Cape Verdean Transnationalism, Old and New

Deirdre Meintel *Université de Montréal*

Abstract: Transnationalism is by no means as recent a phenomenon as many writings on the subject would lead one to believe. The study of Cape Verdean migration over almost two centuries reveals the existence of transnational lifestyles in the nineteenth century; similar findings have been reported for Italian and Chinese migration. Periodizing the history of Cape Verdean migration helps reveal how today's transnationalism differs from that of the past. Among other things, today's transnationalism is more diversified and characterized by more intensive contact across diasporic communities. Most importantly, today's "transmigrants" are playing new political roles and have a different relation with the Cape Verdean nation-state than their predecessors. Such differences cannot be explained by technological advances in transportation and communication alone. Rather, they must be seen in light of broader political and economic changes both in the country of origin and elsewhere.

Résumé: Le transnationalisme n'est pas aussi récent que la plupart des écrits sur le sujet le laissent entendre. L'étude de la migration capverdienne sur presque deux siècles fait ressortir l'existence de modes de vie transnationaux au dix-neuvième siècle; des résultats semblables ont été notés pour la migration italienne et chinoise. L'étude des multiples périodes de migration dans l'histoire capverdienne permet de saisir les différences entre le transnationalisme d'aujourd'hui et celui du passé. Entre autres, le transnationalisme d'aujourd'hui est plus diversifié et se caractérise par un contact plus intensif entre les communautés diasporiques. Par ailleurs, les «transmigrants» d'aujourd'hui jouent de nouveaux rôles politiques et ont une relation différente avec l'état-nation capverdien que celle de leurs prédécesseurs. De telles différences ne peuvent être expliquées uniquement par des progrès technologiques dans les domaines du transport et de la communication. Elles doivent être vues plutôt à la lumière plus large des changements politiques et économiques autant dans le pays d'origine qu'ailleurs.

Introduction

The question of transnationalism's historical depth brings to mind Stéphan Zweig's memoir, *Le Monde d'hier*. The bitter experience of being forced to flee Hitler's regime and become a stateless person from an enemy nation in England inspired the Austrian Jewish man of letters (1881-1942) to reminisce of a time before World War I when "the world belonged to all men," where each went when and where he pleased," where the author himself had ventured as far afield as India and the Americas without a passport. Only after the Great War, he says, were travellers subjected to "the humiliations once inflicted only on criminals"—photographs, fingerprints, health certificates, financial guarantees and so on (Zweig, 1993: 476-477). Zweig speaks from the vantage point of one who grew up in the secure, ordered world of Vienna's bourgeoisie, a far cry from the impoverished circumstances of Cape Verdean migrants of the nineteenth century. Nonetheless, the context he evokes—one that is almost unimaginable for today's migrants and travellers—is the one in which Cape Verdean migration to the United States came to be and existed for over a century.

Transnationalism and diaspora have been in the forefront of discussions of migration for some years now. Though the concepts are of relatively recent vintage, there is good reason to believe that they refer to patterns of considerable time depth. Here I am mostly concerned with the first of these concepts; that is, with migrants' life strategies and social relations that bridge several societies. The main issues that concerns us are (1) the time depth of transnationalism, and (2) how and why today's transnationalism is different from that of the past. I will focus primarily on material from research in the Cabo Verde (1972, 1990), as well as more recent field work (1996-99) among Cape Verdean-Americans in the Boston-Providence area, in Toronto and Paris.[1] The propositions I will argue are as follows: (1) that transna-

tionalism well predates the present era; (2) today's Cape Verdean transnationalism is qualitatively different in some important ways from that of earlier periods, and (3) technological factors do not provide sufficient explanation for such differences; rather, we must also explore broader economic and above all, political factors.

At the same time, I suggest, the study of Cape Verdean migration opens some interesting paths of thought regarding (1) the relation of transmigrants to the nation-state, and (2) the extension of transnationalism in time beyond the generation of migrants to their descendants, and in space, beyond bipolar home-host society ties. Finally, I hope to contribute to the thinking about transnationalism as regards social identities and intergroup relations.

A word on concepts

Though researchers often seem to use the terms "diaspora" and transnationalism interchangeably, Clifford's essay on the former term highlights the distinctive experience of certain peoples' historic experience of exile begotten by mass violence against them, their collective knowledge of what might be called the underside of modernity, and their relations of coexistence with other groups in their societies of residence. (See also Hovanessian, 1993; Marienstras, 1975). Others, such as Nonini and Ong give less emphasis to initial founding violence and more to this type of diaspora's results; that is, communities, persons and groups separated by space who nonetheless think of themselves as "we," as having a shared condition, one that is continually reconstituted by travel and visits, and bound together by ties of kinship, commerce, sentiment, values etc. (Nonini and Ong, 1997: 18).

Discussions of transnationalism are usually centered on migrants' political and economic strategies that maximize their links to several nation-states, usually those of origin and of residence.(e.g., Foner, 1997; Smith, 1993) Typically, transmigrants are presented as migrants who seek to improve their economic conditions by leaving the home society, while still keeping some kind of an economic base there. Diasporic peoples are most often portrayed as the victims of exile forced upon them by violent means. Racism of the most violent sort is seen to generate diasporas, while ongoing racial discrimination in the host society is considered the stimulus for counteractive transnational strategies by its victims. (Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc, 1994; Portes and Zhou, 1992).

I prefer to take both these concepts as ideal type models that may apply in varying degrees to particular cases of migratory dispersal of peoples. Labour migration from the Cape Verde over the last century-and-a half corresponds more closely to the transnationalism model; however, as our historical review in the following section will show, the concept of diaspora is also pertinent in some ways. Both concepts refer to types of migration process. By "migration process," I refer to a set of noncultural, broadly material factors surrounding any given migratory flow, economic and political causes, the role of the state (sending or receiving) in the migration, historical timing of the movement, political and economic conditions in the receiving society, the volume and demographic composition of the migration in its different phases, and so on. Such factors, which are not in themselves cultural, may have repercussions for the longterm trajectory of the migration group in the host society. Unless otherwise indicated, the term refers to the migration process linking a particular society of origin with a particular society of residence. What I call here the "societal migration process," refers to the ensemble of migration processes that concern a given society, be it a source, host or both. (Cf. Amselle's concept of "procès migratoire"[1976: 31]).

Transnationalism, old and new

Transnationalism is generally regarded as being so dependent on modern telecommunications and transport, as Foner has noted (1997), that pre-twentieth century transnationalism would seem an oxymoron. However, several writers have argued that transnationalism well predates the present era. Foner's analysis (1997) shows how several immigrant groups in turn-of-the-century New York kept ties with the home country, remained interested in its political situation and in some cases, notably the Italians, returned there in substantial numbers. Nina Glick Schiller (cited by Foner, 355) has suggested in a recent work that perhaps transnationalism is not altogether as new as once thought; Basch, Glick Schiller and Szanton Blanc (1994) acknowledge the existence of older forms of transnationalism but insist on the "newness" of its present form. It is this issue, "oldness and newness," that we hope to clarify via an admittedly incomplete historical review of Cape Verdean labour migrations.

The Cape Verdes

Ten small islands and scattered islets (total surface area: 4003 sq. km.) make up the archipelago of Cabo Verde, situated in the Atlantic in a zone near the equator some 452.8 to 716.8 km off the coast of Senegal (Lobban, 1995: 4). Uninhabited when European navigators claimed them

for Portugal in 1455, the Cape Verdes include nine inhabited islands range in size from tiny Brava (64 sq. km.) to the largest, Santiago (991 sq. km.).

Today's population, numbering 399,670 in 1997 (Low, 1999: 39) gives evidence of the extensive mixture between Africans and Europeans that began in the earliest days of the archipelago's settlement, with the first predominating heavily. It is difficult to find cultural traces of particular African ethnic groups, though a general West African influence is evident in folk religious ritual, traditional items of furniture, and in techniques of weaving and food preparation. There is linguistic (Meintel, 1975) and physical anthropological (Lessa and Ruffie, 1957) evidence of Fula, Mandinka, Wolof and Bambara influences. White settlers were mostly of modest origins and included political undesirables and petty criminals exiled from Portugal, though several families claim nobler European antecedents. One can also find English, French, Italian and Castilian family names, as well as Jewish, surnames.[2]

The official languages of Cabo Verde are Portuguese, taught in the schools and used in formal contexts, and Kriolu (spelled "Crioulo" until recently), the mother tongue of most Cape Verdeans, and the language used in most informal contexts and sometimes in written and audiovisual media. The great majority of Cape Verdeans are Catholic, at least nominally, but several Protestant churches, including the Church of the Nazarene (introduced by an *americano*, or returned migrant from the U.S.), Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh Day Adventists, have claimed converts over the last century.

