

Chapter 2

Luso-Creole Culture and Identity Compared

The Cases of Guinea-Bissau and Sri Lanka

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Introduction

The Upper Guinea Coast is a special case, where processes of creolization in connection to Portugal's expansion are concerned. Colonial ideology used to depict Guinea-Bissau as the 'first Portuguese possession', 'cradle' (Reis Torgal 2005: 64), and 'dawn' (Governo da Guiné 1952) of the Portuguese empire. The Portuguese called at the Upper Guinea Coast on their way to Asia and Brazil. Portuguese culture, having 'disembarked' there first, has been appropriated, integrated and transformed by local populations there since the late fifteenth century. Hence, the Upper Guinea Coast was the first region where creolization occurred in connection to (Portuguese) colonialism (Vale de Almeida 2007). Processes of cultural and particularly linguistic creolization in Africa and Asia have been the subject of several 'mono-sited' studies. However, very few (e.g. Knörr 2008, 2010) involve a comparative look at such processes and their social impact. Generally speaking, findings concerning linguistic connections are linked to connections beyond language – where people speak, they interact (and vice versa); and where they interact, new culture and new identifications are likely to emerge. Research has, however, led to a number of studies on creole groups and culture, which I term 'Luso-Creole'. This notion alludes to a network of 'continued identities' and cultural representations that started emerging during the Portuguese expansion that began in the fifteenth century and have since acquired specific complexities and dynamics (Pina Cabral 2010).

Historical links between the Luso-Creole language varieties in Guinea-Bissau, the Casamance and Cape Verde, and between Upper Guinea, the Gulf of Guinea islands and the Caribbean (Martinus 1996; Jacobs 2009) are not disputed, but early connections between the Upper Guinea Coast and Asia (cf. Kohl 2011c; cf.

Cardoso 2010) are somewhat more controversial. According to the monogenetic hypothesis – based on historico-linguistic data put forward by Thompson (1961a, 1961b) and Valkhoff (1966, 1972) but contested by authors like Ferraz (1987), amongst others – a Luso-Creole language served as the first global lingua franca, connecting the Indian Ocean basin with Africa. Hancock (1975) claimed that Asian Luso-Creole languages generally seem to be marginally connected to the Upper Guinea Coast. Cardoso (2010) recently suggested that ships' passengers journeying from Africa to Asia may have acted as transmitters of Luso-Pidgin elements, leaving unmentioned the possibility that Africans who (were) settled in parts of Asia may have contributed to the spread of Luso-Creole languages there.

Against this background, this chapter sets out to compare some of the dynamics at play in processes of cultural creolization – namely, creole identity construction, creole boundary maintenance and creole influences on postcolonial nation-building – in Guinea-Bissau and Sri Lanka. In doing so, it aims to disclose similarities and differences of the processes and results of creolization, and explain how these resemblances and differences are related to the social make-up of the respective societies in which they occur.¹

Lusocreolization in Cross-Cultural Research

The carrying out of a comparative survey has to rely substantially on existing scholarly literature, not just because no researcher alone can study all the different creole groups to be examined, but also because comparisons may well profit from a historical perspective based on historical sources. Meanwhile, cross-cultural analyses may have to rely on fairly diverse, disparate ethnographic data from the respective geographic settings, which complicates comparisons – as is the case with this study. If we choose to look at (Luso-)Creole culture and identity in a comparative, cross-cultural perspective, then we need to conceptualize 'creole' as an analytical term, since attributes like 'creole' and its cognates in other European languages ('créole', 'crioulo', 'criollo', etc.) 'have meant lots of different things at different times' (Stewart 2007: 5).

The creole case is further complicated by the fact that some creole groups are – by reason of their heterogeneous origins within colonial contexts – identified as 'creoles' by third parties yet do not employ the adjective 'creole' (or its counterpart in any other language) as part of their ethnonym or self-description. This applies, for example, to the Kristons de Geba in Guinea-Bissau (Kohl 2009a, 2009b) as well as the Portuguese Burghers and so-called Kaffirs in Sri Lanka – cases to be studied in this chapter. Furthermore, a creole language does not necessarily exist in all locations where creole groups live, as shown by the examples of the Agudás and Tabom in Ghana, Benin, Togo and Nigeria, who, although they do not speak a creole language, are nevertheless regarded as creoles by historians and social anthropologists. The fact that analytical and actor perspectives on

‘creoleness’ can differ (Knörr 2010) is thus important for comparisons. In Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, moreover, creole languages initially spoken mainly by members of small creole groups spread across ethnic boundaries and turned into major lingua francas. As a result, a small number of ‘creoles’ serve a large number of creole speakers.

