

# Making Up for Lost Time: Exploring the Global Cultural Flow of Music Development Between Lisbon, Portugal and Toronto, Canada

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47611/jsr.v9i2.821>

## ABSTRACT

In an essay entitled “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” Arjun Appadurai proposes a framework for understanding the process of global cultural flow, particularly in the field of economics. The term “culture,” in this sense, is summarily defined as “behaviour and beliefs that are learned and shared: learned so that it is not ‘instinctual,’ shared so that it is not individual” (Pieterse, 1390). Essentially, Appadurai’s framework is segmented into five distinct categories, or “scapes,” including: (a) ethnoscapas, (b) mediascapas, (c) technoscapas, (d) financescapas, and (e) ideoscapas (589). As products or attributes from various communities are introduced into new societies, they are inclined to go through a process of indigenization, often resulting in configurations of cultural hybridity and exchange. This process is evident in global music and media business networks, informing artists and professionals alike on emerging models, markets, and trends within the seemingly limitless boundaries of the global stage. The global cultural flow of music and media incites measurable consequences across all five of Appadurai’s scapes; in turn, this activity informs the character and development of the geographical sites facilitating such exchange. One such relationship exists between Lisbon, Portugal and Toronto, Canada, or more specifically, Lisbon and the Toronto neighborhood known as Little Portugal. Stemming from a complex history of colonialism and immigration, Lisbon and Toronto have developed as symbiotic nodes among the larger structure of global music and media networks. By examining each of Appadurai’s scapes within the context of Lisbon and Toronto’s transnational relationship, one can better understand the effects of global music exchange and the development of the music city itself.

## **Introduction**

Before analyzing Lisbon and Toronto’s music business landscapes against Appadurai’s global cultural flow, one would benefit from some basic historical context. History, as a general study of the past, assists in the designation of points of origin for all five of Appadurai’s scapes; this, in turn, aids one in the anticipating the trajectory of global cultural flows from such points. In an article entitled “Out of the Shadows: Why Portugal’s Music Scene is About to Boom,” reporter Cai Trefor is asked the following question: “What bands have you heard of from Portugal?” The

question is a simple one, posed by Nuno Saraiva, a representative for the music exchange platform WHY Portugal in Lisbon. Trefor hesitates to provide an answer and Saraiva, having anticipated the reporter's unfamiliarity, offers the following explanation, saying:

“[Portugal] was in a dictatorship until the mid-70s and we're playing catch-up... [w]hile the rest of Europe was enjoying The Beatles and The Stones, we had Fado and government approved imports. If you had swearing, incentives to revolution, or were against politics, your music was prohibited.”

## Background

In order to understand Lisbon's evolving relationship to global music and media networks, one must contextualize its development as a music city within the sociopolitical circumstances experienced by Portugal as a whole. Installed in Portugal in 1933, the Estado Novo government was a corporatist-authoritarian regime characterized as fascist and perpetuating of Portugal as a colonialist nation. A military coup in Lisbon known as the Carnation Revolution was directed by left-wing military officers in 1974 and overthrew the Estado Novo regime. Soon after, independence was granted to almost all of Portugal's overseas territories. Given the country's relatively recent history of authoritarianism and censorship, it's no wonder that Saraiva regards Portugal's music culture as playing “catch-up.” As Appadurai explains:

... democracy has clearly become a master term, with powerful echoes... it sits at the center of a variety of ideoscapes, composed of distinctive pragmatic configurations of rough translations of other central terms from the vocabulary of the Enlightenment. (592)

The idealization of democracy, and thus the idealization of western democratic culture, begins to express itself in Portugal's capital following the aftermath of the Carnation Revolution. However, these processes do not occur overnight. As Saraiva explains to Trefor: “...it takes a generation for people to truly feel (somewhat) free” (Trefor, 2). In Trefor's concluding remarks on Lisbon's musical development, they note that “young acts are certainly making up for lost time and doing those who campaigned for a democracy after four decades of fascism proud” (Trefor).

During the 1950s, a mass of Portuguese citizens fled the Estado Novo regime and immigrated to major cities across the world. One of the largest migrations occurred in the area of the Trinity–Bellwoods neighborhood in Toronto, Ontario. According to a 2017 report by the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN), the presently-known Little Portugal/Trinity neighborhood of Toronto was ranked the number one location in Canada for growth in the number of musicians, songwriters, and other people involved in creating music. As SOCAN CEO Eric Baptiste explains in the report:

We're not surprised to see that neighbourhoods with thriving arts communities, live music venues, and other elements of Canada's music ecosystem are showing the greatest growth... Whether the neighbourhood attracts the music creators and publishers, or the music creators and publishers build the neighbourhood is

unclear, but it's definitely a symbiotic relationship. Music plays a major part in making these places the vibrant and cool communities that they are.