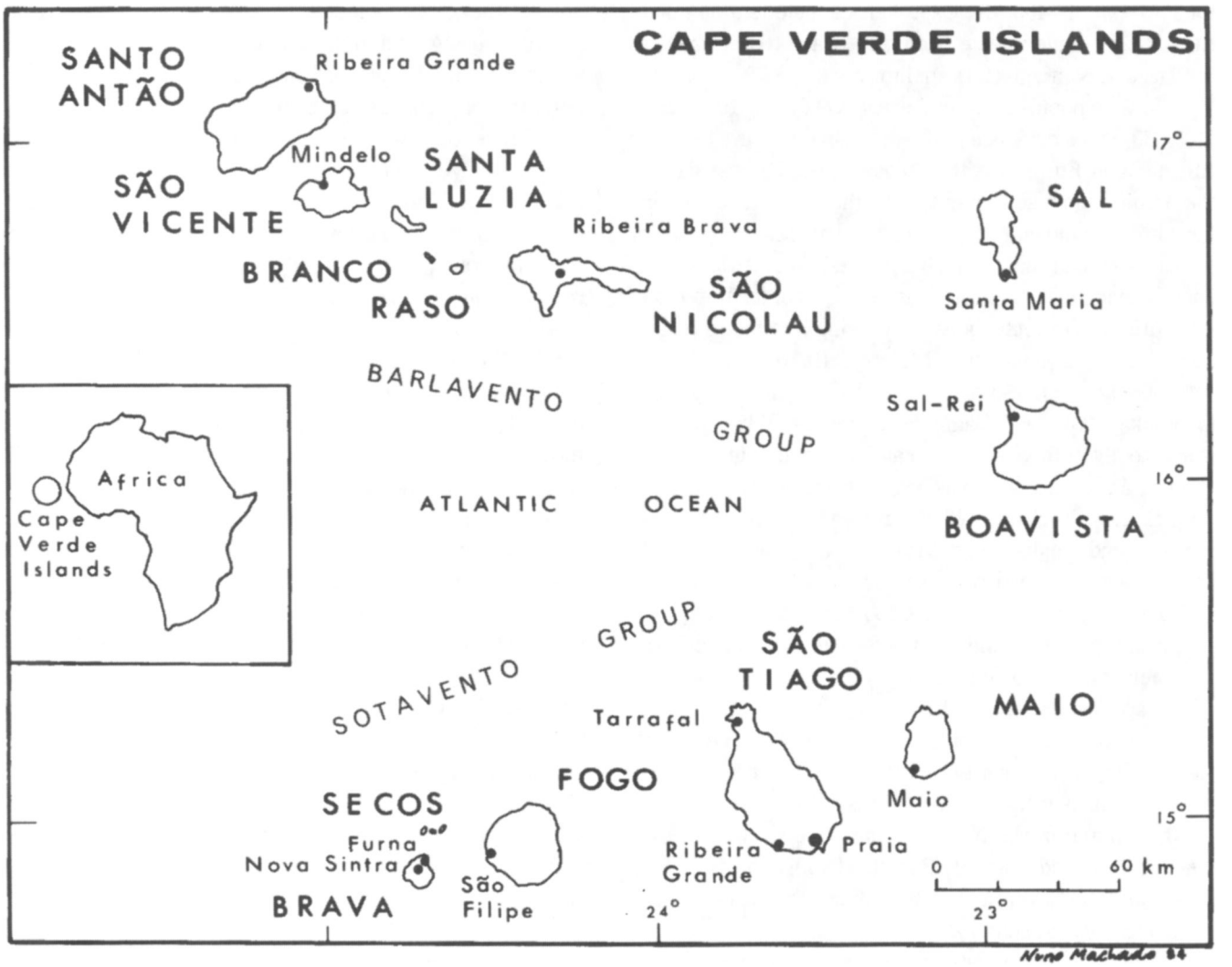
Climatically, the Cape Verdes are part of the Sahel region, with a semi-arid climate and variable, usually low, levels of precipitation from one year to another. Drought has often brought devastating famine to the archipelago; that of the 1940s that took some 40 000 lives (Carreira, 1977: 238; Meintel, 1984a: 60-63). Years of drought may be followed by torrential rains, as happened in 1984, bringing dangers of erosion, rockfalls and flooding.

In the flat islands, including Maio, Sal and Boa Vista, sandy beaches are bordered by dunes and dotted by groves of palm (including date, coconut and tamarind). Their sparse populations have depended mainly on animal husbandry (pigs, donkeys, mules, cows and, especially, goats). By contrast, the mountainous islands, São Nicolau, Santo Antão, Santiago, Brava and Fogo, by contrast, present a wide variety of microclimates produced by differences of altitude, relief and exposure to wind and humidity. A wide variety of food crops are produced when precipitation permits, including tropical fruits and sugarcane in the lowlands and maize, beans and squash in the higher altitudes. Still higher, coffee trees and wine grapes are grown in a few areas. Other crops include manioc, potatoes and the lettuce and tomatoes grown in household gardens. In São Vicente, which lacks fresh water, commerce has been the main economic activity, concentrated around the port of Mindelo.

Gross domestic product per inhabitant figures at $1065 U.S./year[3] (Low 1999: 40). Foreign aid, with Portugal and the European Community as the highest bilateral and multilateral donors, respectively, totalled some $110 million in 1997, or 26% of the GDP. Cabo Verde receives one of the highest levels of foreign aid in the world, at $320 U.S./capita (Greene, 1999: 280), due in part to the country's excellent track record in using previous donations. Judicious use of international aid has led to small scale but meaningful development on the grassroots level: housing, health care, access to water and education have all shown major improvement, while inroads have been made to reduce infant mortality and illiteracy and infectious diseases.[4] Autonomy in food production is unlikely in the foreseeable future; however, some fishing craft have become motorized, and this potential source of food and income is beginning to be developed. In 1999, Cabo Verde pegged its currency to the Portuguese escudo, which is expected to intensify its economic links to Europe and encourage foreign investment, notably in light industry and tourism.

However, unemployment remains high, at 25%, with another quarter of the population underemployed (Greene, 1999: 278). Lesourd observes that much of working population eats only one meal a day (1995: 36). Population growth is about 2.5% a year (Economist Intelligence Unit 1999: 58). Not surprisingly, emigration, underway for nearly two centuries, continues to be high at a yearly average of 3 105 individuals who left the country without returning between 1980 and 1988 (Lesourd, 1995: 275). Approximately 250 000 to 300 000 Cape Verdean citizens live outside the country at present (Lesourd, 1995: 273); some estimates place the number of Cape Verdeans (including descendants) outside the archipelago as high as 700 000 (Pélissier, 1999: 276). Virtually all observers agree that there are far more persons who consider themselves Cape Verdean living outside the archipelago than within it. Today as in the past, migrants' remittances, some $35 million in 1988 (Lobban, 1995: 143), continue to be a major source of revenue, helping counterbalance a negative balance of trade.

Besides the United States, Portugal, the Netherlands and France are popular destinations for today's migrants. Cape Verdeans can be found in over 40 countries across the world, but often in small numbers (Lesourd, 1995: 283). A few hundred Cape Verdeans have settled in Toronto, most of them skilled workers, or professionals



and semi-professionals working in the health field or other human services.

Phase 1: The roots of transnationalism (ca. 1800-ca. 1865)

Portes and Walton (1981) have argued that migration flows generally constitute the continuation of pre-existing, usually assymetrical, relations between source and receiving societies. Commercial ties between New England's port cities and the Cape Verdes were established soon after the Massachusetts Bay colony was founded in 1620[5] in the context of the triangular trade between Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and New England. Indeed, it is probable that the Cape Verdes were better known to Americans before the mid-nineteenth century than they are now, such was their importance to Yankee traders. Live animals, textiles, hides, salt and above all, African slaves attracted the Americans to the Islands; moreover, it was useful for vessels on their way to the African continent to stop in the Islands, for victualling and repairs, as well as for orientation and for information on trading conditions on the coast (Bennett and Brooks, 1965: 48).

By 1817 commerce between New England and the Cape Verdes had grown important enough to warrant the establishment of an American consulate in Praia, Santiago.[6] Most of the consuls' duties were related to the American maritime traffic in the islands. They investigated and reported cases of mutiny and often mediated disputes between seamen and captains, sometimes siding with the captains, in other cases with the ill-treated crew. When trade with the United States was brisk, consuls often found themselves obliged to see to the care and eventual repatriation of destitute or sick seamen.

These men had either abandoned ship, or (more often the case) had been abandoned by unscrupulous captains, who counted on picking up a replacement easily at places like Brava. (See report of Consul Benjamin Tripp, *Dispatches*, Vol. 4, May 12, 1868).

When the Africa Squadron under Commodore Matthew Perry (later to become renowned for opening Japan to Westerners), arrived in Cabo Verde in 1842 the Americans benefitted from the good will generated by gifts of food sent from the United States during the famine of 1830-33 that had caused some 30,000 deaths (Barcellos, 1904: 14). Fund-raising campaigns throughout New England had brought tens of thousands of dollars worth of contributions of food and money collected in churches and schools, and from the wider public. Relief vessels laden with food were sent to the Cape Verdes (Bridge, 1968: 22-3; Lima, 1844: 39), an experience that was repeated when drought struck again in the mid-1850s.

Carreira finds records of Nantucket whalers visiting the Cape Verdes as far back as the 1760s and stopping to clean their catch on shore (1977: 67). Though whales became scarce by the early nineteenth century, the ships continued to visit the Cape Verdes, carrying American products that served as ballast on the outward journey and could be sold in the Islands by Cape Verdean agents, who would sell it over the year before the vessel's next visit (Barros, 1936: 60) and picking up victuals and the occasional hand. A Portuguese observer marvels at the plethora of American goods being sold in this way—wood, furniture, clothing, dishes, foodstuffs—and hopes anxiously for the day when "these will return to being Portuguese colonies" (Lima, 1844: 100).

Beginnings of the Cape Verdean migration process

Along with Azoreans, Madeirans and continental Portuguese, Cape Verdeans are reported to have been living in New England as early as 1820 acording to an early study (Bannick, 1917: 11).[7] After the American Civil War ended, industrialization in New England drained manpower to her cities, and the whalers came to count on picking up Cape Verdeans (as well as Azoreans) on the outbound voyage so as to fill out their crews. Some of the new seamen eventually came to New England where they took up land occupations in New England, beginning the trend to longer periods of residence in the United States.