How, then, can different meanings of ‘creole’ and ‘creolization’ be conceived in ways that make them appropriate tools for cross-cultural research? ‘Creolization’ in an anthropological sense may be conceived as an intergenerational process in which old group boundaries are increasingly dissolved and replaced by new ones. This process is accompanied by the recontextualization of both identity and culture (Knörr 2010) and may result in strongly or weakly ethnicized new identities (cf. Kohl 2009b). Creolization is thus linked to indigenization, in that a newly emerging creole group increasingly identifies with its new local, cultural and social environment and refers to the latter and to a specific shared history as markers of group identity (Knörr 2010). At this juncture, new settlers can become ‘firstcomers’ to certain localities, as opposed to the ‘latecomers’ who follow thereafter (Kopytoff 1987). In several cases, creole groups have surrounded themselves with a mystique of exclusiveness (Cohen 1981; Roberts, Reheem and Colin-Thomé 1989), portraying themselves as ‘bringers of civilization’ and thereby distancing themselves from the autochthonous, ‘noncivilized’ population. Historical processes of creolization often occurred in societies that were shaped by rather fixed boundaries along social, physical and ancestral criteria, constraining socially upward and downward mobility (Knörr 2010). However, creole identity is not a priori linked to phenotypical and class-related characteristics (notably elite status; see Knörr 2010), and its emergence is not restricted to locations that were subject to European colonization. Rather, creolization occurs in settings marked by cultural and identitarian heterogeneity and social hierarchies. Therefore, creolization can also occur in settings untouched by European colonialism, such as (precolonial) East Africa (e.g. Walker 2005; Bryceson 2010), where a distinct Swahili identity emerged in some coastal settings.

Cultural creolization is not to be equated with processes of urbanization or ‘detrribalization’. Indeed, it has often occurred in rural settings like the plantation societies of the Caribbean. Likewise, urbanization may entail indigenization but does not necessarily involve creolization. Detribalization – a term often used to denote processes in which people become estranged from their ‘traditional’ culture upon coming into contact with ‘modern’ ways of life, often in multiethnic and urban settings – however, constitutes one aspect of cultural creolization in that the forging of a new common identity among people of various origins necessitates the de-ethnicization of the different original identities in support of the newly emerging common identity (Knörr 2010). Processes of cultural creolization are distinct from processes of cultural transethnicization (which Knörr [2010] termed ‘pidginization’): although in both cases a new common identity

evolves, in the course of transethnicization the heterogeneous original identities stay intact and are not substituted by the newly emerging identity.

What might comparative analyses of Luso-Creole culture and identity look like, and how can 'Luso-Creole' be conceptualized? Here, Luso-Creole refers to a 'travel of ideas' (Czarniawska and Joerges 1996; Kaufmann and Rottenburg 2012), alluding to long-term impacts of Portugal's maritime interactions and interchanges that continue to unfold their potentials to the present day, as evidenced by now-current narratives, cultural representations and identity constructions that *ex post* refer to past times of Portuguese colonization. In fact, many Luso-Creole communities continue to refer to Portuguese legacies, such as the Catholic faith and Luso-Creole languages, that are often employed as ethnic markers. However, these markers are insufficient to define a 'Luso-Creole' (Pina Cabral 2010), or to delineate a 'Portuguese' space, as proponents of 'lusotropicalism' have suggested. Lusotropicalism was Portugal's colonial ideology before 1974. Taking a Eurocentric and essentialist perspective, this ideology attributed to the Portuguese the exceptional ability to acclimatize to the tropics and socio-culturally fraternize with the colonized people, thus attempting to underline the Iberian country's greatness and peculiarity (Castelo 1999). The doctrine therefore implied that a number of groups colonized or influenced by Portugal since the fifteenth century shared a Portuguese cultural 'essence' that suggested a specific cultural reciprocity with Portugal yet never existed in social practice.

Analytically, Luso-Creole markers are not fixed cultural essences. Rather, they are subject to continuous reinterpretations, recontextualizations and even reifications that serve to maintain and redraw cultural and identitarian boundaries vis-à-vis other groups. During Portugal's colonial expansion, the encounter between Eurocentric ideas and diverse, locally specific thought-worlds led to the unplanned translation of ideas, turning them into different substances (Czarniawska and Joerges 1996). In the long run, sociocultural values, norms and features were often selectively appropriated by emerging Luso-Creole groups – both intentionally and unintentionally – that subsequently integrated and adjusted them to their own needs and cultural structures: 'those social innovations that were incompatible with local social structures were rejected, but useful or unthreatening characteristics were embraced, particularly if such moves were likely to be seen as positive attributes' (Walker 2005: 195).

