

## **Troubling the Good Time Blues: Fado Performance, Placemaking, and Border Crossing in the United States<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper examines fado's powerful relationship to deterritorialization and the complex spatial poetics that condition fado in diaspora. Immigrant enclaves, often defined by frames of spatial multiplicity, where lives are contextualized according to places left and places arrived at, are fertile ground for the study of a musical genre like fado, known both for its topophilia, or love of place, and for its intense focus on making absent places present. This paper explores the ways in which multiple spatial frames inform and influence fado performance in New Jersey. The closing of Newark's last casa de fado has forced the genre into "tight spaces" where fado performers and aficionados share evenings of entertainment with other musical genres and audiences. Some view this hybrid format as a positive development, others as a negative one. Those who see fado's unmooring from traditional performance spaces as the cause of repertoire diminishment and audience misbehavior have pushed fado into spaces associated with education as well as into small, private, home-like settings. Lastly, fado's increasing vulnerability within the space of the enclave has resulted in charged border crossings and the emergence of a more heterogenous group of fado performers and enthusiasts. These border crossings are contextualized against the backdrop of a history of ethnic tensions in Newark's Ironbound neighborhood, and a move among some artists and community leaders to embrace a paradigm of mixture and exchange, with fado as a key expressive laboratory for such a shift.

**KEYWORDS:** fado, diaspora, Portuguese Americans, Newark, Ironbound, migration, performance, music

**RESUMO:** Este ensaio examina a relação poderosa entre o fado e a desterritorialização, além da poética complexa que condiciona a performance do fado em diáspora. Enclaves de imigrantes, muitas vezes definidos por quadros de multiplicidade espacial, onde as vidas individuais são contextualizadas de acordo com os espaços que ficaram atrás e os espaços de chegada, constituem-se em território fértil para o estudo de um género musical como o fado, reconhecido pela sua topofilia, ou amor ao espaço, e pelo seu enfoque

intenso de tornar presentes os espaços ausentes. Este artigo explora as maneiras como múltiplas espacialidades informam e influenciam a performance do fado no estado de Nova Jersey. O encerramento de última casa de fado em Newark forçou o género a estabelecer-se nos “espaços apertados” onde os fadistas e os seus aficionados partilham noites de entretenimento com outros géneros musicais e outros públicos. Alguns vêm neste formato híbrido um desenvolvimento positivo, outros negativo. Os que vêm o desancorar do fado dos seus locais tradicionais como a causa do empobrecimento de repertório e do mau comportamento do público têm levado o fado para os espaços associados com a educação e para espaços íntimos, que se assemelham a lares particulares. Por último, a vulnerabilidade crescente do fado no espaço do enclave imigrante resultou em travessias de fronteira intensas e no surgimento de um grupo mais heterogéneo de fadistas e entusiastas. Estas travessias de fronteira, que serão contextualizadas na história das tensões étnicas dentro do bairro de Ironbound, em Newark, motivaram a aceitação por parte de alguns artistas e líderes da comunidade, de um novo paradigma de mistura e intercâmbio, utilizando o fado como um importante laboratório expressivo para tal mudança.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: fado, diáspora, luso-americanos, Newark, New Jersey, Ironbound, migração, emigrantes, performance, música

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It is a hot, humid day and the festivities have already begun. Sounds of accordions echo onto the steamy pavement as swirls of colored lights, strung across the main artery of Ferry Street, direct the eye toward the traditional parade route. It is as though you are in a Portuguese village for a summertime festival. The location, however, is thousands of miles away, in a neighborhood called the Ironbound in the east ward of Newark, New Jersey—a gritty US port city associated for much of the post–World War II period with crime and poverty, but more recently termed a “renaissance city” for its tech- and arts-driven growth, a branding shift mired in controversy.<sup>2</sup> Today Newark’s Ironbound neighborhood prepares for the Portugal Day parade, an outdoor display of many floats, marked by the cacophonous inclusion of disparate urban institutions and ethnic denizens of all stripes and persuasions. By day’s end, half a million revelers will fill the streets of the neighborhood some people call “Little Portugal.”<sup>3</sup>

The parade won’t begin for another two hours, however, and groups of friends and families gather indoors at the Sport Club Português for a pre-parade

performance of a play written by East Ward Councilman Augusto Amador, entitled *Foi pelo sonho que fomos*. The play is staged high under a proscenium arch at the back of a large banquet hall. The audience pipes down as costumed actors enter the stage and sit at tavern tables under an enormous reproduction of José Malhoa's *Os bêbados* painted by a local Luso-American artist. The play, rife with poetic verses about longing for Portugal and adapting to the US, is billed as “uma viagem cultural ao fundo do tempo.” The curtain opens to reveal a dizzying barrage of Portuguese props and emblems, an identificatory shorthand so well-known in this neighborhood—the flag, the rooster, the filigree jewelry, the guitarra portuguesa, the checkered tablecloth—symbols that, borrowing Cristiana Bastos's (2020, 37) terminology, reflect the Portuguese American expression of “hyperbolic” nationalism.

As the audience grapples with how to take in this colorful hodgepodge, a huge projection screen swells with black and white photos. At first there is no sound—just languorous image after image of Portuguese emigrants boarding boats in mid-century Lisbon, carrying guitars, sitting on crates, crying into kerchiefs, setting off for shores unknown. These historical images, some of them now famous—reproduced in many a book, documentary and website dedicated to the topic of Portuguese migration—seem to have a powerful effect on the audience. Then a slow, sad fado sung by legendary fadista Amália Rodrigues fills the capacious hall as the black and white photos continue, this time portraying the passage itself. Images of waves and ships, small against the vast ocean, are set to Amália's throaty dips and melismas. The terrifying uncertainty of this liminal, open-ocean phase, neither here nor there, the transition from one world to another, seems somehow perfectly expressed in Amália's vocal delivery and lyrical content. As the dramatized slideshow builds, audience members begin to weep softly, and the symbiosis between fado and immigrant passage looms large, a perfect combination, a poetics of song and experience dependent on one another and intensely felt by those in the audience who “left for the dream,” embodying the title of Amador's play.

As I sat in this makeshift theater on June 11, 2011, during Portugal Day in Newark, listening to Amália sing and watching those around me weep on a day meant for revelry, I realized that fado's powerful relationship to deterritorialization and the complex spatial poetics of its performance in a US ethnic enclave would be a crucial angle to examine. Immigrant enclaves, defined always by frames of spatial multiplicity where lives are contextualized according to places left and places

arrived at, not to mention the powerful in-between spaces of passage, are fertile ground for the study of a musical genre like fado, known both for its topophilia, or love of place, and for its intense focus on making absent places present.

This paper explores the ways in which multiple spatial frames inform and influence fado performance in New Jersey. The space of the ethnic enclave, a vulnerable sphere of ethnic succession and demographic turnover, has been the staging ground for the closing of the last casa de fado in Newark—potentially a signal of fado’s diminishing relevance to the Portuguese American community of Northern New Jersey. However, the closing of this last traditional venue has accompanied the genre’s move into “tight spaces” (Baker 2001) where fado performers and audiences share evenings of entertainment with other musical genres and companion audiences. Some view this hybrid format as a positive development, others as a negative one. Those who see fado’s unmooring from traditional performance spaces as the cause of repertoire diminishment and audience misbehavior have pushed fado into spaces associated with education as well as into small, private, home-like settings. Lastly, fado’s increasing vulnerability within the space of the enclave has resulted in charged border crossings and the emergence of a more heterogeneous group of fado performers and aficionados. These border crossings are contextualized here against the backdrop of a history of ethnic tensions in the Ironbound neighborhood, and a move among some artists and community leaders to embrace a paradigm of mixture and exchange, with fado as a key expressive laboratory for such a shift.

