurant on Haitian radio, had some reggae music performed there, and are considering producing some joint Cape Verdean-Haitian nights at Vincent’s, another upscale mostly Latin night club between Boston and Brockton. It is also not uncommon to see non-Cape Verdeans, such as Haitians, at Boston’s other main Cape Verdean supper club, Restaurante Laura.

## Changing racial identifications and music in North America

Even if US Cape Verdeans find linkages with a broader creole community of post-colonials from Africa and the Caribbean, the relationship with African-Americans is more problematic. Cape Verdeans for generations have been subjected to what Marilyn Halter has called “the suffocating structures of racial categorization in American society” (Halter 1993: 174). Mixed-race, creole immigrant populations from countries with more complex racial classification systems usually encounter, when arriving in the US, re-assignment to the category of “Black,” based on the US two-category system, the “one drop rule,” and the “law of hypodescent” (Harris 1963, 1964). These arrangements assign all people with any African ancestry whatever to a single minority “Black” category.<sup>3</sup> In recent decades, US Cape Verdeans in New England have won for themselves a separate census category for their own nationality. Nonetheless, Cape Verdeans are increasingly classified officially and by white Americans together with a wide variety of African and Caribbean populations, many of whom are also creoles, as “Black” together with African-Americans.

Earlier generations of Cape Verdeans in the colonial era arrived in the US with Portuguese passports, and identified more with Portugal than with Africa. While many did assimilate in the 1960s civil rights movement into African-American communities and Black racial identities (Halter 1993: 171-173), in the past there has always been resistance among *Kriolos* to identifying as “Black” (Sanchez 1997, Barker 1996). Cape Verdeans have usually chosen to identify as creole or as white. As in the 1960s, and already into the second generation of a post-colonial era, today’s younger, often US-born Cape

<sup>2</sup> *Morabeza*: an especially friendly hospitality and warmth shown to guests, that gives them a feeling of relaxed comfort, usually cited as a special quality of Cape Verdean people and culture.

<sup>3</sup> Harris’ use of hypo-descent, of course, means that any mixed race people are assigned to the lower, or inferior, category, and the “one drop rule” means literally that even “one drop of black blood” assigns someone to the Black “race.” In 2000, for the first time, the US census allowed self-categorization as “mixed race.”

Verdeans more and more identify as Black, and as part of a wider African diaspora. Today's new pressures to reidentify as Black follow from Cape Verdeans' settling increasingly in urban communities that are also populated by culturally diverse populations of Afro-diasporic peoples, including Caribbeans, Latinos, and African-Americans, and their lack of any felt connection with Portugal as a former colonial center.

Identifying as Black no longer means, if it ever did, forsaking Cape Verdean ethnic or national identity. Indeed, it seems that this wider identification with a Black African diaspora is accompanied by stronger assertions of an African-derived Cape Verdean national or ethnic identity, as we will see in the events described below. As with many other African-derived immigrant populations in the USA, the difficulty for Cape Verdeans lies in negotiating a Black identity without defining themselves ethnically as African-American, which they are constantly pressured to do in the USA. Cape Verdeans accomplish this by situating and explaining their identity within a broader, pan-African diasporic sphere, not tied specifically to African-American culture, to European or lusophone frameworks, or to seeing themselves as creole – that is, something between European and African, or between Black and White. This same shift in racial identification is happening also in Portugal among second-generation African immigrant youth, including Cape Verdeans, according to Teresa Fradique (2003: 63).

How today's youth engage with these themes was evident in January 2004, at the annual January celebration of Martin Luther King and Amílcar Cabral held each winter in Boston (see Fig. 1). The 2004 celebration's theme was "The Roots of Hip-Hop and the Struggle for Liberation," an attempt to use music to address these new cross-pressures in racial and ethnic identification. About 200 Cape Verdean youth, mostly secondary school students, were in attendance with their teachers, youth leaders and some parents. The event was sponsored by the King-Cabral Committee, an offshoot of the Cape Verdean Creole Institute, a political and literary society of Cape Verdean intellectuals and professionals in the New England region. An important motivation of the adult organizers was their worry that youth's over-identification with African-American culture could threaten the connection to their national culture. The program plan was to acknowledge youth's connection with the African diaspora, and the need to value Black identity, but at the same time to bolster Cape Verdean ethnic identity.