A Luso-Creole 'travel of ideas' can attest to the power of the colonized subjects who, as agents, creatively and selectively appropriated specific 'Portuguese' sociocultural values and representations, combining them with their own ideas or those borrowed from third parties, and thereby underscoring intercultural interactions of various kinds. Thus, the imitation and appropriation of ideas was by no means unilateral (as lusotropicalism suggested); rather, the 'travel of ideas' has always gone back and forth. Europe in general, like Portugal in particular, has proved to be only one disseminator of ideas, albeit quite a powerful one. Once

appropriated, ideas of heterogeneous origins were integrated, intermingled and transformed over generations, sometimes to such an extent that their origins are no longer traceable. Nevertheless, in various geographic settings references to Portugal can be quite strong, serving as markers of difference in mutual boundary construction. In African, American and Asian creole contexts, ‘Portuguese’ may often be interpreted differently from European understandings of the term. Furthermore, many who refer to ‘Portuguese’ or Christian–Catholic features may not at all identify themselves as ‘Portuguese’. References to ‘Portuguese’ change over time and are always related to context and place (cf. Fabian 1983). A Luso-Creole space can be conceived as an intersubjective network of contacts that owes its existence to distinct markers – sociocultural concepts, styles, ideas, features, patterns of cognition – that in various localities have passed through manifold complex and creative dynamics (Pina Cabral 2010).

In the following discussion of Luso-Creole culture and identity I will concentrate on two objects of comparison. Using my findings from Guinea-Bissau and data extracted from scholarly literature on Sri Lanka, I will address (1) the construction of creole identities and the strategies employed to maintain boundaries in the interaction with other, non-creole groups; and (2) creole groups’ contributions to postcolonial nation-building, both top-down and from below. Given the dissimilarity and incompleteness of data, this can only be done in a preliminary fashion at this point.

Guinea-Bissau versus Sri Lanka

In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese started establishing trading posts along the West African coast. There, Europeans, Cape Verdeans and Africans came to interact and intermingle, increasingly developing distinct identities and lifestyles that exist up to the present day. Guinea-Bissau remained a Portuguese colony until 1973/74, when it achieved independence after more than a decade of armed struggle. Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon, was ‘discovered’ by the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century. Portugal had to cede this territory to the Netherlands in 1658, and the Dutch were themselves supplanted by the British in 1796. In any case, one result of Portugal’s presence was the emergence of small Luso-Creole communities along the island’s east coast and in its north-west. Sri Lanka became independent from British rule in 1948.

Identity Construction and Interethnic Relations

In Guinea-Bissau, various creole categories of people have long coexisted. These include descendants of immigrants from Cape Verde, who can be distinguished from people of Kriston (literally ‘Christian’) origin (cf. Havik 2004, 2007; Kohl 2009a, 2009b). Creoles number only a few thousand people. The early emer-

gence of Kriston identity is strongly connected with the European-African colonial encounter along the Upper Guinea Coast, as numerous scholars have shown (e.g. Mark 2002; Brooks 2003; Havik 2004; Mark and da Silva Horta 2011). Portuguese navigators began exploring the coastal and riverine regions of present-day Guinea-Bissau in the mid-fifteenth century. Subsequently, European adventurers, delinquents and merchants settled in the area and began to work as commercial middlemen between Africans in the hinterland and European and Cape Verdean businessmen. This turned *praças* – small, isolated Portuguese trading posts connected by maritime links – into exchange hubs for commodities and slaves that served as locations for European-African cultural encounters.

Apart from the Portuguese officials and militaries, Catholic clergymen established themselves in the trading posts with a view to proselytize Africans. Within these *praças*, high levels of interethnic mixture and intermarriages (i.e. a process of cultural creolization) produced new cultural representations and a new common creole identity. Identity among the Kriston communities was ultimately defined by language (a Portuguese-based creole vernacular, nowadays known as Kriol), a distinctive architecture (rectangular houses with verandas) and the Catholic religion (Mark 2002). For instance, *manjuandadis* – predominantly female associations that provide for sociability and mutual solidarity (Trajano Filho 1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2010; cf. Kohl 2009b, 2012a, 2012b) – have apparently integrated features of both European Christian lay brotherhoods and African age-set organizations (see below). Likewise integrating Portuguese and African features is carnival, which used to be celebrated annually in the former trade settlements (Kohl 2009b). The Kristons, who served as economic, cultural and political brokers for Europeans engaged in commerce, regarded themselves as firstcomers to these trading posts and are widely recognized as such. In the early days, several terms to denote Kristons emerged, some of them persisting until at least the early twentieth century. In use for a long time was the term *grumete* (literally, ‘cabin boy’), implying a relation of servitude, whereas *tangomão* – referring to outcasts and renegades involved in riverine trade – had largely disappeared by the late nineteenth century (Havik 2004). Other widely used terms ascribed to Kristons were *filhos da terra* (literally, ‘sons of the land’) and *cristãos da terra* or ‘Christians of the land’ (Mark 2002). Historically, Kristons also identified themselves also as ‘Portuguese’, as they connoted their Catholic faith and fluency in Portuguese or Kriol respectively with ‘Portugueseness’.