The traffic to the United States was not the only migration that marked this period. Labour migration to the coffee and cacao plantations of São Tomé and Principe, located in the Gulf of Guiné, began in 1863, at a time when the Cape Verdes were experiencing a bitter famine. The end of slavery (a process that began in 1856) had made for large numbers of labourers who were technically free but often enough in practice, bound to their former owners, now their landlords, given that they had no other means of subsistence. Governors and administrators and recruiting agents (usually shopkeeper-landowners) pressured the poor to go "south," and in some cases, tried to prevent them from migrating to the U.S. Until the 1960s, when Portugal herself had need of Cape Verdean labour, the migrants suffered insalubrious housing and diet, and rape, torture and beatings made work on the plantations a "modern slavery" as per the title of an early exposé (Nevinson, 1968, originally published in 1906). Many workers became virtual chattels since deductions from their wages to cover food, medical care and other basic needs often put them in debt to the planters. Over the fifty years of the twentieth century for which statistics are available, there were 79,392 departures, nearly half by women, from Cabo Verde to the colony of São Tomé (from Table 29, Carreira, 1977: 248). During the same period, smaller numbers of Cape Verdeans, usually from more privileged social strata, went as well to other destinations, such as Portugal, Argentina, Venezuela and Brazil. Others went to the African continent as merchants, administrators, missionaries and generally played the role of proxy colonizers for the Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau, Angola and Mozambique (Andrade, 1996: 202-4).

Migrants to the United States during this period were mainly peasants from the islands where slaveholdings were generally small and minifundia the general rule—Brava, S. Nicolau, Santo Antão. These migrants, especially those from Brava, were generally lighter in colour than those going to São Tomé, who tended to be the poorer, darker segments of society. Except for the those who shipped out as crew on the whalers, going to the United States required a certain cash outlay for passport fees, passage and initial expenses. Of course, once family chains were established, relatives already established in New England tended to help those who followed them. Going to "America" (as Cape Verdeans usually call the United States) was represented less an alternative to imminent starvation than the hope of a more comfortable existence. "We didn't lack for food," said a man from Brava who had first gone to the United States in 1906, "but we didn't have shoes."

Brava, where my 1972 field work was based, is the island most influenced by the traffic to and from America (For more detail, see Meintel, 1984a). Early in the twentieth century, Cape Verdeans in New England were com-

monly known as "Bravas," and the island's traditions and dialect of Kriolu tended to dominate among the immigrants in New England. Brava's government archives show passengers bound for the United States coming from the other islands, especially Fogo. Though the "Brava" means "wild," it is a misnomer, because the island's appearance of well-tended domestication is unique in the archipelago. Late in the afternoon, a froth of cloud usually rolls through the main settlement, S. Joao Baptista, also called Nova Sintra or simply the "Vila" (town) through which one can make out the crimson honeysuckle flowers and the deep green of the vines rambling over low stone walls. The surrounding hillsides have patches of green even when there has been no rain for years.

In the records of passenger lists for vessels departing from the Brava to the United States that I consulted in the archives of the town hall of Nova Sintra, seat of the island's administration, I was unable to find any listings of passengers before 1846. In any case, both the visits of the whalers and the departures of emigrants during the early years of the migration were often effectuated without benefit of bureaucratic formalities. The whalers often anchored offshore for just a few days, avoiding the expensive and time-consuming conventions of an official landing, such as health visits, harbour fees and so on—much to the irritation of the Portuguese authorities, according to consular reports.

By the 1860s, Brava was a habitual stop for whaling captains seeking to replace undesirable crew members, for there the captains could find men "without any difficulty" and make the exchange "without any communication with the consular agent or customs house" (*Dispatches*, Vol. 4, May 12, 1868; see also December 15, 1871 and December 15, 1875). In the same report, Consul Benjamin Tripp relates that men from Brava sometimes arranged with the captains to be left to spend a few months at home, returning to their ship "at a moment's notice" when the vessel returned. Tripp was surprised at the number of people he met in Brava who spoke some English. He reports that an estimated 4 000 men from Brava, or about a third of the island's total population, had gone to the United States, or at least shipped out on American vessels. Though this figure may be exaggerated, Tripp's report leaves no doubt that by now the migration had affected a considerable number of Brava households. "When on a short visit there recently, I found that nearly all the men and some of the women speak our language. The people of Brava are constantly going to and coming from the United States" (*Dispatches*, May 12, 1868).

While America represented the hope of a better life for the poor (being still considered a rather barbarous place by the more favoured), São Tomé was synonymous with exile. In economic terms, going to São Tomé usually represented the last resort of the destitute; the volume of this migration varied from year to year, depending on climatic conditions in Cabo Verde. The migration to the United States, by contrast, tended to vary with opportunity, its volume affected more by American immigration policy than anything else. In times of economic scarcity, in fact, peasants were harder put to obtain the cash needed to leave. By the 1860s, the migration to America had taken on a certain regularity and was growing in volume. An 1874 government report estimates that at least 100 men left each year on American vessels, but other sources of the day lead Carreira to estimate an annual average of 350 or more (Carreira, 1977: 69-70).

A swelling tide (1865-1880)

In modern times, the departure of migrants from Brava to the United States is a festive occasion, since they are likely to have as many relatives waiting for them in the U.S. as they leave behind. In 1972, I observed many such departures at the island's port village of Furna; often, the hugs and tears of farewell at the dock were accompanied by the music of mornas, a traditional Cape verdean musical form that has gained wider audience through the singer Cesaria—always including Eugénio Tavares[8]—Hora di Bai ("Time of Departure," a song of farewell)—played to the music of small violins, called *ribecas*, and mandolins. In the early years of the migration, though, departure was no occasion for celebration. Years often passed before news was received of the absent one, and if they returned they might have little to show for all the years at sea; some returned carrying syphilis and other venereal diseases. Wives of the seamen often dressed in black, partly out of real mourning, and partly in the belief that their devotion would ward off dangers to their husbands. In 1990, I was startled at the tiny airport of Mosteiros, Fogo, to hear two women, who looked about 20 years old, keening the *guisa*[9] as they waited for the plane that would bear one of them away. However, I was told that at the height of the migration, the beach below Fogo's town of São Felipe, echoed continuously with the eerie tones of the *guisa*.

Much of the migration continued to be clandestine; only in 1884 were ships obliged to put into Furna, Brava's main port, situtated below the Vila, before going to any of the island's more secluded ports (*Dispatches*, November 1, 1884). Many of the migrants were still evading conscription; others had no money to pay pass-

port fees. And, I was told by elderly informants in 1972, there was pressure put on the poor to go to São Tomé rather than to America (confirmed in the consular dispatches of the above-mentioned Benjamin Tripp). From 1864 on, Brava's municipal archives show recorded departures of paying passengers from Brava, including some women and children, leaving openly and in possession of the proper papers. What is more, they were giving their destinations as specific cities or regions, such as New Bedford, Providence and even California, where work on the railroads attracted some of the migrants. The United States had clearly become a destination, not merely a port of call, and at least a few families were establishing themselves there. For the majority, the migration was probably temporary in intent, if not always in practice, evidenced by the fact that young men still predominated among the migrants, and many were in fact returning for long or short periods. The Cape Verdeans who stayed in New England found work not only in the mills, but also in many other occupations, rural and urban, that had been left wanting for labour by the industrial boom.

The presence of women and children on the passenger lists indicates that whole families were probably settling in the United States soon after the end of the Civil War. Oral tradition holds that some of the women who left unaccompanied in the 1860s and 1870s did so in disgrace, or even as punishment for adultery. Mothers of illegitimate children and women caught in adultery had virtually no chance to make a new life in Brava, where even widow remarriage was frowned upon. Male or female, the migrants were usually of humble social standing, impoverished peasants and, probably, manumitted slaves. It is said that certain slaveowners rewarded some of their chattels by freeing them and paying their passage across the Atlantic. The United States was not yet the wealthy world power she would become; to Whites of the vila, they were a poor, "savage" country, fit for only the dregs of Cape Verdean society. Most migrants bound for America (usually elided to 'merca in Kriolu) were young men who did not aspire to end their days in an alien land but rather hoped to return in a few years in improved circumstances.

Already in the 1860s a pattern of migration was established that was still in evidence at the end of the colonial period over a century later. Males leaving for the first time in their teens or early twenties would return after a few years of work at sea or in the United States with sufficient funds to establish a household. A brief courtship, then marriage, would be followed by the migrant's return to the United States. Until he returned permanently, he might only see his wife and children once every few years.

Written communication between separated family members was cumbersome; few Cape Verdean peasants read or wrote Portuguese, the language in which letters were written, so that each party had to write through an intermediary in a language neither of them was very familiar with. In any case, it took about four months to send a letter and receive a reply, something that had not changed much at the time of my stay in 1972. Oral messages of greeting, called mantenhas (the word derives from the Portuguese verb, *manter*, meaning "maintain") sent via travelling friends and relatives were a more common mode of communication. Transmitted by a human link in Kriolu, the mother tongue and the language of intimacy, rather than in stylized, unfamiliar Portuguese, the mantenha was a more immediate, intimate and communal form of contact. Thus messages, news and gossip travelled as fast as sailing navigation would allow.