This paper is based on more than ten years of ethnographic fieldwork, from 2008 to the present, and on regular attendance of fado concerts, rehearsals, and other social gatherings in the Ironbound, in New York City, and in other regional hubs of Portuguese immigration. It is also based on semi-structured, long-format ethnographic interviews with fado performers, lyricists, producers, and aficionados, primarily in Northern New Jersey, as well as the consultation of the Ironbound Oral History Project archive of interviews.<sup>4</sup>

### **Spaces Undone: Changes within Newark’s Fado Cathedral**

Newark’s Little Portugal neighborhood, also called the Ironbound, has long been hailed as the “Catedral do Fado.” This immigrant neighborhood has the most newly arrived population of Portuguese, the highest degree of Portuguese language use in the home, and the largest proportion of continentals (as opposed to Azoreans) of all of the major US hubs of Portuguese emigration (Vicente

1999). Northern New Jersey is also home to hundreds of Portuguese cultural associations, schools, clubs, and churches—most of them involved in maintaining Portuguese traditions, particularly those of an expressive nature. Perhaps the general characteristics of this ethnic enclave and the widely avowed desire on the part of the community to keep Portuguese language and culture alive into the second and third generations explain the Ironbound’s label as a “Fado Cathedral.” It has, in fact, spawned and supported a fado performance scene which has remained active, with seasonal ups and downs, for over five decades.

The Ironbound boasts fifteen to twenty amateur fadistas and instrumentalists who either live or regularly perform there. This group is varied. Two-thirds form what is known as the “old guard”: fadistas in their fifties, sixties, and seventies, all of whom were born in Portugal and many of whom are Portuguese-language dominant. Another six to ten singers form what is increasingly called a wave of second-generation “fado jovem” (Durães 2012). All but one of this group of “young fado” singers was born in New Jersey, all are in their teens and twenties, and all are bilingual.<sup>5</sup> These two generations often perform together and conceive of themselves, to some degree, as part of a unified group of local fadistas, although their spatial and social practices sometimes diverge.

In the mid to late 2010s, following fado’s UNESCO designation as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, fado in New Jersey seemed to hit a high-water mark; a seemingly endless array of celebratory events at clubs, ribbon cuttings, restaurant openings, and wine tastings featured fado as part of a diverse program of entertainment, with “Fado Friday” sessions sprouting up at several area restaurants, and a growing wave of young fadistas reviving the scene and capturing the public’s attention anew. However, there have also been signs of change that some performers and aficionados interpret as fado’s diminishment within the ethnic enclave.<sup>6</sup> These signs of change hinge on issues of space. One measure of the health of the fado scene in diaspora is the presence (or lack thereof) of adequate and appropriate space for performance. Fado’s adaptation to increasingly awkward spaces, which are deemed at best atypical or nontraditional and at worst inappropriate or “undignified,” calls into question the importance of fado to the immigrant community and sets off the perennial debate as to whether or not fado will survive into the next generation.

In order to chart the changing nature of performance venues, it is important to note that the Ironbound currently has no dedicated casa de fado. Casas de fado, intimate spaces where food and alcohol are often served and patrons listen

to fado late into the night, first appeared in Lisbon, Portugal, in the early twentieth century, as part of a larger movement toward the commercialization and professionalization of fado.<sup>7</sup> For long stretches throughout the 1980s, 1990s, and early 2000s, the Ironbound supported at least one *casa de fado*. These establishments, as noted by many fado scholars, have served a variety of important social and musical functions (Nery 2004; Cordeiro 1994; Klein and Alves 1994). One central function of the *casa de fado* in the Portuguese context has been teaching and initiating new generations of fado singers.<sup>8</sup> The history of instability regarding the Ironbound's *casas de fado* exposes the sometimes-fragile link between fado in Portugal and fado in the Portuguese diaspora in the US.

The last Ironbound *casa de fado*, *Quebra Bilhas*, closed in the late 2000s.<sup>9</sup> The closing, which was in part prompted by a murder outside the front doors of the establishment, and an occasional crop of rough-and-tumble patrons, recalls fado's nineteenth-century association with Lisbon crime, prisons, and prostitution. This incident draws attention to the uncannily similar backdrop that Newark and Lisbon provide to fado lore and history. They are both port cities built around the commercial activities enabled by river transport systems. Both cities are dominated by "landscapes of voyage" (Stewart 1993). Both feature riverside neighborhoods that have been associated with vice, crime, and population transience. Each is perched on opposing sides of the Atlantic and both have nurtured fado, known for its lyrical lamentation of difficult circumstances and its expressive portrayal of the urban spaces which provide the *mise-en-scène* for pleasure and hardship alike.<sup>10</sup>

Even though the riverside neighborhoods of Newark and Lisbon provide similarly fertile socio-spatial ground for fado performance, Newark's current lack of a *casa de fado* forces the genre into "tight spaces." Borrowing the term from Houston Baker (2001), dance scholar Danielle Goldman (2010, 146) analyzes the way dance improvisation necessitates "an ongoing interaction with shifting tight places." These tight spaces, "whether created by power relations, social norms, aesthetic traditions or physical technique" (146), can be viewed as constraining, liberating, or both.<sup>11</sup> Ironbound fado has made a forced exodus from the traditional space of the *casa de fado*—where mementos and memorabilia line the walls, providing visual evidence of fado's dogged persistence, and where audiences know how to behave—into "tight spaces" such as family restaurants, basements of cultural centers, and other makeshift venues originally designed for other purposes. This shift is a cause for consternation among some *fadistas*

and puts venue owners of “tight spaces” in a difficult position as they struggle to balance competing agendas and expectations. Even though fado in Portugal has a long history of change and a wide array of changing performance contexts—from the gritty streets of portside Lisbon in the 1820s, to the bourgeois salons of the turn of the century, to the *casas de fado* and theater stages of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries—changing spaces play a different role in diaspora. The ethnic neighborhood is always under threat of dissolution. And this socio-spatial fragility ties into issues of belonging, visibility, and identity; the disappearance of dedicated fado venues becomes a manifestation, perhaps proof, of the ethnic succession underway.

Since the closure of *Quebra Bilhas*, reliable weekly opportunities to hear fado in the Ironbound have diminished. For many years, however, a restaurant called *El Pastor* served as a parallel space for the regular weekend performance of fado. *El Pastor*, originally a Spanish restaurant, entered new management in the mid-1980s under Portuguese businessman and fado enthusiast, José Marques. Marques never changed the name of his new restaurant, but he revamped the menu of weekend entertainment. “He loved fado and had a lot of faith in fado bringing in people to the restaurant” (Cirne 2020).<sup>12</sup> Under Marques’s ownership, therefore, fado consistently anchored the weekend programming. In the early years, fado was the unequivocal musical draw—*El Pastor*’s weekend entertainment featured three long fado sets, interspersed with shorter sets of Portuguese popular music (Cirne 2020). During many of these nights, Marques also paid extra for fado’s traditional instrumentation—a solo vocalist accompanied by a Spanish guitar (or viola) and a *guitarra portuguesa* (a twelve-string lute-like instrument that in Lisbon fado shares the melody with the voice)—in order to guarantee an “authentic” traditional experience of fado. Because *guitarra portuguesa* players were in short supply in New Jersey and New York, they commanded higher fees than the “house band” comprising keyboards and percussion. But the extra outlay was worth it, particularly in the early years, as *El Pastor*’s devotion to fado succeeded in attracting robust crowds of weekend patrons, mostly first-generation Portuguese immigrants and their families and friends, for long sessions of listening, eating, and drinking, which often lasted well past midnight (Cirne 2020).

