

Emigration and the Spatial Production of Difference *From* Cape Verde

Kesha Fikes



Cape Verdean Archipelago

Source: Cabo Verde Telecom, 1997-1998

(The Archipelago is situated in the Atlantic, about 250 miles west of Dakar)

Introduction: The Perception of Cape Verdean Raciality

This essay links practices of spatial mobility, or transnational migration, to the production of raced reality.¹ It considers how respective geographic labor markets exercise and impose different demographic requirements. Migrant labor requirements in the Americas and elsewhere, especially since the late 19th Century, were explicitly raced; migration labor laws inherently dichotomized non-national subjects into favorable and non-documented (i.e., criminal) communities (cf. Ngai 2003; Nevins 2002; De Genova 2002). Accordingly,

migrant populations shifted into labor markets where their profiles were deemed appropriate, or not, for the labor activity in question. This essay considers the racial logics of reception into such markets; it does so by considering a potential relationship between the different ways that racialized difference is observed and treated in the recipient *and* the sending context. Specifically, I focus on the ways that the Portuguese colonial government in Cape Verde utilized state authorized discourses of race to manage and regulate labor emigrations from Cape Verde, from the late 19th Century through independence in 1975. Then, within the same time period, I consider how the racial logics of the recipient context – the US and Portugal – likewise affected the lives of Cape Verdean communities, though not in the sense of their value as labor. Instead, I base my analysis on what their presences came to politically ratify in the US and in Portugal, at independence: popular and state perceptions of Cape Verdean raciality emerged as sites that morally legitimized absolute racial models (i.e., “non-mixed racial categories) in the US, for instance, while rationalizing the eradication of “mixed” categories as legitimate signs of difference in Portugal. Next, I question the idea of a potential relationship between the racial logics of Portuguese colonial emigrations and the politics of racial ascription within Cape Verdean immigrant contexts. If the racial politics of the sending and recipient contexts (through independence) mutually produced de-historicized narratives and perceptions of Cape Verdean social practice, across space, how then can we reconsider the organizing capacity of race, at the transnational level?

This question is entertained, first, by placing the history of colonial Cape Verdean emigrations in dialogue with popular perceptions of Cape Verdean raciality, or racial consciousness, in the US and in Portugal. While substantial information is available on Portugal, the same task is quite difficult in the US; representations of Cape Verdean raciality are largely oral, not documented. It is a form of information that circulates as a popular narrative with real effects. The truth-value of these effects is evident in the types of research questions that shape the few recent studies that exist on Cape Verdeans in the US (Halter 1993; De Andrade 1996; Sánchez 1999; Fikes 2000). In general, such research questions, by necessity, are framed to make sense of Cape Verdean racial practices within the context of an environment that politically values absolute racial distinctiveness. The goal, hence, is to think through a method of analysis that does not require a definitive national-cultural space for the assessment of

raced reality. I question the diverse ways in which select community experiences of racial management are transformed, not dismantled, as they travel.

The idea of the migrant or traveling Cape Verdean subject – whether from Portuguese colonial ethnologies or purity-inspired identity ideologies that circulate outside of Portuguese-speaking space – is commonly grounded within discussions of racial ambivalence.² Notwithstanding Portuguese colonial anti-miscegenation arguments that reported the unstable emotional and social destiny of the Cape Verdean mulatto (especially in the 30s and 40s),³ or Gilberto Freyre's suggestion that Cape Verde occupied the infant stages of Brazil's miscegenation process (Lopes 1956),⁴ the Cape Verdean subject remains popularly recognized as being disconnected from its political reality. But under what logics are such political claims of racial ambivalence made intelligible? What is necessarily implied and serviced by politics that produce or target racial practices deemed unstable? And how can we talk about the logistics of Cape Verdean movements into colonial and non-Portuguese state markets where racial practices are conceived differently?

Arguably, the representational value of Cape Verdean raciality has historically serviced diverse moral and political economic interests. Here, moral interests can be identified within the public practices that question Cape Verdean racial expressions that can not be grounded within a stable or consistent racial category. Political economic interests can be summed as the processes by which the Portuguese colonial state linked Cape Verdean racial categories to various forms of voluntary and involuntary/forced work, such that a subject's exchange value within diverse imperial and national labor markets could either 1) be appropriated into a given locale, regardless of their race-specific labor requirements, or 2) forcibly prevent targeted Cape Verdean communities from participation in labor markets that were external to Portuguese colonial labor industries. The distinctions between these interests are linked to the particular ways that sending and recipient locales for Cape Verdean communities publicly regarded Cape Verdean raciality⁵ differently.

