



10-2020

Editor's Note

Joao J. Rosa

Follow this and additional works at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jcvs>



Part of the [Critical and Cultural Studies Commons](#), and the [International and Area Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Rosa, Joao J.. (2020). Editor's Note. *Journal of Cape Verdean Studies*, 5(1), 1-4.

Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jcvs/vol5/iss1/2>

Copyright © 2020 Joao J. Rosa

This item is available as part of Virtual Commons, the open-access institutional repository of Bridgewater State University, Bridgewater, Massachusetts.

© 2020 Joao J. Rosa

Editor's Note

Migration, Racialization and the suturing of National Identity: Global movements in the Neoliberal Order

In recent times, a plethora of private ventures targeting individuals who seek to investigate their ethnic origins have developed. While the bio-engineering technology associated with these ventures are increasingly being used in nefarious ways¹, these endeavors confirm both the human need to understand our own origins, much as they implicitly recognize the extensive flows of human migration processes, be they forced or otherwise. Migratory flows of people across geopolitical spaces has for centuries been the orchestrated pathways and economic catalyst for the “development” of western societies (Rodney & Davis, 2018, Bennett, 2016). While it is true that the neoliberal age is often characterized by the free flow and movement of capital (Klein, 2008, Harvey, 2007, Chomsky, 2017), current migratory flows can in many ways be seen as the inevitable results of profound disturbances endemic to the prevailing social and economic order. The ferocious and dissolute excesses of the “de-regulated” economic model are evidenced in the depravity of tiered existences that produce on the one—hand the catering of chocolate covered desserts costing \$25,000² while simultaneously engendering ethically moribund policies that imprison children at southwestern border while attempting entry into the very country whose macro social and economic policies create dire destitution and precarious conditions in their countries of origin.

The centuries-long racialized depletion of human labor force through the machinations of slavery that strategically engineered the underdevelopment of Africa while providing this economic force for the development of the west, in some spaces occurred concurrently with free flows of migration that often stemmed from policies of structured colonial neglect of the colonized and the vicissitudes of the environment (Correia e Silva, 1996). Ironically, as Gottlieb highlights in her current piece, even while the blossoming of Cabo Verde as an occupied archipelago was nascent in a social exclusion that would force the mixing of slaves, Jews, Christians, animists and Muslims, Cabo Verde’s role in the racialized slave trade brought into being one of the first globalized societies of humanity.

The diasporic presence of the Cabo Verdean people across the world today is due to the interplay between this colossal human tragedy that was slavery/slave trade and the continuing unquenching need to resist and thrive by exploring the possibilities contained in “imagined communities”³ (Anderson, 1983) both in Cabo Verde and in the diaspora.

On December 4, 1818, in an official correspondence to then Secretary of State John Quincy Adams, the honorable Samuel Hodges, U.S. Consul General in Cabo Verde communicated his distress at having a ship manned by renegade Americans flying British colors who after skirmishes with crews from other U.S. vessels anchored in port, engaged in “plundering the vessels of all of their money and other valuable articles found on board and threatening with destruction the vessel and crew...(S. Hodges, personal communication, December 4, 1818.)” The fact that the exchange occurred on the soil of Cabo Verde and that legalized slavery in the U.S. would only come to an end at the conclusion of the U.S. Civil War

¹ <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02545-5>

² <https://www.cnbc.com/2017/08/24/what-its-like-to-eat-serendipity-3s-1000-golden-opulence-sundae.html>

³ (Anderson, 1983)

in 1865, highlights the multi-faceted U.S. exchanges with the archipelago nation. In fact, historical archives point to the presence of Cabo Verdeans in the U.S. as early as the late 1700's, with some participating in the Revolutionary War (and of course every war since).