Brava's primacy in the migration was established in this period; by the late 1860s there is record of individuals from S. Nicolau and Santo Antão going to the U.S. from Brava, some of them as passengers, others as crew. Brava's port records of 1868 (I was unable to find records earlier than that date, although it is possible that such exist) show no fewer than 29 vessels arriving in her ports that year, virtually all American, and this includes only those who entered legally and paid the appropriate fees. Besides the whaling schooners and barks there were also several packets, light two-masted schooners whose primary function was transporting cargo, mail and passengers. As whaling declined, some of the old vessels were converted to packets and bought by Cape Verdeans.

Phase 2: Intensive transnationalism (1880-1920)

By the 1880's, the packets had become the primary means of transport of migrants to the United States[10] They usually made two round trips a year, in spring and fall, taking in once case as little as twelve days to make the crossing, (Cohn and Platzer, 1978: 92), but usually about a month and sometimes longer. They arrived in the Cape Verdes in the spring bearing a vast array of trade goods, including foodstuffs, clothing, and every manner of household necessity—pots and pans, rocking chairs, oil lamps and on and on, much of it sent by the emigrants to their families. On the return voyage, they carried as many passengers as they could hold. Schooners built for 50 to 60 persons would carry some hundred legal passengers and 40 crew, all these further crowded by clandestine passengers and stowaways bound for Cape Cod's

cranberry bogs, as well as the live animals that would be slaughtered and consumed during the voyage (Tyack, 1952: 26).

The importance of the packets went far beyond their commercial value. They represented sport as well as business, for the Cape Verdeans did not merely sail the packets, they raced them across the Atlantic,[11] adding competitive brio to the physical and commercial risks of the voyage. The comings and goings of the vessels gave temporal focus to life of Cape Verdean communities on both sides of the Atlantic. Weddings and baptisms were scheduled for after their arrival in Cabo Verde while their arrival in New Bedford and other port cities in spring was a high point in the year, a moment when immigrants and Cape Verdeans born in America welcomed newcomers fresh from the Islands in a festive atmosphere. Friends and relatives of passengers gathered at the dock, passing food and gifts to loved ones still on board, while others climbed on board to celebrate with music and dancing even before the formalities of arrival had been completed (Halter, 1995: 71-73). The ships' departure in the fall was again the occasion for bringing diverse sectors of the community into contact.

From the 1880s on, the movement to the United States grew in volume, diversity and duration. Exact figures are hard to come by, since there were still many clandestine departures from Cabo Verde, and despite permissive American immigration policies, also a number of unrecorded entries into the United States. Halter, in a study of Cape Verdean immigration to New Bedford, Massachusetts, discusses the question in detail; her calculations show legal immigration by Cape Verdeans growing enormously after 1891, and especially after the turn of the century until 1920.[12] Portuguese consular reports of 1923 estimated some 7 000 Cape Verdeans in New Bedford and 500 in Fall River Massachusetts as well as 2 626 in Connecticut towns and cities (Carvalho, 1931: 36-37; Warner, 1940).

This was a time of more intensive contact between the United States and the Cape Verdes than at any other time until Independence. A great many packets[13] were making two round trips a year, allowing much going back and forth by the same individuals. As the men took up land occupations in the United States and spent longer periods there, wives and children became more and more numerous on the passenger's lists, along with some lone women. Yet, Halter notes in her study of ships' mainfests of vessels arriving at New Bedford, that while numbers were rising, the proportion of women declined, from 28.6% before the turn of the century (1860-99), to 15.4% after (1900-20), Likewise, the proportion of children under 14 declined from to 4.5% during the same periods, and the proportion of married men was higher among entrants coming before 1900 (Halter, 1995: 46). One out of three Cape Verdeans, most of them males in their twenties, who arrived in New Bedford, Massachusetts between 1900 and 1920 had been in the United States before (Halter, 1995: 77). A study of bog workers in Massachusetts in published in 1911 as part of the Dillingham Report, reports some 1 500 Cape Verdeans arriving in New England and some 500 returning to the Islands each year (cited in Tyack, 1952: 26).

In short, one gets the impression of a migration whose volume increased greatly in the years between 1900 and 1920, and whose transnational dimension had also become more pronounced. Besides the couples and families of immigrants settling on the eastern seaboard, there were apparently a number, mostly young men, who were living between two shores. This was possible partly because of liberal American immigration policies, which allowed aliens to come and go much more freely than after 1921, and also because of the packets; i.e., cargo and passenger ships, travelling back and forth in increasing numbers.

At this point, there was a sizeable seasonal migration of Cape Verdeans, some already established in nearby towns, some coming from the Islands, to the cranberry bogs that lined Cape Cod near towns such as Plymouth, Barstable and Nantucket. The bogs employed about 3 000 workers year round and double that number during the six week harvest season that began in August.

These "regular seasonals" often included women and children, between a sixth and a third of the workers, according to the Dillingham report (Halter, 1995: 46). Some returned to the same bogs year after year, joining friends and relatives. Not only did this make the work more pleasant, but it also fostered solidarity among the workers.[14] According to oral accounts I collected in 1972 in Brava, many peasants went year after year, because the summer work in the bogs coincided closely with the inactive summer months of the Cape Verdean agricultural cycle. (See also Halter, 1995: 75). Wages ranged from $200 to $500 per season, depending on the worker's level of skill; green workers, fresh from the Islands, netted about $100 for the season, after deductions for passage, food and clothing (Bannick, 1917: 65; see also Tyack, 1952: 24).

Some of the bogworkers, instead of leaving at the end of the season, stayed in the towns along the Cape, making a living from whatever work they could find, picking strawberries, gathering shellfish, selling flowers, chopping wood and doing other odd jobs, as well as rais-

ing vegetables and poultry (Almeida, 1979: 51, 56). Others found more stable employment in railroad construction and maintenance. A few of the bogworkers accumulated enough capital to open a shop, and many more to become farmers, returning second-rate farmland to productivity. Some of these farms would be worked communally for several more generations by extended families. Thus was formed the nucleus of the Cape Verdean American community on Cape Cod, one now depleted by the migration of its youth to Boston and other large cities in the region. However, the summer saints' feasts traditional to Cabo Verde still draw hundreds back to towns like Carver (Meintel, 2001).

Otherwise, urban and maritime-related employment drew Cape Verdeans to the port cities: work in the textile factories, rope making, stevedore work, as well as, for the men, work on local and international vessels and for the women, work as domestics. Many of the new immigrants became stevedores or worked in shipbuilding and related trades, e.g., as coopers and riggers, and in rope manufacture. Some of the Cape Verdeans on the Cape became oystermen. The steamers of the Fall River Line employed many Cape Verdeans, usually in the jobs available to the "coloured," such as messboy, cook or steward. Once Cape Verdeans moved into such niches they tended to monopolize them, bringing in friends and relatives; for example, when a messboy was promoted to cook, he would pass his old job on to someone from his island of origin. Many of the male migrants of this period whom I interviewed in their retirement in Brava[15] had worked in several or all of these areas—agriculture, seafaring, manufacture.

At this point the migrants were still mostly peasants, many of whom continued the pattern established earlier whereby husbands absented themselves for long periods and wives remained in Cabo Verde. Young men leaving for the first time in their teens or early twenties would accumulate sufficient funds to establish a household after a few years of work at sea or in the United States. A brief courtship, then marriage, would be followed by the migrant's return to the United States. Until he returned to Cabo Verde permanently, he might only see his wife and children once every few years. Many men who spent 20 or 30 years abroad, returning only to live with their wives in old age. (Often, these men had a second family in the United States.) In his absence, the migrant's remittances were judiciously stewarded by his wife who remained in charge of the couple's land and animals. Bit by bit, land would be purchased and a house "in the American style" constructed, eventually to be filled with many American furnishings. "The boys' ambition was to go to America; for the girls it was to set up an American house (*casa americana*) in Brava, with American furniture," recounted a Brava woman born in the 1890s. Emigration was coming to be seen as a normal "life crisis," like marriage, and indeed, emigration and marriage were becoming intertwined projects for young people in areas of high emigration.

The poet and essayist Tavares (see note 8) saw Cabo Verde's ties with America as a chance to hasten the coming of the more democratic society promised by the Republic, through the agency of returned migrants. He could hardly have forseen the transformation of the Portuguese Republic into a dictatorship under Antònio Salazar. Tavares' belief that "the Cape Verdean who emigrates never puts down roots in the lands where he goes to work," (1913) was probably an accurate reading of the intentions of the Cape Verdeans he met in the United States. However, due to political changes in both the United States and Cabo Verde, migrants to America would soon be doing just that, returning, if they did, only in old age.

Phase 3: Submerged transnationalism (1920-75)

The severe restrictions placed on immigration to the United States by the Immigration Acts of 1921 and 1924 were to limit greatly the possiblities of circulation of people, goods and information between Cabe Verdeans in the U.S. and those in Cabo Verde. With the "Quota Law" of 1921 yearly ceilings on immigration were fixed at 3% of that nationality's foreign born residents in the United States in 1910. Southern Europeans (including Cape Verdeans, who came as Portuguese citizens) were thus severely limited, and overall quota immigration would total about 350 000 (Harper, 1975: 11). Preferential status under the quotas was accorded to the immediate families (minor offspring, siblings, spouses and fiancées) of American citizens. The Immigration Act of 1924 required immigrants to obtain visas abroad, reduced quotas further and reduced each source to a yearly immigration limit of 2% of that nationality resident in the United States in 1890. Wives and children of American citizens were removed from quota restrictions.

