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UPHAMS CORNER AND "OTHER" SPACES:
RACIALIZED YOUTH IDENTITIES IN BOSTON'S CAPE VERDEAN COMMUNITY

Written By
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Anthropology Honors Project
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Reader: Mary Beth Mills
May, 2013

DEDICATION

I lovingly dedicate this thesis to my parents, Maria Lina and Bob Moorehouse. My accomplishments, including this project, would not have been possible without their daily motivation and guidance, and to them I am eternally grateful.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my advisor Britt Halvorson for her invaluable guidance throughout this project. She was always there to nurture my a-ha moments and motivate me during moments of doubt. Working together for the last several months will remain a fond memory, and I will miss her dearly. To Mary Beth Mills, I would like to thank you not only for your help this year but also for sitting with me one afternoon in April 2010 as we discussed my future as an anthropology major. I would like to express my gratitude to Chandra Bhimull who has challenged me to take intellectual risks, asked me the most difficult questions, and taught me to never apologize for the amount of time I spend with the television on; you have been one of my greatest inspirations at Colby and I am forever thankful. To Carole Levine, thank you for your friendship over the last four years and for listening to me rant about the research process every day at 12:15pm in the bookstore. To Isadora, sis, thank you for keeping me on task. Finally, I must thank my "cube-mates", Rachel and Ellicott, who consoled me through fits of hysteria. We got through this together!

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

> My tiny world revolved around Store 24, KFC, and the park across the street. Through the Hamlet St. parking lot we would wander into the "Spanish" grocery store. I would drag my toddler feet, yelping as if I were crossing the Sahara. Crossing Columbia Road was even worse, but I knew I wasn't supposed to be "all the way up there" unless my *vovó*[1] was there to pick me up from the school bus. The borders were ingrained in my mind: Columbia, Hamlet, Gene and Belden. It was our neighborhood, "the hood", and my corner of the world.
>
> Blink and you might miss it. It may be less than one square mile, but those streets, corners, bodegas and traffic lights illuminate nostalgia. It may not be Beacon Hill, and I may not have ever been to "The Pru" or walked "historic trails", but Uphams Corner is historical to me, to us. We were cramped in rows of triple deckers, all 12,000+ residents buzzing between East Cottage, Quincy, Pleasant and the railroad tracks. Within these borders, thousands of families share blocks, several community and youth centers battle the good fight against local violence, and small business owners take pride in countless corner stores, barbershops, and eateries. Columbia Road is the neighborhood's main artery, but if you beat the yellow light, you could miss it. You would miss the "boys around the block causing trouble near Hancock St.", the smell of *toresma*[2] streaming and steaming out of hot vents, or the *vovós* gossiping near the beauty parlor. Uphams corner is small and mighty, like its robust Cape Verdean population. Uphams Corner is a Cape Verdean-American capital, a slice of Cape Verde in a distinctly American metropolis.

While embarking on this thesis project I have begun by viewing Cape Verdean-Americanness and Uphams Corner as linked; to study contemporary Cape Verdean-American lived realities means consulting this neighborhood space, and the area is mutually dependent on its Cape Verdean residents. In the particularly unpredictable world of ethnographic field research, as I focused on the collection of narratives, a new and surprising actor emerged: the neighborhood space, around which crucial tensions revolve. It is vital to understand how neighborhood provides not merely the scenery behind actions but more importantly how, as a conceptual framework, it can also be constitutive of residents' actions in relation to quotidian moments of identification. This thesis aims to highlight identity processes and performances

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[1] *Kriolu* for "grandmother".
[2] Cape Verdean fried pork belly.

among Cape Verdean (-Americans) in Boston (Uphams Corner). This ethnographic project underscores moments of identification, instances of tension, misunderstanding, or friction that make us more aware of our performances and presentations of self-- moments in which identity becomes temporarily more apparent as we make daily political decisions.

First, though, allow me to step back for a moment. To borrow Jamaica Kincaid's terminology, Cape Verde is a "small place" but that does not mean it is insignificant. As an island territory-turned nation in the middle of the Atlantic it is easily overlooked in discussions of the African continent and African diaspora. Its inhabitants, emigrants, and descendents are commonly cited, both by scholars and community members, as an "invisible" population. However, Cape Verde has been at the center of world history. As a crucial player in the global slave trade it saw its people become increasingly mixed both racially and ethnically. For years I have satirically called Cape Verdeans, including myself, "mixed beyond recognition", both racially and playing on the fact that as a small place we are rarely included or recognized in maps, historical accounts, or academic conversation. This thesis serves as a way to highlight Cape Verde and make space for its visibility in academia. This is about more than including the islands on a map, but rather situates Cape Verdean (-American) experiences in a broader body of literature on race and identity, which in turn brings awareness to the often forgotten Cape Verdean narrative.

Though this project does not focus directly on Cape Verde, Boston's Cape Verdean community bears strong ties to the islands, and the two are important places for analysis, both for my thesis and to my informants. The majority of Cape Verdean descendents in the U.S. live in Massachusetts, and Boston boasts tens of thousands. Boston has historically been known as a segregated city fueled with racial tensions, particularly in the 1970s, just as post-Cape Verdean independence migrants arrived. Its city spaces also provide a wealth of interesting avenues for research. Neighborhood politics in Boston are fascinating as are the

ways residents stereotype and symbolize various neighborhoods, particularly Dorchester, the largest and one of the city's most diverse neighborhoods. Boston's context is central to my findings, but the importance of urban life is also crucial to this thesis and intersects with identity performance in many surprising ways. I will discuss cityscapes, neighborhood, and the importance of "fromness" within Boston in more depth throughout this thesis, particularly in chapter four.[3]

Cape Verde also figures strongly in the Boston context as an origin of transatlantic ideologies of race and racialization. Cape Verde's "mulatto" category, that of being generally mixed race in this particular racial system, does not translate easily in the United States. Cape Verdean immigrants struggle to adjust to rigid U.S. understandings of race. Furthermore, first-generation Cape Verdean-Americans attempt to navigate their identities within both frameworks, negotiating between *Kriolu e Merkanu* (Creole and American) modes of racialization. Identity-making for Cape Verdean-Americans is defined by multiplicities; they must negotiate socio-cultural pulls in every direction and are expected to make definitive claims about their self-understanding. Their language is a mix of African lexical elements, Portuguese, and English code switching. Their food, usually heavily doused in olive oil, is mostly European-influenced and their neighborhood and community a mixture of African-Americans, Latino-Americans, and Caribbean immigrants. This leaves space for miscategorization, misunderstanding, and essentialization within the identity-making experiences of Cape Verdean-Americans in Boston.

The exciting aspect of studying both Cape Verde and Boston is finding the ways in which the two local contexts connect. Though Boston is the central focus of this thesis, I continue to acknowledge the ways in which Cape Verde's social, political, and historical

[3] Throughout this thesis I use the term "fromness" to describe the meaning accorded to one's place of origin, particularly their home neighborhood, and evaluate the ways in which this notion informs racialized identities. The term was introduced to me by my professor and mentor Chandra D. Bhimull, whose comments radically shifted my thinking as I refined the scope and argument of my project.

climate come to shape forms of understanding within Boston's Cape Verdean community, particularly as articulated by elders. Boston as a site provides a space for Cape Verdean ideals to meld and conflict with U.S.-American lifeways. The diversity of Boston's neighborhoods allows Cape Verdean-Americans to experiment, borrow, or otherwise interact with other cultural expressions, while negotiating their own upbringing as Cape Verdean, understanding their role as Bostonians, and grappling with their national identity as American. The Cape Verdean context, interweaves into a Cape Verdean-Bostonian's everyday life. It is nearly impossible to speak of Boston's Cape Verdean community without considering the islands themselves, and being consistently aware of both localities is essential.

I focus on families who arrived in Boston after 1975, the year in which Cape Verde gained independence from Portugal. This "new wave" of post-independence Cape Verdeans, as opposed to the "old wave" that traveled to southeast Massachusetts as whalers in the late 19th century, is overlooked by scholarly literature on Cape Verdeans. Their roles in families, communities, and neighborhoods offer rich fields for investigation, as this thesis documents. Though a small body of research has been established on Cape Verdean experiences in the U.S., the majority of scholarship has focused on pre-independence accounts. While there has been a recent movement towards the study of post-independence groups, first-generation American youth are overlooked. My research serves to fill this crucial gap.

Recently anthropologists and other social scientists have begun to look more critically at what it means to be a "youth" in the 21st century. I interpret the category of "youth" rather loosely, and it is mostly dependent on whether the individual self-identifies with youth and youth movements; more generally, however, I frame youth as persons under the age of 30. Cole and Durham, in Generations and Globalization (2006), similarly define youth as being anywhere between 12 and 29. What is more important, though, is how age becomes an important factor of study. Cole and Durham explain:

> Age is important because of its centrality in social reproduction. Not only are intergenerational relations important for passing on or modifying tradition, but intergenerational links are among the most intimate and powerful in social life (2).

Exploring the often fraught understandings between generations allows for a more holistic interpretation of social production, particularly as it informs racialization of spaces and identities. Cole and Durham insist that generations should not be interpreted separately but rather understood in conjunction or tension with others. The actions within one generation signal shifts in or reification of understandings in another. Age groups are relational and should be studied as such, and throughout this thesis, in looking at youth experiences in Boston, I also interrogate elders' constructions of race, place, and cultural authenticity as they pertain to my informants' identities.

Cape Verdean youth experiences offer substantial analytic opportunities. In particular, I explore how youth view themselves in relation to their elders; youth, as a group charged with the future of the community Cape Verdean, simultaneously hope to fit into a U.S. social landscape. Cape Verdean-American youth live through multiplicities, through several tensions and double binds: between Cape Verde and the U.S., between racial ascriptions, and between generational understandings of race and the future. Consequently I am interested not only in what it means to be a Cape Verdean but also in what it means to be a Cape Verdean in the U.S., or what it means to be Cape Verdean and American simultaneously.

At the core of intergenerational differences are varying understandings of Cape Verdeanness in a U.S. context. Parents who lived through the independence movement in Cape Verde have specific understandings of what it means to be a Cape Verdean. During the 1970s, they carved out a new, post-colonial identity for themselves. Parental opinions on racial and ethnic identities deepen and complicate the identity-making process for young Cape Verdean-Americans. Such intergenerational tensions inform the multiple, almost fractal dynamics of the research questions I have tackled for this project.

This thesis argues that Cape Verdean-American youth in Boston insist on identifying in multiple, non-unitary ways. By challenging singular notions of cultural identity, Cape Verdean-American youth must negotiate a series of ongoing daily tensions shaped in turn by their positioning within multiple systems of racial categorization, as well as the norms and expectations of their community and families. These tensions also reflect and engage the politics of fromness and racialized neighborhoods, as well as moments of racial ascription and misunderstanding by outsiders. I argue that identities are constructed and performed in the everyday as individuals navigate not only their immediate positionality but also their futures while striving to carve out a recognizable place for themselves in a rigid and complex U.S. racial climate.

Ethnographic Basics

As an ethnographic investigation of first generation Cape Verdean-Americans, my goals were to gain a better understanding of the processes of (racial) identity-making and performance within the Cape Verdean community, immerse myself in the community when possible through participant-observation, and share a variety of voices from within the CVA community. I collected data through a mixed methodology of participant-observation, mostly through family gatherings and conversations, an extensive literature analysis, and several personal interviews.

I conducted extensive interviews with strangers, family members, and family friends, a total of seven, all between the ages of 21-32, and all of whom were deeply tied to the Cape Verdean community in Boston. I first began by interviewing my brother, who initially inspired this project, and his voice as it may intertwine with or contradict my own will be apparent throughout this thesis. Additionally, I interviewed two sets of siblings separately, and these opportunities proved themselves to be especially valuable for understanding how opinions can vary within one family and for illuminating intergenerational tensions. These

familial interviews forced me to understand family as an important site for ethnographic research.

I met with informants in person for the most part, though some interviews and follow-up conversations were done through online video calls and by phone. Research took place in homes, importantly, whether my home, their apartment, dorm, or our shared home-neighborhood space of Uphams Corner. Each informant was eager to speak about their experience, their family and their origins, revealing a familiar pattern in the Cape Verdean community to spread awareness about Cape Verdean cultural history, in order to make the group more visible; in that respect, it was not challenging to find volunteers for my project. Interview questions were aimed at obtaining a personal narrative or history of each interviewee and consisted of open questions about their neighborhood affiliations, city spaces, family migration history, intergenerational (dis)connections, and forms of racial awareness and identity. I also asked each participant how they perceive their membership in the Cape Verdean-American community. Most informants responded more strongly to a particular theme and their voices will be highlighted in corresponding chapters. In sharing their narratives, I aim to highlight the various lived experiences of those in a community in which I am both interested and to which I am deeply connected. I hope to feature the experiences of individuals, from a small community, whose identities are often glossed over.

Reflexivity's Place in This Ethnography

I cannot fully explain my research without also rooting myself and expressing my positionality and involvement in the community that I am studying. I identify as Cape Verdean-American, with Cape Verdean parents who arrived in the U.S. in the late 1970s. I prefer a hyphenated identity, at least for myself, because I strongly associate myself with the challenging experience of being a first-generation American who had to balance a Cape

Verdean childhood in Boston with my "Americanizing" adolescence. I am both Cape Verdean and American in separate but also conjoined ways.

The hyphen does more than identify me, but also roots me in different communities. Although I am very familiar with Cape Verdean cultural traditions, food, music, and customs, I consider myself to be "half" in the community as a researcher. For sure, I come from a place of knowing and my embedded knowledge will be apparent throughout this thesis. That is undeniable. However, as someone who moved away from Boston at a relatively young age, and had to syncretize several aspects of her life (for example, welcoming an Irish-American stepfather into our family), I must admit to feeling somewhat peripheral to the Cape Verdean community at particular moments. There are many aspects of a Cape Verdean experience that are very apparent to me and other situations in which I feel clueless, or less than fluent.

While conducting research I interrogated my own position and have been particularly influenced and inspired by French anthropologist Joëlle Bahloul's work within her own community in Algeria. She wrote of "doing an ethnography of [her] own people" and how her research evolved into a "personal quest", both of which are elements that I encountered as an ethnographer (2). What exactly does it mean to "question *my* people" (2) and what does that connote about my privilege, access, and power? All anthropologists must ask themselves similar questions but further caution needs to be taken when investigating aspects of yourself and your own community, past and present. Bahloul introduces several questions about her position as a researcher, specifically examining her role in the Othering process: "who is the Other?...these pages reveal a situation of multifaceted reflexivity in which the voices of the Other have been incorporated into my own" (7). Similarly, I have pondered this, wondering if I am effectively othering my informants, othering a community that so happens to be mine as well, and finally othering myself by exposing portions of my own identity-making experience.

I have continually asked myself, how are my interviewees thinking about me? What is my role in this community both as a researcher and a Cape Verdean? On the other hand, in writing this thesis I have come to understand the depth and wealth of my embedded knowledge, not realizing my quietly made assumptions about cultural practices I take for granted. I must admit I understand Cape Verdeans at a different level than someone who is outside of the community but in no way do I value that more or consider it better. I continue to ask myself if I am more or less equipped as an anthropologist to discuss these matters of identity because I am in the community and face similar struggles. As a researcher, I strive to present the subjectivities of my informants from a place of situated knowing while remaining conscious that my place of knowing, a site that positions me in ways that are at once privileged and partial, affects my research.

Theoretical Frameworks: Race, Space, Identity

I base my research on notions of racialized identity and place, both of which are constructed entities that are socially real and present in everyday life. My specific combination of preexisting notions of identity, race, and place comes together in rather unique ways. I apply them to: neighborhood spaces, moments of intersection, and intergenerational misunderstandings. Many theorists have written about race and place but neglect to animate them in the same inextricably linked ways as I and my informants do. Literature focused specifically on local contexts and Cape Verdean (-Americans) will be discussed and woven through the thesis but for now I will unpack these overarching terms as they pertain to my research.

Race as a social construction is immensely powerful, enough to cause unimaginable rifts between individuals, communities, and nations; though race is constructed, it is socially real and incredibly significant (Wade 1993: 345). Wade argues that the constructedness of various “races” does not mean there is insignificance to race as a category, e.g. Blacks or

blackness for those for whom blackness is a central aspect of identity (4).[4] Most importantly, understanding race as a social construction does not mean that it is not socially real or significant, but rather that it impacts everyday lived experiences in powerful ways. Similarly, I have argued that race is important simply because it is important to those I am studying. This is because, as John Hartigan Jr. (1999) argues in writing about whiteness in Detroit neighborhoods, race is ordinary and is experienced every day.

I build my understandings of race and racialization from contemporary race theories, keeping constant notions of race/ racial identities as constructed, relational, and rooted in power dynamics (Delgado, et al. 2012). Furthermore, I connect race to two other major frameworks. Race becomes linked to place in several interesting and complex ways is mapped onto individuals in particular interactions: these processes are what I regard as racialization of spaces and identities.

This intersection takes place in neighborhood spaces, in this thesis. Neighborhood *spaces* become *places* through the assignment of racializing stereotypes to urban geography. When race is mapped onto space, it is then ascribed to individuals who live, work, and move through city spaces. For example, a city may have a so-called good or bad neighborhood, which is identified as dangerous or otherwise categorized. Through numerous complex and interweaving processes that include media and news influence, social stigmatization, and more, such places become linked to particular racial identities. The area, through continued articulation of being "Asian", for example, is racialized as an "Asian" place, bringing with it the stereotypes, either disheartening or celebratory, of Asianness. Racial ascriptions stick; they leave indelible marks on the identity-making process. These ascriptions serve to narrow identity construction, which is deeply rooted in our negotiations with places. Being from the "Asian neighborhood", or not associating with it, works to create one's self-perception and

[4] I capitalize "Black" and "White" in most instances to acknowledge the racialized identities it represents.

subsequently affects performances in everyday life. What does it mean to perform racialized spaces and identities? I clarify this in the following sections on racializing spaces (places) and identities through a literature analysis.

Racializing Spaces[5]

Place is central to this thesis, as are the ways in which spaces become regarded as racial. First, I must distinguish between my uses of space and place for the remainder of this thesis. Place is used to signify the ways in which individuals and collectives accord meaning to spaces. However, in discussing cityscapes, space is used to identify the locations through which individuals move. I theorize neighborhood spaces predominantly using literature on place in anthropology while continuing to use space in some instances. In keeping with urban scholarly work, I use space to communicate my arguments about neighborhoods and cities. However, I motivate space differently by arguing, in chapter four, that it is not merely a container for humans and social interaction but rather affected by interanimation. I do not understand space as static or quantitative, but rather as an entity that is negotiated by individuals and created into places. Using both terms allows flexibility in understanding urban areas and the creation of meaningful places.

I explicitly consider a specific set of racial understandings from the Cape Verdean islands and evaluate how those inform Cape Verdean (-American) notions of race once in the U.S. I try to deconstruct but also fold the Cape Verdean concept of race into the rocky and sharply delineating racial landscape of the U.S. and Boston. Additionally, I suture notions of race and place together as they pertain to Boston's neighborhoods, specifically examining racial stereotypes mapped onto specific areas, streets, and homes. How are such mappings

[5] I alternate slightly throughout this thesis between "racializing" and "racialized". Racializing suggests the processual nature by which spaces and identities are linked to racial characteristics. However, using racialized exemplifies the ways in which these processes are ascribed, though they are active, hence the gerund form of racializing.

interrelated with everyday interactions and how is space made meaningful in these "racial situations", as Hartigan (1999) coined?

Just as race exists as an important factor in the lives of those I study, place holds deep significance. Much writing has been done on spaces and places as meaningful cultural entities; Gupta and Ferguson (1992) write, "Anthropology has always known that the experience of space is always socially constructed" and question how spatial meanings are established (10). Individuals create relationships with spaces in various ways, but it is also necessary to evaluate the ways in which communities establish meaningful places. My informants openly described their personal relationship with various city spaces, which can easily be rooted in theoretical literature that has been compiled over the last few decades. Basso's descriptions of place in Wisdom Sits in Places (1996), which focuses on place naming among Western Apache, are particularly salient. He expresses that lived relationships with places can acquire meaning and that "relationships with places are lived whenever a place becomes the object of awareness," (106-7). I am concerned with these moments of awareness, glimpses of reflection on place and how it can relate deeply with social interactions.

Basso also writes of the "interanimation" of places, and addresses how "places and their meanings are continuously woven into the fabric of social life", further describing, "as places animate the ideas and feelings of persons who attend to them, these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which attention has been bestowed," (107-110). This notion echoes my findings regarding informants' experiences in Boston's spaces. I argue in chapter 4 that neighborhoods, as constructed places, are created and reproduced by us as inhabitants, while the place itself makes us as our quotidian interactions moving throughout space inform self-understanding.

Gregory, Soja, and Urry (1985) all describe elements of this correlation. Gregory explains that spaces are not only arenas for class or race conflicts but that they are also the location in which such relations are constituted. Additionally, Soja identifies spatiality *as* society while Urry identifies space as a *set of relationships* rather than its own substance (cited in Wade 1993: 53-4). Relationships between place, meaning, identity, and race are socially entangled. This thesis tries to loosen these tangles through an examination of everyday life and everyday relationships with space. Edensor (2002) similarly values the study of everyday spatial encounters. Our constant engagement in the world in everyday motion, which relies on familiar routines, is what produces and maps space as meaningful. Edensor focuses on commutes, shopping, and other daily points of "congregations, interaction, rest and relaxation" (55). These are what I stress as *moments of identification*. Within these "paths, constellations, meeting points, and intersections" is a means to understanding the small ways in which people come to view themselves (55).

Yet, how do moments of identification become racial, and why are spaces racialized? I draw here first on Hartigan's work linking different forms of whiteness to varied social spaces showing how racial categories are constructed and interpreted among Detroit residents and second on John Jackson Jr.'s work on imaginations of blackness in Harlem (2001). Jackson argues that racialization occurs when "the performative action of race creates space for people to challenge arguments about what particular behaviors connect to which discrete races" (12). Furthermore, Hartigan suggests:

> Racialness is a function of indelible markings, poignant, irrevocable histories, and unavoidable proximities…The operations of racial identity, the privileges and the disadvantages, are predicated on the specialization of epidermal difference… The particular contours of spatial formations, with their distinct racial and class compositions informs the discursive modes through which the significance of racialness is varied by class compositions, is assessed, manipulated, and negotiated.

As space is made meaningful, it is simultaneously made racially relevant to its inhabitants, who are ready to reconstruct race through boundaries and places. Community members do not simply create places but rather construct racialized spaces through which to define social interaction. Negotiating these color lines becomes a daily task for Cape Verdeans in Boston. For example, as is discussed in chapter four, moments of miscategorization occur daily in particular neighborhood spaces; a Cape Verdean (-American) is racialized as Dominican/Latino only because they are shopping at a particular store at a particular corner. Now, if they were doing the same errand in a different Boston location, they may be identified as African-American.

Furthermore, I argue that space itself is also active, echoing Neely and Samura's (2011) theory that space is "an archive of the social processes and social relationships composing racial orders… active in the sense that it interacts with people and their activities as an ongoing set of possibilities in which race is fabricated." Their concept acknowledges processes of racialization as mutual, in that space and race act upon the identity just as the collective creates specific racial understandings (2011: 1934).

Race and place are manifested most saliently in my research through familial tensions among youth and elders in Boston's Cape Verdean community. The problem, as perceived by elders, is that Cape Verdean-American youth begin to abandon their home-grown, neighborhood-based, cultural values for "American" practices, which are often racialized as African-American. In addition, racial tensions between Cape Verdeans and African-Americans are animated through examples of familial disjuncture, such as conflicting ideologies of "future" and whether or not that is located in the neighborhood space. Youth and elders navigate a contested terrain of what the future of the community (and neighborhood) will look like. These conflicts are mapped onto space. My informants described a cultural double bind, placed on them by elders, that obliges youth to be connected

to their neighborhood space but simultaneously creates a desire to leave because social pressures alert them that there are "better" neighborhoods out there. These neighborhoods are also racialized as generally White places, which are non-Cape Verdean but hierarchically considered better than African-American spaces. Elders construct the sense of peril for the community and tie this to place *and* race. When we refocus on the youth, they are stuck between fear and aspiration, between *Kriolu e Merkanu*, and between different notions of what the future should look like, while relating these directly to space, place, and neighborhood meanings as constructed by their surrounding community.

Racializing Identities

Within the anthropological discipline it is generally understood that identity is fluid, constructed, multiple, and most importantly a process. Though I support this definition, this thesis also aims to uncover the ways in which identities are perceived and constructed through social interactions as singular, racialized, and performed. It is critical to understand identity as constructed, both by the individual and by other social actors, and as racialized, much like the neighborhood spaces are.

First, however, let me define how I understand "identity" in this thesis. Some ideologies promote identities as a right, in that identity is something possessed: for example, the notion of *having an identity*. However, it is more common in anthropology to understand the ways in which identities are *made and cultivated*, knowing the crucial, often political decisions that inform identity (Cohen: 178). (Racialized) identities are created, as Goffman (1959) argues, "to create impressions based on the audience", alluding to intentional performance of identity rather that the existence of "natural" or given identities. Wade writes, in Blackness and Racial Mixture (1993), that race has naturalizing tendencies but it is only through the social construction of "race" and "nature" that some come to seemingly "natural" conclusions about the existence of racialized identities (344).

My research supports models of identity formation which see processes of self-categorization operating in tandem with outside perceptions of an individual. Identity is formed by the individual ("I identify as…"), but identities also form in relation to ideas that are ascribed, mapped, or placed onto others; thus, like space, identities are also a social process involving more than the personal choices of an individual. The connection between choice and identity is reflected throughout this thesis, but I also argue that many social aspects of identity-making dynamics, such as intergenerational tensions and neighborhood spaces, inform the construction of racialized identities as well as the ways in which individuals perceive themselves within racial system of understanding. Appiah (1994) writes about choice in the construction of identity/self-understanding: "We do make choices but we do not determine the options among which we choose," (154). Similarly, Wilkins (1996) suggests that "we make ourselves up" from a "toolkit made available by our culture and society" (7). Racialized identities, however, figure slightly differently, because racial ascriptions actively limit individuals' identities by reducing them to a singular social category. As racially ambiguous individuals, Cape Verdeans experience racialization in two ways: through ascription but also by existing in-between racial categories in particular social situations. Cape Verdean youth are in a liminal space regarding their identities; they are caught between (African-)Americanness, blackness, and Cape Verdeanness. Though their scope for agency may seem limited under such circumstance, this thesis suggests that Cape Verdean youth can and do exercise agency particularly in their (our) choices to negotiate and claim multiple identities. Cape Verdean-American youth by asserting identities that are at once complex and multiple, seek to challenge the reductive ways in which their race is ascribed or misunderstood daily, not only in their neighborhood but also in the broader U.S.