Over time, however, as Portuguese emigration to the US slowed and Portuguese American families who had first settled in the Ironbound began moving out to neighboring towns for more green space and better school

systems, El Pastor's typical weekend crowd began to change. Because it retained its Spanish-language name, the restaurant began to appeal to an increasingly broad range of Newark denizens. The changing demographics of the weekend crowd at El Pastor reflected the changing ethnic composition of the Ironbound, where the Portuguese were joined, and in part replaced, by increasing numbers of Brazilians, Ecuadorians, and other Central and South American immigrants. The owners of El Pastor modified weekend programming in response to this shift, which took place from the 1990s through the mid-2010s. Instead of interspersing fado sets with Portuguese popular music, El Pastor increasingly offered upbeat Latin dance music from South America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, such as salsa, cumbia, and merengue, in order to offset the melancholy of fado—which an increasing number of weekend patrons didn't know (Cirne 2020).<sup>13</sup>

In addition to sharing the stage with other types of music during these years, fado's instrumentation also changed over time. The death of several local *guitarra portuguesa* players made securing traditional accompaniment challenging. Fado vocalists, therefore, ended up being routinely accompanied at El Pastor by the long-standing Duo Suave, comprising musical director/keyboardist Tony Cirne and percussionist Victor Fonseca.<sup>14</sup> The disappearance of traditional fado accompaniment displeased some fado performers, as well as some die-hard fado aficionados who regularly patronized El Pastor. As ethnomusicologist Salwa El-Shawan Castelo-Branco (1994, 127) states, “Tanto o público como os intérpretes do fado consideram o acompanhamento instrumental, sobretudo o da guitarra, como o elemento indispensável para a interpretação do fado, e um dos seus mais poderosos símbolos.” The traditional pairing of two string instruments and a vocalist is essential to the musical dialogue created by fado performers where the *guitarra* acts as second soloist (Castelo-Branco 1994, 135, 131). Consequently, the loss of two local *guitarra* players and a *viola* player left weekend fado programming in a bind. As the culminating event in this narrative of change and accommodation, fado's multi-decade relationship with the venue of El Pastor ended completely in the mid-2010s, when the establishment closed its doors for good.

Even though El Pastor has closed, ending a long-lived commitment to fado programming, this collaboration represents an important phase in Newark's fado history that warrants examination and analysis. By examining fado's tenure at El Pastor, we can better understand how New Jersey's community of fado



performers, *aficionados*, and venue owners responded to change over time. We can explore the limits of which aesthetic accommodations were seen as permissible in the context of diaspora, and which “crossed the line,” threatening the definitional frameworks for what constitutes fado. We can understand what kind of “tight space” El Pastor constituted and whether accompanying changes in performance format, instrumentation, repertoire, and taste publics signaled constraint or liberation or a combination of both.

Fadistas are often divided in their reflections on the role of El Pastor in the fado community. On the one hand, many of the old guard were regular weekend patrons there. Male fado performers would sit around the big wooden bar after work and watch soccer matches on TV, while female singers shared meals with friends and family in the dining room, listened to other fadistas, danced, or occasionally sat in on someone else’s set. Certain fado regulars—either performers or *aficionados*—even had their own special tables reserved for them week after week. El Pastor was an important social hub for this generation. The younger singers also have an attachment to El Pastor, even though their peers typically didn’t socialize there. Many young fadistas associate El Pastor with early performance opportunities and their first interactions with the old-guard fadistas. The restaurant owners and Tony Cirne typically welcomed new talent and provided important exposure for those new to the scene. A 2012 feature in the local Portuguese paper confirmed, for example, that “segundo Tony Cirne, o director musical do El Pastor, ‘a aposta na juventude será, sem dúvida, uma das características desta nova época’” (Durães 2012, 14). El Pastor, therefore, played a crucial role as the brick-and-mortar anchor for fado performing, listening, and networking, greasing the wheels of exchange and interplay by “putting experience into circulation,” to borrow Victor Turner’s (1991) phrase. In this sense, inasmuch as El Pastor’s “tight space” provided an essential outlet for the sociability of fado performers while enabling the music’s continuation and growth through regular performance opportunities, it can be thought of as generative, but perhaps not exactly liberating.

On the other hand, some performers and fado enthusiasts complained about the restaurant’s environment, suggesting that the formatting and instrumentation constraints compromised core ingredients of fado’s defining framework. High on the list of complaints was the dancing component of the weekend programming, which patrons saw as derailing the proper emotional environment for fado listening and, therefore, for fado performance.

On a chilly Saturday night in September of 2012, El Pastor's dining room/performance space was filled to capacity. Several long tables accommodated parties of twenty or more, as well as many of the usual four-tops. Cirne, the keyboardist and master of ceremonies, joked with the audience all night in three languages—Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese. Indeed, there was a big extended family of Italians celebrating a birthday, several tables of Portuguese and Brazilian families, and a smattering of Galicians and Central Americans—ethnic groups that reflect the demographics of Newark's East and North Wards. Before playing a merengue, Cirne, a native Portuguese speaker, encouraged the audience to get up and dance in Spanish. “Arriba! Arriba!!” he shouted playfully. Not needing much cajoling in any language, seven or eight pairs of middle-aged and even elderly patrons crowded onto the small dance floor, laughing and moving adroitly to the fast-paced Dominican rhythms. Clearly this part of the evening—during which Cirne, an instrumentalist, producer, and composer, bantered with the audience, DJ-ed requested tunes, and sang over recorded dance tracks—had gained an enthusiastic following over the years. Many people there had come to dance. And with the rotating disco ball poised over the dance floor and the DJ's masterful polyglot jocularly and spinning of upbeat Latin rhythms, this segment of the audience clearly got what they came for.

And then the fado portion began. As Cirne descended from the small stage he had been perched on all night and began to walk through the crowded dining room, I wondered how he would get the boisterous crowd to quiet down enough for young fadista Pedro Botas to begin his set. As fado aficionados know, audience behavior is a crucial element in successful fado performance. Some fado scholars describe the intense interchange between vocalist and audience members during peak performative moments as quasi-religious. Graça Índia Cordeiro states, for example:

A emoção que atravessa a voz e a postura do cantador transmite-se, por contágio, aos ouvintes que o acompanham em todos os pormenores, e é neste momento, quase religioso, de comunicação, criada uma ligação sensitiva entre todos os participantes—*é tão fadista quem canta como quem ouve*—que se vive a partilha de uma narrativa, de um sentimento, numa espécie de comunhão entre todos. (1994, 68; italics in the original)

A key ingredient that enables this intense relationship between fado performer and audience is silence. Based on her research of amateur fado in Lisbon, Lila Ellen Gray observes:

Silence can be qualitative; singers and fans might speak of a venue in terms of the quality of its silence, where an audience who knows how to be silent is one that knows how to listen with the same intensity with which the fadista is singing, thus entering into the fado and thus into the feeling. (2013, 38)

Given that “high quality” silence paves the way for an audience/singer exchange essential to “entering into the fado,” Cirne had his work cut out for him as he threaded his way through tables without his microphone, presenting information in an unamplified voice that no one could hear. It was the first time all night that he spoke without a microphone; clearly, this was his strategy for transitioning into an acoustic-type environment, where patrons had to be especially quiet to hear voices whose only projection came from the diaphragm. As he continued to speak, looking almost as if he were in a silent film, a few patrons noticed him, halted their conversations, and elbowed and shushed their dining companions. It took five or six minutes, but the silent-film trick seemed to work. As the audience finally came to full attention, Tony introduced Pedro. Pedro took a deep breath, looked to the heavens, and began to sing the mournful melodies and lyrics of the Sérgio Nunes fado “Lenda da fonte.” He has a deep resonant voice and an earnest delivery, and he sang beautifully despite the nerve-racking battle for silence that preceded his set and the absence of string accompaniment.