Under the authoritarian Salazar regime established in Portugal and her colonies in 1920, controls on emigration from Cabo Verde became far more stringent. A 1928 agreement between the U.S. and Portugal ensured that insular (Azorean and Madeiran) and continental Portuguese would be allowed greater shares of the nation's quota than Cabo Verde. Cape Verdeans interpreted this

as yet another means to pressure them to go to the plantations of São Tomé. Would-be emigrants trying to join relatives in the United States could be held back at the last minute by the security police in Cabo Verde on the basis of anonymous denunciations. They were obliged to pass through in Lisbon, a time-consuming and expensive proposition, where they might be detained beyond the limit of their visas.

The new context of increased state controls at both ends of the migration process accelerated the demise of the packet trade, leaving the immigrant community in the U.S. largely cut off from its roots. After the early 1920s, Brava returned to her former isolation, reminiscent of the "deglobalization" discussed by Hannerz (1996), her once-full harbours now empty. At the time of my field work there in 1972, Brava could go as long as six weeks with no outside contact whatsoever. There were still very few telephones in the archipelago, and faxes had not yet come into use. Mail took at least three weeks to cross the Atlantic. It is clear that transnational life strategies were unavailable to all but a very few wealthy individuals; rather, the policies of both the Portuguese colonial state and the American state had obliged migrants to fix their lives on one or the other of the Atlantic. A trickle of migration continued, mainly via marriage and family reunification policies.[16]

During the period that I am calling one of "submerged transnationalism," the once-intensive contact between Cape Verdeans on both sides of the Atlantic had greatly diminished. By then visits home had become a frustrating and very expensive odyssey for the emigrants. At great expense, they were obliged to pass through Lisbon, then the island of Sal (where they were likely to be charged high rates of duty for goods being brought for needy relatives), and on to Praia or São Vicente, where they might have difficulty finding a boat going to Brava. The trajectory was often an impossible one for those with only two or three weeks' leave from their jobs in the United States.

Still, it should be borne in mind that the Cape Verdean economy depended on immigrant remittances as much as ever and that many migrants sent substantial proportions of their earnings to Cabo Verde during all their working lives and envisioned spending their retirement in the Islands. Many couples functioned as a conjugal and economic unit, despite the husband's long absences. In such cases, the wife carefully stewarded her migrant husband's resources, buying land and supervising its cultivation, as well as overseeing household improvements. Even if he were known to have a second family in the U.S., as long as he sent remittances (which would cease immediately should the wife be known to be unfaithful), he remained head of the household. In fact, it was and remains extremely common for Cape Verdean men to have children by women other than their wives, and to recognize paternity and provide what material support they could for them. On the other hand, when "Yolanda," a woman in her twenties living in Brava whose common-law[17] husband had emigrated some months before, had a liason with a married government employee, it quickly became known and resulted in the dissolution of her marital union and cessation of all financial support.

As I have discussed elsewhere (Meintel, 1984b) Cabo Verde presents two types of matrifocality, one being the classical type whereby the core of the household is composed of adult females, with authority going by seniority of age and generation. Men's residence is likely to be temporary and is conditional on their relationship with a woman in the household. Many such households can be seen in Cabo Verde, especially in the poorer classes. However, migration has produced households that look quite similar, with adult women, their mothers, perhaps a sister and her children sharing a dwelling. Nonetheless, the authority structure is patriarchal, with the absent senior male sending remittances and having the final say in all major—and some minor—decisions. School outings, for example, had to be planned long in advance so that girls whose fathers were in the U.S. could be asked for permission to go.

Return migration now involved elderly men coming home with an American social security pension, after many years as of work seamen or labourers. Like the returned migrants to southern Italy described by Joseph Lopreato (1967), the elderly *americanos* in Brava and Fogo had little schooling, and were not fluent in Portuguese. Though better off than most peasants, they had little, if any, political influence, and were generally snubbed by the urban elites. The stereotype of the *americano* (especially of Brava) was that of an illiterate rustic[18] who, with his new means, sought to mimic the seigneurial lifestyle of a bygone day. Their large houses, American suits, horses, and in some cases, much-younger wives all were taken as efforts to capture an inaccessible social status that was no longer of the modern world (Meintel, 1984a).

Business marriages

The main means of immigration to the United States during this period, was via marriage to an American citizen that would eventually permit a family chain to migrate. Marriages resulting in immigration to the U.S. are of two types, the so-called "serious marriage" (*casamento sério*) and the "business marriage" (*casamento di negocio*). The

second, less common type, refers to marriages contracted for the sole purpose of giving the Cape Verdean partner the right to immigrate to the United States. In the early 1970s a fee of $1000 plus expenses was the standard price paid to the American partner, who was not always of Cape Verdean ancestry.

Most of the time the distinction between "business marriage" and "serious marriage" is quite ambiguous. In the typical case, friends or relatives already in the United States arrange for a girl[19] to marry an emigrant they trust who has U.S. citizenship, virtually always someone from the same island. This is seen as risky for the fiancée, since her partner may pressure her to make the marriage more than nominal against her will. Thus it is preferable to arrange such marriages between relatives, usually cousins. Like the first-cousin marriages that were always very common among the landowning elite, such practical unions are a way of keeping scarce resources, in this case, access to the United States, in the family. "Better to marry someone in the family than some stranger," was the comment of one family member of the marriage (eventually stabilized as a "serious" marriage) between a girl from one of Fogo's old landed families, now fallen on hard times, and her much older cousin Raimundo, born in the same island and living in Massachusetts. Disparities of age, colour or religion that would normally be viewed as a barrier to marriage do not necessarily indicate that a marriage is a "business" union, since American citizenship is considered a resource that outweighs other handicaps. Nominal marriages, celebrated by a civil ceremony, sometimes become trial marriages and if successful, are often marked by a religious wedding later on.

Of the dozen-or-so marriages I witnessed in Brava in 1972, not one included the actual bridegroom; rather all were marriages by proxy to emigrants in the United States or the Netherlands. Three were religious marriages, which by Cape Verdean law at the time, could not be ended by divorce. Most seemed to fall in the ambiguous middle ground between unions contracted for the purpose of emigration and "serious marriages." Most often, the emigrant has been shown a picture of the girl by a friend or relative abroad and decides to find out about her, her personality, character, reputation and family background. Then he may choose to make his interest known, either via letter or through an intermediary known to both parties. After that, the girl and her family make their own inquiries about the prospective fiancé. If all are satisfied, a marriage may be contracted. When I asked several girls if they were not nervous about marrying men they had never met, one said, "Oh no, we Cape Verdean girls are easy to get along with." Another added, "That's right. If you like the country, you have to like the husband."

Marriage continues to be a means to obtain legal residence in the United States, though it has become more common for young women to visit family members in the U.S. or work there illegally before marrying an immigrant. In these cases, the woman is likely to take a more active role in finding and choosing a partner, though once again, unions initially approached as a solution to practical difficulties, often become long-term unions.

Community and identity

The long decades of reduced contact between Cabo Verde and the American immigrant community produced a "communications gap" between the American ethnic community and Cabo Verde that allowed certain "myths of identity" to enter the immigrant community's dominant ideology. Cape Verdeans were described as fluent speakers of Portuguese, mostly literate, free of racism and as bearers of a culture whose Portuguese roots were the only ones recognized, one that set them apart from African-Americans (Meintel, 1981; 1984a). Such notions were far from universal even in 1972, but they were very prevalent (and are still current in some quarters); above all, they were constantly articulated and reinforced in public presentations of the community; that is, the group composed of those who identified and were accepted as Cape Verdean-American. The political context of the Salazar era made it all the more difficult for Cape Verdean-Americans to have a realistic idea of social and economic conditions in Cabo Verde, since virtually no uncensored literature was available, and little enough of any other kind. Visitors were usually sufficiently intimidated by the atmosphere of repression in the Islands to avoid asking any questions that might look like "making politics" (*fazé politica*).

Meanwhile, ethnic institutions, including newpapers, voluntary associations, Catholic parishes and Protestant congregations flourished; Coli and Lobban's study (1990) of Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island mentions dozens in that state alone, and many more existed in other parts of New England, some large and publicly visible, others small and intimate, some short-lived, others lasting for generations. Moreoever, Cape Verdean-Americans also made their presence felt in associations that were not ethnic by definition, including neighbourhood groupings in Providence and New Bedford as well as labour unions. The dynamism of the group's institutional life cannot be attributed to cultural heritage, since associations in Cabo Verde were nearly all controlled by the State or by the Church. Rather it owes much to the fact that the immigrants were typically

excluded from White, including White Portuguese, institutions, including Catholic parishes, and yet did not want to be confused with American Blacks. This last was not only a factor of the American racial system but also that of the Cape Verdes, as I have explained elsewhere (Meintel, 1984a). Moreover, cultural elements (musical forms, for example) thought of as African were generally excluded from the public life of the community.

Several earlier observers have noted the socially isolated, hermetic quality of life in the ethnic community (e.g., Carvalho, 1931: 34; Warner, 1940: 127) that was still remarkable in the early 1970s. A woman born in Providence ca. 1950 recalls that she, like many other Cape Verdean children, was allowed to play only with her cousins. While the community offered a refuge from the denigrating definitions of self that its members might encounter as Americans of colour, mostly working class, it excluded its own on the basis of colour or marriage to Afro-Americans. Others, often the better educated and more politically aware, deliberately chose to distance themselves from the group, even to the point of denying or underplaying their ethnic origins. By the early 1970s, generational conflict over young people's expressions of sympathy with the Black Power movement, such as natural hair styles, was acute and marked by violence in a few cases. For many parents, young people's identification with American Blacks was tantamount to—in the words they often used—"denying their culture," and by extension, denying their family. The political transformation of Cabo Verde from colony to independent nation, and a new era of transnational contacts 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.