I maintain throughout this thesis that such identities are processes. Again this challenges the notion that identity is an essence, something that is possessed; rather it is

continually being made and remade in consistent and interesting ways (Edensor 2002: 24). Our presentations of self change slowly, or according to context, but we, as individuals, attempt to create a semblance of constancy every day. Temporally, process is often imagined as a large, overarching change; yet identities are made every day, and zooming in on *moments* is useful in interpreting the processual quality of identity. Edensor (2002) writes of how the everyday is taken for granted, characterized as boring or static in relation to the "exciting moments in which decisions are made" (17). Recognizing, as Edensor urges, the "patterns laid down in the everyday" can open us to the processual and dynamic elements embedded in everyday life (23). Identity-making emerges from an individual's daily decisions, an ongoing, even at times unconscious, reflexivity of self anchored in particular moments and encounters. In many ways this supports the concept of *identification* specifically, which, as Bauman (2001) writes, relates to identities in that it is "a never ending, always incomplete, unfinished, and open-ended activity in which we all, by necessity or by choice are engaged" (10).

At the root of such everyday decisions are quotidian performances. Post-modernist anthropology favors a performative lens of identity, which is crucial to my ethnography. Post-modernity focuses on the de/reconstruction of identities, forming the fluid, fragmented, discontinuous, and hybrid definitions of identity we are familiar with today. Throughout the very late 20th century and into the 21st, identity has come to be regarded by scholars as performative (Elliot & DuGay 2009: xii). I find myself most inspired by performance theorist Bryant Keith Alexander (2004) who probes notions of performing blackness and Americanness. He suggests that performance is attributed to skin in the U.S., and creatively explores how the cultural politics of color are embodied in culturally scripted ways. These scripts are set on the corners of America's cities.

Performance is an appropriate metaphor for evaluating identities because we can see more clearly the moments in which identities change, crystallize, are produced and reproduced (Edensor: 69, Johnson: 7). Dynamic performances point to dynamic identities-multiple, syncretized, and political identities. The specific ways in which identities are performed, and how those performances are understood to be racial, will be discussed thoroughly in subsequent chapters.

Racializing identities, however, refer to the ways in which individuals are identified in direct reference to a racially marked category (Miles 1994: 275). In many cases Cape Verdean-American youth feel identified by their racial/ethnic ascriptions, which extend to assumptions about their characteristics, actions, and home environment. Although Cape Verdean youth, and many people of color, identify strongly with racial and ethnic identities, these self-understandings cannot be viewed apart from the broader dominant constructions of racialized identities that .shape contemporary American hierarchies of power and value. Overall, it is important to understand how racialized identities are folded into a broader identity-making process, particularly for Cape Verdean-American youth who identify with multiple races, or are categorized in varying ways on a daily basis.

Moving Forward

This thesis is broken into two main sections. Part one begins by situating ourselves. Situating ourselves means understanding Cape Verde in order to move transatlantically to Boston; chapter two is an overview of Cape Verdean history as it relates to the experiences of Cape Verdean-Bostonians and an introduction to Cape Verdean notions of race. Chapter three focuses on historicizing Cape Verdean experiences in the U.S. and dives into “identity management strategies” among Cape Verdean-Americans. Part two presents my main ethnographic findings and creates theoretical linkages to real, lived experiences in Boston. Chapter four zooms in on neighborhood as meaningful place and racially charged space,

examining the ways in which people move through neighborhood and how neighborhood informs identity. Chapter five encompasses negotiations of cultural authenticity and evaluates the spaces of divergent intergenerational understandings of Cape Verdeanness. Chapter six concludes the work by investigating the ways in which Cape Verdean-Americans strike a balance between these various, immensely complex identity-making aspects. I look particularly at how lived experiences incorporate all of these themes, and how they inform political choices of identity in Boston, including negotiating “official identities” such as those on the U.S. Census.

CHAPTER 2: SITUATING OURSELVES: CAPE VERDE

The Importance of the Other Local Context

Not only is it crucial to be mindful of the impacts of the local context of my site, Boston, but when considering a transnational, immigrant community, one cannot ignore the incredible impact of local contexts within the other site. In very direct ways the Cape Verde islands are related to Cape Verdean-Americans' imaginings of themselves, particularly because their parents are from the islands and instilled within them notions of self-value through a Cape Verdean framework. Cape Verdean-American anthropologist Gina Sanchez argues that "self-awareness is constructed through the commonsense recollections of the past upon which people rely to construct themselves as members of a present collectivity" (Sanchez 2005: 535). Essentially, self-definitions and self-perceptions as Cape Verdean-Americans are in effect rooted on the islands and through the nation's history insomuch as it is through local communities. The Cape Verdean community is special, as well, because of its strong pride in its history, cultural practice, and expression. The islands are conceptualized as a "defining cultural symbol" in identity construction (Sanchez 2005: 533). The members of this seemingly invisible sector of American society insist on the importance of their history and feel that they have to convince others, as Belmira Lopes does in her narrative, that "The Cape Verdeans *have* a history" (Lopes and Nunes 1982: 202).

In this chapter, I will explore and retell Cape Verdean history briefly while orienting this story as it pertains to Boston's Cape Verdean population and to my ethnographic findings.[6] Rooting ourselves in the past allows for a full-bodied investigation and reflection of the present lived experiences of Cape Verdean-Americans. Furthermore, a development of Cape Verdean history in this chapter will initiate my discussion of historicized identities in

[6] By using a historical lens here, I utilize notions of History as officially recorded and generally accepted events. In this particular case I do not emphasize personal narrative history. I imagine history in Trouillot's (1994) sense of that which is said to have happened. I use history carefully, but also value the ways in which situating my topic in past events motivates my research.

chapter three. Later detailed descriptions of Cape Verdean definitions and understandings of race in this chapter work to place race in both local contexts; by this I mean acknowledging the ways in which race as a social tool are used in Cape Verde and Boston and how they are mutually informed. The intersection of both racial frameworks is most easily seen in intergenerational tensions, which will be touched upon in this chapter but explored in much more depth in the fourth chapter. Finally, I introduce Cape Verdean Creole (*Kriolu*) as a cornerstone of Cape Verdean cultural expression, including informants' understandings of language use, more of which will also be discussed in chapter five. Finally, I consider the Cape Verdean diaspora momentarily to conclude my discussion of history and race while providing a diversifying voice, which allows us to move transatlantically to Boston to finally situate ourselves in New England.

Cape Verdean History

The history of Cape Verde is very much connected to other places, mostly through circulation of humans. The islands are connected to Europe, the U.S., and Brazil among other locations. The islands have been both isolated and connected to major events of world history. Despite its remote location Cape Verde was involved in the golden age of navigation, the transatlantic slave trade, and African independence struggles (Batalha 2004: 22, Lobban 1995: 6).[7] In this section I will focus on Cape Verde's political transformation from colony to independent nation, its transnational contacts, and how its dynamic history frames dilemmas of identity. Cape Verde's history, on a basic level, is characterized triply: Colonialism, Emigration, and Independence.

Discovery, Slavery, and Colonialism

Despite being firmly rooted and connected to their home islands, Cape Verdeans paradoxically do not have a point of reference as much as we may think, meaning that their

[7] Cape Verde is located in the North Atlantic a few hundred miles off the coast of Senegal and the Gambia. Combined the ten islands are approximately the area of Rhode Island (CIA World Factbook).

lineal connection to the African continent is ambiguous. The islands were truly uninhabited before the Portuguese arrived, interestingly being discovered by European voyageurs, unlike most colonized states. The islands were first sighted during 1455-1460 with no doubt that the Portuguese were the first there (Monteiro 1997: 20, Batalha 2004: 18). Due to Cape Verde's tough climate and poor natural resources it was difficult to populate the numerous islands. At first seamen from the Azores and Madeira flocked to the islands, initially to the *Barlavento* (northern islands) and Brava, which have continued to be racially marked as White or Portuguese ever since (Sanchez 1997: 56). Missionary activity began immediately in 1466 and continued well into the 20th century; Cape Verde is nearly uniformly Catholic, with a small and shrinking Jewish population. Colonialist Catholicism has now become a marker of Cape Verdean culture and the religious practice has become a source of hope and pride for many Cape Verdeans. Upon arrival in New England, many Cape Verdeans joined and founded parishes, including New Bedford's Our Lady of Assumption, which has been a cultural touchstone for Cape Verdean-Americans for over a century (Carter and Aulette 2009: 25-27).

Cape Verde is likely most well known for its role in the transatlantic slave trade, commonly understood to be a "pit-stop" or platform between West Africa and the Americas. Not only did this have an effect on world history, but slavery on and through the islands worked to create the racial categorizations that are still present in the nation today. Portugal was the first European nation to initiate slavery in Africa as well as the last to abolish it in the late 19th century. Initially, Cape Verde operated on a plantation system, which was modeled after the Canaries and Madeira. Slave owners were generally single, White Portuguese men who unsurprisingly would take advantage of slave women and engage in mostly unconsenting relations with them (Lobban 1995: 25, 17). Portuguese rape and victimization of West African females is a dark truth in Cape Verde's history that many have yet to face,

particularly because miscegenation in this manner is the basis for the nation's majority mulatto population (Batalha 2004: 20, 22). Unfortunately, this crucial piece of the islands' historical narrative is frequently glossed over or silenced, despite its importance for understanding so much about Cape Verde's social structure, and especially its race and gender dynamics.

Cape Verde's experience with slavery, although having unique characteristics, also parallels other trajectories found globally. Lobban (1995) writes that as colonialism and slavery endured oppression worsened and this is evident in both Brazil and the United States among other locations (43). As slavery's grip became more devastating, states worldwide began placing limits on trade and practice, working toward abolition. Portuguese territories were notorious for their reluctance to abandon free labor. Slowly throughout the 19th century Portugal made small efforts, mostly due to pressure from the British, eventually abolishing slave *trading* in 1836 (Batalha 2004: 24). The U.S.'s decision to end slavery directly pushed the Portuguese and Brazilian governments toward final abolishment (Lobban 1995: 40). However, colonialism continued strongly into the majority of the 20th century.

The resulting social hierarchy in Cape Verde defined a multitude of social distinctions based on, as Sanchez argues, "a combination of ancestry, phenotype, skin tone, class and island" (536). I will discuss notions of racial identity in Cape Verde later, but understanding its basis in colonialism and slavery, which is also very much tied to specific islands or place, is paramount.

Famine and Emigration

Cape Verde is recognized more for its emigrants than it is for its residential population and has been habitually cited as having a population smaller than its diaspora. Mass emigration from the islands stems from a history plagued by several famines. The Cape Verdean climate is mostly dry, with some locations receiving precipitation only a few times

per year. Between 1747 and1970 Cape Verde sustained fifty-eight years of famine, the most catastrophic in 1902. During this early 20th century period, Cape Verdeans flocked to the United States, some joining relatives who had already settled in New Bedford or Cape Cod (Batalha 2004: 21).

The mass emigration Cape Verde experienced is often puzzling to many who are looking to label the transnational population explosion of Cape Verdeans. Though I do believe these populations constitute a diaspora, many would argue that they do not because emigration was voluntary as opposed to forced expulsion; in many regards, however, emigration was necessary for their livelihoods and thus famine could be considered grounds for "forced expulsion".

When opportunities arose, including work in whaling or at cranberry bogs in New England, Cape Verdeans leapt at the chance for "*na buska vida*", to find a better life, a motto that many Cape Verdeans cherish. A few primary immigration waves mark Cape Verdean history: late 19th century (associated with whaling), 1927-1945, 1946-1973, and 1975-present (post-independence) (Batalha 2004).[8] During the period of 1820-1975 it has been estimated that 35-45,000 Cape Verdeans arrived in the United States, with 60% emigrating from Brava and Fogo; a majority of immigrants arrived prior to 1920 (Halter 2005: 617). As such, Brava and Fogo are the islands most influenced by traffic to and from the U.S., thus entangling New England undoubtedly in Cape Verdean history (Meintel 2002: 26).

Toward Independence

Cape Verde gained its independence on July 5, 1975 after a long battle against tight Portuguese control and alongside other Luso-African nations: Mozambique, Angola, Guinea-Bissau, and São Tomé & Principe. In 1951, Cape Verde officially transitioned into an

[8] Pre-1975 arrivals are what I consider the "first wave" or older generation immigrants, while post-independence immigration is "new wave". Although I focus specifically on the children of post-independence émigrés, understanding the migration patterns of previous generations is important in understanding dynamics among Cape Verdeans in the Massachusetts community.

"overseas province" as Portugal's ploy to thwart growing nationalism. Nationalistic pride resulted from strong resistance groups, formed out of citizens' weariness of the harshness of Cape Verdean life throughout the 20th century. The number of educated Cape Verdeans grew, as well as those returning from posts abroad (Batalha 2004: 28). Rather than concede or comply, as Portugal perceived England and France had done with their colonies, the government strategically embraced Cape Verde as a part of the Portuguese nation, though its imperial policies remained largely the same. Outraged, many Cape Verdeans began to follow Amilcar Cabral, the nation's revolutionary hero, in his plans to move Cape Verde in a new direction. The independence leader and organizer of the African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), Cabral emphasized the African elements of Cape Verdean heritage and connected the future of the nation to other continental territories (Greenfield 1976: 12). Essentially, Cabral, who spent most of his time in Guinea-Bissau[9], theorized that Cape Verdeans should re-Africanize themselves and deplore colonial rule (Carter and Aulette 2009: 29). All violent struggles took place in Guinea-Bissau, but were fought on behalf of the Cape Verdeans, who never endured war on their land; in 1975 the PAIGC assumed sole power, which lasted until 1991 as a mild communistic rule that was supported by the Soviet Union and excessive remittances (Batalha 2004: 16).

The year 1975, as I have stressed throughout, is a monumental year in Cape Verde, and particularly for Cape Verdean-Bostonians. On the brink of independence, Cape Verdeans, both on the islands and abroad, were presented with an identity dilemma. J.M. Monteiro writes that Cape Verdeans questioned if they should honor their European heritage and reject burgeoning nationalism or in turn reject their historically Portuguese identities in favor of their African legacy (Monteiro 1997: 19). For the first time, though, an official choice needed to be made: to be Cape Verdean or Portuguese? It became a political matter

[9] Formerly known as Portuguese Guinea.

and an explicit challenge to the *assimilado* and *badiu* identities created and continuously made through centuries of colonial rule.[10]

This moment is particularly powerful in looking at the immigrant groups in Boston; Post-1975 immigrants understand cultural identity differently than 3rd or 4th generationers in New Bedford or Cape Cod, who came to the U.S. in the late 19th century. Identifying as Cape Verdean is more magnanimous, political, and carries meaning in different ways for these recent migrants. Again, I stress the importance, for this thesis, of studying post-1975 immigrants and their children, because it is in this space of intergenerational difference, influenced by historical aspects of identity that Cape Verdeanness is made, un-made, contested, and re-evaluated.

Moving Forward

Post-1975 Cape Verde is almost unrecognizable in comparison to its colonial past. As previously mentioned, the islands were under a mild communist rule until 1991, when the Movement for Democracy (MpD) was established in Praia. Throughout the 1980s Cape Verde's relationship with Guinea-Bissau became strained and the PAIGC was abandoned in favor of the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV); as a result Cape Verde has since distanced itself from mainland Africa, though bilateral cooperation has been restored between the two nations (Batalha 2004: 29). Cape Verde's democracy has been strong for the last two decades, and is consistently identified as Africa's most stable government, though this measure is ambiguous and arguably arbitrary. Democracy in Cape Verde has also become a source of independence from the African continent, particularly through the adoption of a new, "less African" flag in the 1990s. The new flag symbolizes the political and governmental changes Cape Verde experienced and features red, White, and blue, with a circle of yellow stars that represent the ten islands rather than the previous red, black, yellow, and green flag (Sanchez 1997: 56, Batalha and Carling 2009: 15). In many

[10] I explain both of these terms in depth in "Race in Cape Verde".

ways this symbolic representation of the nation as its own entity rather than a part of an African amalgamation points to Cape Verde's growing diversity as marked by immigration and steadily growing populations from Europe and China.

Race in Cape Verde

Race relations in Cape Verde will always be linked to the nation's historical context, dating back to Portuguese absolute reign and through the independence movement. It is easy to locate racial tensions in Portuguese colonialism. Under Portuguese rule Cape Verde had a special status as a territory seen as less African than other colonies but this does not mean that intense racial hierarchies were not present (Sanchez 2005: 407, Lopes and Nunes 1982: 5, Lobban 1995:54). Sanchez writes that identity for Cape Verdeans, both in the U.S. and on the islands, is based in colonial and post-colonial histories, alluding to the newness of some identities such as "Cape Verdean", "African", or "Black" (1998: 24).[11] Understanding race in Cape Verde is an important piece to the identity puzzle for Cape Verdean-Americans in Boston. Not only because they are so closely related to the islands, by cultural ties or temporally in relation to migration, but also because two racial systems are mixing in the U.S. context. Race and ethnicity tend to be conflated in Cape Verde while they are separated in the U.S. The dominant U.S. racial system categorizes people on a binary scale; one is either Black or White. Lima recognizes that "regardless of how Cape Verdeans identify racially or politically, we must face the fact that the racial and ethnic landscape in Cape Verde is different from the U.S.," and it is crucial to understand the ethno-historical aspects of these systems in order to begin to comprehend the Cape Verdean-American perspective (Lima 2011: 8, 3).

Badiu, Assimilado, and Racialized Island Spaces

In the Cape Verdean context, differences between Black and White parallel historical distinctions between *assimilado* (assimilated) and *badiu*. *Assimilados* during colonial rule,

[11] For more on these identity strategies refer to chapter 3.

and particularly during an era of slavery, were given preferential treatment for their compliance to *Branco* (White) authority (Lobban 1995: 54). Appearing Portuguese is one aspect, but at the heart of the term *is* assimilation and how well West Africans were "adjusting" to their new location and a new regime. Being officially documented as *assimilado* meant being granted the privileges of whiteness and Europeanness on the islands (Meintel 1984). *Badiu*, contrarily, has been associated with drifters, rebels, and those living on the margins. The identity was initially constructed to categorize the "more African" appearing Cape Verdeans who were thought to have escaped the slave trade by retreating to the hinterlands of the islands, particularly Santiago.[12]

The term badiu is derived from the Portuguese word, *vadio*, which translates to "wanderer" or "vagrant" (Batalha 2004: 74). The category became more socially entrenched when applied to Cape Verdeans who resisted everyday colonial pressures, which resulted in a reputation and stereotype of being difficult, vehement, or violent. As the unique Portuguese Creole developed into today's Cape Verdean Creole or *Kriolu*, *vadio* became *badiu* and took on its own life of racial denigration. The *vadio* that marked idleness is now *badiu* that marks violence and more interestingly, blackness or Africanness.

On the other hand, the term has been used, to a lesser extent, to identify positive aspects of "African" Cape Verdeans, generally from within the group: *Badiu* can mean honesty, integrity, and hardworking: all of which are valued cornerstones to Cape Verdean cultural identities (Batalha 2004: 33). *Badiu* also emerged as a positive identifier during the independence movement and shortly after independence much in the way that "Black is Beautiful" spread throughout the United States in the 1970s. To a certain extent *Badiu* served as a signifier of legitimacy for rebels and others fighting for independence, evidently a symbol of their dedication to separating from Portugal or to create solidarity with those in

[12] Often written historically as São Tiago.

Guinea-Bissau, Angola, Mozambique, and São Tome and Principe (Lobban 1995: 61, Batalha 2004: 74). However, much like the U.S.-American campaigns, they did little to redefine the original terms that still hold negative connotations and maintain a social stigma in Cape Verde.

Pushing this even further, *badiu* works incessantly to map racial categories onto specific Cape Verdean islands. Island origins, for both residential Cape Verdeans and emigrants worldwide, are racialized. Ideas about island space were produced through migrant labor practices that translated eventually into more fixed public opinion on race and space. Many islands were thought to be more "blackened" than others during colonialism, due to less racial mixing in those places (Fikes 2006: 162). However, in fact extensive racial mixing occurred on every island to create a largely genetically and racially hybridized society unlike many in the world. The notion that some islands remained more isolated and less racially mixed (and so "blacker" than others) is not supported in the historical record and belies the longstanding and common practices of movement, between the islands. Nevertheless, these ideas persist and throughout Cape Verde, entire islands, and island groupings have become racialized: the northern islands, known as *Barlavento,* and the southern islands, *Sotavento,* originally distinguished because of wind and weather patterns, are now instant racial markers of Europeanness and Africanness, whiteness and blackness, respectively (Carter and Aulette 2009: 217). The North is almost unanimously understood to be Portuguese while the South is African. *Badiu* has become synonymous with *Santiaguense*, meaning an islander from Santiago, the main island (Fikes 2006: 162). Santiago has come to be known as the "most African" island, though contemporarily it is also the most "cosmopolitan" and in some ways most European because of the international influences coming through the capital city, Praia. *Sanitaguenses* are *negro* while "other" islanders are mulatto or *mestiço*, and the "blackening"

mentioned previously is directly connected to Santiago; islands that came in contact with it were thought to instantly become more African (163).

Similarly, fellow *Sotaventos*, from Fogo and Brava, are racialized as Black or from less mixed spaces. Fogo and Brava also constitute the two primary islands of origin for Cape Verdean-Americans; Fogo is associated with new immigrants while Bravas tend to be New Bedfordans or Cape Codders. Each island has more specific stereotypes associated with it. Fogo, translating to fire in Portuguese and also marking the only active volcano in the archipelago, is branded for its "fiery" residents, meaning men and women with short tempers (Lopes and Nunes 1982: 31). An informant, Janette*, 25, describes Fogo as a highly stereotyped island and introduced me to the phrase, "bo de dodo o de Fogo?", meaning "Are you crazy or are you from Fogo?" Furthermore, Fogo is commonly referred to as "backwards" or behind the rest of Cape Verde because of rural lifestyles and less infrastructure and access to amenities.

Brava, translating to brave, is one of Cape Verde's smallest islands but has had an enormous impact in the United States. Bravas, particularly women, are known for their charm, or *morabeza*, but typically isolate themselves from other *Sotavento* islanders. Sanchez (1997) describes their tendencies as clannish and addresses how this separation extends to the U.S. Bravas, including immigrants, see their heritage as independent from Fogo and Santiago, basing their difference in plantation patterns and racial history. Due to this, in the U.S., Bravas created their own clubs and organizations in southern Massachusetts that historically excluded other islanders, particularly *Santiaguense badius* (Lopes and Nunes 1982: 5, 48; Greenfield 1976: 9). Through this example we can see competing racial narratives floating throughout Cape Verde, even among groups that are cast together and how they stand to differentiate themselves. Race and island origin are inextricable and mutually

signifying of cemented cultural notions of “blackening”, “mixing”, “African”, and “European”.

Most of my informants trace their heritage to Fogo, which is understandable considering that most Cape Verdean-Bostonians are from Fogo. However, pride in their Fogo identity was not voiced as being in relation to other islands but rather an acknowledgement of their families’ journey to the U.S. However, at informal family gatherings, and from observations throughout my experience in Cape Verdean households, island-based divides are reified quietly and constantly. My mother, aunts, and grandmother are always quick to identify individuals through their island origins. Though it has never been explicitly explained to me, there seems to be a secret code of understanding among elder Cape Verdeans concerning island identities that involves, for example, differentiating the tones elders use to describe someone from Boa Vista versus another from Santiago. Although I am sometimes unsure of the assumptions and inferences being made, what is obvious is the importance of island origin in instantly categorizing individuals within the Cape Verdean community. Every first-generationer is able to describe the island and area their family is from, and this *fromness* is certainly an element of one’s identity.

Race and Class in a Mixed Society

Cape Verde, though relatively unknown by the general public in the U.S., is recognized as a mixed-race state, existing to a certain extent in parallel to Brazil and Cuba. Batalha refers to it as a “Luso tropical Eden deceiving itself and others” in discussing Cape Verde’s paradigm of racial assimilation as opposed to pluralism (2004: 52). Color is not only experienced through a postcolonial scope but absorbs other equally crucial social factors including economic status. Much like Brazil, wealth is categorized largely through race and, despite a tripartite racial system (Black, White, and mixed), Cape Verdeans utilize a more detailed racial classification through apparent financial status. Discrimination based on class

is incidentally tied to race, though Cape Verdeans would deny this; correspondingly many Brazilians harbor an analogous ideology that racism does not exist in their country (Meintel 1984: 162-3). “Money whitens,” a phrase commonly coupled with discussions of “racial democracy” in Brazil, is also applied and mutually understood in Cape Verde. Racial class is flexible in that a person can become whiter with a better socioeconomic status, thus moving bilaterally up a social hierarchy; terms such as *preto* and *negro* tend to be avoided while *branco* and *mestiço* are in effect celebrated categorizations of mobility (Batalha 2004: 60). Simultaneously, this does not reflect particular understandings of their phenotype, which is why for many “Portuguese” Cape Verdeans who immigrated in the 19th century adapting to a different, U.S.-American racial system was challenging. Meintel (1984) analogizes the Cape Verdean system to that of the United States by noting, “the myth of racial equality in Cape Verde is parallel to the myth of upward class mobility in the U.S.”, further drawing comparisons between colonial Cape Verde and a segregated U.S. (165). Though similarities can be found between Cape Verde and various other countries, there are several ways in which its racial system is rather unique in creating categories of celebration and disparagement, which are necessary to acknowledge in order to understand how Cape Verdean-Americans negotiate several modes of racial politics.

Phenotype and Racial Categorization

Though thoroughly mixed and frequently characterized as a nation of mixed citizens between whom racism does not exist, Cape Verde cannot be viewed as a whole when it comes to race relations. Batalha (2004) writes that Cape Verdean identity encompasses different aspects in opposition to each other that are often manifestations of cultural diversity within the islands; we have seen this so far in popular imaginations of islands of origin, historical contexts, and economic status. However, physical characteristics cannot be ignored. Despite Cape Verdeans’ incredibly diverse genetic mixture causing many people to look

similarly ambiguous (to outsiders of course), Cape Verdeans are able to focus on the minutia of phenotype and create further racial categorization. Interestingly, it is said that those from Fogo, Brava, and Santiago, the "African" *Sotavento* islands, tend to focus on racial distinction more than other islanders, and I suggest that this is due to centuries of social marginalization that prompted *Sotaventos* to create divisions amongst themselves in order to survive in a complex yet rigid racial classification system (55,73, 222).