Labor markets use racial schemas for different purposes. Likewise, communities engage forms of social practice that emerge from acts that simultaneously challenge and cohere to these schemas. From the perspective of colonial Cape Verdean society, for instance, one's political location was conceived in connection to the spaces one could or would inhabit: vicious drought and famine cycles that occurred regularly between the 18th and 20th

Centuries rendered migration a political tool that shaped social reality. Post-abolition labor codes continued to legitimize the link between race and labor. Indigenous and non-indigenous designations were linked to the 9 inhabited islands of the Cape Verdean archipelago. Legally, one's island affiliation would be attached to one's racial location, as indigenous or non-indigenous, which rendered designated colonial Cape Verdeans 'legally contracted' or 'voluntary migrant travelers', respectively. Importantly, one's racial location was not simply registered in connection to its relevance within the local social world of Cape Verde. An understanding of one's racial location was relative to the moment in which one was distributed as a unit of raced labor, in accordance with the demographic labor preferences of the respective recipient locale.

From the perspective of the Portuguese colonial administration, which in part sustained the Cape Verdean economy with forced and voluntary labor remittances, what mattered was the potential of the exchange value of Cape Verdean raciality within the recipient labor markets of Cape Verdean communities. Cape Verdeans in Western labor markets carried Portuguese passports which rendered them racially ambiguous; in part, this was because Azoreans and white-identified Continental Portuguese nationals carried the same passport when they were in transit. In short, *if, where* and *how* one moved signified different racial realities; survival depended upon one's very ability to act upon one's migratory status, at any given moment. Deathly ecological crises in colonial Cape Verde rendered race a political object: it would be made and unmade as one traveled.

An understanding of colonial Cape Verdean raciality, because of the 'traveling' context in which it emerges, requires the initiation of a dialogue that can conceptually grasp how the relationship between the sending and recipient context mutually constituted the idea of the Cape Verdean subject as ambiguous. What follows is a historical overview of the concept of indigeneity in Cape Verde. Here, indigeneity is referenced as the sign for Africanity and/or absolute blackness. This concept is important because one's legal association with it, as stressed above, determined whether one would engage in voluntary or forced labor. Peoples from the island of Santiago were identified with the indigenous category; curiously, Santiaguense were not officially identified as indigenous subjects, but *labor* from Santiago was legally regulated under indigenous labor law. Hence, it would be the types of labor in which they were

forcibly contracted that popularly justified their treatment as indigenous subjects.

What's more, Cape Verdeans from each of the other populated islands were also engaged in forced, contracted labor activities. However, as addressed below, the logics behind their local racial locations were not "tainted" by ideas of indigeneity. In essence, local ideals of racial difference were not conceivable outside of one's potential relationship to the very possibilities of migrant travel. Cape Verdeans' use of the Portuguese nationality passport (variably, from late 19th C through 1975) became a means to guaranteeing one's participation in voluntary or non-Portuguese regulated labor activities. Arguably, such efforts, which necessarily required transformations in one's racial status, were made possible through forms of legal belonging that emerged through transnational movement.

The Emigrant Logics of Cape Verdean Raciality

Perhaps the vagueness surrounding the conditions of Cape Verdean entry and settlement into different labor markets begins with the project of its history. The official narrative of Cape Verdean history presumes that the practice and recognition of racial difference is self-evident. Inter-racial union patterns across the archipelago, from the early 16th through the 19th Centuries, are treated as self-selective practices whose "frequencies" varied by island. The fact that these stories are oddly mapped onto the rationale that justifies why some islands were more civilized – as evidenced by education/literacy and cultural institutions – while others remained more African prompts one to question not only the logics that presume that each island is self-contained, but that which is achieved by certain versions of Cape Verdean history. I begin this query by presenting the official version and then proposing an alternate.

Officially, the ten-island archipelago of Cape Verde, discovered as uninhabited in 1460, is situated within the Sahel wind belt. Subsequently, it suffers from consecutive cycles of drought. Portuguese colonial administrators and colonial appointed Cape Verdean and Portuguese physical and social scientists produced volumes of ethnographic texts that categorized and detailed difference by island, over time.⁶ To summarize these accounts, they speak of the historic settlement processes that occurred in the Cape Verde islands, beginning in the late 15th Century. Settlement experiences are described in evolutionary terms, starting with the colonization of the island of Santiago by crown