Phase 4: Contemporary Transnationalism

Cabo Verde's independence from Portugal in 1975 ushered in a period of great political and economic change, first under the socialist government of the PAICV (Partido Africano da Independência de Cabo Verde), in power 1975-91 and then the more centrist Movimento para Democracia (1991-). International aid, rejected by Portugal in the past, was now welcomed. While the United States remains the largest donor, the European Community has also contributed important projects, as have Cuba and Eastern European countries. In the process, communication and transportation networks have seen great improvements: landing strips have been built on all the islands, though Brava's is not in use at present; the airports of Sal and Praia have been enlarged and improved; modernized maritime transport has also helped to open once-isolated localities to contact with the rest of the archipelago, as well as with the world beyond.

Since Independence, migration has increased; the average number leaving each year (whether as tourists or with work permits abroad) now averages 3 105 (Lesourd, 1995: 275) The permissive attitude of the Cape Verdean government toward departures, rigidly controlled in the past, as well as the much increased accessibility of air travel, including direct flights to various European destinations as well as to Lisbon and the United States have all encouraged the growth of migration, both legal and illegal. Cabo Verde now hosts eight embassies and numerous consulates, making the process of obtaining visas much easier than it was in the past.

Migration has diversified in terms of gender, class, destination and points of origin. As one official in Praia put it to me, "Emigration increases wherever an airstrip is built." Areas formerly isolated from the rest of the archipelago are now in direct contact with the world outside, making migration more feasible and more inviting. Increasingly, the migrants are of both sexes (Lesourd, 1995: 290) and include not only the impoverished and unschooled but also many who have secondary schooling or more. Internal migration has accelerated the urban growth, especially in Praia, the capital; a move to Praia or Mindelo is often a prelude to emigration.

The number of destinations attracting Cape Verdeans has multiplied in recent years. The United States, Portugal, and the Netherlands continue to predominate, as they have since the 1960s, but smaller numbers of migrants are going to many places where Cape Verdeans have previously been absent or few in number including all of Western Europe, especially France and Scandinavia. A new (post-1975) pattern of circular migration between Cabo Verde and Lisbon, on the one hand, and Brazil on the other, has given rise to thriving informal markets, especially in Santiago.

Furthermore, the mobility of emigrants is not necessarily limited to a single move abroad. Whereas in the past, the young men coming to the United States, often moved from one small concentration of Cape Verdeans to another within the United States, today's migrants, male and female, often move from one country to another before establishing stable residence in one of them. Migrants in France (some 30 000-40 000, mostly manual labourers and domestics[20]), for example, are highly mobile at every level: throughout the wider metropolitan area, because of poverty and housing difficulties; within France, where they move between Nice, Amiens and other cities; and across Western Europe, where they fol-

low employment possibilities wherever they arise. Such mobility is possible not only because of the migrants' networks of kinship and friendship but also because of the ease of circulation across national borders within the European Union. Since Independence, many Cape Verdeans in Portugal, where they number some 50,000 (Lesourd, 1995: 281) have claimed Portuguese citizenship, further facilitating mobility within the European Community.

Overall, recent migrants show even greater family dispersal than in the past. Lesourd's study finds couples who are both emigrants but not residing in the same country (1995: 296). In many nuclear families I have contacted in Brava and Fogo, siblings are dispersed across several nation-states outside Cabo Verde. This is especially evident among the better-educated (i.e., those with secondary schooling or more). Like other African countries, Cabo Verde does not have enough employment commensurate with the increasingly high educational levels of many of her youth. Postsecondary education and entry into the labour market of such young people often occasion a move to join family members abroad. "Lydia" (pseudonym), a young woman about 20 years old, whom I met in Toronto at a Cape Verdean Independence Day celebration in 1998, is a case in point. Of Cape Verdean parentage, raised in Dakar, she was visiting relatives in Toronto and hoped to stay in Canada to work and pursue university studies. Otherwise, she planned to join other members of her extended family in France or Portugal. By the same token, young adults in Cabo Verde with secondary education or higher who would have been unlikely to emigrate in the past now see migration as a possible solution to life problems, such as dissatisfaction in their jobs, and for women, their marriages. (Divorce is becoming more common in Cabo Verde but is still a stigma for women.)

Legal migration to the United States has grown somewhat because of greater access to visas than in colonial times (the American Consul in Praia estimated it at about 1 200 in the early 1990s), and is further augmented by those among the 3 000 Cape Verdean with tourist visas who remain in the U.S (an estimated 50%, according to a consular source in Praia in 1990). Marriage continues to allow many to become legal American residents, and as in the past, such marriages usually fall somewhere in between purely strategic arrangements and genuine unions. Since Independence, the migration to the United States has become more diversified in terms of class and place of origin. Not only peasants from families with members already in the United States but also the well-educated as well as the very poor from islands that had historically sent relatively few migrants are all represented in the illegal as well as the legal migration to the United States. Many of the poorer immigrants arriving have no supportive kinship ties in the American ethnic community, and in the worst cases, young men have ended up trafficking in drugs as a means of subsistence. Undocumented migrants who cannot risk a visit home can be seen at Boston's Logan airport watching their more fortunate compatriots arriving from and leaving for Cabo Verde, just for the sense of contact with home.

Besides making it easier to leave Cabo Verde, improved access to air travel has generated visits by Cape Verdean Americans who might never have seen the place otherwise. In 1990, I had the occasion to share a number of charter flights between Boston and Cabo Verde where the other passengers were nearly all Cape Verdean-Americans, of the second, third, and even fourth generations, most of whom who had never seen Cabo Verde. Indeed the process of reconciling the reality they discovered with the myth of a beloved homeland, usually within a visit of several weeks, would be worth a study in itself. If nothing else, the steady traffic of Cape Verdean-Americans to Cabo Verde since 1975 attests to the longevity of transnational identities over the decades of restricted contact.

In the past, emigrants' remittances went mainly to their families, with collective efforts occurring mainly in times of famine; any other collective efforts were rebuffed by the colonial regime. After 1975 emigrants in the Netherlands began to organize to make collective donations that would go to building schools, waterworks and so on. This pattern is also evident among Cape Verdean-Americans, whose summer festivities in New England (both religious and secular) usually involve drives for donations to Cape Verdean causes (providing educational materials, for example).

Remittances continue to form the mainstay of household income for many families in the Cape Verde Islands; Lesourd's study of 484 emigrants and their households shows that 86% of the emigrants sent contributions home and that often these were transferred by hand, such that they do not figure in official statistics of private transfers. At the same time, emigrants are contributing to the Cape Verdean economy in new ways. Collective contributions (as opposed to remittances sent to relatives) are now encouraged and given recognition on public occasions (for example, the running water provided to a small hamlet in Fogo in 1990 by emigrants in the Netherlands, a gift marked by a visit from the then-Prime Minister, Pedro Pires). Tourism organized for and by migrants has grown; now, there are agencies in migrant communities abroad as well as in Cabo Verde.

Tax incentives encourage local investment by emigrants to help development of fishing and light industry. Promex, a body under partial government control and funded by USAID, has promoted tourism and investment across the world and figures on Cape Verdean Websites since 1991.

The political aspects of today's migration are qualtitatively different from those of past migrations. First of all, there have been noticeable efforts on the part of Cape Verdean government to mobilize and keep contact with emigrants; for example, by the establishment of IAPE, o Instituto do Apoio ao Emigrante (Institute for Support to Emigrants), a government agency that offers helpful information to emigants, and has its own Website publishes a journal, *Emigraison*. Like other small "sending" countries, Cabo Verde has tried to assure the welfare of its citizens abroad and maintain ties with them via diplomatic accords with receiving countries such as Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, France and others. The two principal newspapers carry far more news about emigrants and migration than before. During the years when the socialist Partido da Independência de Cabo Verde (PAICV) governed (1975-91), the traditional saints" feasts that bring emigrants to visit in large numbers in the summer became the occasion for meetings with the Prime Minister, this in an effort to rally the migrants to the new nation and to encourage their continued economic support.

This was an uphill struggle in the case of the *americanos* (both migrants and their descendants) whom I met on their visits to Cabo Verde in 1990. By virtue of living in the American political context, they were deeply afraid of a government that sounded "communist" and that affirmed and valued Cabo Verde's African heritage. To complicate matters, almost none of them could communicate in Portuguese, the language used on formal occasions even after Independence,[21] helping to perpetuate the old stereotypes of *americanos* (including their descendants) as illiterate. Indeed, ambivalence in relations between the *americanos* and the Cape Verdean government was very evident in 1990. The *americanos* not being able to function in Portuguese was often equated with more general ignorance; unpleasant experiences at the hands of customs agents reinforced the visitors' suspicions of the socialist government.

The newly intensified contact with Cabo Verde has stimulated interesting changes in the political and ideological colouration of Cape Verdean American community institutions and public life. Independence itself brought about a change in leadership in existing organizations, favouring a younger generation that was not compromised by overly close contacts with the Portuguese colonial government, and generated the birth of many new ones. Printed media in the community, including newspapers and magazines saw similar changes, the pro-Portugal tone giving way to a much more ideologically diversified and often more sophisticated ethnic press.

A new transnationalism

Recent migrants have played a pivotal role in the community's changes. These migrants can be legitimately called transmigrants: educated beyond the secondary level, multilingual (Kriolu, Portuguese, English and often French or German), well-connected to the ruling elite in Cabo Verde. Often they have lived outside of Cabo Verde in connection with work or studies. The "new transmigrants" as I am calling them, media-wise and at ease in public speaking, have been far more active and visible in Cape Verdean-American public life than previous generations of new migrants. In this they resemble university-educated Cape Verdean Americans of the third and fourth generations. But besides their high levels of education, some of the new migrants have a further advantage; namely privileged connections with the Cape Verdean political elite.