The formation of the Cabo Verdean diaspora in the U.S., while reflecting merely a sliver of the global migratory processes that have impacted the people and history of Cabo Verde, is particularly interesting in that it is very much tied to national policies and crises on both sides of the Atlantic. While Correia e Silva (1996) highlights the duality of natural climatic conditions (lack of rain & drought) and state structured neglect (famine/hunger) as two of the principal catalysts for the continued migration of Cabo Verdeans to the U.S., others such as Pereira (2019) have through rigorous academic research provided evidence of the reciprocal nature of that engagement. As Pereira (2019) highlights, solidarity networks between the people of the U.S. and the inhabitants of the islands were particularly effective in times of hunger, and certainly, and more importantly, went beyond official channels of engagement with churches leading the way in providing needed resources to mitigate the effects of hunger on the islands in times of crises. Similarly, in times of intense economic hardships in the U.S., such as was the case during the economic depression of 1929, many Cabo Verdeans who had been in the U.S. for generations returned to the islands with whatever resources they possessed since these would provide a more secure buffer in Cabo Verde. In this sense, migration, for Cabo Verde and the people of Cabo Verde has always had and continues to have a multi-layered impact.

The present edition focuses on a broader range of a number of little-studied historicities that comprise the overall narrative of migratory movements that have overtime created the people of Cabo Verde. The edition begins with Gottlieb's thought-provoking study of the patterns of Jewish Identity formation amongst Cabo Verdeans, the author juxtaposes the framework of Critical Race Theory and Clifford Geertz's notions of "models" in understanding the multiple ways in which Cabo Verdeans come to understand and inhabit (to varying degrees) Jewish identities.

In complementing Gottlieb's study of the assuming of Jewish identity (ies) by Cabo Verdeans of Jewish descent, Marco Piazza, through rigorous methodological processes traces the historical development of Jewish communities in Cabo Verde focusing on the particularity of the Cristão-Novos and their precarious new socio-political position which as Piazza argues, "actually endows them with a sensitivity towards those who are made the object of exclusion and discrimination". While laying a firm foundation for the understanding of the historical processes through which the Cristão-Novos adapt and resist in the process of becoming in Cabo Verde, Piazza underscores the importance of the ambiguities which this group carried as a marker of their own positionality but also a source of strength in affirming new identities.

The edition then re-centers the multi-dimensionality of the migratory experience by examining the intersectionality between ideological dispositions and transnational formations. Abel Djassi Amado critically explores the discourses and actions that allowed the Cabo Verdean diasporic communities in the U.S. to experience varying degrees of allegiance to the independence movement. Bringing forth a deeper understanding of the ideological tensions resulting from a contested revolutionary struggle, Abel Djassi Amado de-constructs the myth of homogeneity of experience and in so doing posits alternative narratives.

The edition ends with a brief look at a "circular diaspora" through the analysis of David Almeida. Through a critical lens, David Almeida analyzes the experiences of graduate students returning to Cabo Verde after an extended study experience in the United States. In his analysis, Almeida clearly and articulately reflects on the significance of identities and narratives

constructed by these graduate students as well as the impact of the “hidden curriculum” in forming in them dispositions conducive to transformative social engagements. Through this important work, Almeida opens a space of inquiry that reaches beyond functionalist understandings of the official curriculum as the sole model of ontological awareness.

The history of migration for the Cabo Verdean diaspora is on-going. It is continuously re-imagined, re-authored and re-shaped with each traversing of the terrain of the spaces of the imagined community. The articles contained herein contribute to the greater understanding of these processes.

Joao J. Rosa, Ph.D.
Bridgewater State University
Fall 2020

References

- Anderson, B. (1983). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. New York: NY. Verso.
- Bennett, L. (2016). *Before the Mayflower: A History of the Negro in America*. Chicago: IL. Johnson Publishing Company.
- Chomsky, N. (2017). *Who Rules the World?* New York: NY. Picador Press.
- Correia e Silva, A. (1996). *Historia de Um Sahel Insular*. Praia. Spleen Edições.
- Harvey, D. (2007). *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. New York: NY. Oxford University Press.
- Klein, N. (2008). *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. New York: NY. Picador Press.
- Pereira, E.C. (2019, February). *American liberal Ideas and Resistance Movements in Cape Verde*. Paper presented at the Pedro Pires Institute for Cape Verdean Studies, Bridgewater State University.
- Rodney, W. & Davis, A. (2018). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. London: Verso.