appointed Portuguese administrators, in addition to slaves from the Senegambia region. Next, subsequent colonizations of the islands of Fogo and Brava, by Santiaguense slaves and European travelers and administrators suggest the ways that racially and culturally mixed descendants from these three southern (Sotavento group) islands (Santiago, Fogo and Brava) slowly populated the remaining 5 northern (Barlavento) islands, in addition to the Sotavento island of Maio. These colonizations occurred between the 17th and 19th Centuries and included Portuguese and other Europeans. The story continues: the development of schools (especially a seminary school in São Nicolau) in the Barlavento islands, in addition to lucrative port activities on the island of Sao Vicente, from the late 18th through the early 20th Centuries, allowed for creolized mulatto communities to develop a self-reflective sense of community in a nation-like sense that elite, early 20th Century Cape Verdean writers, the *Claristas*, defined as the essence of *creolidade* (creolization): it made them neither African nor European, but somewhere in-between. This experience was coupled with the defining sense of *saudade* (longing), which is treated as the emotional response to physical separation from those that emigrated or were left behind; this understanding is intertwined within the contents of the experience of *creolidade*.⁷ Celebratory representations of this hybridity – shifting vaguely between biology and culture⁸ – were recognized in juxtaposition to failed attempts to promote such civility on the island of Santiago. Santiago was the port of entry for new slaves from the Continent and it was represented as a haven for “unruly” maroons and maroon-descended peoples⁹.

An alternate version of this narrative begins with the same date, 1460, but emphasizes those practices that would produce different forms for recognizing difference within each island. Specifically, this version attends to the ways in which labor migrations – in response to the crisis of drought and famine – emerged as the nexus that necessarily organized and deciphered the significance of social life in Cape Verde. For instance, in as early as the 16th Century, *if*, *where*, and *how* one moved emerged as racially inscribed and defining practices. Cape Verdeans – documented as the descendants of exported slaves, primarily from the Senegambia region, were divided into different classes of slaves. Literate and Christianized slaves were generally sent to Europe, while “under-skilled” slaves were divided into those being shipped to the Americas and those that would remain within the Archipelago for experimental agrarian projects that marginally provided foods for local consumption. Others were captured

and then released to work as official bureaucrats or traders. Such individuals often had access to property and slaves which would confuse the imaginaries of European maritime personnel and traders who would stop temporarily in the islands to refuel and/or to pick-up slaves. By the mid to late 18th Century this economy would officially extend into voluntary and involuntary migrant markets (especially to cacao plantations in São Tomé and Príncipe) within a moment that coincides with Portugal's deteriorating imperial economy. Importantly, by the 18th and 19th Centuries, one's potential for mobility – be it forced or voluntary, labor or government related, temporary or permanent, or within or beyond Portuguese colonial space – cumulatively organized a field of tangible power recognition where positionality was conceived in connection to the spaces one had or could inhabit.

Competing Racial Narratives

In contrast to the official narrative, letters and records dating from the 16th through the 19th Centuries indicate that Santiago always hosted a diverse community of free Africans, in addition to freed, self-liberated and enslaved communities whose experiences with Portuguese plantation owners and administrators were no less diverse than those on other islands, particularly because of the consistent threat of drought and famine. What's more, each of the newly settled islands, which were represented as hosting creolized-mulato populations, continued to absorb new slaves from the Continent until as late as the late 19th Century. Further, Amaral (1960), drawing from Barcellos de Senna's work (1899), suggests that one way of controlling growing mulatto populations in Santiago was to send them to Brazil. Importantly, the objective here is not to represent these racial communities – African negros and creolized-mulatos – in real terms, nor to assume that negro meant slave nor that mulato signified freedom. Rather, I hope to point to ways that such representations signified categorical realities: race and the limits of freedom were made recognizable in relation to different practices of labor mobility. These practices required the idea and presence of racial ambiguity for the purpose of being able to respond to the labor demands of different Portuguese African and non-Portuguese labor markets, at any given moment. Thus, skewed representations of geography (which mapped racial progress and degeneracy through island affiliations) are reflected in the uneven history of the making and dismantling of migrant labor practices. The representation of African

negroes and creolized-mulatos produced the façade of racial certainty, via the archipelago's long history of internal migrations. As such, the idea of Cape Verdean racial ambivalence is produced when Cape Verdean workers change spaces and markets. Arguably, it is for this very reason – the recognition of racial ambiguity *in transit* – that the inter-dependent political system of migration and labor requires close examination: race and island origins could mutually signify each other and, subsequently, “blackened” or “hybridized” communities as necessary.