The program of speakers and musicians presented that day stressed the commonalities between "a whole segment of disenfranchised youth who grew up in urban conditions, in a society that didn't speak to them, with roots that are African," as one speaker put it, and the place of Cape Verdeans in that youth category. Speakers such as educator and conference organizer Ambrizeth Lima also drew attention to the parallels between the struggles of the



Fig. 1 – Cape Verdean youth at the Amílcar Cabral – Martin Luther King celebration in Boston, January 19, 2004.

Cape Verdean and the African-American communities for empowerment and liberation, lauding both King and Cabral as revolutionary heroes who had much in common: both were fighting for the rights of their people in the same historical period, and both were martyred through assassination. Identifying as Black, but staying Cape Verdean, were presented as compatible with one another. First students were encouraged to recognize their Black identity. “We inherit injustices, prejudices that come with being labeled as Black,” one musician speaker noted. “I used to write ‘Cape Verdean’ when they asked me what race I was. Now I change that to ‘Black,’” he admitted. He continued, “Cape Verdeans and Blacks need to reach out more to each other. The white supremacist structure, they all got us in the same bag!”

Cape Verdean youth that day were encouraged to identify with African-Americans as equals, but also to retain a full appreciation of their own culture and heritage. The speaker – a high school teacher – said that, “If you are trying to identify with African-Americans you are trying to identify with a group that is not fully aware of their own roots [...] that’s why it’s important for you to keep in touch with your own.” Before and after the speeches, a traditional acoustic musical ensemble played various mornas and coladeras to the audience, and the organizers instructed the youth in what music they

were listening to. Home-made *kachupa* and other traditional foods were served for lunch.<sup>4</sup> The young people talked to one another in *Kriolu* in the informal junctures before, during and after the official program.



Fig. 2 – Jose Fernandes, also known as Dje Dje, and sometimes the Jaysta Man, from Brockton, Massachusetts, rising hip-hop artist in the USA and the wider Cape Verdean diaspora.

To make the point that being Black and Cape Verdean are compatible identities, and that Cape Verdean culture and identity can be conserved even as part of a pan-African diaspora, organizers unveiled a composite Cape Verdean national flag that kept its traditional form and shapes, but that changed the colors from blue, white and red to the red, black, and green of the Black Liberation flag. Cape Verdean hip-hop artists, including Brockton's Dje Dje (see Fig. 2), also proved the same points musically, performing for the enthusiastic crowd of adolescents by rapping, and doing it in *Kriolu*.

<sup>4</sup> *Kachupa*: a corn hominy, vegetable, and pork stew-type preparation that is considered by most Cape Verdeans to be the national dish.



## Lusofonia, language, and the eclipse of Portuguese by *Kriolu* in Cape Verdean music

Unanimously, Cape Verdeans in Boston reject the definition of their music as lusophone, both the idea that Cape Verdean cultural expressions are shaped by Portuguese forms, and especially that there is something in the Portuguese language that influences Cape Verdean musical expression. The Cape Verdean Minister of Culture, for example, told me at a symposium in Boston that, “*Cultura lusófona? Música lusófona?* [“Lusophone culture? Lusophone Music?”] There’s more to it than language. That concept is reductionist. We prefer *países de expressão portuguesa* [“Portuguese speaking countries”] – because there’s more than language that shapes a country – identity, culture, and heritage all are wider in what they encompass.” Vuca Pinheiro, musician and music producer with his own studio in Brockton, Massachusetts, pointed out that the concept of lusophonia not only erases Cape Verdean national identity in relation to Portugal, but also negates important differences among the countries of the former empire, diminishing musical distinctiveness and national identities.