Though many Cape Verdeans acknowledge that they share Black ancestry, this did not stop the creation of a unique racial society in which everyone is *Creole* as a common denominator while still perpetuating deeply embedded understandings of difference (20). Extremely specific labeling based on race occurs that takes into account face shape, hair texture, hair and skin color, as well as structural facial elements, such as nose slenderness. This incredibly acute basis for classification and racism is foreign to many U.S. Americans who are accustomed to race being based purely on skin tone. Rather, a Cape Verdean could be a dark shade but have a slight nose or light hair and be considered a "Black-White" Cape Verdean. Their skin may be dark but their "White features" can afford the individual better opportunities in a racial hierarchy (Lobban 1995: 57). Other Cape Verdean categories include face types such as *comprido* and *redondo*[13], hair that is *seca* or *crespo*[14], or types such as *preto di Guine* and *tipo Europeu*[15](48-50,61).

Such typing is understood to either be correct or incorrect by fellow Cape Verdeans and despite their miniscule differences they are folded into an unbending, commonly deployed discourse. These varieties reify rigid racial ideas in a society that defines itself as being racially fluid, and continue to create an intricate paradox that is, to a certain extent, translated to the U.S. Sanchez writes of her own experience, "the prestige of Caucasoid

[13] Long/narrow and round
[14] Dry/wiry and frizzy
[15] Guinean Black and European

features is not lost on any Cape Verdean who grows up hearing about 'good hair' or 'good features'" (1998: 5).

From my personal experience, most Cape Verdean elders I meet comment on my appearance almost immediately. Typical *bunitu*[16] comments are social niceties, yet are often accompanied by comments on hair type, eye shape, and nose structure. As someone whose skin tone would be categorized in a "racial democracy" as *café com leite*[17], I am a rather "standard" complexion for Cape Verdeans, though skin color does vary greatly among islanders. However, I have been complimented and almost praised for a variety of European features, including long *kabel d'odju* (eyelashes), a slender nose, and "baby hairs" (wispy, fine strands which frame the face). Meanwhile, my coily, thick and frizzy natural hair was taunted for being difficult and impossible to manage throughout my childhood.

Interestingly, though, hair situates Cape Verdeans strangely between island understandings and African-American beauty ideals. Many Cape Verdeans joke about "kinky" hairstyles as being distinctly "African" and undesirable, but in relation to African-American women and girls, most Cape Verdeans "don't need" relaxers or perms. Hair texture and other phenotypic characteristics are strong mnemonics for the division of individuals and communities, both within and outside of Cape Verde. This example of existing in a strange, ambiguous space between African and African-American, Black and Cape Verdean allows us to see again a combination of Cape Verdean ideology colliding with U.S. life in a way that is undeniably unique for Cape Verdean-Americans.

Situating Ourselves: Cape Verdean Diaspora(s)

The Cape Verdean diaspora is small but mighty, and expands over many nations, in Europe, Africa, North and South America.[18] Just as situating ourselves in the island nation

[16] Beautiful
[17] Coffee with cream
[18] The term diaspora is complicated here. For the purposes of my thesis I will be using the term to encompass a large scattering of Cape Verdeans throughout the world who are not necessarily all emigrants. Traditionally,

itself serves to complete a picture of Cape Verdean experiences, acknowledging the diasporic communities reveals experiences that are pertinent to Cape Verdean identities, particularly the importance of migration to Cape Verdean cultural pride. Though hyphenated identities exist for many Cape Verdeans worldwide (e.g. Cape Verdean-Swede, Dutch-Cape Verdean), diasporic identities pull communities and individuals together, celebrating Cape Verdeanness while embracing certain elements of alternate nationalities. In this concluding portion, I concisely review transnational Cape Verdean communities in order to allow us to eventually move across the Atlantic to Boston in my next chapter.

Transnationalism

Cape Verde's international community of both emigrants and "diasporic" Cape Verdeans is commonly referenced as being as large as or larger than the residential population on the islands, upwards of possibly 700,000 individuals. To briefly introduce emigration as a foundation of Cape Verde in the past and present I will share a popular Cape Verdean *morna* folk song:[19]

Here I am, in the middle of the ocean on my way to America

Going to a distant land is a man's destiny

It is a nameless destiny that we must fulfill

Cape Verdeans have always been seen and understood themselves to be movers, with a destiny to move past the islands onto something better, "*na buska vida"*[20]. The romanticism of such a destiny is linked to Cape Verdean traditions of seafaring and migration to earn enough money to return to Cape Verde and live not only comfortably but in luxury (Batalha

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diaspora intended to signify those who experienced forced removal and the transnational groups that resulted, more specifically Jews and Africans. However, recently diaspora has been used and overused in literature to often point to large emigrant groups. Because the Cape Verdean community worldwide is so vast and involves so many factors of history and migratory patterns, I use diaspora to conceptualize the entirety of Cape Verdeans abroad, whereas communities are used to pinpoint some smaller groups and neighborhoods of course to suggest enclaves. I do not wish to bog myself down with the political decision of using diaspora as a term "improperly" as it takes focus away from my research.

[19] Translated from *Kriolu* (Lima 2011: IX).

[20] "*Na Buska Vida"*-the search for a better life.

and Carling 2009: 28). Emigration is as integral to Cape Verdean identities as other elements (Lobban 1995: 58). Emigrants have been central to Cape Verdean nation-building by providing support through political participation, remittances, and nationalism abroad. People have always been Cape Verde's premier renewable resource, considering that it is an archipelago with few natural resources (152). Although in recent years many Cape Verdeans have decided against returning to the islands, others on the islands have similarly chosen to stay, understanding more fully that immigrant life in many locations is quite challenging (Batalha and Carling 2009: 26). Batalha and Carling's volume reveals that 2nd generation Cape Verdean-European populations will soon outnumber 1st generationers (28). [21] Still, steady emigration occurs to several countries, mostly in Europe, with each island being associated with niche communities abroad (Batalha and Carling 2009: 16).[22]

Furthermore, in recent decades, transnational contact has grown in more abstract ways. Through technological innovations, many diasporic Cape Verdeans are able to keep in regular contact with their families on the islands without having to travel to Cape Verde. This affords many the opportunities to remain in the U.S. or other posts but still maintain crucial contact with the homeland. As a result, demands for internet access in Cape Verde have sky rocketed and the number of Cape Verdean webpages are growing, serving as a way to bridge between Cape Verdeans worldwide (24). On the other hand, 3rd or 4th generationers, mostly in the U.S., have suffered decades of reduced contact, thus producing a communications gap that immigrant populations point to as a weakness of the "old Cape Verdeans", their identities, authenticity, and support of the islands themselves (Meintel 2002: 30-31).

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed Cape Verde as another local context in which my research is indirectly based. Understanding how Cape Verdean history, racial understandings,

[21] Most Cape Verdeans in the U.S. are 3rd or 4th generation Americans (Batalha and Carling 2009: 28).
[22] As previously mentioned, most Cape Verdean-Americans trace their heritage back to Fogo and Brava.

and more relate to Boston is crucial before we can begin investigating the ways in which Boston as a city shine through as particularly important to Cape Verdean (-Americans). Next, I transition to the primary local context, my field site of Massachusetts. Through a discussion of Massachusetts as it relates historically to Cape Verde, I hope to underscore once again the importance of migration to the Cape Verdean community. I will historicize the identities of "old wave" Cape Verdeans while revealing portions of the Cape Verdean-American experience, eventually propelling us forward through time to present-day lived experiences.

CHAPTER 3: HISTORICIZED IDENTITY MAKING, CONSTRUCTION, AND MANAGEMENT

Situating Ourselves: Cape Verdeans in the U.S. Context

Outside of Boston: A Broader Context

Allow us to move transatlantically, whether by a 19th century whaling vessel or a small aircraft in the 1970s, to Massachusetts, the capital of Cape Verde's U.S.-based diaspora. Cape Verde's largest group of emigrants and descendents reside in southern New England, primarily Providence, RI, Brockton, MA, and Boston. Although these local contexts are relevant in following chapters, we must first situate them within the U.S. racial landscape. This landscape is relatively rigid and unaccepting of Cape Verdean's attempts at creating their own identities.

In this chapter, I focus on historicizing racial identities, by which I mean taking a look at the specific ways in which historical moments influenced the creation of Cape Verdean-American identities. First, I root Cape Verdean-Americans in migration narratives, including the experiences of my informants, in order to emphasize in the time of arrival as part of the complexities of identity-making. Simultaneously, I wish to underscore the significance of New England and Boston as distinct place-based entities in historicized identities.[23] These elements motivate understandings of the workings of racial categorization in the U.S., in both its ascribed and personal senses. Throughout these discussions I will introduce some of our ethnography's main characters as they speak about their multiple identity strategies. Such narratives work to demonstrate multiplicities in identity-making processes and are exemplary of fluid, complex, and context and history-dependent identity performances. However, before

[23] It is important to note that Boston does not become particularly significant in an overarching Cape Verdean-American narrative until the 1960s and '70s.

we plunge into the ways in which identities are constructed and experienced, we must further situate ourselves.

History and Historicized Identities[24]

Na Buska Vida

As referenced previously, *na buska vida,* the search for a new life, is a culturally treasured phrase that centrally envelopes Cape Verde's mass emigration to the United States. Though narratives of *sodade*[25] have plagued emigrants, opportunities presented by a new home across the Atlantic have beckoned Cape Verdeans for centuries. In this section, I unveil and detail migration patterns and history of Cape Verdeans in New England. It is an overarching story of struggle, labor, hope, and opportunity, cherished by Cape Verdeans worldwide. In this section I analyze the migration patterns of Cape Verdean- New Englanders and connect this past to racialization and identity-making.

Cape Verde's most sizeable export is its emigrants. Cape Verdeans have been immigrating to the U.S. for over a century in order to escape the harshness of Cape Verdean life. Droughts and famine have beleaguered the Cape Verdean islands since their settlement. A renowned *morna*[26], which has been recreated, covered, and reinstituted in the diaspora, titled "Dia C'tchuva Bem" celebrates the communal joy brought on by a rainy day, of which there are few. Less than 2% of Cape Verde's land is arable. By the end of the 18th century droughts became insufferable and young Cape Verdean men seized the opportunity to travel to the U.S. as whalers. Vessels from Europe and North America were already frequent appearances on Brava's shores, hence the concentrated Brava population among "old wave" immigrants in New England (Halter 2005: 616). U.S.-American seamen began leaving the

[24] See chapter 2 for my discussion of "history". I utilize the term "historicized identities" to highlight the ways in which past modes of identification influence current identity-making processes. It allows us to evaluate particular racial identities throughout the late 19th and 20th centuries as they are relevant to the experiences of Cape Verdean-Americans. Historicizing places identity-making in a broader context.
[25] Painful and emotive longing and yearning, usually for a homeland.
[26] Traditional Cape Verdean folk song.

whaling industry and captains recruited Cape Verdeans for their skill set, work ethic, and likelihood to accept decreased wages. Deeply rooted cultural pride in Cape Verdean industriousness continue to exist in the community, and much of this is derived from stories of struggle and hard work, exemplified in a massive presence in the whaling industry. Marilyn Halter (2005) writes that Cape Verdean whalers experienced significant discrimination at sea and received the lowest wages among their counterparts, suggesting that this was a precursor to the perpetual discrimination they would face for generations in the U.S.

As a first-wave or "old wave"[27] immigrants arriving in the U.S. during the 19th century, Cape Verdeans were thrust into unfamiliar racial territory where, as Halter argues, "entrenched standards of 'Black' and 'White' formed the basis of classification" (617). Immigrants were regularly grouped into expansive racial categories based on phenotypic appearance: European-looking Cape Verdeans were identified as "White" and "Portuguese" while African/Colored immigrants were categorized as "Black Portuguese", "African Portuguese" or simply "Atlantic Islander" (617). Newcomers to the U.S. were accustomed to identifying with their islands of origin and saw themselves as Bravas or Fogos, for example.[28] A few things are important to note here. Dividing Cape Verdeans into "Black" and "White" was to a certain extent unnatural for immigrants coming from a completely different racial landscape. Although the categories of "White" and "Black" exist in Cape Verde, they are rarely simple and are associated with minute facial characteristics or economic status, not necessarily skin tone or shade. Secondly, these divides shook the community. Former bases

[27] I choose "old wave" as a term to distinguish immigrants who arrived before Cape Verdean independence for two reasons. My informants insisted on using the term "old school" to describe 3rd or 4th generation Cape Verdean-Americans and this temporal distinction of age becomes very important in discussions of intergenerational tensions (both between migratory generations and between generations within families). Secondly, first-wave, as used in most of the literature, implies that there are only two waves of immigration, whereas immigrants arrived in several bursts. Numbering these is relatively impossible. Although "old" and "new" may also connote two waves only, I insist on its use as it is valued and pertinent to my informants. I will also use pre- and post-independence to delineate migration histories.

[28] For more on the racial stereotypes associated with islands, see chapter 2.

of categorization and distinction relied on island origin, which continued within the community, but outside forces urged individuals to see themselves differently and thus certain forms of fragmentation tore through the Cape Verdean groups in New England. Finally, it is crucial to remember that Cape Verde was still under stringent Portuguese rule, and that identifying as Portuguese was not only common but expected. As I will describe later in this chapter, Portuguese identity is and was important to pre-independence migrants, despite their racial categorization.

As the whaling industry fell into its final decline, opportunistic Cape Verdean workers pooled together resources to buy old vessels and convert them into passenger boats or "packet boats" (616). This allowed Cape Verdeans the agency and control over their transportation to and from the islands, both for diasporic tourism, resettlement, and emigration to the U.S. Many migrants, up to 25%, also worked in cranberry bogs. As whaling phased out or during off-seasons, laborers traveled to Cape Cod, which still boasts a rather large group of 4th or 5th generation Cape Verdeans.[29] The community was concentrated in Plymouth, Barnstable, and Nantucket counties in Massachusetts, with up to 3,000 migrants per year working fields and bogs. Instead of leaving at the end of the season, many migrant workers remained in the Cape making a living through other odd jobs related to the seasonal market flows in coastal New England.[30]

Though numbers are likely to be inaccurate due to being caught in a complex classificatory system, it is estimated that between 1820 and 1975 some 35,000-45,000 Cape Verdeans arrived in the U.S., 60% of whom came from Brava and Fogo. Since independence,

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[29] As I explain in a later chapter, Cape Cod Cape Verdeans are seen as the most "Americanized" and least Cape Verdean, by means of cultural authenticity, and are simply being referred to as a Cape Codder is connoted as being inauthentic.

[30] Important to note that water, coast, and sea are culturally significant and valued among most Cape Verdeans. It is unsurprising that Cape Verdeans would be recruited to work in such locations or choose to settle in coastal areas. I would be willing to argue that this is a factor in why Cape Verdeans have not expanded to many other U.S. locations. Furthermore, other Cape Verdean communities throughout the country have port access and are within reach of the ocean.

in 1975, around 15,000 immigrants have arrived on the shores of the U.S.; the total is approximately 60,000. In 2000, census reports estimate that the total number of Cape Verdean immigrants and descendents amounted to 400,000, more than the population of the island-nation at the time (Halter 2005: 617-8).

It should be noted that a single family can still be influenced by more than one wave of immigration, and that these should not be seen as discrete and immutable entities. An informant, Gavin, 26, explains: "My great-great grandfather first came here in the 1920s and came through New Bedford first and worked in the whaling business and came to Boston for a couple years and sent money back to my grandfather in Cape Verde." His parents arrived in the U.S. in 1977 after immigrating to both Portugal and France first. Additionally, Janette, 25, described a great grandparent as being a chef on one of the packet/passenger ships of the early 20th century, though her family did not arrive until 1977 as well.

The post-independence wave of immigrants was much smaller despite the broader community having established roots in New England, as my informants explained. This is in part influenced by immigration restrictions placed on Cape Verde in the early 20th century, and differing motivations for leaving the islands. Lives of struggle were/are still common, but many emigrants wished to join family members who established themselves transatlantically, or, in the case of my mother, emigrants escaped Luso-African conflict (Angolan Civil War). Challenges faced by newcomers in the 1970s were experienced differently from their pre-independence cohorts. Meintel writes, "The political transformation of Cabo Verde from colony to independent nation, and a new era of transnational contact between migrant communities and the homeland were to completely reset the parameters of the Cape Verdean identity dynamic and reframe the terms in which 'dilemmas' of identity could be discussed and lived out," (2002: 7). These dilemmas of identity are the crux of my research. Moments

of identification, as I have introduced throughout this thesis, can also relate to particular historical moments as immigrants flowed between New England and Cape Verde in correlation with specific events, movements, and eras.

Migration Pattern	Arrival	Primary City or Location	Generational Position	Primary Mode of Self-ID
Pre-**Independence** "**Old Wave**", "**1st Wave**"	19th century-mid 20th century	New Bedford, MA; Providence, RI	3rd, 4th, or 5th	Portuguese, Black
Post-**Independence** "**New Wave**" "**2nd Wave**"	1975-present	Boston, MA	Immigrant or 1st	Cape Verdean (-American)

Contested Identities in New England

New England is a unique site, and as a whole encompasses much of Cape Verdeans' history in the U.S. Though other Cape Verdean enclaves or communities exist in the U.S., New England has served as an Ellis Island for emigrants and has remained central to the Cape Verdean-American experience.[31]To this day, New England remains the heart of the Cape Verdean-American diasporic community, with Boston serving as the capital for new immigrants. As of 2000, 87% of Cape Verdeans in the U.S. were living in New England.

As a result, Cape Verdeans are afforded the luxury of being relatively known as a cultural cohort in New England with one of Halter's informants saying, "Here in New Bedford, we just kind of accept the fact that we were Cape Verdean and that everybody knew what that meant," but as Cape Verdeans began to leave their communities they faced different problems of being a part of an "invisible" immigrant group (1993:171). Being concentrated in one geographic area is an advantage and a curse simultaneously for Cape

[31] Post-independence migration was also geographically more spread out: there are considerable Cape Verdean communities in Sacramento, Los Angeles, San Diego, Orlando and Hawaii (Halter 2005).

Verdeans; they are lumped together and highly visible in the Boston and Massachusetts communities, while elsewhere they are either an enigma or cast into other groups (35). It can be argued that minority groups from other countries, particularly Latin areas such as Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Brazil have had similar histories of adjusting to such rigid color lines in the U.S., yet Greenfield argues that, "with respect to the Cape Verdeans in the U.S. today, their burden appears to be heavier than that of most other minorities" (LA Times 1975: 10, Greenfield 1976: 29).

As a result of their ethnic and racial visibility, which constantly interplays with notions of invisibility for Cape Verdeans, the diasporic population in New England tended to identify with their particular island of origin. This is evident through community groups such as the Brava Club, São Vicente Sporting Club and more (Halter 2005: 621). Fragmentation proliferated over time for Cape Verdeans in New England, torn between island identities, ascribed racial identities, and their own understandings of race in the U.S. as these collided with Cape Verdean racial categories. This means that racial identification in the U.S. is further complicated by the added negotiation of an island identity, or Cape Verdean-based racial identity. Migrating to the U.S. and being thrust into a foreign racial system, one in which racial identities is assumed, was and is a jarring experience for Cape Verdean émigrés.

The key question is: how do Cape Verdeans locate themselves within the American racial framework, within U.S. cultures? De Andrade writes that the "fit of Cape Verdeans [in the U.S.] is seldom obvious or neat" while *The CVN* published that "the answer is not easy. Many Cape Verdean-Americans struggle to define themselves in America's cultural whirlpool" (1997: 24, 1994: 5). Answers are unclear, but, for now, I shall uncover a portion of Cape Verdean experiences in the broader U.S, with specific references to New England as they pertain to and inform processes of identity-making for Cape Verdean-Americans.

In-betweenness and Racial Ascription

Racial understandings in the United States are quite literally Black and White. The U.S. system is described by Sanchez as "characterized by a non-White continuum of cultural difference, codifying those who stray from the American norm as foreign or cultural 'other'" (1998:22). Additionally, John Hartigan, in Racial Situations (1999) defines U.S.-American ideologies as not "relying upon composite views of race" but rather "dwelling on disparate and unstable interpretations" (4). Self-identification is for Cape Verdean-Americans is limited by the capacity of the nation-state's racial categories (Sanchez 2005: 535).

I adapt, for this thesis, Barrett and Roediger's (1997) concept of "in-between peoples", mostly alluding to being marked as a group of people with an identity crisis. An in-between status is rarely handled well by those in the United States who are eager to categorize anyone and everyone into their proper racial typings, or at least it seems that is the way the census would have it. Racial identity, although something pondered at a metacognitive level, often becomes a question when interacting with others. The fit of a person into a racial category generally depends on their ability to *show* that they *possess* certain characteristics. Not only do questions of performance through acts of "proving" emerge but also a relationship between racial ascription and self-understandings as they both connect to the formation of individual and collective identities among Cape Verdean(-Americans).

Cape Verdeans are phenotypically ambiguous and can appear as a part of many groups worldwide. Appearances can range from what Greenfield (1976) starkly deems "highly negroid to individuals who could pass as White" and that is "not unusual to find individuals [in the same family] who represent both extremes of the color spectrum," (9). Genetic mixture is so varied and so substantial (remember that racial mixing has occurred for over four centuries) that Cape Verdeans can figuratively look like many "types of people"

and due to this they are met with puzzled looks from those who are looking to neatly assess them.

Most commonly, Cape Verdeans are ascribed as being "Black" or "African-American." In an upcoming section, I disentangle the distinction between the two and the significance of both categories for Cape Verdeans, though in the U.S. Black and African-American are conflated. Here, though, I will briefly describe the ways in which blackness is ascribed to Cape Verdeans whether or not they identify racially as such.

Cape Verdeans are often referred to as one of few or the only African group to immigrate "voluntarily" to the U.S., through the whaling industry in the 1800s.[32] The only other peoples of African descent in the U.S. at the time were mostly slave descendents from the American South (Greenfield 1976: 3, Sanchez 1997: 56). In the 19th century, as Portuguese Africans, Cape Verdeans were easily ascribed as Negros or relegated to the Black segment of American society, bringing along the stigma and restrictions associated with such identities (Greenfield 1976: 4).

For some Cape Verdeans being Portuguese meant being White, according to their phenotypic appearance, but for darker skinned Cape Verdeans, their attempts to identify as Portuguese or White conflicted with American racial understandings (LA Times). Generally, immigrants were identified as Black until proven otherwise, possibly by seeing their other siblings, likely to look Portuguese, or through a distinctly European-sounding accent (De Andrade 1997: 25). These were elements that could change racial ascription despite the American racial system, but only changed the situation if a Cape Verdean had the opportunity to explain himself, which was unlikely at the time for a migrant worker.

Cape Verdean immigrants and Cape Verdean-Americans as time wore on became aware of the reality of being Black in America, mostly experienced through Jim Crow

[32] I place voluntary in quotations to show that it is a contested term. In literal manner, Cape Verdean emigration is seen as voluntarily, yet ecological, economic, and social factors have in the past created unfortunate and unbearable situations from which Cape Verdeans felt the need to escape.

legislation (Sanchez 2005: 409). The *Los Angeles Times*, in an article on the cusp of Cape Verdean independence, reported that "Cape Verdeans who had never considered themselves Blacks suddenly found they were objects of harsh racial discrimination" pointing to how they live in "certain" neighborhoods and attend "certain" schools (1975: 1). Though highlighting the Cape Verdean experience on a national scale was impressive for the publication, the article remakes processes of racializing spaces for Cape Verdeans as Blacks. Still, it accurately describes the suddenness and shock of being thrust into a new racial landscape and assumed to be African-American. The adjustment was doubly astounding for Cape Verdeans who rejected any social or cultural contacts with African-Americans, salve a time period fighting side-by-side for Civil Rights (10). We see this culturally-based isolation from African-Americans in the early 20th century and again post-independence, particularly in the 1990s. Concurrently, African-Americans resented Cape Verdeans' "aloofness" and feelings of racial superiority, with one NAACP member exclaiming in the *Times* article, "Man who the hell do they think they are?!" (10). These short examples are useful in understanding that although tensions between African-Americans and Cape Verdeans in points of intersection are present in Boston, they are not unique to that area and are historically based in Cape Verdeans' century-long presence in the United States.[33]

Ethnicity and Racial Pluralism

Navigating a U.S. racial system is challenging, mostly due to its rigid definitions of racial identity. Because of these broad race-based categories, such as "African-American", "Asian", "White" and "Hispanic", Cape Verdean-Americans are expected to filter themselves into a single option. Cape Verdeans in the U.S. are presented with the choice of "assimilating" into broader, dominant American culture. On the other hand, some would argue that developing their own ethnic identity as Cape Verdean-American effectively

[33] Another interesting element of the U.S. racial system is the nexus between bureaucracy and race, particularly through the census and similar forms. This will be discussed in detail in chapter 6.

bounds them off as a separate group (Greenfield 1976: 4). Being ascribed historically and currently as Black signifies two elements: Cape Verdeans lose their "ethnic marker" to popular public ideologies on race in a society that does not distinguish between them and other "Blacks" which in turn creates "Cape Verdean" into an invisible ethnic group (Lima 2011: 4). Here it is important to understand that Cape Verdeans on the islands understand race completely differently, as a composite of factors and fine distinctions of appearance and origin. Thus conflated senses of blackness in the U.S. are quite foreign to many Cape Verdeans, and this is imperative in analyzing Cape Verdean sense-making in America's racial system (Lopes and Nunes 1982: 5). Insisting on their own ethnic differentiation challenges several foundations of that very system. Lima argues that in the United States, ethnicity, defined through differences in language, religion, color, ancestry, or culture, is either self-ascribed or assigned: self-ascribed to White Americans while assigned to non-Whites (25). Cape Verdeans actively challenge this tradition by insisting on being recognized and in this manner is seen as testing the waters of multiculturalism in the U.S. This occurs simultaneously with the "browning of America", the U.S.'s increasingly mixed population, and serves as a window into what official categorization may look like in the future. However, many Cape Verdeans do not feel empowered enough to make these choices, still plagued by some of the implications of being "other" in the United States (Halter 2005: 623)

Multiculturalism, however, may just be a euphemism for heightened awareness of racial difference, and may not be an appropriate replacement for race, particularly as ideologies of difference do not change in the nation (Batalha 2004: 201, 6). Batalha argues that ethnicity as an analytical tool does not add much to our understandings of how we organize social difference because in essence it underscores difference in a possibly stigmatizing mode (6). Though race and ethnicity will always be seen as markers of identity, this does not mean they are not useful lenses through which to evaluate identity management;

succinctly, race and ethnicity matter because they are important to the people themselves, or to Cape Verdeans as something they experience and reflect on daily.