Four or five tables of people—perhaps a third of the audience—seemed to have come for fado, and the rest for the dancing and conviviality. Botas concentrated on those particularly fado-friendly tables and finished a set of three passionately delivered fados. Some of the other tables of non-Portuguese seemed to be listening out of respect; others responded more viscerally to the songs and joined the fado-friendly tables in applauding during the singer’s last crescendo—a gesture of appreciation and shared emotion. Still others seemed not to know the fado audience protocol and were not particularly interested in this segment of the evening’s programming. In short, it was not an unfriendly crowd, but an audience of extremely diverse taste publics that displayed a range of interest in and appreciation for the fado component of the evening. El Pastor’s musical programming would continue in this vein until well after midnight, alternating between DJ-ed Latin dance tunes and short sets of fado.

So what can we make of the disparate musics and leisure time pursuits that share a “tight space”—some nights amicably, other nights awkwardly? Maria de São José Corte-Real (2010; 1991), who spent a year doing fieldwork in the

Ironbound in the early nineties, documented a similar space-sharing arrangement between what she described as “lambada” dance sets and fado sets. Her latest analytical take on these strange bedfellows is that the fado audiences she observed begrudgingly obeyed a Salazar-era pressure to reminisce through expressive modalities, which they found unsatisfying. She creates an analytical dichotomy where fado consumption is obligatory and Latin dancing is liberating: “The intensity of the participation left . . . the impression that the audience was more identified with the lambada dance than with the fados offered up” (2010, 88). She furthers her analysis by arguing that the tension between these two different strategies of identification and belonging resulted in frustration for the audience (87–88).

I agree that the alternating sets produced tension and perhaps at times frustration for some audience members, at least among those I met at El Pastor. However, a couple of factors may muddy the waters here, potentially disrupting a dichotomous reading, at least by the 2010s. One is the diversity of the audience in many venues across the Ironbound—increasing throughout the 1990s, 2000s, and 2010s—and a concomitant range of familiarity with fado. My reading of audience frustration is that in a room full of urban denizens, immigrants from different countries with different musical tastes, habits, languages, and leisure-time agendas, who share a dance floor and who share the consumption of what is essentially a variety show, there will always be certain music and dance sets that appeal to some audience members more than others. In an urban environment like Newark’s Ironbound, the heterogeneity of the audience is an essential factor that disrupts a reading of a generalized Portuguese emigrant preference for Latin dance music over fado. The audience at El Pastor from the nineties until its closing was rarely one hundred percent Portuguese.

The second factor that complicates a dichotomous reading of the musical variety at El Pastor is the possibility that the same Portuguese audience members could simultaneously enjoy both expressive modalities without conflict and frustration. Fado vocalist and guitarist Francisco Chuva (2008) suggests, in fact, that the mix of fado and Latin dance music is what most middle-aged Portuguese Americans want on the weekends. As he states,

há muita gente que vem aqui [El Pastor] porque gostam do fado, jantam a ver fado, têm que ter música para dançar um pouquinho também. . . . As casas do fado só dão fado, não dão mais nada. Aquilo não pode ser, a pessoa tem

uma semana de trabalho bastante grande, às vezes com bastantes horas. Eu ao sábado quero desistir um pouco, quero uma musiquinha para dançar, para afastar o stress.

In other parts of the interview, Chuva elaborates on this point, positing the need for stress release through a mixture of upbeat dancing and fado-inspired reminiscing as unique to the immigrant experience in the US. He explains that many of his coethnics have an intense attitude toward work, given that there is only one generation to make an economic impact, to make the migratory rupture worthwhile. He describes his own work week at a metal plant that begins at five a.m. and ends at eight p.m., “with just enough time in between to get the courage up to start all over again the next day” (Chuva 2008). Intense work experiences are related to the types of blue-collar jobs available to many foreign-born Portuguese who arrived between 1960 and 1980, often with little formal education and limited English. These experiences are compounded by US habits of working overtime, often through lunch and on weekends, with little to no vacation time—markedly different, according to Chuva, from what is permissible and habitual in Portugal. According to Chuva’s testimony, then, the leisure-time desires of the Portuguese in the US may be different from those in Portugal. He is not, however, implying that there is no place for fado in the US diaspora. In fact, for Chuva and others in his generation, performing and listening to fado, especially in the context of diaspora, is often linked to important memory work and the cathartic experience of reminiscing about the past. Attending fado performances that actively conjure absent places, people, and eras—memory work wrapped up in the feeling of *saudade*—has been termed by one scholar of Portuguese emigration a “palliative tool” for dealing with the challenges of deterritorialization (Wieczorek, forthcoming). So, according to Chuva, the setup at El Pastor functioned well for many: Portuguese emigrants had access to live performances of fado as well as other livelier music and dance forms, all in one tight place, for ease of access and variety, designed for those working toward the American Dream, with limited free time, intense work weeks, and a desire to “afastar o stress” and “matar saudades” in a one-stop-shop experience on a Saturday night.

### **Spaces Remade: A Circus of Audience Cultivation**

While Chuva casts fado’s Ironbound adaptation in a largely positive light, there are others who are not as sanguine about changes in performance contexts that lead to uncontrollable audiences and, as a result, to repertoire diminishment.

As we transition from the discussion of *El Pastor* to an analysis of “special event” fado performance, it becomes evident that venues can influence audience composition and expectation, which can, in turn, lead to changes in fado repertoire. José Luís Iglesias, a longtime resident of Northern New Jersey, has waged a lengthy battle to create a stimulating performance scene for Portuguese American artists, musicians, and lyricists. Iglesias taught himself to play *guitarra portuguesa* in response to the shortage of local string players and has become an important force in the New Jersey/New York fado scene. He describes performing fado for an audience of five hundred Portuguese Americans during a gala dinner to inaugurate the Portugal Day weekend:

Sendo fado e não havendo mais nenhuma atração numa festa destas, nós quando começamos, as pessoas não interromperam nada a conversa que estavam a ter, nada. Tocamos um fado. O segundo era “O abandono” do David Mourão-Ferreira. Eu tive que me levantar do meu lugar e fui ao microfone, e fui dizer às pessoas que a gente estaria à espera até estarem todos calados. Porque eu expliquei, aqui há quem goste de fado, eventualmente há quem não goste, mas quem não goste devia arriscar e até ir a ver, tentar ver o que há no fado que pode ser atraente, ou pelo menos respeitar o gosto dos outros. (Iglesias 2009)

Iglesias attributes part of the problem in audience comportment to the diverse venues and events that fado musicians are thrown into—contexts where Portuguese American audiences, only some of whom appreciate fado, have lost the “humility and respect” that they would have possessed in Portugal, taking on foreign attitudes of disrespect and rowdiness. He goes on to say that some local fadistas, who are invited to perform for club anniversaries, Portugal Day celebrations, wine tastings, and other one-time events where audience interest in fado cannot be predicted, have tailored their repertoire to the lowest common denominator.

The fados that are sure crowd-pleasers, that are upbeat and possess a sing-along aspect, become *de rigueur* for many special-event contexts where fadistas must reign in boisterous crowds. Iglesias contends that this type of repertoire diminishment, choosing “fados que não exigem,” creates a circus-like environment:

Cantam imediatamente determinados fados que pessoas já conhecem, são fados fáceis de ouvir, mas as letras não têm realmente, não têm significado às tantas, aquilo não atrasa nem adianta. Mas as pessoas reconhecem-se, porque

é como ver um jogo de futebol, é de adesão imediata, é uma coisa, é energia, é intuitivo, não tem nada a ver com o aspecto musical. (Iglesias 2009)<sup>15</sup>

Iglesias's testimony here and above points to a complex of frustrations, which deal with issues of assimilation into a new cultural environment and the potential incompatibility of fado with swathes of the Portuguese American community who have acquired new goals, desires, and habits. The “unchallenging” fados give immediate satisfaction; they possess an “intuitive” energy and spark in-the-moment engagement with sound that is tailor-made to match the US environment of fast food, pop-up shops, and throw-away merchandise. It is not just the fast-paced rhythms and penchant for immediate gratification of US life that undergird Iglesias's description, but also the mainstream US value system, which he posits as less conducive to soulful, in-depth, quiet reflection. According to Iglesias's testimony, this value system seems to have rubbed off on segments of the special-event fado crowds he plays for: “Aqui há um novo-riquismo, as pessoas gostam de ir a uma festa mostrar-se, mas lá dentro não tem nada” (Iglesias 2009).