Nearly everyone points out that the Portuguese language has not been used for lyrics in any Cape Verdean music in the post-colonial era, or even earlier. Cape Verdeans are very conscious of the use of *Kriolu* words as lyrics to all their songs, from more traditional morna, coladera, and funana, to newer forms of *cabo zouk*, and even to genres that are outside the traditional Cape Verdean, such as hip-hop and R&B. As Deirdre Meintel wrote two decades ago, *Kriolu* has long been a “clear marker of Cape Verdean cultural distinctiveness [...] shared by all Cape Verdeans,” a tool of resistance to colonial rule, and “a symbol of Cape Verdeans’ identity as a people...” (Meintel 1984: 148). Meintel explicitly mentions music, morna in particular, as one of the characteristically private and expressive arenas where *Kriolu* was always used – in contradistinction to the public spheres of church, the state, and education dominated during both the colonial and post-colonial eras by Portuguese, still the country’s official language (see also Meintel 1974).

To most Cape Verdeans, the simplest test of whether the music is Cape Verdean or not is if the lyrics are in *Kriolu*. Music critic and magazine editor Herminio Furtado told me, for example, that Cape Verdeans made zouk their own music by, among other things, adding their own *Kriolu* lyrics, instead of listening to the original Antillean French-linked creole. José Barros, a social service agency administrator in Boston who approves of the cabo-zouk his teenage children listen to, told me that whatever the music, “If the words are in *Kriolu*, it’s ours!”

While sung mostly in *Kriolu*, Cape Verdean songs often include lyrics from other languages, such as English, French, Spanish, and sometimes Dutch

– but never Portuguese. Sometimes entire songs are in these foreign languages, and sometimes only lines, phrases, or stanzas are mixed with *Kriolu* in the same song. Obviously, these supplementary languages reflect the host countries of Cape Verdeans in the diaspora, and also the languages of potential markets for musical performance and sales outside the lusophone context. No doubt Suzanna Lebrano's popularity among Africans in general was boosted by her extensive use of English on her most recent album, *Tudo Pa Bo*.

Another Cape Verdean artist, Antonio Lima, or DJ Baby T, is a good example of creative use of language diversity to reach wider audiences (see Fig. 3). Baby T is Cape Verdean but grew up in Senegal, moved to France as a teenager, and now lives in Rhode Island, USA. Though a Cape Verdean, he has been more shaped by France than Portugal. He never visited Cape Verde until he was in his twenties, and was more familiar then with hip-hop and zouk than with traditional Cape Verdean music. DJ Baby T's art lies in sampling and mixing dance music. His two recent CDs, both dance mixes and heavy on zouk-inspired forms and hip-hop, include wider African rhythms, such as soukous from the Congo, and have lyrics in French, English, and *Kriolu*, mostly featuring Cape Verdean voices. His music sells widely in Africa, Europe, and North America because of this stylistic and language diversity. While Baby T is a Cape Verdean Senegalese, who has lived in France and now lives in America, it is difficult to place him in terms of nationality. I first encountered his music when I bought a cassette of his first album on the street in Maputo, where the street children selling me the tape said he was Mozambican, and in fact his tape was produced and distributed by the Maputo-based office of the Paris-based Lusafrica music company. Only later did I learn that he lived in Pawtucket, Rhode Island not far from my own home in Boston. Though DJ Baby T does not consider his music to be Cape Verdean ("Cape Verdean music is morna and coladera," he told me), he has many Cape Verdean listeners among his global audience, and is well known as a Cape Verdean DJ in New England and France. He travels and tours widely, to Europe and Africa. Surely he is one of those deeply cosmopolitan, first-generation, transnational immigrant youth that Fradique (2003) notes are common in today's urban immigrant communities in Portugal.<sup>5</sup>

Sometimes it is not only the language of the lyrics that are important to consider. Cape Verdeans' wide borrowing of other genres of music, and

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<sup>5</sup> First-generation (or "1-1/2" generation) young people like DJ Baby T, in this sense, are likely to be more cosmopolitan than many 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> generation Cape Verdean youth whose residence has mostly been limited to residence in one diasporic emigrant community, as for example many youth in the USA, who may occasionally travel to Cape Verde for family visits, but do not personally know diasporic communities in other countries. Probably European-based Cape Verdean youth have more exposure and travel to multiple national Cape Verdean communities, and thus are more genuinely cosmopolitan rather than simply transnational in their connections to the diaspora.