One strategy Kristons use even nowadays to emphasize their creole descent is toponymical references, by which they associate themselves with one of the former trading posts to indicate their origin, for example by adding *di Bissau* (‘from Bissau’) or *di Cacheu* (‘from Cacheu’). Thus, although Christianity at present is no longer the preserve of creoles, the additive *Kriston di Bolama* (‘Christian of Bolama’) highlights the individual’s or family’s creole background in one or several of the former *praças*.

Kriston identity has been transethnic: Kristons have identified with one or another ethnic group inasmuch as Kriston identity served as an additional or umbrella identification for members of other ethnic groups. My recent field research found that creole members of the middle and lower classes who identified with one of the various 'ordinary' ethnic groups inhabiting Guinea-Bissau (notably Pepels, Manjacos, Balantas, Bijagós, Felupes or Mancanhas) simultaneously identified themselves as Kristons or used such expressions as *di Cacheu* or *Kriston di Farim*, mentioned above. By contrast, members of the upper class often tended to negate any ethnic affiliation, thus continuing the colonial practice of negating ethnic affiliation while stressing nationality (formerly 'Portuguese', at present 'Bissau-Guinean'). Nonetheless, fellow citizens (pretend to) know these individuals' or families' ethnic background. The identity of those Kristons who mixed with Cape Verdeans, Europeans and – since the early twentieth century – newly arrived Lebanese is only weakly ethnicized. The Kristons may be described as a category of people rather than a group with a pronounced 'we-consciousness' or 'groupness' (cf. Brubaker 2004) – in contrast to both Bissau-Guinean Cape Verdeans and Kristons de Geba.

Scholars sometimes ignore Kriston identity, considering only Cape Verdean descendants residing in Guinea-Bissau to be creoles (see Schiefer 2002; Ellery Mourão 2009). Historically, Cape Verdeans' identity indeed evolved through a process of cultural creolization in the archipelago off the West African coast. They have settled in Guinea-Bissau for centuries. Whereas members of recently migrated families often keep in touch with their families in the archipelago, other individuals in Cape Verdean families that have resided in the country for generations no longer maintain any familial ties to the islands (Kohl 2009a, forthcoming). Cape Verdean immigration to continental West Africa dates back to the early times of Portugal's presence. Cape Verdean clergymen, traders, soldiers and, in the twentieth century, administrative staff and commercial clerks came to Guinea-Bissau. They often used to intermingle especially with Kristons, but since the late nineteenth century Cape Verdeans have increasingly put emphasis on their distinctiveness (Havik 2004). To this day, many creoles of Cape Verdean descent claim to be more Portuguese, more European and hence more civilized than other inhabitants of Guinea-Bissau, including Kriston descendants, proudly depicting their 'home country' as closer to Europe in terms of sociocultural and economic indicators as well as political stability. To support their claims, some interviewees in Bissau, for example, referred to the Cape Verdean flag, which slightly resembles that of the European Union. To give another example, some of my neighbours of Cape Verdean origin in Guinea-Bissau accused their fellow Bissau-Guineans of being involved in magic and witchcraft, distancing themselves from such practices. However, in numerous informal conversations I found out that many of them themselves engaged in 'superstitious' beliefs and practices

that they publicly rejected. Politically, the Portuguese historically sought to portray Cape Verdeans as their allies, trying to divide the independence movement that engaged many Cape Verdeans. After independence, Cape Verdean politicians were criticized for their strong role in Bissau-Guinean politics, leading to the first successful coup in 1980 (Kohl forthcoming).

As in the Cape Verdean case, the identity of the Kristons de Geba is strongly ethnicized – the ethnonym refers to the now decayed former trading post of Geba in central Guinea-Bissau. The Kristons de Geba regard Geba as their ancestral home, although most of them now reside either in nearby Bafatá or in Bissau. Having traditionally settled in an area populated predominantly by Muslims, they developed a quite strong, non-transethnic ethnic identity, stressing their nominal Christian faith. Unlike other Kristons' identification, their ethnic ascription and self-identification are congruent, and their group cohesion is very pronounced (see Kohl 2009a, 2011a).

