Cape Verdean Women and Globalization
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The Politics of Gender, Culture, and Resistance

Katherine Carter
and
Judy Aulette
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This book represents a long journey for the two authors who met more than a decade ago. Since then they have both worked and lived in several countries including Cape Verde, Hungary, England, Ethiopia, Iraq, Poland, Scotland, South Africa, and the United States. This study began when Katherine Carter landed in Cape Verde to teach English. Carter came to know the people in her community and school and she decided that she wanted to document their experience by writing about her time in Cape Verde and about the people she met there.

Judy Aulette joined her soon after when she and Carter started to exchange ideas about how to conduct the research, what questions to ask, and how to understand and record the Cape Verdean voices. Work at this point, as we go to press, is so much a synthesis that it’s difficult to say which author wrote which words. But the original idea and the supervision of the data collection as well as the ethnographic insights come from Carter. Aulette was central to the conceptualization of the issues as research questions and the inclusion of the political and economic context as essential to our understanding of Cape Verde.

The project has evolved through many stages. In the development of this book, we originally intended to write just about our study but as the venture grew we decided that it might be useful to other ethnographers, especially those just starting out, if we explicated the process by which we developed this research and this manuscript. We, therefore, decided to include at the end of each chapter a reflection on the process of the work.

The book is most importantly an expression of life in Cape Verde through the ideas of Cape Verdians. But it is also a reflection by the authors on how to understand that expression from the point of view of two people from outside Cape Verde. In addition, it is a description of our journey developing a research question, gathering data,
deliberating about how best to understand the information, and determining where all of this fits into our understanding of women, Cape Verde, globalization, oppression, and resistance. Our goal, however, was not to stop at the level of description and interpretation but to offer our ideas to the quest for change.

We hope that this book will introduce people to Cape Verde. We also hope that it will help them to see where Cape Verdean women fit into the global political economy. In addition we hope that students of qualitative methods and critical ethnography will gain insight into the techniques, difficulties, and effectiveness of these methodologies. And, most of all we hope that our findings can become part of the struggle to make globalization a tool for equality and justice rather than exploitation and oppression.

Katherine Carter is a sociology professor at the University of Kurdistan-Hawler in Northern Iraq, where she teaches Introduction to Sociology, Social Inequalities, and Introduction to Ethnography. Carter would like to thank Minichel Alemu for his continuous love and support during the long months of writing and to thank our baby boy, Abraham Isaac Alemu, born while this book was going into production. She would like to thank members of the Sociologists for Women in Society and Association of Black Sociologists who, in 2005, heard Carter’s presentation on Cape Verde and gave important feedback. She expresses sincere gratitude to students and colleagues of the Ethnography Department at the University of Debrecen, Hungary, who also provided valuable insights. Finally, Carter expresses great appreciation to Judy Aulette, whom she met in 1997 in a graduate course at UNC Charlotte. Aulette was teaching Social Stratification and Carter was her student. She was also Carter’s M.A. and Ph.D. advisor throughout the next ten years. Aulette provided constant encouragement and challenged Carter to take risks in writing and publishing, and in living and teaching abroad. Carter thanks the students, friends, and families of Cape Verde who made this book possible.

Aulette is a professor in the Department of Sociology and the Women’s and Gender Studies Program at UNC Charlotte where she teaches and writes about family, gender, women, and activism. Aulette would like to thank Albert Aulette, Anna Aulette-Root, and Elizabeth Aulette-Root for their reading of several drafts of this work and their constant support; Tamera Shefer, director of the Women’s and Gender Studies Programme at the University of the Western Cape in Cape Town South Africa for introducing her to gender in Africa; Laurie Garo and Christine Davis her colleagues and members of her
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