Fig. 3 – Antonio Lima, or “DJ Baby T,” spinning at a late night dance party celebrating the 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary of Boston’s Restaurante Cesaria, 2:00 am, August 1, 2003, lower deck of the cruise boat, “Spirit of Boston,” Boston Harbor.

their incorporation into hybrid forms that include more traditional Cape Verdean elements also makes their music more adaptable to diverse audiences. DJ Baby T tries in his records to include “something that will please everyone,” by which he means Cape Verdeans throughout the diaspora, but also other listeners in their host countries. Finding the right mix to appeal to Mozambicans, Senegalese, Franco-Cape Verdeans in Paris, and Cape Verdean Americans is not always easy. DJ Baby T told me that while his first heavily zouk-oriented album, *100% Afro’Cap Love Mixx*, sold well in Africa as well as the US, in his second album, *Mas Un Jam, Mas Un Mix*, he tried to include more hip-hop to make it more appealing to North Americans – but the album turned out to be less successful with Africans. In assembling his third album he is still trying to find the right balance. Similarly, Holland’s Cape Verdean musical star Suzanna Lebrano not only sings zouk and coladera, but also many R&B songs. Sometimes the language of the lyrics changes with the genre, away from *Kriolu*. Izé, for example, France’s famous Cape Verdean hip hop artist, raps only in French.

In Guilbault’s (1993) treatment of the emergence of zouk in the French Antilles, she explains how the use of creole language for lyrics by popular musical groups such as Kassav represented a new assertion of post-colonial

resistance among Antilleans, a championing of their cultural distinctiveness and integrity in the face of a dominant French culture, both in their island Departments, and in migrant communities living directly in the metropole. In Cape Verde, of course, the official language is still Portuguese, representing an incomplete de-colonization process, as Donaldo Macedo among others has reminded us (Macedo 2003). Agitation from Cape Verdeans in the diaspora is especially strong for full officialization of *Kriolu* as a standard language (Shabaka 2003), though much linguistic and political work remains to be done – especially in the archipelago – before that can be accomplished.

*Kriolu* continues to be used throughout the transnational diaspora, but usually completely outside any Portuguese colonial context. Usually *Kriolu* is considered the only Cape Verdean national language, and in the US it has already been used in schools for many young people in bilingual education programs that help them to learn English. For the second generation especially, whether in the USA, France, or Holland – probably the majority of all Cape Verdean youth – the Portuguese language is mostly missing from their formation: they learn French, English or Dutch in their schools and communities, not Portuguese. Using *Kriolu*, moreover, does not have for them the same colonial stigma that it did for their parents and grandparents.

In assessing the utility of lusophonia as an orienting concept, even moving beyond language and lyrics to musical forms raises serious doubts whether it has much relevance. The fact is that the musical influences that penetrate today's Cape Verdean music, and that Cape Verdeans are hybridizing with older forms and attempting to make their own, all come from traditions other than the lusophone, or the Portuguese. Hip-hop, reggae, Congolese and other African musics, R&B, soul, Latin American rhythms such as cumbia and salsa, and of course zouk all emanate from national cultural traditions outside the Portuguese or lusophone worlds. In the diaspora especially, as noted earlier, Cape Verdean artists typically hybridize influences that give them cross-over appeal in their host societies. More than this, Cape Verdean music producers now intentionally market music to mainstream audiences, such as the famed Mendes Brothers' MB Studios, promoting artists such as E'Lissa Jones, who work predominantly in R&B, jazz, and blues, and who sing in English, and Antonio "TC" Cruz, advertised as "the first Lusophone artist to come to the United States and record an album entirely in English" (Reis 2003a: 40), singing mostly ballads, R&B, and soul. As already noted, Cape Verdean artists and their producers, like rappers Izé in France and Dje Dje in the US, also seek to conquer markets that lack much connection to the archipelago, such as hip-hop audiences in France and the US.