Despite these differences, many creoles in Guinea-Bissau continue to stress their historical roles as brokers for the Portuguese, emphasizing their part-European genealogies, urban residence and Christian beliefs and often, in doing so, drawing a boundary between them and the 'uncivilized' (religiously and socially) rural population (Kohl 2009b). Kristons and Cape Verdeans are united by their common fluency in the Luso-Creole Kriol language that emerged along the Upper Guinea Coast in the sixteenth century and has turned into the country's lingua franca in the past forty years (do Couto 1994).²

The example of Sri Lanka resembles the Bissau-Guinean case insofar as Sri Lanka is inhabited by various creole groups that refer to different European heritages. Today, they account for less than 1 per cent of the total population and live predominantly in urban environments along the coast. Their origins can be traced back to the times of colonization by the Portuguese, Dutch and British, whose consecutive presence entailed settlement by Europeans, Africans and Indians and, henceforth, the emergence of several coexisting creole communities. The Dutch Burghers were a small but influential minority before losing ground to Sinhalese and Tamils after independence in 1948 (cf. McGilvray 1982; Henry 1986; Roberts, Reheem and Colin-Thomé 1989; Roberts 1994). They pointed extensively to their part-Dutch ancestry and bear mention here only so far as their case facilitates the understanding of the relationship between creoles on the one hand and colonialism and nationalism on the other. My main focus will instead be the Portuguese Burghers (McGilvray 1982, 2007, 2008; Jackson 1990) and the so-called Kaffirs (Jackson 1990; de Silva Jayasuriya 2001, 2003, 2006), as these groups refer to a Luso-Creole space, conceiving of themselves as parts of an intersubjective network. This Luso-Creole space is based on what these groups perceive, style, reinterpret, recontextualize and reify – both consciously and unconsciously – as 'Portuguese', putting forward their Catholic faith, a Luso-

Creole language, a music style known as *Baila* (derived from the Portuguese term for ‘dance’) and Luso-Creole folk songs and narrations (cf. Jackson 1990, 2005; Sheeran 1997; de Mel 2006).

Once the Portuguese had established commercial contacts with Sri Lanka at the beginning of the sixteenth century, they did not mix solely with the local Sri Lankan population. From about 1630 they also relied on the military and auxiliary assistance of mercenary African soldier-slaves – most of them probably originating from South-Eastern Africa, Madagascar and Ethiopia – whom they supposedly introduced to the island via the Indo-Portuguese settlement of Goa (Boxer 1977; de Mel 2006). While the Portuguese were, for military and imperial ends, open to miscegenation, ‘unofficial prejudice ... ran much deeper’ (Boxer 1977: 303). Eventually, the mixing led to the emergence of diverse *mestiço* (European father and Sri Lankan mother), *castiço* (European father and Eurasian mother), *mulato* (European father and African mother) and *lançado* strata – the latter, Africans, at the bottom of society (Jackson 1990). In this regard, subsequent Dutch and British colonial policies differed much from the Portuguese approach: both Dutch and British took offence to the Portuguese’s ‘indiscriminately mixing with natives and Africans to effectively inject “inferior” elements of primitivism into the superior and pristine European racial stock and cultural legitimacy’, making them responsible for ‘producing “degenerate” mixed offspring’ (de Mel 2006: 4).

After the British had replaced the Dutch colonial power, the Dutch term *burgher* (‘citizen’, ‘urbanite’) – originally limited to those serving the Dutch East India Company – started to denote any people of mixed origin in the island (de Mel 2006). The separation of Dutch from Portuguese Burghers can be located in the nineteenth century. Whereas the Dutch Burghers exposed a ‘specifically Anglo, that is, a non-Iberian European pride of race’ (Sheeran 1997: 64), those individuals that were to ‘become’ Portuguese Burghers were believed to lack an ‘Anglo-European collective consciousness’ (de Mel 2006: 100). Underlining their lower social status, they have been also called ‘Mechanics’ or ‘Mico-Burghers’ in reference to their blue-collar professions (as opposed to the white-collar jobs allegedly reserved for the Dutch Burgher group) (McGilvray 1982; de Mel 2006). Nowadays, the Portuguese Burghers are mostly Roman Catholics and are concentrated along the island’s east coast around Batticaloa and Trincomalee (McGilvray 1982).

So far, no ethnographic research has been conducted on recent modes and dimensions of interethnic conviviality between the Portuguese Burghers and the rest of Sri Lanka’s population, including other creole groups. This lack of research may have to do with the 2004 tsunami disaster – some Portuguese Burgher communities had to resettle in the aftermath of the natural catastrophe – (McGilvray 2007, 2008) and the prolonged civil war that ended only in 2009. In the 1970s, research on the Dutch Burghers revealed that they portrayed themselves as so-