Finding and allowing ways to identify in multiple ways define the identity-making process among my informants. Though a U.S. racial classification system urges, and in some ways forces, individuals to make rigid, binary, or singular choices regarding racial identification, I aim to show the ways in which American-born Cape Verdeans navigate this terrain by identifying multiply. Next, I detail some of these strategies in both their singular states and how they weave together.

Identity Strategies and Self-Identification

In this thesis, I suggest that the notion of occupying space in two or more communities, identifying multipositionally, is at the heart of Cape Verdean-American identity-making, or "identity management" as Greenfield refers to it in his seminal piece on identity in southeastern Massachusetts.[34] The literature, in general, proposes that Cape Verdeans in the Boston area form their identities in relation to other groups, specifically with whom they live in close proximity (Sanchez 2005: 413; 1997: 66). Sanchez writes, "Identity management entails the reconciliation of one's cultural identity with one's [identity as a] socially ascribed, racialized minority", which is a struggle I have observed in the Cape Verdean community: searching for a balance between cultural pulls toward Cape Verdeanness and ascribed identities as African-American, Black, or Hispanic (2005: 407). Such strategies serve as windows into the lives of a diverse population. The reconciliation Sanchez introduces is present in most Cape Verdean identity strategies, which usually fit into Greenfield and Gonçalves's (1976; 1983) well-known categories: 1) CV-Portuguese, 2) CV-Black, 3) CV-African, and 4) CV-American. Jose da Silva Gonçalves wrote for the first time about a Cape Verdean-only identity as well. Despite their rigidity in nature, these identity

[34] I use the term multipositionally to refer to the multiple ways in which individuals identify themselves (racially). I borrow the phrase from Earl Lewis (1995) who describes multipositionality in reference to historical actors. He argues that identities are affected by historical, temporal, and spatial aspects.

strategies are valid and useful tools for carefully examining identity-making in this community; they show how individuals see themselves related to the groups and categories around them.

However, it is important to note that these identity strategies should not be seen as singular, though Greenfield (1976) seems to purport them as so. Additionally, identity management as a term connotes an unnaturalness to identity-making and performance in suggesting that something *needs* to be managed. Rather, I use the term "management" carefully in referring to views presented in the literature and prefer to describe these social processes as identity-making and identity performances instead.

As an example of the multifaceted, ways in which a Cape Verdean can identify simultaneously or over time and a precursor to the identities I will lay out, I introduce a response from an informant, my brother, Marco, 30, as he goes through his own thought process of multiple identities:

> I only pretty much identify myself as African-American by default and that's because I have to. You know you get categorized as that. My race, I think of it [as] the only thing that's changed over time. I think that as a kid, like a really young kid, I didn't realize I was Black because I didn't look like a typical Black person. And we spoke a language that Black people didn't. And we ate food that Black people didn't. They don't eat rice and beans and they don't speak a foreign language or are from an island or islands. When I was young and ignorant when people said Black I thought they meant African-American, people who have been here for generations and generations in America or someone in Africa, like Nigeria or Ethiopia or something but I still knew we were from Africa.

Though a clear, singular identity is obfuscated through Marco's description, it is exemplary of the complex ways in which Cape Verdean-Americans choose to see themselves, but also how self-understanding is crucially dependent on others' perceptions. Marco identifies primarily as Cape Verdean (-American), yet incorporates notions of blackness, African-Americanness, and Africanness into his mode of self-identification. Again, though broken

down into distinct identity strategies, the following sections serve to show the ways in which identities can crystallize but also reveal how they may interweave.

Cape Verdean-Portuguese

The Cape Verdean-Portuguese identity is very much rooted in colonial histories that are still present in the lives of Cape Verdeans worldwide but play an especially strong role for "old" Cape Verdeans' identity negotiation. Until 1975 some Cape Verdean immigrants and descendents in the U.S. felt comfortable projecting a Portuguese identity because Cape Verde was still under Portuguese rule and *technically* Portuguese was their language. By way of imperialist effects, many Cape Verdeans still identified with Portuguese culture, particularly those from the northern islands. An interviewee in *Some Funny Kind of Porto Rican* (2006) insisted that his mother and aunts would identify as Portuguese so as to avoid any repercussions of rejecting their nationality, emphasizing the Europeans' heavy hand over Cape Verdeans.

Being Cape Verdean in this early wave of immigration sometimes simply meant also being Portuguese. Not only was there a fear of disrespecting Portugal, but also a fear of American racial politics; the concern was that Americans, both the government and general public, would include Cape Verdeans into an amalgamation of mistreated, disadvantaged "coloreds". Being accused of blackness was a sure sign that one was downgraded in American society and that justified an insistence of Portuguese identity (Greenfield 1976: 10). To complicate the matter, Massachusetts and Rhode Island had become known for their large Portuguese-American communities which, especially before the Civil Rights Movement, made it very difficult for Cape Verdeans to assimilate into and make claim to their distinctive communities (10). The Cape Verdean-Portuguese identity did not prevail, however, and began to suffer as the Civil Rights Movement grew and Black pride gained traction.

Surprisingly, though, one of my informants strongly aligned himself with a Portuguese identity, among several others. Robson, 20, like myself, attends a small liberal arts school in rural Maine. As "one of the only ones who looks like [him]", he has recently felt the need to evaluate his self-identification and think critically about what it means to be Cape Verdean, including plans to conduct a thesis on Cape Verdean history. Robson openly traces his lineage and past to Portugal, acknowledging that his paternal ancestors less than three generations prior had come from the colonizing nation. In our conversation, his tone was resolute as he paused to explain and essentially defend himself. He was used to being objected to, accustomed to certain claims made about him simply when he uttered, "I associate myself as a Portuguese-Cape Verdean." Identifying as Portuguese for him means not shying away from a historical linkage, and based on his vocal, strong-willed personality, it is unsurprising that he would encourage others to step back and evaluate their Portugueseness, as well.

To a certain extent, I have also associated myself with being Portuguese. My maternal great-grandmother was Portuguese, and, as I have been told, had large green eyes and dark blonde hair. However, my affinity with Portugueseness surpasses this; when explaining "my culture" to someone who is unfamiliar with Cape Verde, I often find myself describing the several Portuguese-affiliated elements: copious amounts of *azeite doce* (olive oil) and an unwavering love for *bacalhau* (salted cod). The obvious Portuguese elements present in Cape Verdean cultural traditions and lifeways is undeniable, and thus I do associate myself with being Portuguese. Contemporarily, it is rare for someone to identify strongly as solely Cape Verdean- Portuguese, and this rather single identifier is usually reserved to 3rd or 4th generationers, whereas youth, including Robson and I, fold Portugueseness into other overarching modes of self-identification, such as blackness.

Cape Verdean-Black

Some Cape Verdeans in the late 1950s and early '60s made the difficult political decision to band together with African-Americans for a common cause; this marks the birth of a Cape Verdean-Black strategy that began to complicate Cape Verdean- African-American dynamics. Previously, integrating into American or Portuguese-American populations was challenging because Cape Verdeans' skin color, although varied, was an initial obstacle (Greenfield 1976: 11). In the African-American community, skin color was not as much of a barrier, though light-skinned Cape Verdeans can face much of the intraracial discrimination that fairer African-Americans encounter. Second or third generation Cape Verdean-Americans, as opposed to Cape Verdean immigrants, felt charged with the responsibility to help their brothers and sisters in a fight for liberation within their own country. This was evidenced through activism but also as Cape Verdean-Americans attempted to assimilate with African-Americans. For example, many left their own neighborhoods to move to Black "ghettos" in New Bedford as a way to demonstrate their dedication and new hybridized identities (Greenfield 1976: 11). This singular action evokes important elements of identity including place, membership, and performance. Black became a primary identity and "Cape Verdean" was only referenced when interacting with another Cape Verdean or one who is persistent in interrogating the Cape Verdean's identity (Sanchez 1998: 24).

In such cases, it is not that a Cape Verdean identity is concealed, but rather that one is Black until proven otherwise, usually by way of language and cultural consumption, among other performances. Sanchez writes that young Cape Verdeans who identify as both CV and Black are not negating their blackness. I would push this further to argue that identifying as Black primarily is not a negation of Cape Verdeanness either (2005: 415). Negotiating one's identity in this manner underscores the relevance of context. One of Lima's informants with a "healthy perception of his identity as a Cape Verdean" understood that he lived in a context where he was perceived as a Black youth from the "ghetto" (2011: 91). This emphasizes the

importance of racialized neighborhoods and builds upon the significance of evoking blackness in relation to Cape Verdeanness, which will be discussed fully in my next chapter

Sanchez asserts that a Black identity (in addition to a Cape Verdean-American identity) "serves as an affront to the U.S. system of racial categorization and has the potential to subvert current racial and ethnic categories" (Sanchez 2005: 431). I believe that identity assertion can challenge preexisting racial categories but it is not clear if Cape Verdean-Americans could subvert them; while Sanchez's statement is laudable in the way that she critiques this country's racial system, identity making is a more nuanced political process than Sanchez suggests.

In spite of such nuances, some Cape Verdeans view their identities more simply, unaware of the political decisions they make. Some Cape Verdean-Americans may assert a dual identity comfortably by recognizing themselves as Black by way of physical appearance or cultural affinity (Sanchez 1998: 24). However, for many it can be either one or the other. The danger in this is racial essentialism and identity conflation. Some can effectively present multiple identities but at times, as many of my informants expressed, it can become taxing depending on the audience. Audience in this example becomes important and works to frame identification as performance; this theme emerges continually throughout this thesis in exploring narratives such as Robson's. Robson explains: "Sometimes you can't even tell them you're Cape Verdean because they don't even know what that is and then you have to be like, 'Yo, I'm Black'". Although Robson identifies multipositionally, in these specific moments of identification he is mostly unaware of the implications of what he is saying. Still, his difficulty with this statement emerged in our conversation shortly after he said it, as he caught himself thinking about Portugueseness, Blackness, and African-Americanness in tandem, particularly as a light skinned person who would not be phenotypically categorized as Black: "I get confused by it. The way they [unspecified community members] make fun of

Black people being ridiculous. We had a talk about it [and they said] wouldn't you say you're White because you're Portuguese?" Here, Robson is alluding to his ability to pass as Portuguese/ White but his choice to also associate as Black by "upbringing", which in this case is again conflated with African-Americanness. Yet, for many Cape Verdeans both terms (Black and African-American) carry very distinctive meanings.

Personally, I recognize myself as Black based on my phenotypic characterization but also in solidarity with Blacks as a traditionally oppressed group; meanwhile, though I participate in African-American culture in many ways, "my culture" is quite different and as a result, I am not necessarily African-American. An informant, Armando, 22, insisted on being Black by social categorization, and chose not to fight it, but insists on Cape Verdeanness mostly because of his ability to communicate in *Kriolu.* On the other hand, Robson, stated, "I'm Black because of the way I grew up but not based on the shade of my skin." The variety of ways in which Cape Verdeans engage with African-Americanness is particularly fascinating and needs to be parsed out.

Black vs. African-American

Identifying as Black or African-American appears frequently in Lima and Sanchez's (2011; 1997, 1998, 2005) works as well as my own. The distinction between Black and African-American for Cape Verdeans is imperative and presents yet more points of intersection, or moments of social interaction, through history and politicized movements in the U.S. and throughout the Cape Verdean-American experience.

I will continue to draw this out later but for my analysis now I will tease apart the two terms: Black connotes a racial identity associated with the solidarity of those of African descent while African-American suggests a culturally specific understanding of Blackness in the United States. The distinction between Black and African-American is relatively small but of magnanimous importance. At the center of this disparity are the differences between

race and ethnicity; for example, a Cape Verdean could identify ethnically as Cape Verdean alone, but racially sees themselves as Black (Sanchez 2005: 423). Black is a racial category while African-American connotes a distinct cultural group; both are often seen in the Cape Verdean community as unrelatable, while popular imagination and discourse molds them into one category.

Cape Verdeans are commonly categorized as Black *and* African-American because they are synonymous based on socially constructed ideas of physical appearance in the U.S. (424). The key is that Cape Verdeans understand how they are perceived as African-Americans and have the ability to identity *with* African-Americans in certain social circumstances but not identity *as* African-American (Sanchez 2005:425). For example, my brother, Marco, commented, "I think I'm associated with [blackness/ African-Americanness] because I'm supposed to be. I don't really identify with them in the sense of supporting Black groups and I wasn't in any of those groups in college. I just identify with it because I like the music and their culture as well." Marco consumes African-American culture in many ways but chooses not to identify strongly as African-American at a deep level. He views Cape Verdeanness and blackness as separate but tangential entities. In similar but also competing ways, Michele, 28, identifies as African-American but not necessarily Black, but associates herself more deeply with Cape Verdeanness. Complexly circulating through these distinctions are intricate and often unclear notions of Americanness, as well as at what point one feels Cape Verdean-American in relation to Africanness or blackness.

Despite its complexities many Cape Verdeans are able to plainly state their feelings on the matter. Two of Sanchez's informants explained memorably, "The fact of the matter is that I'm not Black-American. If you speak of certain traditions that are carried on within the African-American community, I didn't grow up with that. I grew up listening to Bana, Cesaria, eating *katxupa*, eating *kuskus*. I mean, it's very different" (Sanchez 2005:424).

Another insists that she is not offended by being called Black, because she understands that she is, but would also explain her Cape Verdean origin (424). However, Gavin, 26, explained that associating with blackness was not much of a choice because he was pushed away by African-American individuals:

> Growing up I was the only kid on my street that had nice hair and was light-skinned. I knew from a young age that I was different. I didn't realize why I was different until maybe later, 7 or 8. They started realizing I was Cape Verdean and was raised a different way. My street was pretty much all Black kids. Basically African-American kids, but I say Black because it's not really a big deal. Growing up sometimes they were like make jokes like he must be Italian or something, but pretty much 'he's not Black'. Made me realize I'm different because I'm Cape Verdean.

As a result, Gavin identifies primarily as Cape Verdean-American, though he also consumes African-American culture, but to a lesser extent than his cohorts. Similarly, I have felt a separation from African-Americanness based on cultural exclusion. Just as I come from a place of knowing and unknowing as it relates to Cape Verdean cultural elements, I often find myself lost or excluded in specific situations with African-American friends and classmates. Additionally, Lima writes of a young man who states, "Wherever I go I'm Cape Verdean, not Black-American, I don't know them and I cannot identify with them" (2011: 95).

To borrow from W.E.B. Dubois's terminology, the problem here is that of a color line. Black is a color and African-American is a cultural category with which Cape Verdeans cannot fully identify. Yet, consumption of African-American and hip-hop culture is popular and evident, particularly among young Cape Verdean-Americans; youth thus are sometimes participating in a culture without necessarily identifying with it.

Cape Verdean-African

A third major identity strategy relates more broadly to the Cape Verdean and African diaspora. This prompts us to return to historical moments with which Cape Verde or Cape Verdeans in the U.S. are tangentially involved. As the 1960s wore on, many Cape Verdean-Americans were actively involved in the Civil Rights Movement, but those who were more

internationally inclined were paying closer attention to liberation struggles in Africa. Most colonized countries on the continent gained independence in the ‘60s, salve the Portuguese territories, including Cape Verde, which collectively celebrated freedom in 1975. African independences provided yet another point of pride for Cape Verdeans who were influenced by Amilcar Cabral’s activism and pan-Africanist sentiments. Many sought to be members of a larger African community, insisting that being Cape Verdean was as African as identifying as Ghanaian or Nigerian. This was often a hard point to sell for many because of the nation’s lack of contact with the continent until independence, yet notions of diasporic blackness allowed some room for Cape Verdeans. Cape Verdean (Americans) could identity *with and as* Africans both politically and based purely on geo-social connections; “African” in this case is treated like “Black”- as primarily a racial marker rather than an ethnic or cultural one (Lima 2011: 42, 82, Sanchez 2005: 429).

Many Cape Verdeans exercise their ability to subscribe to both the African and Cape Verdean diasporas. Authors tend to presume that they are synonymous but in reality they come to represent different identities. That is not to say they are mutually exclusive entities. The Cape Verdean diaspora is rooted in cultural distinction, meaning that Cape Verdeanness is in some respects separate from the African continent. However, due to recent historical events, as Cape Verdeans’ sense of connection to Africa has strengthened, the notion of African diaspora began to take hold. The Cape Verdean diaspora does work in similar ways to the African diaspora, though. A connection to the homeland has always been central to Cape Verdean traditions. The islands are constantly and longingly referred to as *nha terra*, my land. Traditional folk songs, *morna*, are almost exclusively centered on loss and yearning, *sodade*, which cannot be translated into a single English word but connotes the deep sadness that is felt when away from what is familiar to oneself. *Sodade* is the symbolic basis of “old” Cape Verdeans’ relationship with *a terra* while it is a driving factor for “new” Cape

Verdeans' remittances and frequent trips "home". "Old" Cape Verdeans, for this reason, are known to be more dramatic about their attachment to homeland. An interviewee in *Some Funny Kind of Porto Rican* recalls his mother and grandmothers throwing themselves back in chairs, weeping, and calling out "*Sodade!"* On the other hand, it is less common for a "new" Cape Verdean to exhibit this grandeur because it is likely that they've spoken to their family in Fogo within the last few days and have received updates from the village. *Sodade* is foundational in many aspects of Cape Verdean culture but is felt differently along dividing lines in the community.

This notion of *sodade* appears to have a dialectical relationship with loss and longing in the African diaspora but I find one vital distinction. Despite authors' use of Benedict Anderson's theory of "imagined community" in relation to the Cape Verdean diaspora, I feel that it belongs more appropriately with the African diaspora as a whole. An "imagined community" and "imagined homeland" do not work in the same ways for Cape Verdeans, though it can be argued that both exist conceptually for Cape Verdean (Americans). Most of the African diaspora does not know their true homeland, so they create a relationship with the continent. Cape Verdeans will proudly tell you about their country, their island, and their village, usually identifying as African due to geographic proximity to the continent or an established political affinity to African independence movements. It can be argued, though, that due to Cape Verdeans' mixed ancestry, which amalgamates over a dozen West African groups with Portuguese and other European roots, that Cape Verdeans know as little about their "true" origins as many African-Americans do. Despite this, Cape Verdeans have made a home for themselves on the archipelago hundreds of miles from the continent; they view themselves as an entirely new group of people that are related to Africa but not on the same abstract, diasporic level evident in popular literature on the African continent and its descendents. Most of my informants acknowledge being African in this geographical sense,

as do I, and did not express a deep connection with Africanness in the ways that others might. However, in my own travels to Southern Africa, I felt forms of inclusion and exclusion on the basis of being Cape Verdean and noticed similar "African" elements in daily life with which I connected to differently than my African-American colleagues. However, I insisted on explaining my Cape Verdean heritage abroad just as I would "at home" in Massachusetts.

The Cape Verdean diaspora, again as a deep connection to a global Cape Verdean community, arguably always will take precedence over the African diaspora, a larger-scale identification with Africa. Sanchez claims that the Cape Verdean diaspora is a useful analytical tool for examining how immigrants of African descent are "actively reshaping the boundaries of racial categories by creating space for cultural differentiation" (1998: 25), meaning that although Cape Verdeans view themselves as Africans, they hope to carve out space for a Cape Verdean identity as well. We must keep in mind, however, that it is not a perfect community, but rather "fractured", as Sanchez writes in her other research (2005). Diaspora, when used traditionally, is neither a perfect term nor perfect framework through which to discuss Cape Verdean experiences worldwide, because it is equally important to find moments of *disconnection* among groups as it is to find the ways in which they bridge themselves transnationally.

Cape Verdean and Cape Verdean-American

"Moments of identification"[35] are crucial to my argument, and specifically moments in which Cape Verdean (-Americans) work to distinguish themselves as members of a unique community. Insisting on a Cape Verdean-only or Cape Verdean-American identity perhaps the most creativity and carves out a space for the "invisible immigrants" of the East Coast. Moments of distinction for Cape Verdean (-Americans) are moments in which they can stand their ground and take some agency over their identification. Whether or not they identify

[35] I first mentioned my concept of "moments" in the introduction as particular instances and interactions that crystallize facets of identity and become crucial in the identity-making process.

multipositionally as also Black, African, or otherwise, Cape Verdean-Americans are actively opening up the process of identity-making by creating a new category for themselves.

A “Cape Verdean only” identity, meaning one that does not acknowledge blackness, Africanness, or any other ascribed category, is most popular with immigrants or older generations, but throughout my research it becomes evident that it is still common among young Cape Verdean-Americans as well. For immigrants, Cape Verdean as a singular identity is employed because they question their abilities to be American, both culturally and by way of natural citizenship. However, some of their children, the first-generationers on whom I focus, also do not feel American because they identify culturally as Cape Verdean despite being born and growing up in the U.S. (Lima 2011: 53, Sanchez 2005: 419). This trend emerged in the late ‘70s as the liberation movement waged and “Black is beautiful” became blaxploitation. The Cape Verdean identity, and soon Cape Verdean-American, was structured as a statement of double consciousness. One could see themselves as Black, understood both phenotypically and politically, but still retain their Cape Verdean identity (Sanchez 1997: 64). Again, we see a Cape Verdean identity taking precedence over, but in some cases still working alongside, other identities such as Black. For some, though, being Black and being Cape Verdean can hold equal importance, and here identity takes on a “both/and” framework rather than “either/or”. However, this does not come without challenges; some argue that insisting on being Cape Verdean is an active political decision to deny other identities, thus showing the difficulties of asserting a multifaceted identity in the U.S.

Sanchez (1997) introduces the concept of denial and resistance in how the Cape Verdean-American identity is perceived in relation to racial identity. She writes that calling oneself Cape Verdean is often deciphered as a denial of African heritage and that this misconception of Cape Verdean-American identification continues to exist today (Sanchez 1997: 63). Lara Barboza explains, “When I explain that I’m Cape Verdean and explain Cape

Verde they say, 'You're saying you're not Black,'. Now if I'm saying I'm from an African country then what am I denying?" (63). A Cape Verdean-American identity is not so much negating blackness or Africanness as it is challenging social ascriptions of these categories based on physical characteristics and cultural assumptions. Sanchez deems it as resistance to assimilation (Sanchez 2005: 537). I would not agree fully with this claim, rather arguing that identifying as Cape Verdean-American challenges assumptions but does not allow one to avoid assimilation. However, being resolute about expressing a Cape Verdean (-American) only identity can be seen as a positive expression of agency rather than a negative action such as denial. Still, statements such as my informant Janette's, 25, can be contested: "I don't feel like I have to say out loud: 'I'm Cape Verdean". I don't need it to be out loud to be known. I don't have to prove to people. I don't need to say it. You've gotta know it and if you don't oh well". I believe insistence on a Cape Verdean-American identity is not a glossing over of other identities or a negation of blackness, but rather an attempt to make oneself and one's community more visible. Such claims do not cement a Cape Verdean identity but rather allow space for it in addition to other identities or vice versa.

In my personal experience I have found that I can identify as American, as someone raised in the U.S. who has an affinity for "American culture". I also identify as Cape Verdean because I also see my world through a Cape Verdean cultural lens in some ways. Sanchez, for a moment, begins to move away from notions of identity fluidity by saying that Cape Verdean (-American) identity performance is resistance. The term resistance visually represents two competing sides, and suggests that there are only two options: to be American or to be Cape Verdean. I would argue that although a Cape Verdean-American identity challenges racial categories in the U.S. it allows more agency by putting forth a multicultural identity in a racial and political climate that is still uncomfortable with multiple identities.

Rethinking the Cape Verdean-American Identity

While fully acknowledging the time period (1975) in which Greenfield conducted his research (as Cape Verde gained independence), I continue to find his argument about identity fluidity to falter in his analysis. More specifically, he sets out to prove that fluidity is an advantage but does not necessarily show evidence of identity fluidity among Cape Verdeans, leading his theorized, albeit perfectly realistic, strategies to appear static (Greenfield 1976:28). I tend to align myself with Sanchez (1997) who mostly suggests the maintenance of multiple identities is a manner through which Cape Verdeans challenge ideas about racial categorization. Moreover, she argues that Cape Verdeans in Boston negotiate their identities situated within both the African and Cape Verdean diaspora communities, and explains Cape Verdeans' prideful assertion through being charged by these communities to "go forth and tell the world our existence" (Sanchez 2005: 433, 406, 414). I appreciate a combination of Greenfield and Sanchez's identity negotiation strategies; the key is to think "both/and". As a matter of fact, all of my informants identify as Cape Verdean-American but also create space for more fluid and dynamic forms of identification. I and they take into consideration not only race, but also Cape Verdeans' (self)ascribed alternatives to race, including national identity, (multi)cultural identities, or an alignment with African diasporic communities. The truth is that identity is not only a combination of these in deeply theoretical ways but present in daily points of interaction, in neighborhoods, with other races, and within one's own ethnocultural group; identity-making surrounds an individual and cannot be kept within the socio-cultural boundaries outlined by "blackness", "Africanness", or even "Cape Verdeanness", because Cape Verdeans' lifeways are not only to be seen in those frames.

In this chapter I have presented and evaluated the ways identity-making strategies, decisions and performances are influenced, created, and understood. Whether it be Portuguese, Black, African, or Cape Verdean, it is imperative to note the ways in which these

identifiers, both placed on and openly expressed by my informants, come together in distinct and interesting ways as they rely on "both local contexts".

Next, I will examine Boston as a site of importance and reveal how neighborhood spaces act quietly but powerfully as key players in the identity-making process. I will examine these issues by evaluating cityscapes, stereotypes, and the specificities of daily life, while keeping in mind these dynamic identity strategies.

CHAPTER 4: RACIALIZED NEIGHBORHOOD SPACES AND MOMENTS OF IDENTIFICATION

> "Neighborhood is a word that has come to sound like a valentine"- Jane Jacobs, The Death and Life of Great American Cities

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In this chapter, I argue that "neighborhood" and its social-spatial boundaries hold particular value to city dwellers, and though neighborhood lines are socially constructed they serve as real boundaries as they pertain to identity performance. Boston's neighborhoods are created by residents through their stereotypes in daily life,. Additionally, as I suggest, neighborhood spaces in turn partially create our identities and influence identity performance, particularly through my notion of "fromness".[36]

I will argue for the use of neighborhood as an analytical tool, and evaluate Boston's residential areas as racialized spaces while questioning how places become racially charged and meaningful. To support these claims I continue to examine Cape Verdean-American experiences both historically and as they are voiced by my informants. I aim to highlight the role of place, space, and race (as they intersect in interesting and contested ways) in the identity-making process for Cape Verdean youth in daily life. I evaluate daily life through motion, interaction, and misunderstanding, focusing on *moments of identification*. First, I will

[36] Once again, I use "fromness" as a created term to signal the social significance of one's home neighborhood or other origins.

introduce neighborhood as a theoretical concept and unfold the notion of racialized neighborhood spaces, building from Hartigan and Jackson's work on Detroit and Harlem respectively. In following sections, I will unpack Boston's significance, specifically for Cape Verdean (-Americans) as a preface to individual narratives about valued neighborhood spaces. From informants' experiences I will root and ground myself in daily life, navigating through the cityscape, and explore how it can be used to highlight moments of identification though instances of interaction, tension, and misunderstanding.