Today's Cape Verdean music does not clearly exhibit influences marked in any way as Portuguese. In fact, some informants asserted to me the

recent direction of musical influence goes the other way: Cape Verdean music mostly influencing Portuguese music. Cape Verdean but Portuguese-born singers such as Sofia, Lura, and Sara Tavares have become part of Portuguese music, the thinking goes, and are introducing new African elements into the popular music of Portugal. Julio Rosário of RB Music, and its Islands Music store in Boston, told me about his February 2004 trip to Lisbon, where in a small Bairro Alto club he was surprised to hear a “white Portuguese guitarist” performing Grace Évora’s popular Cape Verdean hit, “El é Sabim,” even singing the *Kriolu* lyrics. “And he did pretty well!”, he remarked with amazement and pride.

### **Musical origins, the colonial past, and morna**

Morna, of course, is “the one thing that binds together Cape Verdeans scattered all over the world” (Gomes 2003: 270), and is regarded today as the islands’ most important, commonly shared traditional music – partly because its instrumentation is mostly still acoustic and the genre has not changed since well before independence. If more recent post-colonial Portuguese influences on Cape Verdean music have been minimal, at best, what about in the past, and the questions of origins, with “traditional” forms such as morna? It’s the conventional wisdom for many in Portugal, Europe and the United States, outside the Cape Verdean community, that the soulful, melodic strains of morna are partly drawn from European rules of melody, and specifically are related to Portuguese fado, and other Iberian song forms. Peter Manuel, for example, states that morna is “European derived” (1988). Some journalists even refer to morna as “Cape Verdean fado.” Certainly much Portuguese scholarship, by ethnomusicologists such as Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco and Gerard Behague, for example, argue strongly for recognition of the “Portuguese elements,” such as “structural elements in the music of Portuguese origin,” and “the Luso-Hispanic contribution” in the music of Brazil and the other ex-colonies (Behague 1997: 527). Castelo-Branco, as well, echoing other specialists such as Ferreira de Castro, also writes of “musical Portugueseness,” and defines all musics in which Portuguese have participated or influenced as “Portuguese music,” arguing that Portugal influenced music in other regions under its control by infusing Portuguese elements in them, but also by mediating exchanges among other musical cultures (1997: 40). As in most recent constructions of the Portuguese influence on music from the lusophone world, as represented in the 1998 Lisbon festivities such as Expo’98 (Sieber 2002), European elements from Portugal, understood as universal and neutral, seem to be defined as providing the universal linkages among all lusophone musical variants.

Today's vigorous debates over the origins of morna and the nature of its linkage to Portugal address such issues and speak to new arguments and ideas about national identity in the post-colonial era. In fact, sifting through the conflicting evidence and arguments about the origins of morna makes clear that historical arguments about tradition and cultural origins are always linked to the ideologies and politics of identity formation. These debates are almost by definition never subject to resolution in any clear-cut or permanent way.

I have not met one Cape Verdean person in the United States who believes that morna derives from Europe, Portugal, or fado in any significant way. Coimbra graduate Ines Brito, native of the island of Fogo and important community leader and educator in Boston, said for example: "I can't think of anything in Cape Verdean music that comes from Portugal. They say that morna and fado are linked, but I don't think so. I never saw the evidence. Morna has more to do with Brazil." Cape Verdeans in Lisbon made similar judgments. At the city's Cape Verdean Association, for example, João Fiel Miranda explained: "Morna and fado are almost in a parallel existence, each drawing from some of the same sources [...] but fado is European, and lundum [from Angola] is still found in Cape Verde." Many criticize the very concept of *música lusófona* promoted inside Portugal, seeing it as a neocolonialist ideological category used by Portuguese to appropriate Cape Verdean music, such as Cesária Évora's, as their own cultural product.

Like people in general, Cape Verdean scholarly and journalistic writings on the topic also increasingly assert the African origins of the genre. Lumumba Shabaka, writing in CV Music World, explains it this way: "Morna originated in Boa Vista and matured in Brava [...] Later on it became the national music. Notwithstanding this, ethnomusicologists have speculated that perhaps morna, modinha from Brazil, and fado from Portugal have a common origin, which is not Portuguese, although that has been the predominant thinking as a result of eurocentrism." He goes on to attribute fado's origins to Moorish forms and to the Angolan lundum (Shabaka 2002). A more complex origin is cited by Gomes who credits Boa Vista as the cradle, with "harmonies that are the result of musical syncretism which originated with the Brazilian modinha and subsequently crossed with the lundum (from Guinea), the fado, the samba, the fox-trot, and the mambo" (Gomes 2003: 267). "The similarities between the fado and the morna can perhaps be attributed," Gomes continues, with support from Vasco Martins (1998), "to the African musical form that is at the origin of the fado, the lundum, assimilated in Brazil but which still persists in Cape Verde on the island of Boa Vista" (Gomes 2003: 270).