cially more advanced than the Portuguese Burghers, ascribing origins as liberated slaves to the latter and regarding them as 'poorer, darker, more numerous and less European (than themselves)' (McGilvray 1982; cf. Roberts 1994; de Mel 2006). Nevertheless, findings from the early 1970s suggest that 'a strict division between the Dutch and Portuguese Burghers was impossible to sustain' (McGilvray 1982: 237) in social practice. Despite a trend towards endogamy in the 1970s, about a third of the Portuguese Burghers had either a Tamil or Sinhalese partner (McGilvray 1982) and appeared to speak Sinhalese and Tamil in daily life (cf. Smith 1977). As a result of this integrative pattern, the Portuguese Burghers were to some extent included in the caste ranking, mostly as members of middle-class craftsmen castes (McGilvray 1982). However, while descent, religion and profession appeared to serve as criteria for this ranking, they were nonetheless believed to be an ethnic group rather than a caste (McGilvray 2008). Given the limited ethnographic data, it is not clear how other ethnic groups, notably the Tamils and the dominant Sinhalese, currently – after a bloody, politically ethnicized civil war that lasted more than twenty-five years – position against the Portuguese Burghers. Certainly the Buddhist, conservative-traditionalist Sinhalese or so-called Arya Sinhala elite take a negative attitude towards creole cultural representations, particularly music, which they condescendingly call *tuppahi* (de Mel 2006) – a term apparently derived from the notion *topazes*, which used to refer to darker skinned people who claimed Portuguese, Christian descent (de Silva 1972).

Well-known Kaffir communities have existed in Puttalam district, about 160 km north of the country's capital of Colombo, along the west coast. Other communities have disappeared, owing to the increasing relocation of Kaffirs to other parts of Sri Lanka over the past hundred years. Moreover, 'exogamy has made the descendants of Afro-Sri Lankans less conspicuous' (de Silva Jayasuriya 2008: 162–63). At present, in terms of professional background, the Kaffirs do not differ from other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, though the ethnographies on Kaffirs generally leave a non-elite impression. The ethnonym Kaffir derives from terms denoting Africans in various languages, including Portuguese and English, going back to the Arab *kafir*, which was generally applied to 'nonbelievers', that is, non-Muslims. Although the Portuguese had started to transplant Africans to Sri Lanka in the early seventeenth century, present-day Kaffir oral histories rather locate their ancestors' arrival in Sri Lanka in the early nineteenth, when the British reportedly transferred them from South Africa to the island to serve as military auxiliaries. These narratives are partly confirmed by scholarly historical accounts. Altogether, the diverse information suggests various waves of Africans migrating to Sri Lanka for an extended period of time. Having themselves largely integrated into the dominant Sinhalese culture, the Kaffirs continue to stick to Christianity, and the elders particularly are still fluent in the island's Luso-Creole language. Similar to the stereotypes imposed on the Portuguese Burghers, British colonial

prejudices and mostly negative othering used to target Kaffirs due to their dark skin colour (de Mel 2006; de Silva Jayasuriya 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008).

As in the case of Guinea-Bissau among Kristons and Cape Verdeans alike, religion and descent appear to continue to be powerful markers of boundary drawing. Conversely, whereas profession has largely ceased to be a significant marker of difference for Luso-Creole communities in Guinea-Bissau, occupation and social status – at least in the case of the Portuguese Burghers – seemingly continues to play a role in Sri Lanka. However, the sequence of different colonial powers and practices in the case of Sri Lanka – in contrast to the continuous, albeit limited and weak, colonial presence of the Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau – appears to have fostered the separation between Portuguese Burghers and Dutch Burghers. Particularly Victorian othering on phenotypical, ‘racial’ grounds facilitated the emergence of elite Sinhala rejection of foreign influences and, consequently, creole representations, whereas in Guinea-Bissau the Kristons are, given their transethnic identity, well connected to ‘ordinary’ ethnic groups. Although Cape Verdean ‘superior’ attitudes and distancing from other Bissau-Guineans has been politically instrumentalized since late colonial times, the politicization and polarization of ethnicity is much more pronounced in Sri Lanka, affecting also creole culture and identity.

Contributions to National Integration

This essay now turns to the contribution of creole culture and identity to processes of postcolonial nation-building. In Guinea-Bissau, both creole individuals and creole culture and identity as a whole contributed significantly to the struggle for independence and the nation-building that followed independence. Both Cape Verdean and Kriston creoles figured prominently in leadership positions in the independence movement led by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea [-Bissau] and Cape Verde (PAIGC), and they dominated the armed struggle for independent state- and nationhood, as various authors have shown (e.g., Rudebeck 1974; Galli and Jones 1987; Forrest 1992; Dhada 1993). Furthermore, the PAIGC – led by Amílcar Cabral, himself a creole of Cape Verdean ancestry – crafted a powerful, efficient and integrative state ideology. Political frictions, facilitated by the Portuguese to weaken the independence movement, built on the antagonism between Cape Verdeans and the ‘native’ Bissau-Guinean population, including Kristons. Creoles (and noncreoles as well) were politically divided: many Cape Verdean (and other Bissau-Guinean) activists demanded an independent binational Cape Verdean-Bissau-Guinean state, whereas others vehemently opposed a binational solution; another cluster rather favoured autonomy within Portugal’s empire.