Colonial practices of “blackening” in Cape Verde were essential to the 18th Century economic development of São Tomé and Príncipe, a set of cacau producing islands whose export earnings would be used to support the metropole. The problem, however, was that by the mid 18th Century substantial numbers of men avoiding contracted labor began to participate in various maritime activities, namely whaling. By the mid to late 19th Century, however, as the colonial administration contemplated the consequences of the abolition of slavery, it called for the greater management of the extraction of raw materials and plantation cultivation on the Continent and especially within the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe. The implementation of policies of forced labor recruitment, for disciplinary purposes, would camouflage the continuation of slave labor. In reality, by the turn of the century (19th to 20th), the new ‘freed’ peasantries from each of the islands participated in the forced labor emigrations, particularly to the cacau plantations. Their numbers by island varied considerably, with the majority representing Santiago (Carreira 1983; Meintel 1984). Here, it is important to note that only one island was designated within the production and write-up of post-slavery labor laws¹⁰; that island was Santiago (Meintel 1984).

While in theory, as of 1910, Cape Verdeans were no longer Portuguese citizens (Fernandes 2002) – though they continued to carry Portuguese nationality passports for travel purposes – the process of targeting Santiaguense into labor networks that likewise legally targeted indigenous continental Africans (from Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau) unofficially treated Santiaguense workers as indigenous subjects; for, the colonial administration related to them as Continental Africans, or persons whose origins, by law, subjected them to the stipulations of “disciplining” contracted work. Santiaguense would be treated as indigenous workers, until the end of Indigenous Policy in 1961. Importantly, in practice, other islanders from Santo

Antão, Fogo, and Maio, for instance, who were likewise contracted to the same plantations, particularly in São Tomé and Príncipe, would likewise be treated as indigenous workers, as evidenced by their individual labor contracts, their working conditions, and their documented complaints to Portuguese officials (Fikes, n.d).

In effect, emigration from Cape Verde became a local tool for discerning difference through space. The connections between racialized migration policies and island origins meant that it was enough for one's political relationship to the possibility of emigration (i.e., contracted/forced or voluntary) to situate one's social location within the Archipelago, as well as beyond it. Having stressed this, however, references to island origins should not be treated as real or absolutist; Cape Verdeans migrated between the islands and hence always had family or social connections that linked communities across the archipelago. Hence, ideas about island space were produced through migrant labor practices that were intelligible through discourses of race. In this sense, the argument is not simply that island origins determined spatial mobility; island particularity was likewise an ideological production that relied upon the certainties of racial essence for their legal and popular depiction.

Race and Indigeneity

The aims of the discourse of indigeneity, within the context of Cape Verde, focused on the benefits of turning “non-assimilable” *vadios*, or vagrants, throughout the Archipelago into productive workers of the Portuguese Empire, throughout 18th Century.¹¹ Importantly, it was a term that could be ascribed to individual that appeared “idle” (see Perreira 1984). By the 19th Century, as evidenced within the travelogue section of the Cape Verdean *Boletins* – weekly colonial administrative reviews – popular references to Santiaguense islanders emerged as interchangeable with a new category of identity – ‘*Badiu*’ – derived from *vadio*.¹² It was used to identify local islanders who refused to participate in domestic and plantation slave labor. Within the historical literature on Santiago absentee landlord patterns on plantations are described as the underlying reason for Santiaguense “ruggedness.” Likewise, the mountainous areas of Santiago which often served as a refuge for run-away slaves are used to substantiate this argument. Importantly, both Fogo and Santo Antão also had mountainous areas and absentee landlord practices. What's more, interior based Santiaguense never lived in isolation because the constant threat of famine meant that those in the

interior were always connected to the urban center for food security purposes. Bravan and Barlavento island life, in contrast, are described as “close-contact” farming situations between slaves and colonial owners, which “naturally” provided the ideal environment for assimilation experiences to occur on their own, over time. These juxtaposed narratives have led many to argue or presume that Santiago remained the most racially and culturally African of all of the islands in the Archipelago. While it is true that as the first and primary port of African entry Santiago experienced its own cultural particularity, future studies of Santiago will have to contend with the political implications of such representation, particularly since Santiaguense (though black-identified) do not necessarily articulate their daily Cape Verdean experience as African (though ‘black’ and ‘African’ can be treated as synonyms) and since the legacies of such representation are intimately tied to colonial interests. For example, colonial bureaucrat and anthropologist Mendes Corrêa (1938) remarked the following:¹³

“For them (referring to designated mestiços) manifestations of African origins didn’t survive and nor are they remembered, being that they (African manifestations) exist only (survived) in Santiago; on the other islands, what’s been proven, in reality, was a simulation with a predominant Portuguese element.”¹⁴