Today's arguably most authentic Cape Verdean roots music derives from the *badiu* culture on the island of Santiago, where escaped black slaves

in the interior resisted Portuguese attempts to repress their African cultural forms. Santiago was the site of the musical forms that were most proscribed as primitive during the colonial era – batuke, tabanka, and funana. While these genres have been updated and revitalized, including for example funana’s reinvention by the musician Katchaz, who fundamentally altered the instrumentation to more modern, electrified forms in the 1970s (Furtado 2004), today they are held up by everyone as the quintessential Cape Verdean roots music. It is mostly in the archipelago itself that many new efforts are being made by new artists to revive and reinterpret the *badiu* forms, which are not only achieving a newly ascribed folkloric status nationally, but are also being reinterpreted within newer electronic, contemporary, dance-oriented formats (e.g., by Manuel Lopes Andrade, “Tcheka,” or the group Ferro Gaita, who have so modernized batuke, tabanka, and funana). These newer resurrections of formerly stigmatized African forms are called by some a “new wave” of national music (e.g., C. Monteiro 2003).

In the US, partly related to the increasing identification of younger Cape Verdeans with Africa and its diaspora, rather than with Europe, many young Cape Verdeans seek out and embrace these more decidedly African cultural forms, including music. Musical critic Herminio Furtado, for example, writes that:

The affirmation of the African components of the Cape Verdean culture is visible in the predominance of the songs and dances of African origin, such as funana and [the Angolan] modern dance, passada, over the more European aspects such as morna [...] Young CVs are identifying themselves every day more with funana, batuke, soukouss, zouk and finançon than with morna and coladera. Look around and notice how CV girls are adopting traditional African fashion clothes and hairstyle. Visit a nightclub and watch them dance in the very African way. You will see nothing Portuguese but some light skin color – which in turn does not determine a culture (Furtado 2002).

The trends that Furtado discusses are prominent across the entire Cape Verdean world, not just in the US.

There is one way, however, that Cape Verdeans involved in music performance and production in the US acknowledge the importance of Portugal for their music. If Portugal is not credited with being important in a substantive musical sense, it is central for all Cape Verdean music because it controls key facets of the infrastructure of the global and especially lusophone music business, specifically, RTP África (Rádio Televisão Portuguesa), and RDP África (Rádio Difusão Portuguesa), the state-run television and radio stations broadcast to lusophone countries. Music producer Julio Rosário, of RB Recording, for example, explains, “Whenever we launch a new CD, we try to do it very well in Portugal, and if we do that, everything usually follows

well.” If a CD does well in Portugal, it usually results in air play on RDP and RTP África, including interviews with the artist, and a boost in African sales, including in Cape Verde itself.

### **A closing note: change, generational struggle, and musical taste**

There are significant transformations occurring among Cape Verdean immigrant populations in the diaspora, some forged by post-colonial realities that make immigrant life a completely different matter for migrants from an independent, African Cape Verde, than for earlier generations who arrived with Portuguese passports in the same locations. For second-generation youth, in particular, pressures are to reidentify with a wider cosmopolitan, transnational, often economically marginal and urban-based immigrant population in the Global North, a population differently marked racially, often as Black. As music critic Herminio Furtado explained to me, for example, the older musical forms like

Morna and coladera are about living the rural life, and taking ships to Portugal or America. It was another time. The music doesn't speak to us anymore. We have technology now, we have telephones and Internet. Our lyrics speak to the world that we live in now, where we are. Morna and coladera haven't changed much in 50 years, but we have.

Another Cape Verdean community leader and local businessman joked about morna having the image of, “Mom and Pop sitting in the living room nostalgically listening to songs about back home.”