The concern about newly acquired materialism that may condition indifference toward the immaterial riches of music among those whose expressive habits are oriented toward festive ostentation finds its way into the lyrics of a fado written by local New Jersey poet João S. Martins. In his “Fado da noite do fado,” the Ironbound's main artery, Ferry Street, is central to a discussion of immigrant dreams and realities. In his middle three stanzas, Martins (2015, 36) writes:

nas vozes que a noite esconde  
por muito escuro que faça  
uma luzinha presença  
brilha por trás da vidraça

vendem-se imagens e luzes  
nas janelas da ilusão  
capa que encobre a tristeza  
das noites de solidão

nas estrelas que viajam  
há uma esperança e uma prece  
sonhos das horas que passam  
enquanto a noite adormece

The play between night and day is a backdrop for the glittering shop windows full of promise and illusion, beckoning immigrant pedestrians who traffic along Ferry Street on their way to work and back home again. “Images are sold” on Ferry Street, but we get the sense in this fado that those who buy into the dream do not get what they’ve paid for, calling into question the migratory project, bolstered as it is by the promise of economic betterment within the capitalist framework of capital accumulation and consumerism.

A growing group of fado performers has addressed the indifference sometimes exhibited by special-event audiences with a fresh approach that focuses on audience cultivation. In a way, teaching audiences to appreciate fado could be viewed as a type of a remediation for those who were seduced by the glittering windows and bought into a potentially bankrupt American dream. By instructing Portuguese American audiences how to listen to fado, these musicians orchestrate a relearning of expressive modalities from worlds left behind, a remembering of the culturally coded sounds of lament, and a guided reconnection to modes of comportment, ways of thinking, and neglected cultural roots. To this end, Iglesias and other like-minded artists have begun performing fado with a distinctively didactic bent in secondary schools, universities, and libraries. Teaching the listening public about Portuguese music accompanies the search for new venues, both within and outside the Ironbound enclave, and a drive to expand fado’s horizons and secure its positive reception.

One 2008 performance at Newark’s Sport Clube Português, for example, carried the title *All That Fado!*—a spinoff on the 1930s American musical *All That Jazz!*, which had been revived in part through the Broadway hit *Chicago*. Iglesias and Santos included several pages of background on the history of fado in the photocopied program handed out to each audience member. The program was printed completely in English. Santos and Iglesias introduced songs throughout the evening with bilingual explanations of lyrics. The audience of about fifty to sixty people, including Ironbound regulars, extended families of Portuguese Americans, and a large group of Seton Hall University students, filled the intimate space and remained attentive and engaged throughout the evening. Santos and Iglesias’s repertoire was more ample than in the typical special-event performances and included fados de Coimbra, politically charged fados like “Abandono,” and newer fados based on the verses of canonical Portuguese poets. At this event, which was part musical demonstration, part history lesson, and part performance, the ambiance was formal and respectful. Following the



concert, audience members approached the performers as they packed up their sound equipment to ask questions about the lyrics. Two students asked Iglesias if they could hold the *guitarra portuguesa*, plucking at the strings reverently as they asked questions about the instrument.

In the many fado performances I've seen over the years in New Jersey and New York, I rarely saw audience members, complete strangers, approach fadistas with questions following the performance. The structure created by the bilingual playbill, featuring components like a precise listing and order of fados to be played—an unorthodox element even in high-profile venues like Mariza's Carnegie Hall concerts—communicates a desire to inform and instruct. And this, in turn, creates an opening for questions and inquiries, precisely the type of engaged dialogue Iglesias and Santos want to nurture. This approach might mute the potential emotional “communion” between audience and performer; such heightened feeling seems to feed on the improvised quality of a musical climax that takes one by surprise, a dynamic perhaps impeded by the cerebral contemplation of lyrics, history, and instrumentation. But what this didactic fado approach may sacrifice in shared emotion, it gains in audience cultivation and enrichment. This heuristic orientation not only structures a specific type of fado performance, it also informs a willing, respectful public and expands the horizons of Portuguese music using immigrant musicians as intermediaries for larger pedagogical purposes.

The true fadista wants to be heard in restricted spaces, where intimacy can and should exist. The true fadista wants to talk, sing with the people right in front of him. The true fadista doesn't want to sing what he sang and how he sang yesterday. . . . The true fadista refuses the “more-than-tested and predictably successful” recipe. The true fadista is an inveterate gambler: he wants to risk, risk, and risk. (Iglesias 2019)

### **Parting the Codfish Curtain: Fado's Charged Border Crossing**

The production company “Fátima Santos Presents” is another platform designed to further cultivate audiences through the didactic presentation of fado in new places and through collaboration with other musicians. Local fadista Fátima Santos has experimented with different programming efforts in many spaces throughout the Ironbound and surrounding areas. For various periods in the mid-2010s, Fátima Santos Presents organized regular concerts at the Café Concerto,

a corner space in the basement of the Ironbound's Sport Clube Português, adjacent to a bar frequented mostly by older Portuguese men involved in sueca games and long evenings of drinking and banter. An unlikely spot for musical experimentation, the Café Concerto became the venue for jazz concerts featuring New York musicians and bossa nova evenings with Brazilian musicians, as well as other players and genres from outside the Ironbound enclave. Met with varying degrees of success and interest, these Fatima Santos Presents concerts marked a broadening of the fado scene—a dynamic that continues today within other local venues, involving wider circles of fadistas and the integration of outsider musicians.

The musical programming of several gala events in the last ten years reflects a desire to expose the Ironbound's Portuguese emigrant public to different musical traditions and to place fado within a multicontinental orbit of Lusophone cultural exchange. For example, the literary group ProVerbo, which operates out of the Sport Clube Português and comprises twenty to thirty regular members, organizes a gala dinner every year where typically one high-profile musician or writer is invited from Portugal to perform alongside local Portuguese immigrant musicians. For some galas, however, program organizers include other musics from around the Lusophone world. In 2009, for example, the ProVerbo gala featured a broad program of live music including morna and batuque from Cabo Verde, performed by local Cabo Verdean emigrants, Brazilian gaúcho performance featuring Brazilian American second-generation youth, and local Portuguese fado and rancho performances. Glória de Melo and João Martins, founders of ProVerbo, constituted the force behind this programming expansion. They aimed to emphasize “cooperation” across the Portuguese-speaking world by focusing on the musical history of broad Lusophone interchange, as opposed to a bounded presentation of exclusively Portuguese genres.<sup>16</sup> The fact that some of the audience accepted this paradigm of Lusophone exchange while others left early, grumbling about the absence of the usual nationalistic model of programming, underscores the tension within the enclave over issues of ethnic isolation versus assimilation. It also points to a taste for expressions of “hyperbolic” nationalism among some Luso-Americans, as Cristiana Bastos (2020) argues.

The wave of musicians, writers, and community leaders who are pushing to expand fado's presentation and arguing for models of exchange, integration, and innovation run up against a more conservative streak within the community that reflects the desire to cordon off and preserve Portuguese culture. This attitude

toward expressive culture is paralleled by the geography of Ironbound, an area of Newark that is literally “bound” and kept separate by elevated train tracks to the west and enormous interstate highways around much of the rest of the neighborhood. For this reason, and because the Ironbound’s Portuguese community has been known for its insularity, the boundaries separating the ethnic enclave from the rest of the city and beyond have been dubbed “The Codfish Curtain” by local Luso-American resident and scholar Linda Rodrigues (Smothers 1997).