Investigating Racialized Neighborhood Spaces

The significance of neighborhood appears continually in the literature on Cape Verdeans in the U.S. This is not only due to the large population of Cape Verdeans in certain areas of Boston but because neighborhood, conceptually, serves as a backdrop for the interactions that shape individuals' sense of identity (Lima 2011: 33).[37] Neighborhood is utilized in the existing research in three ways: as a literal location, as a background to social interaction, or a combination of both, meaning locations in which significant social interactions occur. These are useful basic understandings but throughout this thesis I argue that neighborhood is itself an actor in the identity-making process.

I base my claims from work done by John Hartigan, John L. Jackson, Jr., and Gina Sanchez who all explore the ways in which neighborhood spaces become interesting arenas for the analysis of identities in daily life. Hartigan makes the claim that "race as a cultural construction will remain a stunted concept unless it is linked to a heightened attention to the ways people actually construct meaningful lives in relation to race" (1999: 4).In examining the construction of whiteness through Detroit's city spaces, Hartigan uniquely marries race and neighborhood in ways that have been surprisingly untouched in anthropology. He argues for the "distinctive role of places in informing and molding the meaning of race" and asserts

[37] Lima estimates that 40,000 Cape Verdeans live in the Greater Boston area while Sanchez claims an underreported 32,000 in Boston alone (Lima 2011, Sanchez 2005).

that “racial identities are produced and experienced distinctly in different locations” (14). Hartigan, in evaluating the ways that race functions in different Detroit neighborhoods, asks fundamentally “What does race mean to these people?” (10). While conducting my research I asked myself this question relentlessly, interrogating neighborhood spaces in the process. Hartigan argues that studying the “localness of race” requires cognizance and insights into the “daily processes by which people make sense of racial matters in their locales” (4). Furthering this understanding, this chapter concentrates on moments of intersection in daily life and how race is quietly, and sometimes explicitly, woven into these place-based interactions.

I take inspiration from John L. Jackson, Jr.’s work on Harlem to describe the ways in which neighborhoods are racialized. Jackson writes that “all communities police the symbolic boundaries that surround them”, and Harlem’s symbolic hold as “the capital of Black America” is particularly strong (2001). Harlem is invoked as a Black space, and symbolic construction is done by residents and outsiders alike to enact this understanding. Such invocations, according to Jackson, “assume a hermetically sealed-off social sphere easily vanquishing other potential trajectories of difference” (2001: 18). This means that neighborhood spaces, through their symbolic importance, can become mired in constructed place-identities and stereotypes. For Jackson, even those who had never been in Harlem could speak of its importance as a location for the solidarity of Black America; it represented the “quintessential Black community” much in the ways North Dorchester, and specifically Uphams Corner, represent Cape Verdean-Americans (2001: 18). Furthermore, race is dynamically interwoven into space even more readily in Boston, which is known as a uniquely racially segregated metropolis that is rich for a discussion on race, place, and identity politics.

Symbolic construction of Boston's cityscape works to create the identities of city-dwellers themselves. In the Cape Verdean-American context, "understandings" of Uphams Corner influence identity-making in this area, as do the stereotypes placed upon other neighborhoods, such as Roxbury, Mattapan, and South Boston. Perceiving one's place among neighborhood spaces carries two meanings: the physical spatiality of one's residential location, but also one's place as understood through belonging, neighborhood origin, and loyalty.

Neighborhood and identity are complexly woven together for Cape Verdean-Americans in Boston. The residents make the neighborhood what it is and continue to construct the area's identity in relation to other sections of the city. Meanwhile, interactions within and throughout the neighborhood are partially constitutive of Cape Verdean-Americans' identity as well. Parsing through these distinctions is not simple, but can be described through prepositions of motion. The first notion of neighborhood as location is simply to act *on top of* a location. The neighborhood itself does not have much of a role. In the second understanding of neighborhood as backdrop, action is seen *in front* of neighborhood, like the scenery behind a stage; I see this sense of neighborhood in Greenfield (1976) and Lima's (2011) research. In their work, the concept does not allow for us to explore how neighborhood can work to create unique identities. The third hypothesis, to which Sanchez subscribes, paints neighborhood into the scenery with a better understanding that location and interactions are related and that identity can be formed *through* place. Sanchez utilizes Logan and Molotoch's argument in Urban Fortunes: the Political Economy of Place that "neighborhood provides its residents with an important sense of identity both for themselves and others," signaling that identity is constructed through place in addition to other contexts that are traditionally evaluated, including cultural consumption and linguistic practices (1987: 107). Furthermore, Edensor (2002) claims that "symbolic spaces are

(re)produced by performers as sites of importance, even though they may reproduce diverse meanings about them," (69). From the selection of literature on racial identities and neighborhood that I have described here, I find this view of neighborhood to be the most productive because it emphasizes the social production of place while representing individuals importantly as performers.

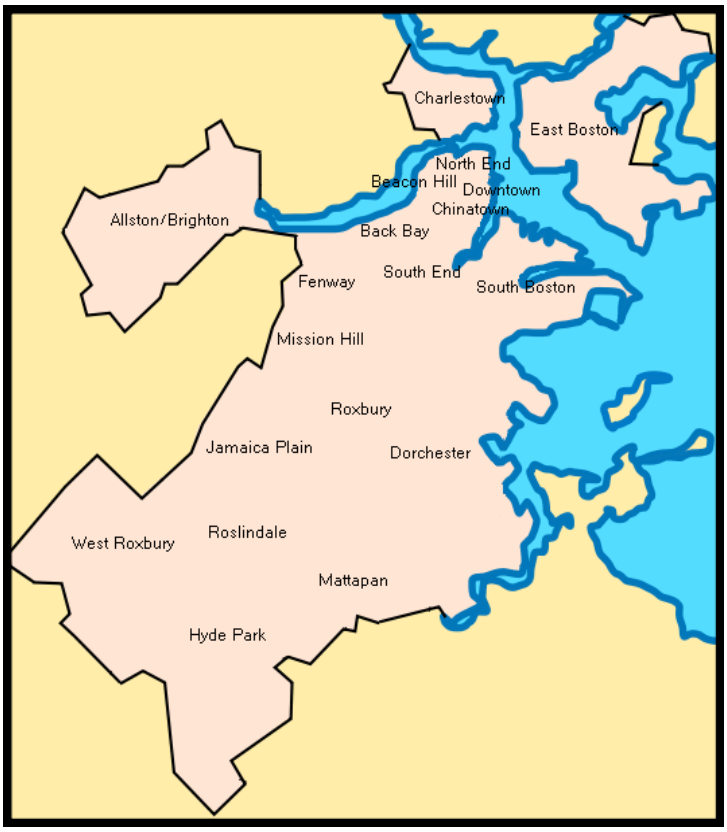
My research suggests, however, that neighborhood does not simply provide the scenery behind the actors on stage, but rather that it plays an equally crucial role in the construction of identity; neighborhood is more than geographic space in which experiences are shaped. Neighborhood is crucial to embodied identity expression. These are not neutral spaces. Boston's city spaces, as they become meaningful places, come to be filled with tension, disharmonious interactions, as well as moments in which individuals and communities come together as they coexist. Space is constant but we are not constantly aware of the work it is doing. Spaces complicate our lived experiences, and thus should not be evaluated simply as bystanders amongst the action. Neighborhood is a player in cultural life because we create it as one, and again, neighborhoods, and subsequently a sense of fromness, create us. Neighborhood spaces are charged and made meaningful as they are inhabited. As we navigate our surroundings we are simultaneously navigating social situations, interactions, misunderstandings, and most importantly navigating our own worldviews and self-perceptions.

In her pivotal book, The Death and Life of Great American Cities, Jane Jacobs (1961) wrote, "the conception of neighborhood cities is meaningless- so long as we think of neighborhood as being self-contained units to any significant degree" (116). Exploring the complex interweaving of various contexts, such as familial and racial tensions, into Boston's neighborhoods, is a holistic method that grounds my research. Before I begin an in-depth

discussion on neighborhood space as an actor through moments of identification, we must situate ourselves in Boston's cityscape.

Situating Ourselves: Boston's Neighborhoods

Discussions of localities continually surface in some of the Cape Verdean- American based research. Space is important, socially real, and should always be considered significant, as I have argued. In this section, I will take a step back to introduce the neighborhoods that are pertinent to my thesis and crucial in a discussion of Cape Verdean-American experiences, aiming to describe why these spaces are so important to their residents.



Boston, as Sanchez describes it, is a "quintessential big city" for Cape Verdeans and Cape Verdean-Americans alike, a center for migration both from the islands and from "country towns" in Cape Cod or the South Shore (Sanchez 2005: 536).[38] Boston has quickly become the new capital of the Cape Verdean diaspora in the U.S., in contrast to New Bedford and Providence, which were historically the heart and lungs of the community. There are easily identifiable Cape Verdean hubs within Boston: the neighborhoods Dorchester and Roxbury.[39] Although

[38] Map of Boston's Neighborhoods. From WikiCommons user Snathaniel
[39] An official count of residents of Cape Verdean descent in Boston is unavailable but estimates range from 15,000-30,000+ (Sanchez 2005; Lima 2011).

Southeastern Massachusetts served as Cape Verdeans' first capital in the U.S., Boston emerged as a Cape Verdean metropolis throughout the 1980s.

Dorchester is Boston's largest neighborhood both in area and in population and is located south of Boston Proper.[40] As a whole, Dorchester is bordered by the South End to the north, Roxbury to the west, South Boston to the northeast, Mattapan to the southwest, and the town of Milton to the South. Dorchester's irregular eastern border is comprised of a series of city beaches carved out by the Atlantic Ocean and the Neponset River. These bordering neighborhoods are diverse, vibrant, and thriving in their own ways, yet there are also some rigid social perceptions of each entity. South End is associated with young professionals, Black middle class families, and a growing LGBT community; it often receives an "up and coming" label by locals and popular media sources despite hefty costs of living and high incomes. South Boston, though still diverse, has been historically associated with Irish residents, who notoriously fled from Dorchester in the 1960s as Cape Verdeans and other diasporic Africans settled (Sanchez 2005: 410).

Roxbury and Mattapan are commonly grouped together with Dorchester as "inner city" neighborhoods despite great variation in race, ethnicity, economic and education statuses among their residents. Gentrification in the last few decades has transformed previously dilapidated or stigmatized mini-neighborhoods into dynamic areas. Still, stereotypes persist about those who live in these areas linked to the "inner city" of Boston.

Roxbury houses Northeastern University, Wentworth Institute of Technology, and Boston's new mosque, the Islamic Society Boston Cultural Center. However, the neighborhood is viewed as largely Black and Latino with a few "nice areas" and several "rough areas". These are geographically separated from university areas by railways and lie further from the main city. Mattapan, on the other hand, has an even worse reputation for

[40] The center of the neighborhood is 5 miles from the State House.

violence, crime, and relative poverty. It is described by many, including Cape Verdeans, as an area in which to “lock your car doors”. Many, including my informant, Robson, colloquially refer to Mattapan as “Murder-pan”, riffing on increasing reports of gang violence, drive-by shootings, and other forms of homicide.

Understood to be mostly African-American, Mattapan is not only seen as similar to Roxbury and Dorchester but also viewed in contrast to both. In my experience, outsiders and residents pit the neighborhoods against one another on the basis of safety, violence, and gang activity; I understood at a young age to never find myself in Mattapan, while Roxbury was better although also considered unsafe. The hierarchies formed about neighborhood spaces are hard to pinpoint, with most of my informants saying they “just knew”, but it is clear that these understandings are learned and reinforced, usually during childhood. Discomfort with Mattapan stems from fear instilled by parents and the local media; Boston nightly news almost always begins with a breakdown of the day’s most violent incidents in Dorchester, Roxbury, or Mattapan, resulting in a racialized, criminalized barrage of images and tropes that are redundant and problematic.

Violence in these locations is racialized to be Black or Latino. Similar racialization occurs within the Cape Verdean communities in these areas but it is unclear which sector of the “fragmented” Cape Verdean community, as Sanchez (2005) refers to it, is most vulnerable to these stereotypes. With the racialization of neighborhood comes the discernment of “good and bad parts”, areas to which you would not venture at night, so to say. In Sanchez and Lima’s research these distinctions between “good and bad areas” were clearly understood by their Cape Verdean informants and these boundaries continue to be present in the daily lives of inner-city residents. Social boundaries are continually being constructed throughout Boston’s neighborhoods and these boundaries become relevant as

political lines within which residents not only live, shop, learn and work but above all interact. I investigate these boundaries more through informants' voices in a later section.

The most relevant boundaries, to my informants, were that of their broader neighborhood, Dorchester. The Boston Redevelopment Authority reported 92,000 residents in Dorchester, of which 36% were Black (a category which often includes Cape Verdeans). [41] In 2011, some estimates for Dorchester's population reached 120,000 or nearly 20% of Boston's total population (census). The 2010 U.S. Census reported a 4% drop in Dorchester's population since 2000, including a 13% and 7% decrease in White and Black populations respectively while the category "Other" saw a 17% increase (Boston Globe 2010). Even considering its diverse and sizable population, Dorchester is generalized as a working-class, immigrant, and largely African-American community plagued by high crime rates. It is viewed as a neighborhood that one never needs to enter and one that residents struggle to leave. Dorchester has had historically high crime rates: in 2011, 22 of 63 homicides in Boston (or 35%) were in Dorchester (Boston Globe 2011). Additionally, Dorchester has more poverty stricken areas than most neighborhoods, but we must constantly be aware that it is Boston's largest neighborhood as well. Generally speaking, Dorchester is susceptible to many of the tired tropes used to describe the "inner city". Another reality, though, is that Dorchester is home to many of Boston's cultural gems: University of Massachusetts Boston

[41] Map of Dorchester's Neighborhoods. Used from WikiCommons author Sswonk

is located in Columbia Point[42], as well as the John F. Kennedy Library, the old Strand Theater, Boston Latin Academy and the Boston Globe. Additionally, despite being an urban center, Dorchester encompasses two of Boston's most valued parks, Carson Beach (including other coastline areas) and Franklin Park, situated at the end of the "Emerald Necklace" arboretum. Organizations, such as My Dorchester and DotWell, have been actively working towards changing perceptions about Dorchester by establishing city walking tours, community meetings, promoting small business collaboration, and beautifying the neighborhood. Dorchester has always been identified as a "historic" neighborhood in Boston, occupied mostly by Irish and Italian and Jewish-Americans until a dramatic ethnic shift in the last half of the 20th century. Immigrants from Southeast Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean flooded into Dorchester, making it quickly known as an area in which new families could put down roots in the U.S. After Cape Verdean independence (1975) thousands of Cape Verdeans arrived, moving into dilapidated, cheap triple deckers (3-story multi-family homes). Cape Verdeans were able to afford purchasing entire homes and were likely to house multiple generations and families; due to this, most homes in the Uphams Corner neighborhood are owned by Cape Verdeans who have lived there for decades and often rent to local tenants.

Uphams Corner is the center of North Dorchester and the heart of the Cape Verdean community in Boston. Joining Dudley Street, from Roxbury, and Columbia Road, from South Boston, it serves as an entry point to the rest of Dorchester, and, thus, is a busier, more urban location than the rest of the broader neighborhood.[43] The urban village is less than one square mile and has between 12,000 and 16,000 residents (BRA MyNeighborhood Viewer).

It is more densely populated than the rest of the city on average and is home to the most Cape Verdeans in the city as well as considerable Haitian, Vietnamese, and Dominican

[42] Now officially but not colloquially known as Harbor Point.
[43] Here I use broader neighborhood to refer to Dorchester or any of the other "neighborhoods" of Boston, whereas just neighborhood would be a specific section within Dorchester, such as Uphams Corner or Ashmont.

communities (City-data.com). Cape Verdeans in this area are generally newer immigrants, arriving between 1975 and 2000, who were able to purchase inexpensive triple-decker homes during White flight and subsequently sell or rent to fellow Cape Verdeans. It is common to find several generations of one family living in three of four consecutive homes in the area. In my personal experience, I lived in a triple decker (on Belden) with family members in the other units, facing the homes of my identical twin aunts and my grandparents; that block was spatially associated as "our block", and through boundaries laid out by my family, we all felt comfortable, self-aware, and safe in this area; venturing past this zone into other neighborhoods immediately changed my conduct, and experiences, meaning that I learned to perform differently.

Uphams Corner[44]	**Racial Group**	**Percentage of Population**	**# of Residents**
Population: up to 16,000	Black	31.5 %	5085
	White	18.2%	2941
	Hispanic/ Latino	19.9%	3212
	Multiple	6.4%	1036
	Other	13.8%	2220
	Asian	9.9%	1594
	Age Group	**Percentage of Population**	**# of Residents**
	0-9	13.6%	2195
	10-19	14.8%	2391
	20-34	26.3%	4244
	35-54	27.7%	4467
	55-64	9.7%	1561
	65+	7.9%	1283

Boston's neighborhoods are crucial to understanding the methods individuals use to situate themselves in their spatial and social surroundings. Although constructed concepts of boundary underscore "neighborhood" in the theoretical sense, neighborhood is an extremely useful analytical tool because, once again, it is *real* to inhabitants. Neighborhoods partially constitute a person's understanding of "fromness" which, as we will discover together through this thesis, constantly circulates as a factor in self-identification as well as

[44] Data Used from the Boston Redevelopment Authority's MyNeighborhood Viewer, drawing a polygon of understood neighborhood borders for Uphams Corner. It is important to note that in Boston's local context, Cape Verdeans are treated in city recordkeeping as their own distinct ethnocultural group apart from Blacks/ African-Americans, thus carving out a specific identity for Cape Verdeans.

opportunities to identify others. Fromness, the notion of *being from a particular location and the implications of such claims* can dictate, for some, how they perform identities, both consciously and subconsciously. Fromness in Boston is rooted almost entirely in neighborhood and simultaneously rooted in Cape Verdeanness through circulations of what places are and are not Cape Verdean,

In reality, however, the Cape Verdean identity is seen as both culturally distinct and blurred with other ethno-racial identities. Cape Verdeans' identity shifts socially through cultural practices and the influence of neighborhood spaces. As previously stated, Dorchester, Roxbury, and Mattapan are racialized as minority areas and concurrently have reputations for crime and violence, which in the media and popular imagination is linked to not only the large African-American population but also the Cape Verdean population. There are three elements present in the creation of Uphams Corner stereotypes: solidarity among Cape Verdeans, divides between Cape Verdeans and other groups, and the ways in which Cape Verdeans are grouped into other racialized "inner city" groups.

Cape Verdeans intermingle with Blacks (African/Caribbean-Americans and immigrants) and Latinos regularly due to their proximity to neighborhoods that are understood to be predominantly Black, Puerto Rican, or Dominican. Furthermore, living in South Dorchester for a Cape Verdean versus Uphams Corner (in the North) or Roxbury (closer to the city center) means living amongst several other ethnic groups on the same street.

Although delineating racial groupings within neighborhoods can further social disparities, it is valuable to acquaint ourselves with Dorchester's ethnic and racial make-up because racial difference is constantly invoked through intra-neighborhood interactions. It is equally important to present perceptions and biases surrounding the neighborhood to better understand the context in which Dorchester residents and Cape Verdeans find themselves. In

the following sections, I will focus on Cape Verdean-American experiences within neighborhood spaces, and as they relate to other individuals (often seen by informants as racial interactions). By evaluating moments of identification through interactions in daily neighborhood life, we can see a Cape Verdean-American's positionality and place in Uphams Corner, Dorchester, or Boston as a whole. Finding one's place, one's sense of belonging, is crucial in the identity-making process, and even more so when gaining perspective on ambiguous identities.

Points of Intersection; Moments of Identification

So far I have only briefly introduced my notion of *moments of identification*. I intend for the phrase to show the ways in which identities are made through daily life, in small moments or instances when we become temporarily aware of ourselves, our place, or our belonging. In moments of intersection and interaction we are urged to evaluate not only ourselves and our surroundings but also consider the audience: the person asking us "what are you?", "where is that?", or otherwise misunderstanding us and our identities as we forge human connections. Cape Verdean-American youth are not constantly aware of the identity-making process, but those discreet moments when they are cognizant of their race or ethnicity, for example, are particularly salient and powerful for analysis. For the remainder of this chapter, I investigate a sample collection of such moments as they relate to neighborhood spaces and lived experiences within Uphams Corner. Narratives from my informants will be explicitly considered and used to bring the neighborhood to life and show the ways in which city spaces are crucial to identity performances. The following will be illuminated through discussions of informants' and my personal experiences: racialized neighborhood boundaries, interactions with African-American and Latino neighbors, and moments of miscategorization.

Points of Intersection: Boundaries, Streets, and 'Hoods

Hamlet Street

The majority of my mother's family is crammed into a small one-way side street: Hamlet. Directly behind Uphams Corner's heartbeat, Dudley and Columbia Streets, is Hamlet. Hamlet Street sits quietly, lined with multi-family homes, facing a buzzing grocery store but cornered by questionable vacant lots, which have recently been restored. A side street in Dorchester, as many of my informants have confessed, does not signify safety, and main roads are usually more secure due to their visibility. Still, our parents tried tirelessly to shield us from any violence; I remember countless distractions to keep me fenced into our front yard. Often, my mischievous tendencies got the best of me and I would bolt from the gates, barely making it from Belden to Hamlet, not more than a few hundred feet. I can still imagine the puzzling combination of fear, ire, and relief on my mother's face when she found me only a block away, still within the safe confines of my family-neighborhood.

Hamlet Street is special to me. Its familiar scents (the old fried oil smell of cornmeal doughnuts) and sounds (traditional Cape Verdean *morna* via Césaria Évora) embrace me with every return. I was there until my mother uprooted us to Cambridge to be in a safer, more productive learning environment. My brother, who is also an influential informant in this thesis, is also quite attached to Hamlet, as is Janette*, a close cousin. Both describe their experiences on Hamlet Street, and the socio-racial boundaries put in place by their families.

Marco*, my brother, 30, currently lives in Uphams Corner, moving back after various stints around Massachusetts. His reasoning was to save money, particularly now while he builds a duplex in the vacant lot next door to our childhood home, in effect beautifying and up-scaling the junction between Belden and Hamlet. Nine years older than me, he remembers Uphams much more than I do, always willing to fill in my spotty memory with anecdotes and retellings of my childhood hijinks. Although he is in some ways equally attached to our second hometown, Cambridge, which I will discuss more in depth later in this chapter,

Dorchester and Uphams Corner have become his home base again. He enjoys being near our family once again- three of our four aunts, an uncle, and our grandparents when they make their semi-annual visits, not to mention our even more extended family of "cousins". Marco's relationship with Uphams is quite different now; his responsibilities grow exponentially as our family's expectations of him changed. However, as children we both enjoyed the close connections to family members. Uphams facilitated bonding, "everyone was Cape Verdean", and with that came a sense of comfort that often distracted us from the dangers that did surround us. Marco describes his experience:

> In Dorchester as a child I went to the little bodega corner stores just to grab snacks or drinks and candy. The store owner was Cape Verdean and I could identify with him because he knew my family. A lot of the stores in the neighborhoods- if Cape Verdeans didn't own and operate them then they were employees, so you always had that sense of belonging because they knew your parents. So you felt that importance or pride of wanting to be Cape Verdean because everywhere you went someone identified you and they identified you because you were someone's son or daughter. When I traveled outside of the neighborhood obviously it was a very different experience.

The corner store was identified by nearly all of my informants as a safe space to which they could venture freely. It seems that bodegas were the only exception. Janette, who shared our three-family home with us in the early 1990s, is quite the fearsome "alpha female" as she describes herself, but as a child was taught by older generations to be submissive, and rarely strayed from her pre-set boundaries.

> Yes we lived in the 'hood but I felt like the block we lived on was a decent block. But if you went down the street it looked very different from my front door…Older cousins would say you better not go there so I knew where I was okay to live in my "la-la land", in my own world in my own head, and knew what was safe and what areas weren't safe for me. I remember me and [Marco] walked near Store 24 just to pick up some food. It was a bar but they had onion rings and I was this little toddler and this guy saw us and he was like we're gonna go tell your parents that you were at the bar. It was funny because we got in trouble because we left our street not because of where we were.

As children, two fears were instilled in us: leaving the block and becoming involved with the "wrong kids", both of which could be expressed spatially and marked by specific areas in Dorchester. Armando, Janette's brother and another close cousin who is just months older than I am, recalls the fear and rebellion of passing Bird Street "without them knowing" while Janette vividly remembers trick-or-treating. She ventured with Marco and another much older cousin. This older cousin was more rebellious than she was and neglected the boundaries set by his elders. Once they passed the clinic down the street, which she now realizes was only a few hundred feet away, she dropped down on the concrete and started bawling, terrified to go any further because of what could happen to them or what their parents would say. Although her older cousins encouraged her, she spent the entire trip hearing an accented and authoritative voice in her head saying: "Do not go far". She described, "As soon as we passed the dentist clinic, and that fire station, I remember for some reason I just knew we were 'far' and I was only six." Whatever "far" was varied by family, and by child, but Janette and my fellow playmates as children always "just knew" when we hit that point, and were taught to fear distance in the inner city.

That is why Hamlet, fittingly named so, was our own little village and haven tucked right behind all the action of the hood. We never knew it was a "bad neighborhood" unless someone else told us. Even while conducting research I stumbled across some demographic maps that circled Hamlet and Belden as a center for "alleged gang violence" (Youth Violence Systems Project). In the neighborhood our families assured us that our front yards were fine but they isolated, identified, and often criminalized the streets just blocks away because they were "nothing like Hamlet", which we understood quickly to mean they weren't Cape Verdean.