This new orientation of so many second-generation youth, both in identity and in musical taste, is alarming in many ways to some middle-aged and older Cape Verdeans. Many of the new musical trends have been roundly condemned by many Cape Verdean adults. The famed João Mendes of the Mendes Brothers, for example, has described the current situation this way: “Today, ours is a community [...] outnumbered by a growing youth population devoid of Cape Verdean values. In short, a community struggling to hold on to their tradition and threatened by their own youth population, bent on imitating the worst elements of the greater American society” (Mendes 2002). Osvaldo dos Reis, in a critical article called “Zouking Our Music Away,” similarly attacks the infusion of zouk into Cape Verdean popular music: “It is great to have foreign influences marrying our music but not to the point where it is slowly suffocating, making our music almost unrecognizable [...] the lyrics are generally boring and pointless” (Reis 2003b). The same complaints are common in the US, Portugal, and Cape Verde – especially among middle-aged and older adults, including many in the music business.



On the other hand, there are at least as many older adults who approve of the new trends and endorse them as still Cape Verdean, as representing growth and development in the nation's musical profile. Almost the last 40 pages of C. Monteiro's recent review of Cape Verdean popular music (2003: 289-329) is devoted to the debate over whether today's music is maintaining its quality and *cabo-verdianidade* as much as in the past – and there are views on all sides. Probably the musician Adalberto Higino Silva (Betú), among others, is wise simply to acknowledge that there is no longer one Cape Verdean music, but several different streams, including: 1) those producing *música clássica cabo-verdiana*, including morna and coladera, 2) another stream focused on the return to roots on Santiago through batuke and funana, 3) Cape Verdeans who are reproducing foreign music, and finally 4) artists producing new hybrids that combine Cape Verdean and foreign influences, such as cabo-zouk (reported in C. Monteiro 2003: 292-293). For many musicians and listeners, these varieties are not always mutually exclusive either, as the same people – including youth – can enjoy multiple forms. Young people can prefer dancing to cabo-zouk or hip-hop, but still appreciate and enjoy morna, many people told me in Boston, especially those who are close to and knowledgeable about today's youth, such as teachers, parents, and social workers.

All these concerns over musical taste and identity, over intergenerational tensions, and the pulls from outside the lusophone context, of course, are really arguments over the emerging shape of contemporary Cape Verdean identity, as it historically changes and diversifies in the post-colonial era. These critical questions of the meaning of *cabo-verdianidade* are as urgently debated across the variegated landscape of the global diaspora, as in the archipelago itself. As Guilbault reminds us, "Music not only reflects people's reality but also 'constructs' or shapes that reality" (Guilbault 1993: 21). This helps explain why debates over music are so urgent, and about far more than just music. As Cape Verdean culture and identity continue to change and diversify in the diaspora, debates over music – so much at the heart of *cabo-verdianidade* – thus are bound to grow even more intense in the years to come.

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## Timothy Sieber

### MÚSICA POPULAR E IDENTIDADE CULTURAL NA DIÁSPORA CABO-VERDIANA PÓS-COLONIAL

*A música popular é um meio poderoso para a representação, contestação e negociação de identidades culturais em processo de mudança no contexto de diásporas globais em transformação. A música reflecte a continuidade e a mudança, favorece e redefine as ligações através do espaço transnacional e confere novas formas às relações intergeracionais. A música popular que surge na diáspora global cabo-verdiana – atravessando o arquipélago, a Europa, a América do Norte e África – oferece um diálogo musical vital sobre questões ligadas à memória, à identidade, à raça e à realidade pós-colonial. As músicas mais recentes, tais como o cabo-zouk e o hip-hop, dão voz a realidades da juventude da diáspora surgidas no seio de comunidades de cor urbanas e multi-étnicas no Norte Global. A juventude cabo-verdiana identifica-se cada vez mais com uma diáspora africana, negra, transnacional e multi-étnica, em grande medida urbana, mas retém ainda muitas vezes a identidade étnica cabo-verdiana. Reclamando-se africana, a música que fazem hoje desdenha a Europa e rejeita os antigos parâmetros lusófonos herdados da época do colonialismo português.*

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