The tensions over “bounded” isolation versus unbound mixing, which sometimes play out among the audiences of Ironbound banquet halls, reflect more everyday tensions within an ethnic enclave in the midst of a demographic shift. As ethnographers have documented in Ironbound high schools (Ramos-Zayas 2009) and in neighborhood festivals and outdoor celebrations (Holton 2006b), some segments of the Ironbound population clash over simmering postcolonial prejudices and preconceptions. Viewed from one angle, the tension involves one group’s demographic diminishment and another group’s rise. The Portuguese, who arrived en masse in Newark between 1960 and 1980, have been joined and are perhaps slowly being replaced in the East Ward by Brazilians and Central Americans, most of whom began arriving in the 1990s.<sup>17</sup> It is a classic story of ethnic succession, where an urban community of immigrants, now in the second and third generations, begins to assimilate into the mainstream and move out toward the suburbs or neighboring cities in search of better school systems and more green space. There are still many Portuguese families living in the Ironbound, but they are aging. Most of those who have moved out to nearby towns still come back regularly to the Ironbound for grocery shopping, to attend mass, to see friends, and to spend time at clubs and cultural centers. But the Portuguese component to the neighborhood is not what it used to be, and people sense that the Ironbound’s “Little Portugal” era may be in decline.

In its more complex form, the Ironbound conflict extends beyond the fragility of one group’s attachment to place during a moment of demographic transition. The situation in the Ironbound is more complicated because, in large part, the group being replaced and the group doing the replacing share a colonial history and a language. According to the testimonies of several hundred Portuguese and Brazilian immigrants interviewed for the Ironbound Oral History Project (IOHP), what divides and unites these two ethnic groups, resettled side by side in the US in an era of postcolonialism, is very much in contention.<sup>18</sup> Both groups come to the fresh start provided by migration with colonial baggage and the

vestiges of old wounds and prejudices that inflect present day interaction and sometimes thwart a peaceable coexistence in diaspora.

Although a discourse analysis of the IOHP interviews shows a narrative strain emphasizing Portuguese-Brazilian cooperation, the more dominant narrative is one of cultural misunderstanding, strife, and a markedly dissociative way of defining Portuguese and Brazilian identity in diaspora. There are incendiary charges in both directions: IOHP testimonies by Brazilians link charges of racial prejudice, closed-mindedness, and conservatism to Portugal's history as a colonial power and to its leadership role in the slave trade.<sup>19</sup> Charges in the other direction emphasize Brazil's "tropical" orientation and what is characterized as a companion attitude of liberalism and moral permissiveness.<sup>20</sup> Persuasive evidence of these oppositional attitudes, according to the testimonies, is found in the expressive forms that have come to symbolize cultural difference in this Newark neighborhood (Holton 2006b). Although there are performance forms popular in the Ironbound, such as Portuguese rancho groups and Brazilian gaúcho groups, that are quite similar in their presentational styles, performance circuits, and social purpose as positive leisure-time activities for second-generation urban youth, not one person interviewed mentioned them as proof of the ways in which Portuguese and Brazilians are similar. Instead, many testimonies focused on the ways in which the two "national song forms"—fado and samba—perfectly expressed the North-South divide and the reasons that cultural habits developed in Brazil and Portugal, respectively, are inherently and forever opposed. In short, fado and samba both bolster and justify Luso-Brazilian conflict in the Ironbound.

As John M. O'Connell (2010, vii) states, "music can be used to identify conflict by examining the manifestations of discord in musical discourse and in musical practice." Discourse about the way in which musical forms represent cultural difference and justify quotidian antagonisms elucidate conservative attitudes concerning the preservation and protection of Portugal's "national song." Against this backdrop, one can begin to understand why there is resistance to fado's border crossing, both in its mixing with other Lusophone music genres and in its role as a platform for the expressive talents of immigrant musicians and lyricists. If fado is an essential (and essentialized) symbol of Portuguese identity in diaspora in the context of Luso-Brazilian tension, then it is not difficult to see why multiethnic teams of fado musicians and vocalists would draw complaint from the more conservative sector of the population. To stir the pot even further,

scholars are increasingly in agreement that Portugal's "national song" has Afro-Brazilian roots (among other early influences), and that the first documented mention of the cultural form "fado"—then more of a danced than sung form—actually appeared in Brazil in the 1700s.<sup>21</sup> It is easy to understand, then, why singing "Estranha forma da vida," an Amália Rodrigues classic, in a Brazilian accent, or adding a bossa nova syncopation to fado guitar arrangements, or splicing together fado and samba verses and performing them in drag—all formal experimentations that have occurred in this region over the past decade—would offend a conservative standpoint. It follows that special-event programming like ProVerbo's gala, curated to demonstrate the easy cohabitation and expressive kinship between Lusophone musical genres such as fado, morna, bossa nova, and samba, would provoke the early departure of those audience members wishing the codfish curtain had never been lifted.

Despite the insular reputation of this ethnic enclave, a gingerly established paradigm of mixture seems to be gaining support, as more and more fado enthusiasts and musicians from the community and beyond push the boundaries of instrumentation, arrangement, and venue. This sometimes involves expanding the cast of fado performers into multiethnic, plurilingual teams rallied around the beauty of a musical form—making a *de facto* argument for pan-Lusophone exchange and collaboration. As Dan Lundburg (2010) notes in his study of Middle Eastern musicians in Germany, the diasporic context can encourage interethnic cooperation among musicians—partnerships that might not be possible in other sociogeographic spaces. Scholars like Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (1988) have also argued that the diasporic context can be a liberating space of formal musical innovation—as was the case with her study of US klezmer musicians. Until relatively recently, however, this has not been true for fado in Northern New Jersey. Unlike the easy integration of non-Portuguese and Portuguese instrumentalists in Rhode Island bandas that Katherine Brucher (2009) documents, this relatively recent inclusion of foreign singers and instrumentalists in the fado scene of New Jersey and New York City has taken a while to become accepted wholesale by the Ironbound fado community.

A constellation of factors has facilitated fado's particularly intense border crossing in the New Jersey/New York region. First, the shortage of instrumentalists and the closing of the last *casa de fado*, ostensibly constraining factors, paradoxically forced fado performance to extend into new venues, open up to new audiences, and expand its usual cast of performers to include musicians

and vocalists from other ethnic groups. Second, while the Ironbound's demographic shift and the Portuguese community's slowly diminishing residential presence have indeed produced tension and anxiety, they have also spawned a paradigm of mixture—if not always out of desire, then out of necessity—and certain Portuguese American community and cultural leaders have been vocal advocates of this turn.<sup>22</sup>

In addition, a shift in fado historiography and representation has spread across the Atlantic. More definitive arguments by scholars such as Rui Vieira Nery (2004) and José Tinhorão (1994) have found their way into New Jersey's Portuguese community, expanding residents' understanding of fado's early history and the triangulation of cultural influences that circulated among port cities in Brazil, Africa, and Portugal and gave rise to the song/dance form in its earliest incantation. Aside from reading newspaper articles and reviews about fado in the local paper *LusoAmericano* and online, attending guest lectures at area universities by visiting musicologists such as Salwa Castelo-Branco, and participating in classes (such as the recent Citylore workshops) dedicated to dispelling myths about fado's early history, many local fado enthusiasts and performers have seen Carlos Saura's film *Fados* (2007).<sup>23</sup> Saura's cinematic portrayal of fado in all its diversity, with attendant pluricontinental influences and proliferation, has impacted New Jersey's local fado community by exposing narrative inroads for viewing fado more broadly, as "world heritage" along the lines of its UNESCO designation in 2011, instead of a narrowly defined national form to be protected from outside participation and alteration.