As representations of Santiaguense islanders remain fixed upon negro identity – while “other” islanders are understood to be creolized-mestiços – future studies will also need to assess the discursive history of race distribution and categorization within the Archipelago, from colonial settlement through independence in 1975; notably, the works of Onesimo Silveira, Daniel Pereira (1984), Gabriel Fernandes (2002) and Jose Carlos Gomes dos Anjos (2002), in particular, have already contributed considerably to this line of discussion. In that color is also a symbolic reference to power, a discursive legacy of colonial and plantation politics, it is also, as Fanon (1967) and Hall (1996) remind us, a sliding signifier whose meaning is politically situated. Given this sliding significance, phenotype – in terms of analysis – is marginally treated here; the categories ‘mulato/a’, ‘mestiço/a’, and ‘negro/a’ are not entertained as solid realities. As Santiago is centered within the history of Cape Verde, and its spatial signification in labor migrations, the recognition of Badiu identity and its relationship to Santiago is treated as a temporal and spatial signifier that was

essential to supporting Portugal in post-emancipation. Notably, the treatment of Santiaguense inhabitants as *Badiu* not only guaranteed the availability of Santiaguense workers, but likewise became an infinite solution to camouflaging or “blackening” the realities of contact in Santiago.

The signifying capacity of Santiago, from the colonial administrative perspective, would continue until approximately the mid 1960s when Portugal began to reroute workers from each of the islands to Portugal. At this moment, poignantly, racialized worker distinctiveness is conspicuously absent from the language of labor policies on migration to Portugal. Cape Verdeans were recruited to replace Portuguese male workers who emigrated to north Western Europe or to the Americas during the 1940s and 1950s, or who were either killed or injured in battle during the colonial wars on the Continent, throughout the 1960s and the early 1970s. Men worked primarily in construction, mining and in carpentry. Simultaneously, Cape Verdean women from each of the islands and from different class locations entered various Portuguese work sectors; they were employed as hotel chamber maids, nurses, and entrepreneurs of feminized work activities, among other jobs (Fikes, n.d.). Cape Verdean womens’ migrations to Portugal were key to the transformation of the idea of indigeneity; as noted by Meintel (1984) Santiaguense women were represented as masculine and ferocious. In part these discourses emerged in connection to their scrutinized participation in state documented food revolts that date from the early 19th through the mid 20th Centuries.^{xv} Subsequently, the relocation of Santiaguense women to the metropole would challenge how ideals of feminine respectability likewise foreground the association of Santiaguense identity with indigeneity (Fikes, n.d.). The discussion that follows attends to voluntary Santiaguense movements as a way of illuminating not only the operative qualities of *Badiu* identity, but the fragility and uncertainty of creole-mestiço/mulato status as evidenced by Portugal’s changing relationship to Santiago. Importantly, the change in Cape Verdean nationality status – because of the loss of passport privileges at independence – likewise rendered the islands, from a global perspective, racially non-discernable.

Labor Emigration to the Metropole - Portugal

Voluntary migrant workers began to experience increasing difficulties in their attempts to emigrate to Holland, France and especially the US by mid 1960s. These recipient contexts increasingly recognized and enforced differences

between an unmarked Portuguese national category and black Portuguese, or Portuguese de côr, or of color (Fikes n.d.). Simultaneously, women and men workers from each of the islands were being recruited for employment opportunities in Portugal. But in addition to Portugal's engagement in practices that would transform its labor relationship to the Cape Verdean archipelago, what else was served or serviced by recruitment to the metropole? From the Portuguese colonial administration's perspectives, or so it seems, the objective was to disrupt the possibility of Cape Verdean anti-colonial activity, while filling construction, mining and carpentry jobs that were vacated by Portuguese workers seeking work abroad. As fighting never occurred in Cape Verde, but rather took place in Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde's independence partner, one could argue that the colonial administration's attempts were somewhat successful. However, I would also consider the importance of the future consequences of the recruitment program. The recruitment program not only drew from a racially and sexually stigmatized island-community within the Archipelago – the Santiaguense – a group that was condemned through labor policy to forced and enslaved movement within Portuguese territorial space, but it simultaneously disrupted cultural practices of race recognition by 1) allowing Santiaguense to enter into a space (Portugal) that previously could only be occupied by Cape Verdean elites, clergy, and temporary maritime personnel – among the few, and 2) by enforcing labor practices that did not racially acknowledge (through policy) differences between workers, regardless of island affiliations. In essence, the recruitment program to Portugal (among other transitional events) disrupted the ways in which, for instance, the capital potential of creole-mestiço particularity could 'materialize' or be interpreted through transnational movements; creolized-mestiço particularity, from the position of Portugal, became blurred.