After independence, the above-mentioned transethnic character of Kriston identity and culture led the women’s organization of the victorious PAIGC to use selected representations of creole culture, such as *manjuandadis*, to mobilize

the female population. In colonial times, *manjuandadis* were found only at the former trading posts, fostering conviviality and mutuality among their predominantly female members. Nowadays, the diversified character of these institutions is underlined by the highly visible music performances of some *manjuandadis* in particular. Ranging from formalized associations to less institutionalized networks of coworkers, neighbours, kin and friends, *manjuandadis* have since the 1960s also spread to the Muslim population – albeit some elite (Christian) cultural activists do not regard the latter as *manjuandadis* but rather as mere ‘groups’. *Manjuandadis* are often associated with specific ethnic groups, as they frequently recruit members from family or neighbourhood networks dominated by a specific ethnicity; nevertheless, most of them are multiethnic. Numerous *manjuandadis* share characteristics with commercially popular rotating credits and savings associations. Semantically, meanwhile, the age-set organizations that are common in rural, agriculture-dominated communities are also increasingly referred to as *manjuandadis*.

In the long run, these representations have contributed to interethnic integration – transethnicization – by fostering nation-building ‘from below’. The postcolonial state that envisioned a new, integrated national culture developed ‘from above’ has in fact ignited a ‘bottom-up’ nation-building process. Political and economic liberalization since the late 1980s has led to the commodification of *manjuandadis*, some of which have become professional bands for hire. The popularity of the *manjuandadi* music genre and the associations’ mutuality accelerated their further spread throughout the country (for detailed ethnographic elaborations, see Trajano Filho 1998; Kohl 2009b, 2012b). Similarly, the Luso-Creole language Kriol, hitherto spoken only by small, largely creole communities in the *praças*, began to spread country-wide from the 1920s in an expansion unsuccessfully countered by the colonial authorities. This process was likewise accelerated by the independence movement, which used Kriol as the language of instruction and command. Since independence Kriol has transformed into the country’s lingua franca, fostered by the state and its representatives across the country and in the audio media (cf. Kohl 2009b, 2011b, 2012b). According to the latest census, conducted in 2009, about 90 per cent of Guinea-Bissau’s population is fluent in Kriol.

Data on Sri Lanka is limited. Most Dutch Burghers opposed Ceylon’s independence from the United Kingdom, but nothing is known about the attitudes of Portuguese Burghers and Kaffirs. Dutch Burghers feared marginalization, given the power of exclusive Sinhala nationalism. Indeed, once independence was achieved, the Dutch Burghers’ exposure to the ‘Sinhala Only’ policy and its excluding measures led some of them to migrate to Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom (Henry 1986; Brohier 1998). However, this process apparently also led to a redrawing of intercreole boundaries, resulting in a temporary and partial closing of ranks between Dutch and Portuguese Burghers. As regards

nation-building 'from below', the Portuguese Burghers and Kaffirs of Sri Lanka are widely believed to be the founders of *Baila*, which has been one of the most popular music styles in Sri Lanka since the 1950s (Sheeran 1997; de Mel 2006).

The origins of modern *Baila* can be located in *Kafirinha* and *Chicothi*, originally cultivated by Portuguese Burghers. *Kafirinha* in particular was a style of music and dance that in the nineteenth century was closely associated with poor working-class people in urban settings, including Portuguese Burghers and Kaffirs. Because these groups were of mixed ancestry, *Kafirinha* was subject to 'racialization' and stigmatization by the traditionalist Sri Lankan elite, who tended to identify with Europe. They continue to ascribe African origins to *Kafirinha* today, associating it with 'savageness' and 'brutishness' (Jackson 1990; Sheeran 1997), even though *Kafirinha* is – despite its name – predominantly an 'Iberian-influenced vocal and dance music' expression (de Mel 2006: 101). However, Sri Lankans seldom acknowledge African influences in contemporary Sri Lankan culture (Alpers 2012: 72). However, while *Kafirinha* continues to be cultivated among Portuguese Burgher and Kaffir communities, it also emerged as Sri Lanka's popular *Baila* music more generally (Jackson 1990; Sheeran 1997).