Marco described exploring other parts of the city as he entered adolescence, and how it felt to leave the Cape Verdean enclave:

> I would venture out to places within the city. With friends we would go to other neighborhoods and we couldn't identify [with people there]. That's when I really realized that in other neighborhoods we didn't fit in. We would go to the North End to go swimming and it was predominantly Italian people, and we knew we didn't fit in like we did in our own neighborhood. Most of us were a part of the bussing system and had to go to other neighborhoods such as South Boston. South Boston was an area I did not want to go to and associate with because it was known as a racial or racist neighborhood where a lot of the residents were racist, so I didn't want to be associated with that nor did I feel safe being there from [my] experience. It was understood growing up in Boston that that's how it was and I went there and experienced it firsthand. [We were] being chased by a bunch of older kids that were a different race than I was. The only reason they were trying to hurt us was because we were Black and from a different neighborhood.

All of my informants identified going to school as a boundary crossing experience that solidified racial understandings for them, specifically if they ventured to largely White neighborhoods such as South Boston and Hyde Park. Traveling on public transportation, watching the neighborhoods change is visually interesting in Boston, but returning home (to the "hood") was always more memorable for my informants, especially Marco who hated going to South Boston and to this day does not associate positively with the area.

Hamilton Street and Hancock Street

Situated directly below Uphams Corner's southern boundary, Quincy Street, is the Bowdoin/Geneva neighborhood, an area, sprinkled with Cape Verdeans, that tends to be marked as a "rough" section and is always in contrast to other more valued residential spaces, such as Savin Hill.[45] Gavin*, 26, who still lives in his childhood neighborhood describes:

> I grew up in one of the worst neighborhoods in Dorchester, it was called Hamilton Street, and it was off of Bowdoin Street- bad streets. A bad street means drive-bys and a lot of drug and gang activity. I realized my street was bad because that's when I first encountered violence at a young age. I would say in terms of how you describe neighborhoods you have good and bad neighborhoods in Boston. If you compare it to another bad

[45] Savin Hill is a largely gentrified area of Dorchester near the beaches and ocean. Previously understood to be a violent area and historically referred to colloquially as "stab-n-kill", the area has shed its typical Dorchester stereotypes in recent decades.

> area like Uphams Corner it's pretty much the same. But in Savin Hill you could walk around without worrying about danger. Overall, the demographics in Savin Hill are White and Asian but right now some Cape Verdeans are integrating there, as compared to growing up. My neighborhood growing up, compared to Uphams Corner is the same as far as demographics: Asians, Hispanics, Cape Verdeans- it was pretty diverse [but] some kids didn't like me because I was Cape Verdean. Still, in terms of violence, it was the same thing. But you didn't really see it unless you associated with those people but we were also aware of it because we knew we couldn't walk through there.
>
> Growing up we knew where not to go. For example, we didn't go to Mattapan or Four Corners. You knew that if you went to those areas that trouble might arise. People could try to start trouble with you or question where you're from. We just knew. It's hard to explain why but we just knew. I mean we knew why because of safety, meaning possibly not making it out the same way you came in… but we just knew.
>
> Boundaries came from friends and school. We would hear kids talking about their neighborhoods and our own neighborhood. You just heard it through word of mouth. Everyone talked about bad neighborhoods and it was a common thing. We knew that Mattapan was known for violence just the same way.

Gavin, whom I spoke with on the phone, is Janette's college friend. He speaks openly and passionately about being Cape Verdean and his sense of fromness associated with Dorchester. His descriptions of Dorchester mirror the *sodade* of older Cape Verdean generations, and his connections to his roots are deep. Still, he wishes his neighborhood were safer, but values being in a Cape Verdean area more than other residential amenities, and identifies more with Cape Verdean city-villages, like the family-neighborhoods I described earlier, rather than other (racialized) portions of Dorchester.

Similarly, Robson, 20, a Bates College student, describes his boundaries living on Hancock St. (Uphams Corner). Hancock was a boundary laid out by my family as particularly dangerous, and it made news a few years ago as the site of a violent gun-down inside a popular Cape Verdean restaurant, Kâ –Carlos (Uphams News 2011). However, much to my surprise during our casual interview at his Lewiston, Maine apartment, Robson revealed that Wendover Street was his absolute boundary as an adolescent. Wendover Street is directly

behind Belden/Hamlet and has recently been portrayed in the media as a drug pipeline. In January 2013, Boston authorities arrested nearly thirty gang-members, most of whom were Cape Verdean, on Wendover Street after uncovering a massive crack-cocaine trap that had been shipping narcotics to Maine. Robson described Wendover as an area where "you might get caught up", meaning pegged for violent attack, and elaborated that the local Burger King was a hotspot for gang activity (Boston Globe 2013).[46]

Boundaries, such as restaurants and stores, are invoked as being violent and racialized as being Cape Verdean or African-American spaces, due to America's culturally naturalized connections between gang violence and young Black males. Despite being susceptible to these stereotypes, both Robson and Gavin actively re-make these stereotypes, but both also remain in the area and feel strongly about continuing to live in Dorchester for the time being. Partially rationalizing this, Robson said that "every street in America is a bad street," or has the potential for danger, but he was always ready to assure that another location, "other" spaces, were more stigmatized than his own neighborhood:

> I associate with Dorchester and Roxbury. I don't trust Murderpan [Mattapan]. Tons of friends don't go around there. I would go to Roslindale to get sneakers but if I know I have to pick them up in Mattapan then I'll call them and have them sent [out further] to Roslindale. From other people you know, you just learn about Mattapan not being safe. Like the 28 bus for example- we call it the murder bus. You just don't associate with the 28 at all!

Through Robson's quote we can see how the literal moving through city space is complicated by racialized places. The critical question here is how are these distinct lines and boundaries created? How does the 28 bus, a normal public transportation route traveled by a variety of Bostonians, become the "murder bus"? What does this say about social influences on notions of safety and how these areas are being racialized?

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[46] Police reports have identified the Wendover Street gang as one of the most prominent in Dorchester.

Furthermore, how does these boundaries and neighborhood associations affect identities? Neighborhood lines are explicit indicators of difference in Dorchester/Boston. From informants' examples we can see that they either felt as if they "fit in", as Marco described, or not, such as when venturing to school. Cape Verdean spaces were created and stereotyped within the community as safe, although other Cape Verdean communities, such as those in Bowdoin/Geneva, normalize these spaces as gang-infested and violent (Boston Magazine 2006). Identifying oneself as being from "the hood" is a particular experience and aligns oneself slightly with the stereotypes placed on one's residential area. Despite negative connotations of Dorchester and Uphams Corner, all informants articulated elements of pride in their fromness. Fromness, or the ways in which where one is from or rooted matters in identity performance, is especially powerful in Dorchester. Identifying with specific streets, as most in Dorchester do, is an explicit affiliation or performance of fromness, which is easily racialized or criminalized by residents. Still, the question of how these spaces become so racialized is yet to be answered; I will begin to chip away at this in my next section on intersections between the Cape Verdean and African-American communities of Dorchester.

Points of Intersection: Blackness and the African-American Community

The following section briefly introduces elements of intersection between the Cape Verdean and African-American communities. The ways in which these intersections are interpreted and understood intergenerationally will be a focus of chapter five, but for now I will unpack moments of disjuncture and alignment between Cape Verdean and African-American youths in Dorchester and Boston.

Racial tensions concerning the Cape Verdean community in the US are rarely exposed in the research on Cape Verdean-Americans. Cape Verdeans, particularly elders, have incorporated African-American discrimination into interactions within their own families. *Badiu* is a term usually uttered to stigmatize an "especially Black" Cape Verdean socially

understood to be descended from slaves and to have less Portuguese "blood." This is entirely dependent on one's island of origin. African-Americans in Boston's inner city could be referred to as *badiu*, but are more commonly called *bandidus*. *Bandidu* is literally translated as "bum", but in the U.S. more closely means "thug". *Bandidu* is associated with African-American gang members and the Cape Verdean-American youth who emulate their ways. The term can be used jokingly among Cape Verdeans but also packs a heavy racialized meaning when mapped onto those from other areas or races. Negative mapping is then again placed on Cape Verdean youth and sends mixed signals.

Based on personal experience, African-American English and similar speech patterns were branded as *bandidu* or *papia di rua/ comberso bos di rua* (street language). The linguistic similarities between *badiu* and *bandidu* must not be ignored and can offer a window into racial categorization through Cape Verdean Creole. Young hip-hoppers view the musical movement as a "style" and insist they are not *bandidus* (Lima 2011: 45).[47] The fear associated with the *bandidu* label works in three ways, and the literature tends to only acknowledge two: it is an example of intraracial discrimination from Cape Verdeans to African-Americans, of intra-ethnic tensions transported from the islands, and of the ways both intersect in Boston to create new understandings of these racial terms.

In many ways, my informant Robson subverts stereotypes of Cape Verdeans and African-Americans in the U.S. He grew up in Uphams Corner, on Hancock Street to be exact. Persistently encouraged by his parents to work more diligently than his siblings and avoid the hazards and temptations of the inner city, he became involved in squash as a preteen. His parents, who he describes as "old school" Cape Verdean immigrants, lived in fear that their children would be "caught up" by gang life; Robson did lament and allude to his brother's involvement in some of Dorchester's dangers and how that additionally served as an

[47] Other anti-Black phrases in a Kriol lexicon include: *prete mache* ("nigger"- rarely used but powerful), and *el e branco* ("He is White." -used to connote class mobility) (Los Angeles Times: 10).

inspiration. In his experience, squash became a culturally constructed antonym to "street life".

Robson explains that Cape Verdeans "took over" Dorchester, alluding to massive post-independence immigration, and that African-Americans and Cape Verdeans occasionally clash. This stems mostly from stereotypes propagated by the Cape Verdean community, particularly the notion of "boys around the block."

> Boys around the block are guys who stand on the same corner- like at the mailbox 24/7. When you pass by there again, they will still be there. Clearly they're doing some kind of illegal activity. It's always the specific 5 dudes in front of the liquor store and I just know they're doing something illegal. One of my friends got shot by one of them just a few weeks back, and I knew something would happen around there eventually. My mother looks at them like they ain't got no life. She was the motivation of me going to school.

Again, we can see fear as a powerful motivator in the Cape Verdean community. Robson and all of my informants identified those on the "block" as African-American males whom their families would point to as having disvalued morals and engaging in unlawful activity. Parents who fear their children being deported or becoming involved in gang activity are wary of their children's involvement with African-American friends or community members. However, I will dive into that matter more deeply in the next chapter.

Another intriguing component of intersections among Cape Verdeans and African-Americans is Cape Verdean-American youths' affinity with "African-American culture", which is usually essentialized as hip-hop music and its associated cultural elements. Expressions of blackness in Dorchester are often combined or conflated with hip-hop identifiers. Many Cape Verdean youth, particularly males, readily consume hip-hop culture and strive to convincingly portray their blackness via consumption of blackness. Cape Verdean-Americans, as inner-city dwellers, (feel that they need to) identify with many messages and philosophies associated with hip-hop, and in many ways are able to identify

with African-Americanness in this way. However, many youth simultaneously do not associate *as* African-American, as I have explained in a previous chapter, but still balance their consumption of African-Americanness via hip-hop with their identification as "black". Furthermore, when it comes to interacting with family members, many youth feel the need to either "turn-off" their expressions of African-Americanness or defend them. A combination of these scenarios contributes to confusing moments of identification in which youth are expected to identify multipositionally or change their identity-expressions based on the audience; identities in this way are performed and individuals are often conscious of their shifting.

To explain this further, I shall utilize an example as I perceived it. My brother, Marco, identified very strongly with hip-hop movements of the late 1990s. His heroes, and subsequently mine, were Tupac and Dr. Dre. Marco insatiably consumed "gangsta rap", was glued to MTV and listened to new tracks with his friends. Eventually, my brother, and again to a certain extent I, as an impressionable younger sister, started telling comrades that we were from Compton (another overtly racialized and criminalized space in the U.S.). Our mother feared the influences that lurked around the corner (gangs, violence, etc.) and we moved to West Cambridge. Her intention was to move us to a spatially less stigmatized and violent area, but she could not "correct" my brother's influences. I recall several heated arguments between the two of them concerning "street language" and my brother's appearance (baggy clothing, cornrows), and how these related directly to African-Americans and eventually was mapped onto the public housing complex next to our home. Many of my brother's friends lived in this area and he identified closely with them, but at home he would have to defend himself daily.

This short example describes the ambiguity that can be felt by Cape Verdean-American youths as it relates to African-Americanness, and introduces an element of

intergenerational tensions. It connects to the dichotomy/multiplicity of *identifying with or as* a particular racial-cultural identity and how the audience influences these choices and performances. Next, I will discuss moments of disjuncture through miscategorization as Cape Verdean-Americans navigate ascribed racial identities in particular places. It is important to keep in mind notions of identity performance, and its incumbent tensions, as we move on.

Points of Intersection: Miscategorization and the Latino Community

Despite rarely identifying as Latino in any way, Cape Verdeans are frequently miscategorized as Puerto Rican or Dominican in the same way they are assumed to be African-American. This is mostly due to neighborhood affiliation, but is also related to physical appearance in many cases, namely hair texture and fair skin tone. “I think it’s my hair,” explains my brother Marco. On the other hand, Gavin described himself as the “only kid in the neighborhood” with hair like his, which automatically meant he was not “African-American” (phenotypically) like other neighborhood children. As mentioned previously, Cape Verdeans construct their identities in relation to their surroundings, but in the case of Latino ethno-racial identity this comes into play in a different manner. Research on this topic has been mentioned by Sanchez, and will be the focus of this section on moments of interaction.

Cape Verdeans interact with Latinos just as often as with African-Americans and have maintained a strategic consumer relationship with their Spanish speaking neighbors and rely heavily on Spanish speaking communities; for example, adobo and sazón are Cape Verdean culinary staples that are usually only found at Latino/Spanish shops, while most of my informants spoke about going to bodega-style corner stores for treats (Sanchez 2005: 413, 420). Additionally, Cape Verdeans are often able to communicate effectively in Spanish with their fellow community members and will not shy away from responding to questions in Spanish when assumed to be Latino. In this way, neighborhood spaces play a role because of

Cape Verdeans' positionality within largely immigrant neighborhoods, mingling with Dominicans and Puerto Ricans. Analogously, youth consumption of hip-hop can be compared to many Cape Verdean women's fondness of Spanish television programming such as *telenovelas* (421). When encountered and assumed to be of Spanish descent, however, Cape Verdeans will commonly assert their Black or even more generally African affiliations.

I typed furiously at Robson's desk while he casually leaned back. He played with his curly hair and grooming his goatee with meticulous attention. He reflected on his appearance and describing being miscategorized. As one of very few students of Cape Verdean descent at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, he expects to be racially misplaced:

> It happens here because people don't know what a Cape Verdean is right off the bat. It was weird- with one of my best friends- he had chapped lips and I kept saying, "nigga's lips be chapped" over and over, and his other friends were looking at me and said "Why does Robson keep using the n-word that nigga's Dominican, he can't be using the word like that." But, my friend told them "Robson's African, bro." They were so confused like "You mean you're not Spanish?!"

Although this example takes place in another location, in a rather homogenous community at a liberal arts school in Maine, it reflects similar moments of miscategorization that young Cape Verdeans experience both within and outside of Boston. Interestingly, Robson insisted on his blackness in this situation, and in many ways performed blackness through his linguistic appropriation of the n-word and the cultural agency surrounding such a word choice. The audience was implied to be African-American, which either meant that Robson was (sub)consciously performing blackness and that that blackness was perceived differently by various audience members. His best friend understood that he identified as Cape Verdean and African, and as a result was "Black", while others assumed he was Dominican and established a preset code of conduct based on those assumptions.

Other informants, such as Gavin, also insist on their blackness or Africanness when misperceived, and make it a point to use Spanish in order to make that distinction. He describes a typical moment of misunderstanding:

> People think I'm Puerto Rican or Dominican. I understand Spanish but don't speak it. I get people speaking [to] me in Spanish all the time. I go to the corner store and they speak to me in Spanish…everywhere I go, no matter where I'm at. I just answer back in Spanish, "I'm African", and they don't believe me. I'll say African just to exaggerate the situation, but they'll think I'm not serious. I always make it clear in Spanish that I am Cape Verdean

Gavin's point of exaggerating a performed identity speaks strongly to how important audience is. Rather than responding with "no" he makes the effort to align himself with the African continent in some way. To a certain extent this parallels the concept I introduced in the last chapter of antonymic identities that are used to purposely oppose stereotypes, and here Africanness juxtaposes Dominicanness.

While Gavin spoke of his experience in a largely Black neighborhood and Robson focused on Maine, Marco expressed the frustrations of being misunderstood in his own neighborhood, Uphams Corner.

> J: Do you feel that you're accurately perceived?
>
> M: Hell no! People think I'm Hispanic- Dominican! I think it's the way I look and my hair. [They say,] 'Aye Papi what's up?!' [and] I always tell them I'm not Hispanic. I might speak back to them in Spanish but let them know I'm not Hispanic.
>
> It happens to me all the time. One time, I was actually right here in Uphams Corner where almost everyone seems to be Cape Verdean, and I go to Kentucky Fried Chicken, and I go in to get food and the [Cape Verdean] girls are talking about me. They don't think that I'm Cape Verdean, and they don't think I can understand the language [Kriolu]. Then I told them thank you in Kriolu and just watched their jaws drop. Even they didn't realize I was Cape Verdean and didn't know that I could identify with them and what they do on a daily basis.
>
> Nobody ever even thinks I'm Black. Even in the Dominican Republic they think I'm Dominican. In Costa Rica they think I'm Dominican. But it's been offensive. When people of my own race don't think I'm Cape

> Verdean. It makes me feel like they don't see my Cape Verdeanness. And I have that same sense of pride and it's almost like it's offensive.

What is most important to note in these examples is not only the negative connotation of being marked as Dominican but also the confusing and sometimes offensive experience of being misperceived within one's own community. In these moments a Cape Verdean-American may reflect on their identity (performance) and wonder what it was that led to racial miscategorization. Most settle on physical typecasting as a rationalization, but others have implied that they often wonder if their identity performance is off in some way. For Marco, it was almost as if his neighbors should know that he was Cape Verdean by the way he presented himself just in the way he could "identify with them and what they do on a daily basis." Miscategorization in one's own ethnic community is puzzling for someone hopes to find belonging among an ethno-cultural cohort. Marco's Cape Verdeanness was unnoticed or questions is reflected in this disappointing moment of misunderstanding.

Finally, when asking interviewees why they were always categorized as Dominican (and sometimes Puerto Rican) but not grouped as Brazilian or another Latin ethnicity, nobody had a solid answer. I argue that neighborhood spaces are quietly linked into these forms of mislabeling. Dorchester is known for Dominican populations, thus if one appears to be Hispanic and is known to be from Boston then it is likely they are Dominican, rather than Cuban per se. However, Massachusetts is known for a sizeable Brazilian immigrant population. Why is it that Cape Verdeans are never assumed to be Brazilian? The answer is Boston and its ethnic associations. Brazilians and Portuguese tend to live in suburbs north and west of the city, thus suggesting once again that neighborhood stereotypes are crucial in the construction of others' identities.[48]

[48] Still, many Cape Verdeans share neighborhood spaces with Caribbean immigrants. I have never encountered or heard of encounters where a Cape Verdean was mistaken for Caribbean (Haitian, Jamaican, etc).

Points of Departure: Leaving Uphams Corner

Important to this argument about neighborhood spaces and the identity-making process are locations outside of Boston and how they work in tandem with Dorchester. Many salient memories of racial experiences, typing, and reflection for my informants occurred when leaving Uphams Corner and being thrust into a new social framework: Marco and I moved to West Cambridge, Michele and Miranda (sisters) went south to Brockton, while Janette and Armando (siblings) flew to Orlando.[49]

In 1996, Marco and I transitioned to a new life in Cambridge, a city just over the Charles River that is in many ways linked with Boston. He was just entering high school and spoke of the difficulties of adjusting to a new city with very, very, few Cape Verdeans.

> I grew up in Uphams Corner…until I was 13 years old. Then I spent the second half of my childhood in Cambridge, MA, West Cambridge, which was a completely different environment. There weren't as many minorities and me and my sister and mother were probably the only Cape Verdeans within at least a mile radius. Before I couldn't walk outside without bumping heads with another Cape Verdean.

Tucked into a quiet corner of West Cambridge, Strawberry Hill, our previous life of boundaries changed rapidly. We could now ride our bikes around the city, through the cemetery across the street, to school unattended, and enjoyed our new sense of freedom. What took some getting used to, however, was being an ethnic minority in a homogenous neighborhood.

> [In Uphams Corner] I fit in because I was a city kid. I'm Cape Verdean and the majority of the people in that neighborhood were also Cape Verdean so I felt like I fit in. A lot of people in the neighborhood are my family because a lot of Cape Verdeans are used to living in close quarters [For example,] A lot of families stay close together within the village and they repeated that trend when they came to the U.S. We are all just nested into one little neighborhood.
>
> [But, Cambridge] was an ideal place to grow up. It was not necessarily wealthy but wealthier than before, going from a lower-class neighborhood to upper-middle-class to high-class neighborhood. It was a lot safer. It's

[49] As previously mentioned, Gavin and Robson have spent their entire lives in Dorchester.

> tough because our small block area was a lot more diverse but the broader neighborhood was predominantly rich and White. Million dollar homes and a golf course- we just weren't used to that in Dorchester.

Our immediate neighborhood was more diverse than most of West Cambridge, and for the first time I interacted with many African-American children. My brother, although he had friends from other cultural backgrounds while in Uphams Corner, was introduced into new social networks. He values this as a learning experience that he would not have been afforded in a homogenously Cape Verdean environment. He claims he was forced to embrace diversity.

> It was difficult at first. I was the only Cape Verdean in my area and I couldn't identify with anyone else on the basis of my race or culture. That was a little difficult. I lost those things of being able to relate or seeing people at the store who were from the same background as me. At the same time I was able to absorb and benefit a lot from transitioning- like the education, the after-school programs and things of that nature that I didn't have in Boston. It was easier to make friends but I was used to being around my family and other people I could identify with and that was no longer the case.

Furthermore, interacting with more African-Americans allowed avenues for Marco to explore and express notions of blackness through cultural consumption even more so than before. Still, removing us from Uphams Corner urged both of us to be more cognizant and prideful of our Cape Verdean heritage, specifically as we were required to "explain ourselves" much more in a new city.

I made a point in each interview to ask my informants if they would raise their children in Uphams Corner/ Dorchester or any of the various locations in which they spent their childhood. This question directly draws upon notions of intergenerational tensions and moves forward toward the future and notions of Cape Verdean cultural preservation, particularly as it relates to neighborhood spaces. Marco was adamant that he would rather have a family in Cambridge, though he is still very much tied to Uphams Corner and

continues to live there. In addition to referring to West Cambridge as "an ideal place to grow up," he described:

> M: Of course I would love it if my children [were] to grow up in West Cambridge.
>
> J: Would you want your children to grow up in Uphams Corner?
>
> M: [Burst of laughter] I would prefer Cambridge to Uphams Corner any day. Although there were benefits of growing up in Uphams Corner [but] in terms of safety, no.

Marco's burst of laughter at the thought of raising his children in Uphams Corner was unanimously felt by my other informants, who continue to associate the space with violence. However, when probed to explain more deeply, nearly everyone explained that they appreciated Uphams Corner for its ethno-cultural affinities but as a "hood" and racialized neighborhood space it was undesirable. For example, Gavin proposed that he would pick up and move his family and cultural experience of a "Cape Verdean childhood" to a suburban, safer location if he could. I argue that Cape Verdean-American youth are caught in a double bind between social mobility and the cultural locus that is Uphams Corner. Evidently, the closeness to Cape Verdeanness that Uphams Corner provides is not enough to keep my informants in the city.

Throughout this chapter, I have identified the ways in which city spaces are created into racialized places. These racialized zones are intimately involved in various identity performances and presentation of self for Cape Verdean-American youth in Boston. Through identifying what is Cape Verdean in relation to what is not, meaning Black places, "bad neighborhoods", or the block, youth learn to negotiate their identities in tandem with the places they encounter in daily life. We see this through moments of identification, instances of intersection and misunderstanding and how each influences the construction of racialized

identities. Furthermore, through moments of departure, I have showed the ways in which leaving the city reifies certain stereotypes of Dorchester and Uphams Corner. I aimed to represent the manner in which city spaces are racially inscribed by residents while such places have a role in racializing the identities of Bostonians.

CHAPTER 5: NAVIGATING AUTHENTICITY: PERFORMANCES, POSITIONALITY, AND CAPE VERDEANNESS

Locating Authenticity

This chapter elaborates several tensions that have been mentioned throughout this thesis, all of which I link together as searches for and expressions of cultural authenticity. Authenticity as an analytical term is multifocal with my informants, meaning that authenticity signals different processes and can be seen through many forms, which are discussed throughout chapter five. Generally, in this thesis, authenticity is concerned with authority: who decides what authentic Cape Verdeanness is and what that says about the community. Authority is generally in the hands of elders. Communicated through Cape Verdeanness, authenticity is a contested and contesting concept, and allows us to look deeply at the tensions that arise as well as the ways in which individuals make meaning of their lives.

I delineate the three primary ways in which my informants engaged with authenticity: through fromness, language use, and cultural consumption. Within these themes are tensions among migratory generations of Cape Verdeans (1st v. 4th generation-Americans) and among familial generations (immigrant v. 1st generation-Americans). I argue that authenticity is negotiated as a generational issue Authenticity can be sought after in relation to elders' construction of Cape Verdeanness or through the understanding of being a "new", post-independence Cape Verdean. Both understandings of the term "generation" are important: migratory and familial.

Furthermore, authenticity is constructed inextricably with inauthenticity, meaning that dualities of the term "authentic" must be considered. More simply, one cannot be labeled authentic without another being labeled inauthentic, and this becomes particularly important as young Cape Verdean-Americans experience authenticity by describing what is not Cape Verdean just as much as they identify what is "authentically" or "truly" Cape Verdean.

I evaluate the gaps that exist between migratory generations in understanding authenticity and Cape Verdeanness. This focuses mostly on the ways in which certain places are constructed as authentic or inauthentic within the Cape Verdean community of Massachusetts. Subsequently, I continue my previous discussion on neighborhood by unfolding how neighborhood spaces, particularly leaving Dorchester, are included in circulations of authenticity and Cape Verdeanness. I will also discuss my findings on linguistic practice and cultural consumption as they make and re-make notions of Cape Verdeanness for 1st generationers, and, in some respects, their parents and elders. I will consider not only *Kriolu* but also English and its role in Cape Verdean cultural continuity as it comes to be defined in tension with notions of Americanization. In investigating cultural consumption, I again speak doubly, elaborating on findings of the importance of both Cape Verdean cultural elements, such as cuisine and music, in addition to "other" forms of consumption, including hip-hop music and Spanish language television.