Immediately after Portugal's own revolution for democracy in 1974, which coincided with the independence movements in a former Portuguese Africa, the new democratic Portuguese government created its own constitution; the issue of overseas colonial citizenship was one of its key priorities (see Esteves 1991). The law that attended to overseas citizenship - Decreto-Lei #308-A/75 – stated that Portuguese citizenship could be maintained or acquired by those who were either born in Portugal, or those who had at least one Portuguese parent who was born in Portugal. Importantly, Portuguese parents include contemporary Cape Verdean nationals who were legally recognized and documented as

Portuguese citizens – and not simply Portuguese nationality passport holders – prior to Decreto-Lei #308. Otherwise, the state recognized them as sovereign Cape Verdean national citizens.

The loss of Portuguese nationality passport privileges meant that the terms for acquiring Western visas changed, especially for new African national subjects. Subsequently, traveling Cape Verdeans that did or could not hold onto their Portuguese nationality status – regardless of their island origins – became African nationals, overnight. The argument here is not to suggest that Cape Verdeans with opportunities to travel beyond the Portuguese Empire did not understand themselves as black and/or African when holding Portuguese passports. The point is that they lost the right of use of Portuguese nationality which could facilitate their entry requirement into select places. This process, importantly, meant that the colonial state also legally ceased recognition of differences in the cultural “potential” of Cape Verdeans, by island, in part because it had to dissolve any confusions (internationally) pertaining to similarities with Portuguese Continentals and Azoreans. Subsequently, from the perspective of the international community, Cape Verde was now a sovereign African nation whose subjects – regardless of class or racial location – were one and the same. This instance raises important questions pertaining to sovereignty after independence. For, the efforts of decolonization, in the end, were never simply about independence from Portugal. Arguably, the dissolution of the West’s recognition of Cape Verdeans as Portuguese nationals is likewise reflective of new practices for deciphering race from nationality and/or citizenship, globally. Today, with the exception of those migrants that were able to maintain or acquire Portuguese, American, or other Western citizenries, for instance, contemporary Cape Verdeans are not really moving in and out of different markets where race is managed differently; the politics of sovereignty are such that race – in light of increasingly centralized immigration technologies, and the globally recognized citizen-status of Sub-Saharan African national – is increasingly operating, uniformly, across space. Digressing, one might even argue that the transnational networks that constitute this moment of globalization are merely about the spatial terrain upon which the management of social life and social difference has been expanded, geographically.

Postcoloniality and the 'New Order' Recognition of Creolidade: Reconfiguring the Signifying Potential of Labor Migrations

Since independence, the logistical relationship between racial positionality and island origins has shifted. In post-colonial Cape Verde, the representation of cultural diversity and racial miscegenation is subsumed under a universalizing narrative of *creolidade*. This contemporary narrative differs from its colonial predecessor, however, where the term could previously be utilized or exchanged as a literal synonym for *mestiçagem*, or miscegenation. Today it refers to pan-Archipelago nation-building and it is thought to be politically neutral; it is used to celebrate Cape Verde's unique form of Africanity in connection to its historic Trans-Atlantic experiences of contact and cultural hybridity. In theory, *creolidade* includes Santiaguense. Likewise, Santiaguense embrace this term as they situate their Cape Verdean identity, both within and beyond the Archipelago. In practice, however, something different seems to be happening and there is tremendous ambiguity around the representational role that Santiaguense identity may or may not be playing within the contemporary making of democratic cultural and political practices in Cape Verde. This ambiguity, arguably, is grounded in migration-related demographic transformations in Santiago where some 60% of the nation's inhabitants from across the archipelago reside. Santiago hosts the archipelago's capital city, Praia.

Today, *creolidade*, as a pan-Archipelago experience, can be interpreted as trivializing the unequal historical circumstances that racially encoded voluntary and forced migrant labor practices (see critiques by Fernandes and Gomes dos Anjos). Today, not only is there little political space for debating island politics in conversation with race, but the state's agenda is so focused on the dilemmas of urban and rural poverty throughout the Archipelago – as it should be – such that poverty can only be criticized within a pan-Archipelago context. In essence, after independence, class – which is treated as mutable and potentially controllable by the state and supporting donor agencies alike – is that which is recognized as being at stake; race is effectively blocked from debate. Hence, this pan-archipelago vision is not the only idea that is grounded in the transitioning status of the discourse of *creolidade*. In consideration of the very real poverty that affects Cape Verde, and the difficulties with access to water that continue to disrupt the possibilities for 'normalcy', it is important to acknowledge how the trans-imperial and transnational circumstances that once racially empowered

creolidade through emigrant practices are increasingly dissolving from the outside.