Lastly, the codfish curtain has been opened, allowing for broader trafficking of new multiethnic casts of fado performers, due in part to the emergence of a young crop of second-generation fadistas. Although it is beyond the purview of this paper (and has been treated at some length elsewhere), it is worth noting that these younger Northern New Jersey fadistas are using online technology, bilingualism, and more expansive spatial practices to connect Newark to New York City, thus opening up the fado performance scene even further.<sup>24</sup> The scene's expansion beyond the local enclave can also be linked to the rise of several Portuguese restaurants in New York City that have offered weekly fado sessions on and off over the past several decades. Because of this partnership, homegrown US fado has garnered a broader, more diverse audience, and New Jersey fadistas increasingly engage other genres and ways of thinking about music and spectacle.

## Conclusion

This paper has explored fado's placemaking and border crossing against the backdrop of the changing space of the immigrant enclave. As Michael Colvin (2008; 2016) underscores, fado has a long history of association with vulnerable urban spaces and transient populations. In the case of the Ironbound, socio-spatial vulnerability is tied to processes of ethnic succession, the slow dissolution of Newark's "Little Portugal" and concomitant concerns surrounding belonging and identity in diaspora. Tracking down and securing the "tight spaces" where fado can thrive in diaspora is a bulwark against the threat of disappearance and the "perilous territory of not-belonging" (Said 2010, 359). In the process of accommodating challenges to venue, instrumentation, and changing public tastes, Ironbound fado became increasingly accustomed to sharing the stage with more up-tempo Latin American and Caribbean musics. The one-stop Saturday night experience, where a diverse, polyglot public can reminisce about the past while dancing away the stresses of the present, seemed to work for a contingent of first-generation fado enthusiasts.

For some, these accommodations signal an erosion of social meaning and threaten the cultural integrity of fado as a genre. Some worry that the kind of "high-quality silence" needed from fado audiences is at odds with US ideologies and habits and the dizzying rhythms of urban life. To ward against the erasure or diminishment of fado's more "difficult" repertoire, some New Jersey fadistas have borrowed the tools and structures of education to create an environment for preserving and understanding fado in all of its lyrical and philosophical depth. Similarly, new social pathways facilitate border crossing, and paradigms of mixture and exchange have broadened the range of fado's publics and performers, creating a more dynamic and multidirectional circuitry between the Ironbound and New York City and between Portugal and Newark.

Ultimately, the perennial anxiety over fado's survival in the US can be quieted by an understanding of the genre's special link to the experience of deterritorialization, and to those who have experienced loss by way of migration. In the words of New Jersey fado guitarist Francisco Chuva (2008),

o fado [conta] histórias do português que foi para o estrangeiro, do pescador que saiu pelo mar, disilusões da vida. Tem a ver com a saudade. Eu acho [que] a gente aqui, os portugueses aqui sentem mais o fado do que os portugueses lá. Não quero dizer que os portugueses lá não gostam do fado . . . mas acho

que o afastamento do nosso país e a saudade leva-nos a gostar mais do fado.  
 . . . E eu penso que no geral toda a gente pensa na mesma maneira.

NOTES

1. I would like to thank the many fado performers and aficionados who shared their thoughts and insights with me over the years, sometimes sitting for multiple interviews and fielding questions of all sorts. Without their time and generosity, this research would not have been possible. Any errors or shortcomings are my own.

2. Newark's late twentieth- and early twenty-first-century history has been greatly impacted by the 1967 uprisings and subsequent legislative and grassroots attempts to ameliorate the unjust structures and practices that provoked them. In July 1967, Newark's disenfranchised, largely African American residents responded to institutionalized racism, lack of political representation, a white vice grip on local political and commercial power, police brutality, segregation, and "legal" displacement through use of eminent domain laws by rising up against systemic injustice. The violence and unrest that ensued ended up in the destruction of property and businesses. The events also set off an exodus of "white flight" to the suburbs and years of more general population loss for Newark. Racist redlining practices made it difficult for working-class people of color to rebuild. In the last fifteen years, there has been some progress in addressing the practices, laws, and attitudes that set off the 1967 uprisings, but a 2019 report entitled "Recent Wealth Divide in Newark" shows that "despite Newark's ongoing renaissance as a corporate and cultural hub, the new wealth is not, for the most part, flowing to much of its population—the communities of color that make up the majority of city residents" (Flanagan 2019). It is for these reasons and others that the "renaissance city" designation for Newark inspires controversy.

3. The Bernardino Coutinho family started the Portugal Day parade in the early 1980s. It began as a small, intimate urban parade celebrating Portugal's different regions, but has grown in recent years into an enormous two-week series of concerts, exhibits, dinners, and lectures culminating in the Portugal Day parade. The parade itself and some of the corollary events have taken on a broader, more inclusive orientation, involving various associations and populations from Newark's different neighborhoods and throughout Northern New Jersey. At one point, a committee of organizers considered calling it the "Immigrant Parade" and disassociating it from the Portuguese altogether. Ultimately this was voted down, but the parade itself remains a wide-ranging hodgepodge of municipal, county, and even suburban groups and organizations, ranging from Scottish bagpipe players, African American step groups, and Brazilian samba performers to Portuguese folkloric troupes and beyond.

4. The Ironbound Oral History Project was started in 2000 by the author. It is a repository of more than 250 oral history interviews with Portuguese-speaking migrants and



their descendants residing in Northern New Jersey. The collection of interviews has been conducted and transcribed by undergraduate students at Rutgers University in Newark, and is growing every year.

5. For more on second-generation fado performers in New Jersey and in California, see Holton (2016; 2020).

6. For as long as I have been doing fieldwork within the fado scene of New Jersey, there have been discussions of fado's impending disappearance. The anxiety over whether or not fado will "survive" in this Portuguese American immigrant hub has recently been revealed, for example, through the dynamic online discussion following guitarist José Luis Iglesias's Facebook post entitled "Is There Still Fado in New Jersey?" An essay form of this post was subsequently published in *eMagazine* (Iglesias 2019).

7. According to Alexandra Klein and Vera Alves (1994, 37), during the period before dedicated *casas de fado* emerged, fado was performed throughout Lisbon in an "unprogrammed way" as the "fado vadio," literally "vagabond fado," performed "na rua, na taberna, no bordel, e depois, a par destes, no salão aristocrático e nas esperas de toiros."

8. According to Leonor Losa's (2019, 133) recent dissertation on fado performance in Lisbon, the importance of the *casa de fado* to the nurturing of young talent has ebbed and flowed over the years. Analyzing the practices of lauded younger generation fadista Ricardo Ribeiro, Losa states that "a centralidade que a presença na casa de fados ocupa na vida de Ricardo não é típica da nova geração de fadistas cujas carreiras, como a de Ricardo, se desenvolvem centralmente em trabalhos gravados e espetáculos, sendo que o eixo da apresentação nestes espaços é cada vez menos relevante." So while the lack of a *casa de fado* in the Ironbound is sometimes used as a negative indicator of the health of the fado scene in diaspora, its importance in securing a new generation of fado singers in Lisbon seems to vary and shift. The same can be said for the younger generation of fadistas in Northern New Jersey, many of whom rely on audio recordings and online performance videos for practice and learning (Holton 2016).

9. The link between Lisbon and Newark can be seen in the name of this Ironbound *casa de fado*, established by fadista-proprietor Rosalina Silva and her husband. Quebra Bilhas was the name of a well-known *casa de fado* on the outskirts of Lisbon. Rosalina Silva became enchanted with the name of the establishment in her home country and decided to duplicate it when she opened her own fado house in Newark.