In the final section, I will evaluate, through ethnographic narratives, the ways in which 1st generation Cape Verdean-Americans define and engage with notions of Cape Verdeanness, which prompts the question, "What does it mean to be Cape Verdean and how is this measured, understood, and socially evaluated?" I will unpack the "spectrums of Cape Verdeanness" by asking, "Is it possible to not be Cape Verdean enough?" Some of my informants say yes and employ a set of terms to enact social differentiation; such people are labeled "Cape Cod Cape Verdeans", marked by a lack of *Kriol* proficiency and known through an historically less Cape Verdean space. Is it possible to be too Cape Verdean or a "10 on the Cape Verdeanness scale"? The answer again from my informants is yes: *grini* is the term. What is more interesting are the experiences of those that find themselves somewhere in the middle, including all of my informants. Searching or negotiating their partially ascribed identities from the community around them, in addition to those accorded

to them by their neighborhood, nation, and generational status, is a precarious yet ambiguous positionality.

Placed-Based Authenticity and Migratory Generations

There are several ways in which Cape Verdean communities form a discourse of authenticity, including constructions of fromness, such as island of origin and neighborhood. Neighborhood stereotypes work to establish lines of authenticity and inauthenticity by marking how long a community has been in the United States and how Americanized its residents are.

Within city neighborhoods, authenticity is understood at another level as belonging within Uphams Corner, which is identified as a distinctly Cape Verdean space. Chapter four focused on the ways in which neighborhood boundaries are policed, and similarly neighborhoods are used to reify authenticity through stereotypes of Cape Verdeanness (authentic) and African-Americanness (inauthentic). Uphams Corner is used to make various claims about race because it has become emblematic of Cape Verdeanness, and thus other places that are understood to be un-Cape Verdean are mapped as inauthentic by Cape Verdean-Bostonians.

As described in the last chapter, moving away from Dorchester was memorable for many of my informants. This moment of departure not only forces young Cape Verdean-Americans to negotiate a new local landscape but also places them in a strange category of being a Cape Verdean in an inauthentic Cape Verdean space. By leaving Dorchester, one becomes less authentic in the eyes of community elders; I have had to navigate this precarious position over the last decade since resettling in central Massachusetts. To a certain extent my perceived inauthenticity as a Cape Verdean stems from my departure and is only overshadowed by my weak linguistic abilities. In describing this predicament, I argue that the negative aspects of leaving Boston far outweigh the positives of remaining in a Cape Verdean

city space as it relates to community perceptions of authenticity. This creates a troubling double bind for many Cape Verdeans who seek to leave Dorchester/Uphams Corner, the "inner city", in exchange for social mobility. However, by removing themselves from this emblematic neighborhood they risk forms of judgment. Cultural binds such as this emerge occasionally for Cape Verdean-Americans and signal much more than simply the meanings accorded to place.

Places outside of Boston are made into inauthentic areas of Cape Verdeanness, particularly those where pre-independence Cape Verdeans settled. As a reminder, "old", traditional, or pre-independence Cape Verdeans arrived to Massachusetts in the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries, mostly settling in southeastern Massachusetts as whalers and cranberry bog laborers. On the other hand, post-independence immigrants, the parents of my informants, settled in Boston, specifically Dorchester (Uphams Corner). Although these distinctions are not completely rigid, the mixing of migratory generations in these spaces is not common.

Understanding the tensions between migratory generations is crucial in examining my informants' descriptions of ethnicity because their self-understandings were contingent on constructions of "old" Cape Verdeans in tension with "new" Cape Verdeans. Perceived migratory generational gaps are not only yet to be bridged but also yet to be researched fully with regards to the emerging Cape Verdean-American youth community. Andrade-Watkins's documentary, *Some Funny Kind of Porto Rican,* was entirely based on Cape Verdeans who achieved social recognition in the 1930s. These were "first-generation" individuals who would now be associated exclusively with the "old" Cape Verdean community. On the other hand, Sanchez (2005) focuses on either post-independence immigrants or first-generationers of the 1960s and '70s while Lima (2011) explores the experiences of youth immigrants during the 2000s. My research, though building on all of their findings and contributions to

the literature, is situated in the gaps that each author brings forward; studying the experiences of first-generation Cape Verdean-Americans in the millennial era taps into and interrogates cultural gaps among generations both migratory and familial, which are experienced in the neighborhood and broader community.

Disconnections in the broader Cape Verdean community (New England) are as much constitutive of identity-making as the ways in which individuals find commonality. Both are crucial to understanding how social interactions work to articulate authenticity in complex ways. Authenticity by way of distinctions among "old" and "new" Cape Verdeans is described repeatedly throughout the existing research on Cape Verdean identity. Put simply, "old" Cape Verdeans perceive their authenticity through *symbolic* ties to the islands. They claim the notion of *sodade*, while "new" Cape Verdeans in Boston find authenticity in more *tangible* connections to their homeland (e.g. remittances and communication with remaining family members). This can be mapped rather explicitly through location. Among Cape-Verdean Bostonians, Dorchester and Uphams Corner are created as authentic spaces, yet this is understood more as in relation to what is inauthentic (Southeastern Massachusetts) more so than an insistence upon authenticity.

As a reminder, a Cape Verdean's time of arrival in the U.S. is a crucial factor in understanding how they are perceived within their community and to a certain extent by the wider public. Those who arrived in the 19th and early 20th centuries carried with them a Portuguese nationality and an island identity (usually Bravas) which undoubtedly affected their racial categorization. On the other hand, arriving in the U.S. in the '60s, '70s, and '80s meant lifted immigration limits, growing pan-Africanist sentiments, Cape Verdean liberation, and a new peak in migration to New England. These historical and ideological factors directly influenced the shifts in Cape Verdean identities and helped to create the rift that

splits the community to this day, which are based on varied understandings of Cape Verdeanness.[50]

As an example, Armando, who grew up mostly outside of Boston unlike his older sister, Janette, explains that if others make assumptions about his place of origin, he would prefer to be identified as someone from Dorchester. Although Dorchester residents are stereotyped in specific ways, as I laid out in the last chapter, Dorchester is differently valued among Cape Verdeans. It is a home base for post-independence Cape Verdeans, broadly defined, and thus made into a space of authenticity.[51] However, pre-independence Cape Verdeans understand Dorchester as an inauthentic space, rather valuing the long-established communities in Southeastern Massachusetts. Armando suggests that Cape Verdeans in Boston stigmatize Southeastern Massachusetts Cape Verdeans as judgmental, unaccommodating, and "Portuguese".

These tensions arise through incongruent understandings of Cape Verdeanness; though it is far more complicated than one regional group identifying as "more Cape Verdean" than the other, at the root of this disconnect is what space represents authentic Cape Verdeanness. For example, while conducting my research I spoke with a fellow student from Randolph, Massachusetts, a town south of Boston with a Cape Verdean (-American) presence, and I mentioned that I was from Uphams Corner; he responded, "Wow! You *really are* Cape Verdean!" This exclamation, particularly coming from someone who has interacted with and observed those in the broader Cape Verdean community, demonstrates how widely these understandings circulate and create divisions based in place and authenticity.

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[50] I focus on communities in Southeastern Massachusetts, such as New Bedford, and that of Dorchester. However, the Cape Verdean population spans more than these areas, including Brockton and Cape Cod. Both of these regions have their own cultural perceptions but are spoken of less often than New Bedford and Dorchester which are associated with pre and post-independence migrants respectively. However, Brockton is known for a mixture of migratory generations and Cape Cod is stereotyped as an area with "Americanized", "assimilated" Cape Verdeans whose families came to the U.S. in the 19th century.

[51] Post-1975 immigrants and their descendents.

Another circulated and constructed identity is that of the "Cape Cod Cape Verdean": Marco in particular warned of the ill-perceived "Cape Cod Cape Verdean" category, a direct foil to the *grini* stereotype. As most informants identified, "Cape Cod Cape Verdean" and *grini* represent a "0 or a 10 on the Cape Verdeanness" scale respectively. It is important to note that authenticity, through fromness, is constructed through notions of inauthenticity, meaning that understanding that one is *not* a "Cape Cod Cape Verdean" is as pertinent to identity-making as are other markers of Cape Verdeanness. Those in Boston re-make these stereotypes, which are based on the power of negative stereotypes that challenge Cape Verdeanness rather than positive affirmations of authentic Cape Verdean expressions. It is evident that this particular authenticity, through understandings of place, takes shape through two contested and contrasting identity categories, splitting forms of Cape Verdeanness down the middle.

Sanchez's central argument throughout her body of work is that the Cape Verdean community in Massachusetts is fragmented. At first this seems counterintuitive considering the immense pride in language and culture that many Cape Verdeans express. Not only do divisions affect how Cape Verdean-Americans see themselves but understanding these distinctions among the group is essential in order to comprehend the diverse vectors of Cape Verdean identities. This "fragmented community", as Sanchez writes, is "at once emergent and constitutive of sociohistorical events" (Sanchez 2005: 36). Disunity in the local context is deeply rooted in immigrant history within Boston and Providence as well as the immigration waves from Cape Verde described previously. Felt disconnections between Cape Verdeans are not only based on time of arrival, but also complex understandings of authenticity.[52] These discrepancies among Cape Verdeans point to notions of American

[52] Most late 20th century immigrants come from Fogo or Santiago rather than northern islands.

cultural assimilation, and form an understanding of authentic Cape Verdeanness as connected to the city by Cape Verdean-Bostonians.

In Sanchez's research, she chose to live and work in Boston because she felt that the city, with respect to the scholarship, had taken a backseat to older Cape Verdean communities, namely New Bedford (Sanchez 1998:9). As someone who grew up in an older Cape Verdean, Portuguese community in Taunton, Massachusetts, Sanchez hoped to find other 3rd or 4th generation Cape Verdean-Americans in Dorchester. She quickly learned that Dorchester is almost reserved as an immigrant or 1st-generation space, and found few 3rd or 4th generation Cape Verdean-Americans. To her dismay, she was branded a "fake-verdean" by post-independence Cape Verdean-American interviewees because she was from an "old" Cape Verdean community (Sanchez 2005: 30).[53] Sanchez identifies as Cape Verdean and Puerto Rican and lived in southeastern Massachusetts learning Cape Verdean values and traditions from her grandmother. Although not ethnically 100% Cape Verdean, she connects strongly with a Cape Verdean-American identity, yet this identity was challenged by Cape Verdean-Bostonians. Authenticity is used by Cape Verdeans as a way to create distinctions and further separate the community. Overall, tensions among migratory generations are deeply-seated in notions of cultural authenticity and preservation and how one engages with or negotiates Cape Verdeanness.

Linguistic Use

Kriolu: A Linguistic Key to Identity

Language use and proficiency has emerged as a cornerstone of Cape Verdean cultural expression. For many, including my informants, languages are intrinsically a part of culture as the lens through which one views his or her world, and as Lima argues are "at the core of a person's cultural identity" (52). For many Cape Verdeans, though, language has a slightly different meaning; for a community that prides itself in emotive expression, Creole is the

[53] Taunton's community is primarily of old Cape Verdeans who made early 20th century arrivals

clearest and most widespread symbol of Cape Verdean identity both within the country and around the world, which includes a transnational population of nearly 700,000. According to many, it is a language used to express "what is coming from the soul" (Carter and Aulette 2009: 218, 223,140). Manuel da Luz Gonçalves describes *Kriolu* impeccably as "part of our identity, our way of knowing, but also often our access to the world", both from Cape Verde to Boston specifically (218).

Kriolu is a language that historically was forged by the forced intersection of Portuguese seafarers and West African slaves.[54] Linguistic and physical anthropological evidence points to influences from Fula, Mandinka, Wolof, and Bambara (Meintel 2002: 26, Carter and Aulette 2009: 232). The numerous groups thrust into new social situations in a completely new landscape formed a hybridized language in order to communicate effectively, and thus Portuguese Papiamentu was created (Carter and Aulette 2009: 138).

As one of the oldest creoles still spoken today, *Kriolu* previously only existed orally, but has recently emerged more in literature and other texts (post-independence), specifically as pride in the language grew (140). Although characterized as a creole, recent definitions have been transforming the language into a distinctive form of expression associated with a dynamic culture (Lobban 1995: 78). The language differs substantially in structure from Portuguese but relies on Portuguese vocabulary. However, granting the language official status in a diglossic state, where it is spoken unanimously, is challenging and unlikely because bureaucratic use of Portuguese is so valued (Batalha and Carling 2009: 17). *Kriolu* is the mother tongue for the majority of Cape Verdeans, though each island has its own slightly different form, and is used in informal contexts, audio-visual media, and daily life (Meintel 2002: 26). Portuguese, on the other hand, is and has always been the official language, used in instruction, business, and government. Thus, *Kriolu* has come to represent a racial and

[54] Also often noted as Creole, Cape Verdean Creole, *Crioulo*, *Kriol*, *Kabuverdianu*, *Caboverdiano* and *Papiamentu*, but I will continue to use *Kriolu* as a common form in the most recent literature.

ethnic identity (Lima 2011: 52). It is a language of the soul, something truer to Cape Verdeans than Portuguese.

Subsequently, linguistic choice in Cape Verde is never apolitical, but rather always charged in some way, be it tinged by nationalistic pride or racial superiority. The use of *Kriolu* was tactical in the anti-colonial struggle led by Cabral (Carter and Aulette 2009: 217). Carter and Aulette typify *Kriolu* as a mode of resistance both in the U.S. and in Cape Verde, resistance to colonial oppression but also resistance to an essentializing racial and ethnic system in the U.S. (135). Carter and Aulette also cite Brenzinger et al (1991) in discussing the socio-political implications of assimilating and adopting Portuguese:

> The decision to abandon one's own language always derives from a change in the self-esteem of the speech community. In the cases of language shift one could observe that members, very often in the younger generation of minorities, regard their own community as being inferior (2009: 215).

This quote exemplifies the concerns harbored by elders in Cape Verdean-American communities, specifically their fear that youth will abandon their treasured language in favor of assimilation, not to Portuguese but this time to a U.S.-American system of knowing, understanding, and communicating. Linguistic differences are at the core of intergenerational tensions that I have highlighted as integral to identity making for young Cape Verdean-Americans. Moreover, to a certain extent, language proficiency is indicative of several aspects of a Cape Verdean identity, experience, and authenticity.

Authenticity on the islands is also certified through linguistic practice. It is widely believed that those without a working proficiency in *Kriolu* are unable to know Cape Verdean culture. This is not particularly unique to this language, but the seriousness with which it is handled may be. Informants in Carter and Aulette's work firmly believed that one cannot know "deeply about the culture" or that those who can only speak Portuguese are rendered or "seen as foreigners" in Cape Verdean communities, adding that those who don't speak

Kriolu, and particularly if they *only* speak Portuguese will "risk social exclusion" (223-227). As rigid as this seems, it depicts a Cape Verdean reality where non- *Kriolu* speakers are thought to miss out on Cape Verdean "culture" and the nuances of everyday life. If one has the faculty to communicate effectively, regardless of race, they are interestingly welcomed wholeheartedly into the community because it shows an effort and commitment to an often overlooked cultural practice. For example, Chinese immigrants in Santiago who have taken very quickly to *Kriolu* are lauded for their efforts and are considered, to a certain extent, to be Cape Verdean in their own right. My mother speaks of her experience interacting with Chinese shop owners in Praia, identifying them as certainly not Cape Verdean but close, solely on the basis of language. Still, *Kriolu* is not the sole factor, but undoubtedly is a major determinant, in community acceptance.

Linguistic use largely determines what Sanchez deems "being good enough" to be accepted by Cape Verdeans (2005: 414). This translates again to the U.S. and Boston contexts. *Kriolu* persists as a crucial cultural feature for Cape Verdean-Americans and their identities. In my personal experience, I have always felt like an outsider based on my linguistic skills; I understand most *Kriolu* but am socially unable to communicate effectively. I know I have the faculty to speak the language as a child who spoke it almost exclusively. However, my "loss" of *Kriolu* is considered unacceptable by many of my elders, and in some ways is perceived as worse than not learning the language at all.

A tie to the homeland is at the core of Cape Verdean-Americans' (and immigrants') passion about the language. Retention of *Kriolu* in the community and in the family signals a maintained connection to the islands, for both old and new immigrant waves (again pre- and post-1975). Many Cape Verdean-Americans attempt furtively to retain such cultural elements despite American pressure (Sanchez 2005: 408,410,418). Yet, *Kriolu* stands to unite and divide the community over claims to cultural authority and legacy. Again, intergenerational

conflict arises: both between the varying generations within the U.S. based on migration patterns (1st vs. 4th gen.) and between generations in one family (immigrant vs. 1st gen.). First, old and new Cape Verdeans experience implicit and ongoing tensions concerning language use in that old Cape Verdeans feel their linguistic use is more authentic due to their retention of the *Kriolu* for over a century, while newer immigrants find their connection to homeland to be much stronger and view their *Kriolu* use as a marker of nationalistic pride in being Cape Verdean. Secondly, Cape Verdean-Americans, particularly post-independence 1st generationers, experience *Kriol* diglossia in a different way than their parents did. They are pressured from U.S. society and from their parents to assimilate in order to afford social mobility and certain opportunities as newly minted Americans, yet their families also insist on retention of *Kriolu* as a symbol of cultural pride. Language use again becomes political but now within the family.

Contextual uses of Cape Verdean Creole were understood unanimously by my informants. All were expected to communicate with elders in *Kriolu* when first meeting them, unless English was established as a language early on. Most speak in "Cringlish" with their parents, and almost exclusively in English with fellow youth, cousins, and younger relatives. Armando describes that he only speaks "Cringlish" to those with whom he has a close relationship: "I don't notice it. I know how to go back and forth without thinking about it." Otherwise, he speaks English in his daily life. Creole is reserved primarily for elders and strangers.

In a rare but interesting example, Armando and Michele both speak Creole occasionally at work. Michele, whose occupation is in social work in Dorchester and Roxbury, explains, "At work, I use both because I have both Cape Verdean Creole speaking patients and English speaking patients…I had to learn to speak Creole more 'professionally' when I got this job,". Professional *Kriolu* for many may seem like an oxymoron, even within

the community, but the reality is that the language is expanding its boundaries of the home or even of neighborhoods like Uphams Corner, and is being used as a means of communication in different contexts. It should be pointed out, however, that the clients Michele works with are likely to be older if they are unable to communicate in English, meaning that generational difference is thus invoked again. Highlighting English use in the workplace is interesting because the language is highly valued in the Cape Verdean community. English serves as a key to sociocultural capital as a Cape Verdean-American, at least through the eyes of elders.

Implications of English Use

Most informants describe the widest gap between them and their parents as being language-based; knowing English is a source of power as a first-generationer yet can be burdensome to many Cape Verdean-Americans who constantly need to translate for their families. Armando claimed he was his family's "personal translator" and identified it as a "pet peeve" with double-edged qualities. He explained that his use of not only English but "*proper"* English affects his relationship with his family. Elders and parents "take advantage of" Cape Verdean-American youth because they "can speak clear English" but elders simultaneously feel they are "being judged" by youth because the youth use "educated words". Some families are incredibly proud of their children's perfect English and attribute that to their family's overall success in the U.S. Armando expresses, "I'm the educated one. We're [college students and graduates] the smarter ones and we have something to do in our lives, not the typical McDonald's job." His positionality as an educated, well-spoken individual in his family is highly valued, and elders create this classed dichotomy between higher education and fast food work constantly, an allusion to both the lived realities of some youth and to culturally produced notions of fear and discipline similar to boundary-making in Dorchester. It should be noted that all of my informants are or were college students; it is necessary to keep this in mind when evaluating their positionality within families. Armando's

narrative is particularly common. Though English is seen as a form of social capital, many elders have an overt fear of "assimilated" children who abandon Cape Verdean cultural cornerstones. Learning English allows youth to facilitate family matters with the outside community, for example interacting with doctors, lawyers, or other professionals, yet English can be seen as a detractor from Cape Verdeanness. In this understanding, the two entities, Cape Verdeanness and Americanness, are constructed so that they cannot be mutually performed and inhabited, although in lived realities it is evident that Cape Verdean-Americans identify doubly.

Furthermore, not only does speaking English mean becoming "American", but for many concerned parents it becomes conflated with becoming "Black". These divergent generational understandings center on popular notions of blackness and Americanness among families with youth in Boston. Folded into English use in Boston's neighborhoods (Dorchester and Roxbury) are also linguistic mappings of race, by which I mean residents of these areas are marked as being "Black" or "Latino" by way of their English proficiency or dialect. African-American Vernacular English for many is deemed improper and for a Cape Verdean mother who hears "street language" or "*comberso bos di rua*" it is a disgrace and a sign of poor parenting to other Cape Verdeans.

The conflict between older and younger Cape Verdeans over racial identities is largely based on the time during which their parents, post-independence immigrants, grew up. Those who fought to recognize Cape Verdean identities are also those who were likely to advocate nationalism in Cape Verde, and watching their son or daughter seemingly abandon these cultural values for something that "belongs in the street" is incredibly disheartening. It is crucial to see how important Cape Verdeanness is to an older generation, because it is not simply about carrying the torch and passing on culture to youth, but it emerges from a fear of losing what was once fought for so dearly in the independence movement. Above all,

expressions of African-Americanness through language and consumption are perceived as a threat to the Cape Verdeanness that elders have worked to construct.

Cultural Consumption

Expressions of cultural, ethnic, and racial identities are rooted in specific practices, which can be understood as forms of cultural consumption. For my Cape Verdean-American informants, consumption *was* Cape Verdeanness in many respects.[55] In the following sections I unpack consumptions of "Cape Verdean culture" and of "other cultures" while continually linking them to notions of what is and is not "Cape Verdean". By "other" culture I intentionally point to the ways in which alternative cultural elements and consumptions are othered by Cape Verdeans, particularly elders, as being un-Cape Verdean, improper, or crude. Exploring both the Cape Verdean and non-Cape Verdean offers a glimpse into the categorization and valuation process that takes place within the community.

Cape Verdean Cultural Consumption

When I asked, "How would you rate your proficiency with Cape Verdean culture?", my informants surprisingly had no difficulty answering this question, all giving themselves numerical ratings and basing proficiency on cultural consumption through music, food, and "tradition". I asked this knowing well that my informants interpreted and defined culture in a traditional manner, and although I define culture quite differently it is important to recognize that they place value on consumption of particular cultural expressions as "culture". Most frequently, my informants rated themselves as either a 7 or 8 out of 10, which speaks to the ways in which we place value on numbers and so readily box ourselves in. Though our self-understandings are impacted by multiple sociohistorical and cultural factors, it is perhaps unsurprising? that many are readily able to boil that down into a single quantitative measure of identity expression. Furthermore, the fact that measurement is underscored says something

[55] Consumption was voiced primarily as consuming Cape Verdean food and music.

about the ways in which we not only value quantitative analyses of complex processes but also represents how my informants understand the outside community to perceive them.

These self-identified ratings related directly to age and generation; however, they again point to the significance of temporality and generations in a perceived Cape Verdean cultural continuum. For example, my older informants, those in or around the age of 30, found themselves to be more proficient, and subsequently spoke less about Americanization in their interviews. On the other hand, Armando rated himself as only at 45-50% proficiency in both language and "culture". He said, "In our age range, I'm the one that is most involved in speaking Kriolu." This demonstrates the way in which time is compressed among a generation, meaning that "cultural loss" occurs at an accelerated rate and is evidenced by wide gaps even between cousins who are only several years apart. Armando explained his experience with acculturation, "I know a good chunk about the culture. I always hear it from relatives and hear stories. Also, what we should expect, like always listening to elders, you know cultural norms." Armando described culture as codes of conduct but placed the majority of his emphasis on language and food, which interestingly are what most informants used to explain conduct. What I am getting at here are the ways in which cultural consumption, both in experiencing cultural elements and in literal consumption that involves the ingestion of food and ideas, come to represent the codes that Cape Verdean-Americans are implicitly taught as being "Cape Verdeanness".

Informants cited being raised in a "Cape Verdean way" or in a "Cape Verdean house", identifying the home and parents as particularly important. Michele's answer highlights this:

> I would say that being raised by my grandparents, I was very much saturated in the culture at home, and became educated on traditions and learned to cook CV dishes, listen to CV music, speak the language, and understand the culture more in depth.

Michele reiterates the value placed on elders as bearers of Cape Verdean "culture". Gavin also describes his relationship with his grandparents and how that positions him differently as a young Cape Verdean-American:

> I think having my grandfather raise me- we were all raised by our grandparents. We grew up the same way in terms of having a grandparent there. Our family was always there for us and the culture for us has always been there. They would raise us in the Cape Verdean way, compared to some kids that didn't have that around. Basically if your parents aren't home they can't teach you the culture, learn it, and carry it on. Even when my grandfather left, when he went back to Cape Verde, we still had neighbors that would watch us, older Cape Verdean ladies that would watch us-basically being good neighbors. There are Cape Verdean kids who were raised just like me and some others, even 1st generation who didn't have that same advantage. I would say it's an advantage.

Gavin identifies himself as having an advantage compared to his generational cohort, both American and Cape Verdean, and this is distinctly grounded in his affiliation with elders. Through a connection to "Cape Verdean ways", which are naturalized as traditional worldviews, Gavin believes he can better understand, experience, and perform Cape Verdeanness.

Elders, or immigrant parents and grandparents, are generally associated with Cape Verdean authenticity. Elders are positioned as bearers of culture, expected to pass on teachings to youth, who are then socially regarded as the future of the community and of Cape Verdeanness.[56] Furthermore, mothers, grandmothers, and women in general were most often identified as teachers, creating interesting and direct links between females, homes, and child-rearing. Similarly, my informants' focus on food quickly became feminized. Gavin spoke most nostalgically about food and Cape Verdean identities, claiming he eats it nearly daily and takes pride in knowing how to cook it. Most informants, however, spoke of

[56] Although it is difficult to parse this out because elders bridge different migratory generations, for the case studies involving my informants, elders are considered to be post-independence immigrants, the parents, grandparents, and generally older relatives to the Cape Verdean-American youth in question.

consuming Cape Verdean food but never cooking it themselves, and cited this as a detractor from their Cape Verdeanness.[57]

Gavin, who rated himself most highly, also described a connection between consumption and authenticity:

> Even though I wasn't raised there [in Cape Verde?], my proficiency is advanced. [I identify with] the music the most. I like hip hop a lot but I like Cape Verdean music even better. I like it all. That old school, traditional music brings back memories. The new stuff too, but it's not as creative or unique. It sounds westernized, as if they're trying to attract the Western consumer.