Conclusion

In closing, the project of the study of the Cape Verdean subject tends to misread the logics of Cape Verdean raciality by limiting or conceiving of practices of racial transformation, across space, within the following types of concerns: the status of one's racial consciousness; the relationship between racial subjectivity and color recognition; and the racial desire to assume or possess the colonizer's positionality. Approaches derived from these perspectives obscure the possibilities of being able to contemplate the significance of historical practices such as the following: 1) how one's local racial positionality could be constituted through the experience of emigrating with or without a Portuguese passport, or within or outside of Portuguese colonial space; and 2) how labor practices and their constitutive relationships to gendered racial imaginaries could situate hierarchies of legally-binding racial orders that operatively divided traveling Cape Verdean subjects into indigenous contract laborers and autonomous traveling subjects. The absence of such detail leaves little plausible space for assessing the racial implications of the new citizenship practices which collapsed diverse Cape Verdean social communities into a single racial-national community, according to the entry guidelines of Western receiving countries. For, the process of re-categorizing new Cape Verdean nationals as Sub-Saharan Africans vs. Portuguese nationals is central to understanding how external legal frameworks shape practices of Cape Verdean subjectivity. Arguably, the current struggle over political representation might appear, on the surface, to be just about the transnational possession of racial agency. But importantly, this is also about the assertion of control over one's relationship to the possibilities of spatial movement, and hence one's livelihood, and the ways that such control can mediate local experiences of national belonging in the archipelago. Importantly, subjects do not simply emerge in connection to the spaces in which they "originate": the relational or dialogic quality of subjectivity is also constituted within the relationship that binds different geo-political locales (cf. Lefebvre 1991).

Importantly, this argument should not be read as an appeal to the representation of any form or practice of raciality: this is not the point. Rather, this engagement is simply about questioning how the representational value of

Cape Verdean raciality has serviced diverse transnational interests: the mutual consequence, in the end, has been the production of a de-historicized or “questionable” racial subject. Plainly, the production of the Cape Verdean subject as a unit of mobile Portuguese labor is elided at the same time that politicized ideals of racial consciousness are construed independent of the emigrant logics that texture/d Cape Verdean subjectivity. As a consequence, little room is left for considering how whiteness – the effaced possibility through which difference and ambiguity are made recognizable (Fanon 1967), and which renders the interpretation of Cape Verdean raciality questionable in the first place – remains obfuscated in the company of conversations that emphasize “passing” identified practices among non-white racial subjects; significantly, degrees of difference can only be constituted or recognized in reference to non-white racial subjects. Hence, how can we interpret, alternatively, that project which requires or compels recognition of Cape Verdean raciality as problematic? In what ways do discourses of racial appropriateness produce synchronized forms of regulation that institutionally stabilize appearances of race and racial order, across of space? Responses to these questions might best be framed within what David Scott (1999) has referred to as the moral-political dimension of criticism, or the politics that ideologically shape how we interpret events and practices at any given moment. Narratives of Cape Verdean politics and history are accompanied, compulsively, by questions of racial ambivalence; as such, one is not only required to confront the potential effects that such narratives have on the representational status of Cape Verdean subjectivity, but to consider how such circulating discourses are in fact producing racially “ambiguous” Cape Verdeans in advance of the political histories that have positioned this community as such.

Archives

Boletim Oficial do Governo Geral de Cabo-Verde, 1862 through 1910.

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Notes

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² With the exception of a few research studies (cf. Marilyn Halter 1993; Deidre Meintel 1984; Lelia De Andrade 1996; Gina Sánchez 1999) that attend to popular ideologies pertaining to Cape Verdean racial subjectivity in the US, there is little textual "proof" that can speak to the prevalence of popular ideas regarding Cape Verdean raciality. What is significant, however, is the circulatory or oral nature of this information which emerges through the culmination of the following: questions pertaining to the differences between Cape Verdean and Portuguese subjects; criticism of Cape Verdeans as not identifying as African Americans and/or black, and/or as identifying as Portuguese.

³ See Eusebio Tamagnini, (1934) "Os Problemas da Mesticagem", (Speech) I Congresso Nacional de Anthropologia Colonial; Mendes Corrêa, (1943) *Raças do Império*; Almerindo Lessa & Jacques Ruffié (1960) *Seroantropologia das Ilhas de Cabo Verde: Mesa Redonda Sobre O Homen Cabo-Verdiano*.

⁴ See Cape Verdean intellectual Baltasar Lopes' *Cabo Verde Visto por Gilberto Freyre* (1956), a transcribed radio interview in Mindelo (CV) where Lopes

criticizes Freyre's perception of Cape Verdean identity politics, arguing the Freyre could not conceive of the idea that Cape Verdeans were already culturally evolved and defined, vs. being in the early stages of some future state of racial existence.