In 1997, I was astonished to find some 700 supporters amassed for a benefit evening of Cape Verdean music and dancing where Pedro Pires, the former Prime Minister of Cabo Verde, was guest of honour; only 10 years before, such a show of support for a socialist party would have been unthinkable in the Cape Verdean-American milieu. After the defeat of the PAICV in the 1991 elections, hundreds of PAICV supporters left Cabo Verde, not necessarily permanently, for the U.S. or Europe. These new migrants are transnational less in terms of their economic modalities of subsistence than in terms of their social and political capital. Well-connected by personal and family networks to the educated elite of Cape Verdeans in Europe, as well in Cabo Verde nuclear families based in several societies, this new breed of transmigrants are vocal about events in Cabo Verde as well as international events that affect Cabo Verde (e.g., the 1999 conflict in Guiné-Bissau). Moreover, a change of government in Cabo Verde could find some of these migrants returning to the Islands.

Increasingly, public representations of Cape Verdeanness show a new international orientation and sophistication that reflect the presence of the new transmigrants. Professional-quality dancing in "African" styles, fusion types of music that mix rap, for example, with Cape Verdean rhythms, references to creole societies and African cultural connections are all in evidence at prestigious social gatherings. At the same time, as I have

argued elsewhere (Meintel, 2001), the involvement of new transmigrants has given new life to traditional Cape Verdean saints' feasts (e.g., that of St. John the Baptist on June 24) and other Cape Verdean-American community celebrations, such as Cape Verdean Independence Day (July 5). Such celebrations have involved more contact with Cape Verdeans in other parts of the world in recent years (via visitors, music, fundraising campaigns of various sorts). At the same time, they give evidence of revitalization of traditional Cape Verdean dance and musical forms that had been little-known in the American community, where cultural elements seen as African did not remain in the cultural repertoire of the ethnic community. The re-valuation of African connections and cultural influences (not to mention types of physical beauty) observable at present occurs in a context that is at the same time quite international. Televised video presentations about what the producers term "the Cape Verdean diaspora" present not only local happenings, but events in Cape Verdean communities in Europe as well as in Cabo Verde. Similarly, the journal *Cimboa*, where articles by Cape Verdean researchers, usually well-qualified, cover themes from literature, the humanities and the social sciences, published in English, Portuguese and sometimes Kriolu. Increasingly, Portuguese as well as Kriolu is used on public occasions, along with English, reflecting the educational level of many of the participants.

The Internet has contributed to further intensify contacts among Cape Verdeans, not only between the United States and Cabo Verde, but also between Cape Verdeans in different parts of the world, including Latin America, Australia and Western Europe, judging by a Website based at Dartmouth College established in 1995. In fact, so far, there are relatively few individuals communicating from Cabo Verde, no doubt because of the limited access to the Internet there, though news from a Cape Verdean radio station is available at certain hours for those with audio facilities.

Indeed, the present era of transnationalism is marked by what might be called a "diasporic" dynamic; that is by increasingly intense contact and exchange between dispersed Cape Verdean individuals and communities that are not mediated through the homeland. A Cape Verdean soccer team from Toronto plays another one from Boston; musical groups based in the Netherlands visit Canada and the U.S.; members of families that are no longer based in Cabo Verde visit and contact each other between, for example, suburban Boston, Paris and Rotterdam. Also interesting to note in this regards are the messages posted on websites from individuals in various parts of the world whose Cape Verdean origins date back several generations and who seek to learn about their "cultural roots."

Transnationalism new and old

The foregoing historical overview makes it that clear that Cape Verdean transnationalism well predates the present era. Moreover, Cape Verdeans were far from unique in this regard; Iorizzo describes a pattern of seasonal migration between Italy and Canada before World War I (Iorizzo, 1980: 54).

Chinese transnationalism as well has been found to have roots in 18th and 19th-century practices (Trocki, 1997) that became the object of policing and restrictions by colonial States in the early 20th century, though transgressions continued to occur (Ong and Nonini, 1997).

Looking back to earlier phases of transnationalism helps us better discern what is truly new about today's transnationalism, and there is much that is. To recapitulate, today's Cape Verdean transnationalism is unprecedented in (1) the diversification of the migration as regards the gender, class and locality of origin of the migrants, as well as their destinations; (2) the intensification of contact across localities, including more and more "diasporic" contacts; and (3) the new political roles of the migrants both in relation to the Cape Verdean state and in the Cape Verdean-American ethnic community.

The first phase of Cape Verdean transnationalism happened at a time when the islands were isolated from each other. Thus the impact of Brava's close contact with the United States was localized, first to the upland villages close to the hidden harbors frequented by the Yankee whalers, later extended to the rest of the island and to nearby Fogo but much less apparent elsewhere. Improved transportation and communication within the archipelago following Independence has generalized the migratory process across the society and well beyond traditional source areas. Furthermore, migration now involves the whole range of social classes, including the well-educated as well as the very poor, women as well as men. While the long history of migration has deeply affected the class structure of Brava, today's transnationalism is framed in a context characterized by the general opening of geographical and social boundaries, where migration becomes both attractive and possible—or at least imaginable—to a much wider sector of Cape Verdean society than before (cf. Liu's study of similar processes in a Chinese context, 1997).

While most discussions of transnationalism have focussed on contacts between migrants and home (with a few notable exceptions such as Nonini and Ong, 1997;

Tarrius, 1992); such ties represent only one aspect of today's Cape Verdean transnationalism. In my first contacts with Cape Verdean-Americans in 1971 it was already clear that the "Cape Verdean community" of which so many of my informants spoke knew no national boundaries.[22]

Notes

1 The 1972 field work was funded by the National Institute for Mental Health (Washington, DC). Work among Cape Verdean-Americans and writing was funded by the Center for Urban Ethnography, University of Pennsylvania. Field work in Cabo Verde in 1990 and in the United States in 1996 was made possible by funds from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Ottawa accorded by the Université de Montréal.

2 Portuguese Jews fled to Cape Verde during the Inquisition and again during the Portuguese civil wars of the 1820's, as well as from Rabat, Morocco, in the mid-nineteenth century. Though no evidence of Jewish ritual is evident, the traces of these refugees can still be found in the Jewish cemeteries of several islands, in family names such as Cohen and Levy, as well as in place names such as Synagoga, on the island of Santo Antão.

3 All financial figures are in U.S. dollars.

4 Life expectancy is 67 years and adult literacy is approximately 72%, both well above the average for sub-Saharan Africa (Economist Intelligence Unit 1999: 58). However, the Cape Verdean Embassy's website gives a much lower figure for adult literacy: 52%. See also Lesourd (1995) and Lobban (1995, chap. 5) for discussions of recent economic development.

5 Within the first generation of their settlement, the New England colonists began to seek English manufactures via what came to be called the "triangular commerce" with the West Indies, whose midpoint was the "wine islands" (the Azores and Madeira) and/or the African coast. The very first triangular voyage, recorded in *Winthrop's Journal*, was made in 1643 by a vessel "which went to the Canaries with pipestaves . . . and brought wine, sugar and salt, and some tobacco which she had at Barbadoes, in exchange for Africoes (African slaves), which she carried from the isle of Maio" (Jamieson 1908 II: 227; Bailyn 1955: 84, parentheses added).

6 Dispatches from United States Consuls in Santiago, Cabo Verde 1818-1898 are an important source of information on Cabo Verde's relations with the United States in the nineteenth century. They are available on microfilm (1960, No. T-434) from the United States National Archives and Record Sevice, General Services Administration, Washington, DC.

7 One José da Silva, born in Brava in 1794, shipped out on a whaler and became a naturalized American citizen in Nantucket in 1824 (Carreira, 1977: 65)

8 Brava's beloved poet, Eugénio Tavares, author of many *mornas* (a traditional musical form of the type often sung by Cesária), is still remembered by an affectionate nickname, Nho Tatai. Tavares himself underwent a decade of self-imposed political exile in the U.S., returning home after Portugal became a republic in 1910. Tavares was an ardent defender of the migration to the U.S., and criticized the Portuguese for trying to channel Cape Verdeans to São Tomé's plantations (1913).

9 An improvised ballad, half-wept half-sung, often with a background chorus heard at deaths and burials.

10 Several ancient whaling schooners cum packets were still doing service in the traffic between the islands at the time of my 1972 field work.

11 In 1924 the captain of the *Yukon* wagered $1500 with the captain of the *Valkyria*, to see which could go the fastest from Providence to Brava; the *Valkyria* won, making the trip in only 25 days (Cohn and Platzer 1978: 94). In 1927 three schooners, the *Cameo*, the *Bertha D. Nickerson* and the *Ambrose Snow*, raced from the Cape Verdes to New Bedford and all arrived in 33 days, as per an article in the New Bedford *Standard-Times*, Oct. 22, 1967.

12 Halter calculates that 35,000 to 45,000 Cape Verdeans immigrated to the United States between 1820 and 1976 (1993: 45).

13 The lists of vessels arriving at New Bedford from Cape Verde during decades 1880-1920 give an idea of the intensity of the traffic (Halter, 1995: Appendix 2, pp. 179-186).

14 In 1933 Cape Verdean bog workers participated in what must have been one of the earliest strikes by migrant agricultural labourers in the United States (*New York Times*, September 13, p. 2 and September 14, p. 48).

15 This is also true of the migrants whose life histories were collected by Al Pereira, available at the Providence Public Library.

