



**Evolution**

CULTURAL GROUP MAGAZINE


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**RELIGIOUS  
DIVERSITY IN THE CABO  
VERDEAN COMMUNITY**

**¿Qué será, será  
lo que Porfirio  
tendrá?**

**CUBA-RHODE ISLAND  
EL ARTE TRASPASA LAS FRONTERAS**

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CULTURAL MAGAZINE

*"Construyendo Generaciones"  
"Building Generations"*

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*"Nadie es más perfecto que el sol. El sol quema con la misma luz que calienta, porque tiene luz y porque tiene manchas. Los agradecidos hablan de la luz, los desagradecidos, no hablan más que de sus manchas..."*

**José Martí**

**Parfraseando al Prócer, nuestra redacción extiende su más profundo agradecimiento a todas aquellas personas, que desde la serenidad de la luz, mes tras mes, nos han remitido durante año y medio; sus ideas, correcciones y comentarios.**

**Contribuyendo así a que Evolution Magazine, continúe transitando por los laberintos de la Cultura, con la misma pasión con que el sol acaricia la vida.**

**En esta edición, entre la locuras del Tío Paco, la controversial vida de Porfirio Rubirosa, los consejos de Don Cheto, o las Actividades de El Coming Soon de Pancha, nos complacemos en presentar una exhaustiva investigación sobre la diversidad religiosa de Cabo Verde, la multifacética labor artística del Plástico Ecuatoriano Idelfonso Franco, un resumen de las actividades del Intercambio cultural Cuba-Rhode Island; y así sobre la buena poesía, y las imágenes de José Ramírez, los dejamos en compañía de otros artículos; que deseamos sean de su agrado.**

**Y recuerden que nuestras páginas permanecen abiertas para apoyar sus proyectos.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Miguel Ángel Odio". The signature is fluid and stylized.

*Miguel Ángel Odio*



## RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN THE CABO VERDEAN COMMUNITY

**By: Alma Gottlieb, Ph.D.**

When we read about “the Cabo Verdean community,” it is tempting to imagine a homogeneous group of people. And certainly, a great deal unites Cabo

Verdeans. Language (Crioulo), food (cachupa, kuskus), music (morna, funana, coladeira, tabanka), dance style (batuka), drink (grogue, ponche), clothing style (panos), memories of hardship, and tight-knit families disrupted by diasporic travels are just some of the strong links that keep Cabo Verdeans remarkably connected across several continents.

Yet beneath these shared experiences lies significant diversity at many levels. Levels of education, specific island of origin, and religious background are just three factors that distinguish the experiences of individual Cabo Verdean families. Currently I am researching a somewhat hidden source of religious diversity that has a deep and enduring impact on the Cabo Verdean experience.

It used to be thought that all Cape

Verdeans were Catholic. Yet in recent decades, some Protestant and independent churches have gained influence on the islands. Less publicly acknowledged is that religious diversity actually dates to the founding of Cape Verde society, when the islands were first discovered and inhabited by European explorers. The islands were empty of human habitation, and the first European settlers were disproportionately Jewish because of the increasing anti-Semitism that was slowly starting to claim Iberia in the last decades of the 15th century.

In 1492, Spain issued an Edict of Expulsion requiring all Jews either to leave Spain or convert to Catholicism; four years later, under pressure from Spain, the king of Portugal announced his own Edict of Expulsion. Thousands of Jews opted to leave Iberia—rather than be killed, or forced to convert to Catholicism—and they reached many destinations (including Amsterdam, Istanbul, Brazil, Mexico, Curaçao, Rhode Island, and New York). Much less known is that a smaller but equally adventurous group of Jews fleeing the increasing anti-Semitism enveloping Iberia decided to join the group of Portuguese adventurers traveling to the newly rediscovered islands of Cabo Verde.

On these new maritime routes, Jews found travel an effective means to avoid persecution and death. The more prosperous among them forged remarkably international trading networks, and these networks persisted in one way or another across the next five-and-a-half centuries. Thus some Moroccan Jews fleeing persecution in the 19th century also found their way to Cabo Verde, adding a second

layer of Jewish identity to these sociologically unique islands.

In my current research, I am focusing on the contemporary aftermath of this conjoined Jewish-Cabo Verdean diaspora, exploring how this largely unknown yet historically significant dual diaspora is now being re-evaluated among contemporary Cabo Verdeans (both on and off the islands). Parallel to the efforts of many Brazilians and other Latin Americans rediscovering their Jewish heritage, many Cabo Verdeans are now curious to chart and reclaim the submerged yet historically critical Jewish component of their island's identity.

In meeting Cabo Verdeans across New England, I am using an ethnographic approach. My research methods includes conducting formal interviews, studying the Crioulo language, living for short periods with Cabo Verdean families, and observing and participating in a range of activities with Cabo Verdeans—from concerts to the CV Independence Day Parade to a combined Cabo Verdean-Jewish Passover Seder held annually in Roxbury, MA. From this research, I plan to produce a book about Cabo Verdeans with Jewish ancestry that will document contemporary activities in which many Cabo Verdeans are now engaging in New England, as well as Lisbon, Praia, and elsewhere. As many Cabo Verdeans are reassessing the frequently overlooked Jewish underside to both their family histories and their national identity, this source of religious diversity in the Cabo Verdean community is emerging as a strength in which this island nation can feel pride.