Gavin values traditional *morna* more than contemporary Cape Verdean music, and in the community *morna* is quickly associated with elders, with the islands, and most importantly *not* the streets, in the ways that hip-hop is. For other informants listening to *morna* was considered to represent authentic Cape Verdeanness, and some expressed shame in not listening to Cape Verdean music more often. Gavin affiliates a traditional Cape Verdean household with *morna* while hip-hop, as I explain in the next section, is understood by the community as a musical style for consumption by modern, Americanized, and Cape Verdean youth who are losing touch with their Cape Verdeanness.

Gavin perceives himself, at least through his explanations in our interview, as in relation to elders' construction of youth. The standards to which he held himself were the most traditional compared to other informants, and he identified himself as nearly fluent in Cape Verdean cultural understandings. In this way he perceived himself as more authentic than other youth, although still with much to be desired from the elders' perspective. It is interesting how quickly he links his Cape Verdeanness directly to his grandparents and explains that he would prefer to raise his future children in a similar fashion in order to continue a Cape Verdean influence in his household.

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[57] It should be noted that I am not promoting a rigid definition of cultural identity that is only experienced through consumption. However, I am re-presenting my informants' engagements with particular forms of Cape Verdeanness and Cape Verdean culture while still being aware that many more aspects inform cultural identity.

"Other" Cultural Consumption

Gavin's explanation also introduced aspects of "other" consumption through hip-hop. However, he mixed this in with his love of Cape Verdean music as a sort of qualifier of his authenticity. It seems as if hip-hop's inauthenticity as non-Cape Verdean needed to be balanced with Cape Verdean musical consumption. In this section I look deeper into other forms of cultural consumption and the linkages drawn to "authentic" Cape Verdeanness.

Sanchez claims that the some (3rd generation) Cape Verdean-Americans in Roxbury have successfully integrated and assimilated with the larger African-American community, and that, culturally, this is marked by fashion, music taste, and speech (Sanchez 1998: 24; Sanchez 2005:423). For some Cape Verdean youth, American culture is essentially a reference to "ghetto", Black culture and it is appealing to them, specifically as youth living on "the streets" (Lima 2011: 89). Hip-hop culture, however, is a point of major disagreement among generations in the Cape Verdean community. First, however, I will unpack the tensions between African-Americans and Cape Verdeans once more.

Historically, and as mentioned previously, Cape Verdeans did not associate with African-Americans, or identify as Black for that matter; forms of cultural fusion were frowned upon. Sanchez's informant explains, "My children never knew they were Black until they went outside the neighborhood. The way I was brought up- you'd never say Black. You were Portuguese; you didn't hang around with Negroes. Now we're taught to have pride" (62). The passage works beautifully into a discussion on identity strategies cross-temporally; a mother was instilled with a Portuguese identity and taught to avoid interactions in the African-American community while presently adjusting to a more accepted Black or Cape Verdean identity. Her reluctance rings true amongst many older Cape Verdeans who see their children and grandchildren lured by contemporary Black culture. Cultural experimentations with hip-hop are seen as an "identity crisis" among parents who are also wary of their

children's Black friends. A segment in Andrade-Watkins's documentary even focuses on the social ostracization that young Cape Verdean-Americans face by venturing to the West Side of Providence, a predominantly Black neighborhood of similar class standing as Fox Point (Andrade-Watkins 2006). Since the 1990s, though, it has become expected that Cape Verdean-American youth will go to school with, interact with, and befriend African-Americans much to their traditional parents' dismay. Rather covert racism between Cape Verdeans and African-Americans is rarely mentioned, both in the literature and in the homes of Boston's Cape Verdeans, but it certainly is mutually acknowledged.

Interactions with the African-American community in Boston are extended to identifications with and involvement in hip-hop and other forms of "Black" American culture. This is echoed in Robson's previous example of "boys around the block", men who Cape Verdean elders assume to be dangerous and suspicious. Based on presentations of African-Americans in the media through hip-hop, elders merge stereotypes and naturalize African-Americans to be associated with hip-hop, particularly gangsta hip-hop that emerged in the 1990s, a particularly memorable and violent moment in Dorchester. Furthermore, these associations with hip-hop culture are gendered. Only my male informants discussed their identifications with hip-hop, while females emphasized their consumption of Cape Verdeanness. Though my group of informants is small, this is something I have noticed in my experiences within the community, since my brother's consumption of hip-hop was viewed differently from mine. He was reprimanded frequently for his use of African-American Vernacular English speech patterns and fascination with other fetishized neighborhoods that are associated with hip-hop, such as Compton.

The expression of Cape Verdean cultural authenticity, by means of not consuming hip-hop culture, is valued by elders. However, authenticity is a polemic topic within the hip-hop community in its own right, particularly seen through notions of "realness".

Anthropologists have focused on this topic extensively. For instance, Weiss (2002) writes of hip-hop's realness in Tanzania while LaBennett (2011) studied constructions of authenticity among teenage West Indian Brooklynites. She describes West Indian families' constructions of blackness as inauthentic while balancing notions of authenticity of hip-hop narratives (125). Consumption of hip-hop culture qualifies young Cape Verdeans as members of the American Black community, in some ways insisting upon their membership in the Black diaspora that exists in the United States. Realness in hip-hop is performed, and to a certain extent, the expectations and standards of these performances mirror the same pressures that elders place on youth to perform Cape Verdeanness. A double bind presents itself once again. Additionally, though Cape Verdeans are accustomed to miscategorization, few object to being labeled as "African-American" if they are being perceived as performing African-Americanness accurately. The root of this is unknown but I hypothesize that for many Cape Verdean youth, it must be a relief to perform *something* accurately or "authentically" and in this sense miscategorization could be forgiven. However, I do not argue that Cape Verdeans are in a constant limbo in which they are unsure of their identities, but rather that being perceived as ambiguous eventually becomes tiresome.

Hip-hop does not represent the only form of "other" consumption, though it is the most often mentioned. For example, Robson speaks openly about his involvement with squash, which became a means of social mobility. He values squash as an activity that helped him to find his way to an elite liberal arts school and in many ways allowed him to transcend his racialized neighborhood space. However, his home base is still Dorchester, which to a certain extent maintains his authenticity within the Cape Verdean community. Still, he his self expression is occasionally challenged by his family:

> I had earrings and a Mohawk. My dad would yell at me to "cut your hair". [But I knew] my father had an afro once. "I'll go put you in the street. You want me to go buy you a dress too [to match the earrings]?!" It took

> them a while to get used to it. I mean it's still me with the earrings on, like I don't get it.

Robson's experimentation with his appearance, while not unique to Cape Verdean youth by any means, is an act of boundary testing with his family, who identify earrings, Mohawks, Afros, and other signs of "other cultural consumption" as dishearteningly Americanizing.

On the other hand, Americanization for Armando is located in technology use, his varied interests, including musical theatre, and most interestingly, his sexuality. These constitute very "modern" and "American" "interests" that are often rejected by elders. Armando interestingly links this to being the only "out" LGBTQ individual in his extended family. Due to this, Armando experiences cultural tensions differently than other Cape Verdean youth, and his sexual preferences are starkly mapped by his family to be American:

> With musical theatre, they don't get that- they think it's a gay thing. They think because I'm gay and American I live a different lifestyle but they don't bring it up. [They] combine the American and gay thing. To them gayness is an American notion.

Armando's sexuality is an important factor in his personal identification but also in understanding the ways in which he relates to his family, and should be considered, when appropriate, as it applies to future discussions of situatedness and Cape Verdeanness. To evaluate these tensions further, his sexuality and interests stand in a nearly threatening opposition to traditional notions of Cape Verdeanness held by many elders. What is more concerning, however, is how his insistence on this identity, by his sexuality and distinctly "non-Cape Verdean" lifestyle, means that his family views him as a lost cause to "Americanness"

Surprisingly silenced in my research was elders' consumption of "other" cultures. The consumption of Spanish-language media has become a staple in the background noise of Cape Verdean homes, and is as quickly associated with elder women as hip-hop is stereotyped onto youth. This form of consumption complicated intergenerational

relationships because elders, specifically women, are seen to embody the ideal Cape Verdean yet they are not exclusively consuming cultural forms associated with Cape Verdeanness. The element of hypocrisy surrounding this can be frustrating to Cape Verdean-American youth who work tirelessly to live up to socio-cultural standards as laid out by their families, community, neighborhood, and more. Performances of identity necessitate an audience that relies upon context: Cape Verdeanness in the home, blackness or Cape Verdeanness in the neighborhood, and blackness within the U.S.-American context. Cape Verdean-American youth become caught in these contexts and caught within various spectrums and standards of identity performance. The repercussions of consuming inauthentic cultural elements are usually intangible but powerful nonetheless. Generally, elders respond with reprimands and judgment and they express their disappointment relentlessly, which can be troubling for Cape Verdean-American youth who hope to live up to their families' standards of achieving social mobility while still expressing Cape Verdeanness within the parameters that had been laid out for them.

Conclusion: Understanding Spectrums of Cape Verdeanness

Throughout this chapter I have identified various forms of Cape Verdeanness and how they can be performed, consumed, and negotiated. My informants unanimously located Cape Verdeanness in language use, both in the presence and absence of *Kriolu*, and cultural consumption in the form of music, food, or fashion. Once establishing a base understanding of what Cape Verdeanness is, I asked my informants to describe how this is measured, particularly by the community. Armando explained:

> A: How well you know the language- that's what makes you successful. It's measured through language but also your environment- if you've been around Cape Verdeans. I don't think you could ever be a zero [on the Cape Verdeanness scale] because you *are* Cape Verdean. [The community] can put you aside regardless but they still expect you to know [the culture]. I mean, you can't know *nothing* or not be Cape Verdean at all. You will always have your last name. It's not possible to not be Cape

> Verdean enough. Cape Verdean is Cape Verdean to me. You can't be too much or not enough. But Cape Verdeans judge each other. I don't put that front up like everyone else does. I tell people I'm American.
>
> J: What is this "front"?
>
> A: It just means that I don't stoop to their level. We [Cape Verdeans] try to impress each other. They try to talk about being better than you even though you're in the same family.

Armando, in this example, values language and local environment, but expressed a common sentiment that there are undeniable qualities to being Cape Verdean. Simultaneously, he comments on the ways in which the Cape Verdean community becomes critical concerning identity performances. Armando is much more resolute and confident in his identity performances, but also acknowledges his generational position; by being a younger Cape Verdean, compared to older cousins, he may feel less pressure to perform to even higher standards. Regardless, he does understand that he embodies some form of Cape Verdeanness but is not aware of his exact "position" on this spectrum, meaning the specific ways in which he is perceived to be Cape Verdean by others in the local community.

To my surprise, in relation to my personal experiences and the inspiration for this project, none of my informants felt that they were not "Cape Verdean enough". However, each interviewee was able to understand the notion of not meeting standards of Cape Verdeanness, taking into consideration the ways in which authenticity is constructed within the Cape Verdean community. Emphasized presentations of Cape Verdeanness are directly aligned with authenticity by my informants. As Robson explained:

> J: Is it possible to be an ideal Cape Verdean? If so what does this look like?
>
> R: Grinis! They wear those little Black bracelets, speak the language. I wouldn't say that I'm too Cape Verdean like fresh off the boat. Is there an ideal Cape Verdean? Yes and no, but more on yes side. I don't know how to explain it but I know if someone is Cape Verdean like [the difference between] if they're born straight in Cape Verde or in America. He can be

> dressing like an American but you can still tell that he was born in Cape Verde. I would say that my father is the ideal Cape Verdean.
>
> J: Is it possible not to be Cape Verdean enough?
>
> R: I don't think so… I don't judge people based off that. You can't know for sure.
>
> J: Who judges Cape Verdeanness?
>
> R: The older generation, you know parents and their friends. Parents are the ones who try to embed it in your heard and stuff and they are the judges/audience.

Robson folds many themes into his description, but most importantly reifies authenticity as being on the islands themselves. Interestingly, though, immigrants are painted by Robson as being inauthentic to a certain extent as they adjust to American cultural ways. Michele similarly places the epitome of Cape Verdeanness on immigrants and island spaces:

> I would say that this person [a quintessential Cape Verdean] would be someone that is still in Cape Verde, and not exposed to any other culture, race or ethnicity to cloud their Cape Verdeanness.

Placing authenticity and Cape Verdeanness on the islands brings into conversation the tensions between migratory generations. Is it that Cape Verdean-Americans already feel too far removed from the islands so that they feel unable to claim certain forms of Cape Verdeanness? In what ways does Americanness, as Michele alludes to, cloud senses of Cape Verdeanness? Surprisingly, for a group that tends to identify multipositionally, my informants often spoke of Cape Verdeanness quite singly, even though they understood the multiple complexities involved in constructing the notion.

Americanness and Cape Verdeanness come together to complicate the ways in which Cape Verdean-Americans identify multipositionally but can sometimes understand identities in rigid ways as they are often expected to. This is why island origin is invoked, why neighborhood spaces become so important, and why generational difference is crucial. For

example, Robson explains this nicely, incorporating several themes from throughout this thesis and using the terminology of fromness:

> Fromness for my children is really a part of who they are. I would be afraid of them not having an urban sense of life and being spoiled in the suburbs. I would definitely want them to have the Cape Verdean life but of course not the guys down the street. I have never left the Cape Verdean background because I was always surrounded by it. I would want them to have the same thing so they could *know* that they're Cape Verdean. Some people think they're straight American and don't look back at it at all.

Robson, in his example, focuses on the issue that lies at the crux of Cape Verdeanness and generational tensions: futures. The future is contested in the community because the onus is placed on youth as cultural bearers of the future, just as elders are expected to do the teaching. Cape Verdeanness and its continuity through generations are seen as a measurement of the successes and failures of the youth to fulfill their socio-cultural duties as Cape Verdeans in the United States.

I do not wish to suggest that youth are unconcerned with the future, and as Robson's quote exemplifies, they certainly are invested in the future of the community and their families. The notion of the future in this sense is challenging for many of my informants, all of whom suggested they would prefer to uphold a Cape Verdean presence in their home; all expressed a desire to raise their children in a "Cape Verdean way", either in similar or more concentrated ways than they had experienced. However, this is measured to be in the same traditional sense that many of them tend to disagree with, as well as being linked directly to the consumption of Cape Verdean cuisine and *morna*.

In many ways, this represents how the tensions between youth and elders can eventually converge. Although young Cape Verdeans are often painted as unconcerned with the future, particularly as it pertains to "cultural" preservation, we can see that indeed these issues matter to Cape Verdean-American youth. However, I stress that these understandings for youth are a part of a multifaceted system of negotiating several ideologies and identities,

meaning that room is allowed for other forms of identification and forms of future-making, while elders still tend to perceive these differently. Youth and elders are working toward similar culturally valued ideas of the future of their community. However, there is slippage in their generationally-specific understandings: different notions of Cape Verdeanness. My informants were more comfortable with weaving Cape Verdeanness into their multiple identities, understanding that they can be more than one identity simultaneously, whereas their families understood identity to be constructed in more bifurcated ways.

CHAPTER 6: EVERYDAY NEGOTIATIONS OF MULTIPLE OR NARROWED IDENTITIES

Throughout this thesis I have highlighted the ways in which identities are constructed and performed by Cape Verdean youths in Boston, taking into account the sociohistorical, (racialized) geographical and intergenerational aspects of multiple identification strategies. I have aimed thus far to represent identities as fluid, changing, performed and constructed; however, in my concluding chapter, while still emphasizing these characteristics of identity-making for Cape Verdean-Americans, I complicate the process by introducing the ways in which individuals' identities are narrowed in everyday life, thus valuing additional aspects of their lived realities. At the core of this supplementary argument are the ways in which individuals feel compelled to isolate their identities, despite the multiple ways they experience them, and are forced into rather singular identifications. Still, the several identities that form self-understanding are not lost, but in these concrete moments of identification, ethno-racial identities are expected by various audiences (including informal conversations to bureaucratic bodies) to be paused, still, and crystallized, despite evidence that identities are not constructed in that manner. Holistically, this complements previous chapters, which represented the many layers of identity-making, by illustrating how identities are occasionally perceived by outside communities as often reductive.

Such moments of identification formed the inspiration for this thesis. In addition to unpacking Cape Verdeanness, when pressured to answer "what it means to be Cape Verdean" I pessimistically respond, "it means never being understood". In the lived realities of those who are racially ambiguous, "what are you?" becomes a frequent question, as are instances when official forms inquire about racial/ethnic background for administrative use. These two occasions will be used as examples for the remainder of this concluding chapter to represent the instances in which moments of identification appear more concretely.

Negotiating Everyday Pressures

As mentioned in the introduction, Cape Verdeans encounter many questions about their racial and ethnic background, many on a daily basis. When asked, "What are you?" Janette tends to answer with "Honey, I'm human. What are you?", but her satire is not always appreciated. In this instance, Cape Verdean-Americans are expected to either make a quick judgment, assessing their multiple identities and instantaneously reducing it to a simple answer, or spew out a pre-packaged spiel that somehow encompasses all the Cape Verdean fundamentals, such has geographic location. A few of my informants interestingly used "it's like the Hawaiian Islands of Africa" to condense Cape Verde into a short statement, easy for unfamiliar audiences to understand.

Although some informants entertained such questions when they felt obliged, citing tone and context as the most important factors, others, generally my older interviewees, expressed no need to explain themselves. However, choosing not to "explain oneself" is more of a personal stance against growing weary of being misunderstood than it is about insisting on specific identities. Still, when answering such "What are you?" questions or inquiries along the lines of "Where are you *really* from?", some insist on a Black or Cape Verdean identity only, quickly glossing over the multiple ways in which they identify racially, the multitude of factors that inform such identification, and, furthermore, other negotiated identities, such as gender, sexuality, nationality, and more.

During each interview, my informants and I would complete an exercise in which they would list and explain their multiple identities. Most listed Cape Verdean as first, understandably after a couple hours spent discussing the various ways in which they engage with Cape Verdeanness, but gender identities and sexual orientation emerged as highly important to notions of self-understanding. What is interesting here, however, is that when asked "What are you?", the assumed translation is "What is your race/ethnicity?". Alone, this concept exemplifies the ways in which race becomes important to Cape Verdean-Americans

and those in a U.S. context. Though other identity performances can be either overt or ambiguous (for example, Armando's engagement with his gay identity) it seems that for young Cape Verdean-Americans, being "figured out" on the basis of race and color is a daily experience, whether or not they are fully aware of it occurring in their surroundings. Several informants echoed a similar thought; how you personally identify is only significant to a certain extent when the outside community will continue to create their own assumptions. The complex political choice that remains is whether or not to insist on a Cape Verdean identity. Gavin felt most strongly about this topic: If it don't who is going to speak up for me? I need people to know that I'm Cape Verdean and not from a different background or country."

Personally, I feel the urge to accurately represent myself, even if that means taking the time to teach others some aspects of my experience as a Cape Verdean-American. Taking on roles as cultural ambassadors is common among Cape Verdean youth who hope to spread knowledge about Cape Verde and Cape Verdeanness. Ironically, it is the youth that are charged in these everyday instances with bearing Cape Verdean culture, not the elders, and in light of previous discussions on elder Cape Verdeans' understandings of youth expressions of Cape Verdeanness, this is surprising. Yet in many ways this mirrors the older generations' adoption of a Cape Verdean-only identification in the 1970s as a means to raise awareness during the independence movement; the difference in the 21st century, however, is that youth allow room for more identities and understand that this does not pose a threat to their performances of Cape Verdeanness.

Bureaucracy and Race

Apart from social interaction, racial ascription takes on different meanings for Cape Verdeans through bureaucratic forms of categorization such as the U.S. Census, in school, and on health forms. This constitutes one of the less highlighted aspects of Cape Verdean

identities but is indispensible in evaluating self-identification. “Official IDs” through political processes are incredibly telling of the ways in which we seek self-understanding, both through the manner in which we engage with such forms and the ways in which many disregard them as meaningless - both are useful modes of understanding.

The U.S. Census is an unsilencable figure that has taken on a life of its own in American political culture. Sanchez suggests that the census’s categories are not mere social constructs but also “immutable indicators of human nature” to incessantly organize people (2006: 405). The government is motivated by several factors to officially classify citizens and all others in the nation through racial and ethnic terms (2005: 405). Halter, lauded as an expert on Cape Verdean experiences in the greater U.S., writes, “As a by-product of a society that is organized on the basis of a rigid binary ‘racial’ structure official government records such as those compiled by the U.S. census or immigration have been hopelessly deficient in regarding multiracial populations such as the Cape Verdeans,” adding that “entrenched standards of Black and White” form the basis of such classification systems (2005:617).

Initially, in the 19th century, Cape Verdeans were able to choose between European and White, obviously within phenotypic reason, and “Black Portuguese”, “African-Portuguese” or “Atlantic Islanders”, though in actuality Cape Verdeans were likely to associate themselves with their islands of origin, such as Brava (617). Eventually, as racial politics in the U.S. became inflexible official identities were ascribed to Cape Verdeans. Over time, the U.S. Census has counted Cape Verdeans as White, Portuguese, Black, Bravas, Colored, (Other) Atlantic Islanders, among many more (Sanchez 1997: 58). Similarly, to this day, Cape Verdean children are classified in public school as being African-American or Black, rather than allowing parents or the children themselves to decide this (Boston Public School System, Lima 2011 4). Currently, according to the Census, there are 77,000 Cape Verdeans in the US, despite the fact that estimates reach into the hundreds of thousands

(Halter in Batalha and Carling 2009: 37). Of course, these are only the counted Cape Verdeans who are aware that their specific ethnicity is an option or who were counted by the Census worker as such.

"Cape Verdean" as its own option is recent and still largely unknown. Only two of my informants had ever encountered the option before, while others were genuinely surprised that it even existed. Sanchez writes, "in the U.S. the idea of having a 'choice' in the construction of identity is made problematic by social constraints," and this is entirely true in the realm of "official identities", but still many Cape Verdeans fought for the option to choose (1997:54). Problems arose when Cape Verdeans realized they could no longer make their own choices in how they were perceived by fellow Americans; one mother lamented that when her children were born she had to insist on identifying their race rather than the doctor. Understanding fully how important racial categorization was even for her newborns, she concluded that many Cape Verdeans still choose Black on forms despite identifying whole-heartedly as Cape Verdean because they do not realize they are given a choice (Halter 1993: 173). The majority of my informants select "Black/African-American" consistently on such forms, which to a certain extent reflect the ways in which they identify personally, but by no means encompass the varied ways in which they engage with Blackness and African-Americanness. Furthermore, the primary rationale for choosing Black is that they were unaware any other option was acceptable.

Census data works to otherize many groups of Americans, and many Cape Verdeans took this into their own hands by choosing "other" as a way to empower themselves and not allow themselves to be ascribed as African-American, in essence taking back the definition of "other". Meanwhile, in the 1970s, some Cape Verdeans worked to establish "Cape Verdean-American" as an ethnic option in the long-form census, eventually being granted the option in 1980 (Sanchez 1997: 58, Halter 2005: 623, LA Times 1975: 10). This was easier to establish

in the Boston area, due to Cape Verdeans' visibility in the city, and the "Cape Verdean" option remains on many forms throughout the city, including in hospitals and financial institutions (interview, October 13, 2012). Though several informants suggested they chose "other" on such forms either occasionally or consistently, they only did this so they could write-in "Cape Verdean" or "Cape Verdean-American". In many ways, the post-independence insistence on Cape Verdean-only identities continues as Cape Verdean youth reclaim agency in a small but powerful way by demanding to be identified as Cape Verdean.

Cape Verdean-only identities are a symbolic stance on being outside of the box, literally refusing to be categorized systematically by a rigid racial framework in the U.S. The manner in which official forms expect us to isolate and crystallize our personal identities in the moment is intriguing because it presents a political choice once again to Cape Verdean-Americans, and the ways in which they negotiate that moment of identification is just another layer to analytically rich explorations of self-understandings in tandem with racial ascription.

Points of Departure

Throughout this thesis I have uncovered numerous layers that come together intricately in the identity-making process. These are not intended to be understood individually, but it is important to understand how audiences are able to isolate them in perceiving, categorizing, and ascribing identities to Cape Verdean-American youth who are often caught in very ambiguous spaces: caught between geographies, between contexts, between languages, between generations, and among notions of blackness, (African-) Americanness, and Cape Verdeanness. I explored particular historical moments and contexts that are visible in contemporary experiences as Cape Verdean-Americans negotiate everyday lives as members of an immigrant community and diaspora that are largely unseen. Highlighting these experiences through this thesis brings Cape Verdeanness into visibility and fills a crucial gap of study and knowledge production.

I uncover the complex processes that take place within the Cape Verdean community, rooted in intergenerational tensions. My thesis demonstrates the importance of Cape Verdeanness as a cherished, yet elusive cultural touchstone. Writing these experiences not only gave me the vocabulary to understand my own negotiation with Cape Verdeanness but may also connect me and my work to others who navigate so-called ambiguous, but actually multiple, identities. In this way, my project contributes to a larger body of work on race and identity-making, exemplifying the manner in which individuals, particularly youth in the 21st century, are able to carve out their own identities in a rigid U.S. racial system. This is not unique to the Cape Verdean-American population, but the conviction with which my informants identify in multiple forms may be. Their narratives can be telling of a future in which popular imaginations of race in the U.S. might bend or transform to "allow" fluidly asserted multiple racial identities.

Through my emphasis on moments of identification, which emerge in formal and informal social interactions, and more concretely on official forms, I shine a light on how we (as Cape Verdean-Americans) can see multiple processes of negotiation occurring. These moments merge and mingle as a part of everyday life, but serve as instances in which individuals are able to actively engage in the identity-making process by thinking critically about their positionality in their families, neighborhoods, and country, in pasts, presents, and futures. Through the research and writing process, I have become more keenly aware of my own identity constructions in daily moments. Though my particular association with racial identities has not changed, I have been able to understand more fully the root of such identifications and have found myself able to engage with other Cape Verdean (-Americans) at a level of deeper understanding. This thesis has afforded me the opportunity to tackle daunting terrain, that of conducting ethnography of the self and reasserting my position within a community.

At this point of departure, I reflect on my “slice of Cape Verde in a distinctly American metropolis” and how it figures into the broader world. Uphams Corner is not just a square mile of roads and boundaries, but a meaningful location that is the heart of a small, yet prideful community. It is a place of family dynasties, of intersection and misunderstanding, of arrival and departure. Uphams Corner may be a pocket of Boston, but the urban village encapsulates distinct moments of identification, multifaceted negotiations of self, and curious instances of political identity choices which illuminate the mystical, infinite, and complex entities that we continue to empirically lust after: identity, self-understanding, and race.

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