16 Carreira reports 1408 departures to the U.S. between 1927-45; and only 538 for the years 1945-52 (1977: 125).

17 Migration itself was often the reason for formalizing conjugal ties by marriage, which was otherwise seen as too expensive and impractical for most people, especially under Portuguese rule, when divorce was very difficult to obtain.

18 I myself experienced this stereotype in the city, where I was often taken for someone who had been born in Brava and left at an early age.

19 Typically, the Cape Verdean partner is female. Generally, Cape Verdean women born in the U.S. are loath to enter purely commercial unions. They usually consider men overbearing and "too macho," though some such marriages result from visits to the Islands.

20 Information received from the Cape Verdean Consul in Paris and from leaders of Cape Verdean associations there.

21 There are several reasons for this; migrants to the U.S. typically had little schooling, and so did not speak much Portuguese. Secondly, in the American racial context, great social distance developped between Cape Verdeans and Portuguese immigrants. This has not been the case in the more recent migrations to Canada nor in France.

22 See Baumann (1996) for an interesting discussion of the many levels of usage of the word "community."

References

Almeida, Raymond Anthony (ed.)
1978 *Cape Verdeans in America: Our Story*, Boston: The American Committee for Cape Verde.

Amselle, Jean-Loup
1976 Aspects et significations du phénomène migratoire en Afrique, Jean-Loup Amselle (ed.), *Les Migrations Africaines*, Paris: Maspero: 9-39.
Andrade, Elisa Silva
1996 *Les Iles du Cap-Vert de la "Découverte" à l'Indépendance Nationale (1460-1975)*, Paris: L'Harmattan.
Bailyn, Bernard
1955 *The New England Merchants in the Seventeenth Century*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Bannick, Christian John
1917 *Portuguese Immigration to the United States: Its Distribution and Status*, Berkeley: University of California (reprinted in 1971 by A. and E. Associates, San Francisco, CA).
Barcellos, Christiano José de Senna
1904 *Subsídios para a História de Cabo Verde e Guiné*, Vol. 4, Lisbon: Tipografia da Academia Real das Ciências de Lisboa.
Barros, Simão
1936 *Ensaio sobre a História Económica de Cabo Verde*, Lisbon: Edições Hesperitanias, 3° Fascículo.
Basch, Linda, Nina Glick Schiller and Cristina Szanton Blanc
1994 *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments and Deterritorialized Nation-States*, Luxembourg: Gordon and Breach.
Baumann, Gerd
1996 *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-Ethnic London*, New York: Cambridge University Press.
Bennett, Norman R. and George Brooks, Jr.
1965 *New England Merchants in Africa: A History through Documents, 1802-1865*, Boston: Boston University Press.
Bridge, Horatio
1968 *Journal of an African Cruiser*, London: Dawson of Pall Mall (first published in 1845).
Carreira, António
1977 *Migrações nas ilhas de Cabo Verde*, Lisbon: Universidade Nova de Lisboa.
Carvalho, Eduardo de
1931 *Os Portugueses na Nova Inglaterra*, Rio de Janeiro: Teixeira e Ca.
Clifford, James
1994 Diasporas, *Cultural Anthropology*, 9(3): 302-338.
Cohn, Michael and Michael K.H. Platzer
1978 *Black Men of the Sea*, New York: Dodd Mead.
Coli, Waltraud Berger and Richard Lobban
1990 *The Cape Verdeans in Rhode Island*, Providence, RI: Rhode Island Heritage Commission and Rhode Island Publication Society.
Doral, Ramel, Marie-Antoinette Hily and Emmanuel Ma Mung
1998 Synthèse de Travaux sur l'Immigration et la Présence Étrangère en France, *Migrations Études*, Déc. 1998, Paris: Agence pour le Développement des Relations Interculturelles, Ministère de l'Emploi et de la Solidarité.
Economist Intelligence Unit
1999 Cape Verde, *Country Profile: Sao Tomé and Principe, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde 1999-2000*, London: Economist Intelligence Unit: 54-69.
Elbaz, Mikhael and Denise Helly
1995 Modernité et postmodernité des identités nationales. *Anthropologie et Sociétés*, 19(3): 15-35.
Foner, Nancy
1997 What's New about Transnationalism? New York Immigrants Today and at the Turn of the Century, *Diaspora*, 6(3) (Winter): 355-376.
Glick, Schiller, N. et G. Fouron
1990 "Everywhere We Go, We are in Danger,": Ti-Manno and the Emergence of a Haitian Transnational Identity, *American Ethnologist*, 17(2): 329-334.
Greene, Jonathan
1999 Cabo Verde: Recent History, *Africa South of the Sahara*, London: Europa: 276-287.
Halter, Marilyn
1995 *Between Race and Ethnicity: Cape Verdean American Immigrants 1860-1965*, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
Hannerz, Ulf
1996 The Local and the Global, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places*, London and New York: Routledge.
Harper, Elizabeth J.
1975 *Immigration Laws of the United States*, 3rd ed., Indianapolis, New York: Bobbs-Merrill.
Hovanessian, Martine
1993 L'Enchevêtrement des Catastrophes en Arménie. Discontinuités de l'Histoire et Continuité de Mémoire. *Journal des Anthropologues* (Paris), 52: 11-27.
Iorizzo, Luciano John
1980 *Italian Immigration and the Impact of the Padrone System*, New York, NY: Arno Press.
Lesourd, Michel
1995 *État et Société aux Iles de Cap-Vert*, Paris: Karthala.
Lessa, Almerindo and Jacques Ruffie
1957 *Seroanthropologia das Ilhas de Cabo Verde. Mesa Redonda sobre o Homen Caboverdiano*, Lisbon: Junta de Investigaçoes Cientificas do Ultramar.
Lima, Joao José Lopes de
1844 *Ensaio sobres Estatisticas das Ilhas de Cabo Verde no Mar Atlantico e Suas Dependências na Guiné Portuguesa ao Norte do Equador*, Lisbon: Impresna National.
Liu, Xin
1997 Space, Mobility and Flexibility: Chinese Villagers and Scholars Negotiate Power at Home and Abroad, *Ungrounded Empires: the Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*, Aihwa Ong and Donald M. Nonini (eds.), London and New York: Routledge: 91-114.
Lobban, Richard
1995 *Cape Verde: Crioulo Colony to Independent Nation*, Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
Lopreato, Joseph
1967 *Peasants No More: Social Class and Social Change in an Underdeveloped Society*. San-Francisco: Chandler.
Low, Alan
1999 Cape Verde. The Economic and Business Report, *The World of Information Africa Review*, Walden, UK: Walden: 39-42.

Marienstras, Richard
1975 *Etre un peuple en diaspora*, Paris: Maspero.
Meintel, Deirdre
1975 The Creole Dialect of the Island of Brava, *Miscelânea Luso-Africana*, Marius Valkhoff (ed.), Lisbon: Junta de Investigaçoes Cientificas do Ultramar: 205-256.
1981 Cape Verdean Americans,Hidden Minorities: The Persistence of Ethnicity in American Life, Joan Rollins (ed.), Washington, DC: University Press of America: 233-256.
1984a *Race, Culture and Portuguese Colonialism in Cabo Verde*. Syracuse: Syracuse University.
1984b Emigråço em Cabo Verde: Soluçåo ou Problema? *Revista International de Estudos Africanos* (Lisbon): 2: 93-120.
2001 Transnationalité et renouveau de la vie festive capverdienne aux Etats-Unis, *Revue Internationale des Migrations Internationales* 16(2): 77-90.
Nevinson, Henry Wood
1968 *A Modern Slavery*, New York: Schoken Books (first published in 1906).
Nonini, Donald M. and Aihwa Ong
1997 Chinese Transnationalism as an Alternative Modernity, *Ungrounded Empires: the Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*, Aihwa Ong and Donald M. Nonini (eds.), London and New York: Routledge: 3-36.
Pélissier, René
1999 Cape Verde: Physical and Social Geography, *Africa South of the Sahara*, London: Europa: 276.
Portes, Alejandro and Mia Zhou
1992 En route vers le sommet: nouvelles perspectives sur la question des minorités ethniques, *Revue Européenne des Migrations Internationales*, 8(1): 171-191.
Portes, Alejandro and J. Walton
1981 *Labour, Class and the International System*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
Smith, Robert
1993 Los Ausentes Sempre Presente: The Imagining, Making and Politics of a Transnational Community between New York City and Ticuani, Puebla, *Papers on Latin America*, No. 27, New York: Institute of Latin American and Iberian Studies, Columbia University.
Tarrius, Alain
1992 *Les Fourmis d'Europe: Migrants Riches, Migrants Pauvres et Nouvelles Villes Internationales*, Paris: L'Harmattan.
Tavares, Eugénio
1913 Questões econômicas: A emigração caboverdeana é um elemento de riqueza e civilização, *A Voz de Cabo Verde* 3(101), July 21: 1.
Trocki, Carl A.
1997 Boundaries and Transgressions: Chinese Enterprise in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Southeast Asia. *Ungrounded Empires: the Cultural Politics of Modern Chinese Nationalism*, Aihwa Ong and Donald M. Nonini (eds.), London and New York: Routledge: 61-88.
Tyack, David
1952 *Cape Verdeans in the United States*, Unpublished senior honours thesis, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
Warner, Robert Austin
1940 *The New Haven Negro*, New Haven: Yale University Press.
Zweig, Stefan
1993 *Le Monde d'hier: Souvenirs d'un Européen*, Belfond: Paris (first published in 1944. Available in English translation as *The World of Yesterday*).