10. Several Newark-based Portuguese American writers have penned literary works centering on Newark's Ironbound neighborhood, where the Ironbound is even featured as a protagonist—personified as a lover, a mother, or a friend. Hugo dos Santos (2012), for example, wrote an extended literary piece along these lines, entitled "Ironbound, A Blog," which he describes as a "love letter to the place where I grew up." Writers João S. Martins (2015), Marina Carreira (2017; 2018), paulA neves and Nick Kline (2017), Gloria de Melo (1998), and others have also written fado poems focused on Newark or the relationship

between Newark and Lisbon. This intense literary focus on the space of the neighborhood, applying affective frameworks of topophilia to the hyperlocal, thus characterizes fado lyrics in both riverside locations, further unifying Newark and Lisbon as urban environments that inspire the creation and performance of fado.

11. It is interesting to note the genealogy of this term and its increasing relevance to studies of improvisation. Houston Baker first used “tight spaces” in his book *Turning South Again: Re-Thinking Modernism/Re-Reading Booker T* (2001), followed by an expanding cadre of dance scholars who use it to analyze the dynamic between spatial or social constraint and aesthetic improvisation and emancipation (see Midgelow 2019; Browning 2011).

12. Throughout this essay I use real names of cited performers with permission.

13. Klein and Alves (1994, 39) trace a similar dynamic beginning in late-1920s Lisbon, where the increasingly commercial strategy that linked profit with greater diversity of musical programming produced dedicated fado houses and fado salons, “procurando atingir um público vasto de modo a rentabilizarem-se. . . . Deste modo, não é por acaso que muitas vezes o fado era apresentado em conjunto com outros géneros musicais, também em voga: o foxtrot, o tango, a valsa, e o jazz.”

14. The New Jersey/New York fado scene is still in the midst of what many deem an “instrument crisis,” due to the lack of dedicated fado string players. Fifteen years ago, there were three area “parelhas” or pairs of viola/guitarra players who regularly accompanied local fado singers. At one point there were also several young Luso-American instrumentalists who seemed promising replacements for the aging first-generation players. However, due to illness, aging, and emigration, suddenly the local scene found itself in the mid-2010s with no solid guitarra player and only one seasoned viola player. Interestingly, the fado scene responded using several different strategies. For higher profile events with ample programming budgets, José Silva and Viriato Ferreira, the well-known parelha from Southern New England, travel five hours south to perform. For more routine performances in venues like El Pastor, nontraditional instrumentation such as electric keyboard and percussion is used as a stand-in. And in some venues, special occasions that feature guitarra accompaniment are advertised in local papers as a special draw (Durães 2012). For performances outside the enclave with fewer Portuguese immigrants in the audience, a handful of non-Portuguese instrumentalists sometimes accompany fadistas. This last strategy, which marks an opening up of the guitar-playing circuit, has been largely spearheaded by José Luís Iglesias, an accomplished Portuguese-born guitarist who played with Zeca Afonso in his younger years, holds a master’s degree in jazz studies, and has put an enduring interest in the confluence of Portuguese traditional musics with other expressive forms into practice through local performance, teaching, and recording. Iglesias began teaching himself to play the guitarra portuguesa around 2012 and is now the most reliable player in the area. Loic da Silva, a Luso-French accordion player who moved to New Jersey/New York in 2017, has also entered the scene as a guitarra player to positive local reviews.

15. Tony Cirne (2020) stated that on nights at El Pastor when there seemed to be fewer fado enthusiasts in the audience, and the majority of the room wanted to dance, he would encourage the fadistas to sing more upbeat fados—at least for the first set, until the unaccustomed could get used to the silence required from the audience. According to Cirne, the fadistas did not always take his advice. Some of them, despite the challenging conditions, would continue with plans to sing the “heavier” fados and let the chips fall where there may. Pedro Botas (2012) affirms that the choice and sequencing of fados is sometimes tailored to the room at the last minute.

16. Melo and Martins first introduced these ideas in an interview with Delisa Snowden (2007) for the Portuguese cable TV program *EUA Contacto*—the desire to use the annual ProVerbo gala not only to bring important Portuguese musicians to perform in Newark but also to showcase musicians from other Lusophone countries in order to highlight “cooperation” and commonality across the Portuguese-speaking world. These objectives continue into the present. The organizing committee for the ProVerbo gala in 2019, for example, put out a social-media call for volunteers to compose music to a poem by local Brazilian American journalist Vera Reis entitled “Fado and Samba.” The idea was to present the same poem in two different versions at the 2019 gala—one set to music in the style of a fado and the other in the style of a samba. As stated elsewhere in this paper, the two “national” musical forms, samba and fado, are often invoked as cultural evidence of the differences and tensions between local Portuguese and Brazilian emigrant communities. But in this example the musics are used for different discursive and social purposes: fado and samba are joined together, sharing the same poem, in an orchestration of proximity and sociomusical dialogue.

17. Records show that the Portuguese found their way to New Jersey as early as 1725. But more consistent arrivals did not begin until the 1850s. Promise of factory work became a draw in the early twentieth century, and by the 1920s and 1930s there were six Portuguese-language newspapers published in Newark (“Roots of the Portuguese” 1997). However, the wave of Portuguese emigration from 1960 to 1980, spurred by changes in US immigration laws as well as by political repression and mandatory military service to fight in Portugal’s unpopular colonial wars, produced the greatest numbers of Portuguese settlement in New Jersey to date.

18. Sociologist Glória de Sá (n.d.) has also researched the comingling of Portuguese and Brazilians immigrants in the US, but within a different regional context, that of South-eastern New England.

19. These ideas became the core of a local conflict regarding a statue of Queen Catherine. The New York City borough of Queens is thought to be named after Portuguese Queen Catherine of Bragança, and artist Audrey Flack spent a decade during the 1990s creating models for a statue to honor her. But controversy arose among the city’s residents when Queen Catherine’s slaveholding history was brought to the public’s attention. A group

called “Friends of Queen Catherine,” involving some wealthy Portuguese Americans, tried to fight for the statue’s placement, but in the end it was not given a home in Queens due to the link between Portugal and the slave trade. The twists and turns of this controversy received ample coverage in Newark’s local Portuguese-language paper, *LusoAmericano*, as well as in larger papers such as *The New York Times*. For more on this incident, see Bastos (2020) and Kilgannon (2017).

20. This perception of moral permissiveness conflicts with the reality of Brazilian American religious practices as demonstrated by the influx of Brazilians into Newark’s conservative Evangelical churches---seen as more conservative than the Old-World Catholicism of the Portuguese.

21. For more on this history, see Nery (2004) and Tinhorão (1994); for a discussion of fado historiography and origins debate, see Holton (2006a).

22. In addition to the ProVerbo gala discussed in this paper, there is “Ferry Street,” a literary/musical/graphic design project celebrating the multiethnic space of the Ironbound’s main artery that culminated in a book of original poems and paintings, live concerts, and local gallery exhibitions (Silva, Martins, and Iglesias 2015). One could also read the expansion of the Portugal Day parade in similar terms, and the orientation of the Coutinho family who founded the parade as supporting the mixture/exchange paradigm. Lastly, a series of weekly workshops organized by visiting Portuguese actress Ana Sofia Paiva and funded by the New York City nonprofit Citylore also furthered the fado mixture/exchange orientation. The workshops took place in the Ironbound in spring 2012, comprising several months of weekly two- to three-hour sessions focused on fado history, song taxonomy, and lyric writing, and involving a core group of twenty first- and second-generation poets and musicians. These workshops culminated in a large outdoor concert, which featured original fado lyrics, compositions, and performances by a multiethnic cast of performers.

23. *Fados*, screened locally in New York City starting in March 2009, was promoted with a splashy review in *The New York Times* (see Dargis 2009). Since then, excerpts have been widely viewed on YouTube and spoken and blogged about on local fadistas’ personal websites and Facebook pages.

24. It is also important to note that the most sought-after first- and second-generation fadistas are often asked to perform for special-event occasions beyond the borders of New York and New Jersey, in other hubs of Portuguese emigration in the US, such as Providence, RI; Fall River, MA; Palm Coast, FL; and California’s Central Valley. This diasporic performance circuit has been in place for many decades.

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