⁵ 'Raciality' refers to the heterogeneous field of race-specific and geographic differences or ascriptions that can be used to in the description of Cape Verdean racial practices.

⁶ For colonial ethnologies see António Pusich, (1860-1861) *Memória ou Descrição Físico-Político das Ilhas de Cabo Verde – 1810*; Cristiano Jose de Senna Barcellos, (1899-1900) *Subsídios para a História de Cabo Verde e Guiné, I-II*, (1904) *Alguns Apontamentos Sobre as Fomes de Cabe, desde 1719 a 1904*; Lessa & Ruffie (1960), *Seroanthropologia das Ilhas de Cabo Verde: Mesa-Redonda sobre o Homen Cabo-Verdiano*; and Gabriel Mariano (1959) "Do Funco ao Sobrado ou o Mundo que o Mulatto Criou."

⁷ Here it is essential to note that this colonial, pre-nationalist experience of 'inbetweenness' was not conceived in terms of a logics of whitening, or what it means to continue to evolve, "upward", or racially. Instead, as stressed by founding the *Clarisita* movement intellectual, Baltasar Lopes, *Creolidade* was understood to be a stable cultural experience that had already arrived or evolved. It was a cultural phenomenon in and of itself, independent of European or African cultures.

⁸ See Eusebio Tamagnini, (1934) "Os Problemas da Mesticagem", (Speech) I Congresso Nacional de Anthropologia Colonial; Mendes Corrêa, (1943) *Raças do Império*; Almerindo Lessa & Jacques Ruffié (1960) *Seroanthropologia das Ilhas de Cabo Verde: Mesa Redonda Sobre O Homen Cabo-Verdiano*. Notably, the Lessa & Ruffié reference is the collaborative product of Cape Verdean and European intellectuals/social scientists. The articles in this volume are driven by research questions that link biology, or rather blood, to ideas about culture.

⁹ See critique of this idea in Daniel Pereira's work (1984).

¹⁰ See the proposed articles for legislation and letters to the governor of Cape Verde on the recruitment of Santiaguense workers, in the *Boletins Officiais do Governo Geral de Cabo-Verde*, 1862 through 1878.

¹¹ See Mario Moutinho's (2000) *O Indígena no Pensamento Colonial Português: 1895-1961*, and J.M. da Silva's (1953) *O Sistema Português de Política Indígena* and *O Trabalho Indígena* (1955). Also see Daniel Pereira's (1984) *A Situação da Ilha de Santiago no Primeiro Quartel do Século XVIII*.

¹² This idea is suggested in Pereira's work (1984) on Santiaguense identity politics on late 18th Century Santiago. See also Fernandes (2002) and Gomes dos Santos (2002).

¹³ See Elisa Andrade's (1998) "Do Mito a História".

¹⁴ Original Portuguese text: "Para eles, as manifestações de origem africana no passam de sobrevivência ou de reminiscências, existentes sobretudo em Santiago; nas outras ilhas, o que verificou, na realidade, foi uma simbiose com predominância do elemento português".

¹⁵ Popular narratives of Badiu identity were intertwined with fantastic stories of resistance and vulgarity. While archives and letters documented the presence of slave uprisings on other islands (namely Fogo and Santo Antão), stories of trickery, aggression and violence commonly characterized "Badiu" revolts. The reality is that Santiago was always the most densely populated and financially productive island. During drought crises that led to famine, infamous Santiaguense revolts occurring in 1811, 1822, and 1835 (see Tomazinho reference), coincided with periods of mass death. Moreover, the politicized participation and leadership of women in rebellions further served the purpose of representing Santiaguense as savages, particularly at a time when "other" women began participation in US migrations (Halter 1993). Romanticized and antagonistic tales of self-liberated and fierce negro women with knives and machetes, coupled with the sudden deaths of food hoarding landowners (see critique by Meintel 1984) were woven into ideals of Badiuhood, being characteristics of indigenous and negro identity.

Gendered representations of Santiaguense identity as negro and aggressive were essential to discursively discerning mestiço from negro identity. And it was the racialization or rather "blackening" of Santiaguense identity that served the purpose of the illusion of Badius as masculine and vulgar, regardless of sex. Thus, as mestiço identity was imaginatively constitutive of ideas of mutability, Badiu identity controlled Santiago by "blackening" it. Further, as the fetishized synthesis of black and indigenous status, and mestiço and assimilated status were solidified, these discourses systematically racialized necessary pools of mobile labor, such that travel simultaneously situated one's racial and gender positionality within local politics.