Following the introduction of radio broadcasting in the 1930s, the marginalized Luso-Creole music experienced a revival that was also influenced by the popularization of 'Western', 'Latin'-tinged music on the radio, especially Calypso. Influenced by the West, urbanized Sinhalese known as Samkara Sinhala became fans of Portuguese Burgher music that subsequently transformed into *Waade* (or *Debate Baila*) and the even more popular *Chorus Baila*, integrating influences from Calypso and Global North rock and pop music 'while retaining traditional elements of verbal repartee from Chikothi and ... Kaffringna' (de Mel 2006: 240). Different from Calypso, amongst others, creole music was not considered 'foreign', at least not by the Samkara Sinhala – in contrast to the Arya Sinhala elite, who considered this supposedly *tuppahi* and insipid music a vestige of colonialism and racial miscegenation that betrayed Sri Lankan cultural values (de Mel 2006). Although *Baila* is nowadays considered an apolitical, 'light' music style, some *Bailas* of the 1950s also 'covered a variety of topics that served the Sinhala nationalist cause' (Sheeran 1997: 126). Likewise, some interpreters composed *Bailas* as war songs in the 1990s, when the island was increasingly drawn into a civil war that has often been characterized as an 'ethnic conflict' between the dominant Sinhalese majority and the Tamils. Since the 1970s, *Baila* has been increasingly sung in Sinhalese and has spread across the country, taking on characteristics of commodification. Despite rejections by the elite, Burghers, Samkara Sinhala and the Sri Lankan diaspora widely regard modern *Baila* as 'an emblem of intra-cultural cohesion' (de Mel 2006: 241).

As for the Luso-Creole language, it long ago lost its role as a countrywide lingua franca, which it held up to the nineteenth century. It was replaced by Sinhalese as the island's dominant language, followed by Tamil in the early twentieth

century; meanwhile, English continues to play an important role as a language of education and trade. Today the Luso-Creole language, relegated to a niche existence even among Portuguese Burghers along the east coast and Kaffir communities in Puttalam district, runs the risk of disappearing.

Conclusion

The research on Luso-Creole identities' significance in processes of interethnic and national integration is still in its infancy. I have examined how 'creole' and 'creolization' can be conceptualized as analytical tools serving comparative purposes and framed the notion 'Luso-Creole' as a cross-cultural analytical term. However, the comparison remains incomplete because historical data and ethnographic findings are still disparate and fragmentary in both historical and contemporary perspectives.

Nevertheless, some preliminary conclusions may be drawn concerning the evolution, appropriation and transformation of the Luso-Creole heritage in different settings, illustrated by the examples of Guinea-Bissau and Sri Lanka. Both countries are characterized by the hierarchical coexistence of creole groups who have manifested their supposedly higher social status by alluding to 'European civilization' and 'manners'. Whereas many Cape Verdeans continue to distance themselves from other Bissau-Guineans, including even Kristons, the latter similarly draw a line between the noncreole population and themselves, portrayed as more European, that is, 'Portuguese'. In Sri Lanka, Dutch Burghers look down on both Portuguese Burghers and Kaffirs, ascribing them a socioculturally inferior status due to their 'Iberian-ness', whereas the country's Sinhalese elite regard creoles of any kind as 'alien' and subordinate. Sri Lankan society thus appears to be much more stratified and polarized: creoles are relegated to a second row while creole identities are comparatively manifest (contrary to the complex Kriston case) owing to Dutch and British colonialism that favoured sociocultural closure and distinction more than did the Portuguese variety.

Politically, differences are apparent: in the case of Guinea-Bissau, Luso-Creole groups tended to welcome independence, whereas Dutch and probably Portuguese Burghers in Sri Lanka took a critical stance towards independent statehood, fearing social marginalization. Despite their numerical inferiority, creole groups have, as the examples of Guinea-Bissau and Sri Lanka illustrate, contributed various cultural representations to national popular culture. In Guinea-Bissau, these include *manjuandadi* associations, amongst other features that used to be restricted to tiny Luso-Creole groups but have, since the eve of independence, transcended ethnic and religious boundaries and spread nationwide. This process was facilitated by the transethnic, inclusive character of Kriston identity and fuelled by the post-independence one-party socialist state, which sought mass mobilization of the population. Guinea-Bissau has been characterized by an inte-

grative state ideology that conceives of the nation as an umbrella covering various ethnic groups. The Sri Lankan case is quite different. *Baila* has contributed to national culture, but other creole influences remain marginal and have added little to postcolonial nation-building, not least because Sri Lanka is marked by an exclusive and militant pro-Sinhalese nation-and-state ideology emanating from political and intellectual representatives of a Sinhala majority that strictly seeks to differ 'genuine' Sri Lankan from 'imported' *tuppahi* traditions.

Further research, especially in Sri Lanka, may reveal how 'micro-politics' and 'policies' influence Luso-Creole identity construction and maintenance, how interethnic conviviality is practised in everyday life, and how creoles actively contextualize and reify their supposed 'Portugueseness'. In this regard, comparative ethnographic bottom-up research may improve understanding of which factors allow for creole boundary drawing and conceptualization of 'Portugueseness'.

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Notes

1. Findings for Guinea-Bissau are based on both ethnographic findings (of research conducted in 2006–07 and 2013) and literature research. Data on Sri Lanka have been extracted from existing scholarly literature.
2. The Cape Verdean Windward variety of Kriol differs only slightly from the one spoken in Guinea-Bissau.

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