## Current Day

Most Portuguese-Canadians (69%) live in Ontario, numbering approximately 282,865 in 2006.

In a 2016 census of the Little Portugal neighborhood, 3000 of the area's 15,559 residents identified as Portuguese, with 1735 identifying as immigrants from Portugal. Identifying the motivations for each instance of immigration would be nearly impossible; however, given Portugal's recent political history, it stands to reason that one motivating factor would be the idealization of western democratic traditions. Westernization has been held as a key factor in the globalization of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Marwan M. Kraidy explains that in "the 1970s and 1980s, the United States advocated a 'free flow' of information in tandem with its demands to liberalize media and information worldwide" (16). This flow of western, particularly North American, concepts and ideas surely contributed to the growing idealization of western democracy that emerged within Portugal. In Canada, the Centrist Liberal party has governed for approximately 70 percent of the last century, touting success as a collectively progressive, multiculturally cognizant nation (Heer). If one sought an alternative from the transitional Portugal, progressive Canada would seem a favorable option. This conclusion seems reasonable, as the Portuguese-Canadian community collectively decided in 2003 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of their officially sponsored immigration to Canada, which correlates to the height of Estado Novo's power.

Having established an historical context for Lisbon and Little Portugal's international relationship, we can begin to address the trajectory of their global music networks through the framework of Appadurai's scapes. The first of these is the ethnoscape. Appadurai defines the ethnoscape as "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees... moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world" (589). Arguably the most relevant to the Lisbon-Toronto music relationship is the movement of immigrants, both to and from each city. Returning to Cai Trefor's article on Lisbon's emerging music scene, they note that there is "... a holistic aural picture of modern-day Lisbon," informed in part by "the African diaspora that's occurred mainly after the independence of the African overseas provinces in 1974-75" (4). Notable Lisbon-based artists engaging with identities informed by an immigrant history include a duo named Octa Push, two brothers whose family trace back to Guine Bissau. According to Trefor, the duo's musical style "is as anchored in African polyrhythms and melodies as it is in UK bass and garage" (4). Likewise, a *Rolling Stone* article entitled "The Scene: Discovering the Source of Toronto's New Wave of R&B and Hip-Hop," includes an interview with rapper Kardinal Offishall, who also serves as Executive Creative Director of A&R for Universal Music Canada. In his statement, Offishall cites a phenomenon in Toronto similar to Trefor's observation in Lisbon:

"You have to understand the concept of a cultural mosaic versus a melting pot... When you come to America, you are American, and you are almost encouraged to shed whatever cultural baggage that you came with. Whereas [in Canada], the cultural mosaic, is one where you're taught to embrace who you are culturally, so the whole Canadian identity is one that includes several different cultures."

The trajectory of the collective Lisbon-Toronto ethnoscape is moving away from niche or token support for immigrant-produced music culture. Instead, both cities are encouraging the development of musical hybridity, with a focus on cross-genred music and artistic collaboration. Hybridization under these conditions, “reflects a postmodern sensibility cut ‘n’ mix, transgression, subversion” (Pieterse, 1392). A major contrast between the two cities are their ties to colonial histories. Citizens of certain countries once colonized by Portugal still qualify for Portuguese citizenship. Given that Lisbon is the capital of Portugal, many of these birth-right immigrants migrate to the city. Thus, a growing number of the emerging artists in Lisbon can be seen combining traditionally Asian or African styles of music with varieties of European and American styles. Still, Portugal has a way to go before unseating its predisposition towards the promotion of homogeneous cultural standards. Toronto, with no culpability as a colonial nation over others, is much more readily prepared to define itself collectively as the melting pot described by Offishall, recognizing the role of the immigrant as valid and beneficial to its everchanging music scene. In any case, the future of the Lisbon-Toronto ethnoscape is sure to see one major development in demographics with the introduction of Syrian refugees in both cities. In 2016, Canadian officials reported that 23, 919 individuals claimed refugee status and in 2018, the city of Toronto reported that 40% of shelter inhabitants were refugee claimants. In 2018, the Portuguese government pledged to accept 1,010 refugees from Turkey and Egypt by October 2019, in accordance with the framework of the current EU resettlement program (United Nations). Whether previous trends regarding immigrants and musical hybridity continue is likely, but ultimately uncertain in relation to the present influx of refugee populations.

In an industry report entitled “The Mastering of a Music City,” Graham Henderson, President and CEO of Music Canada, defines the concept of a music city as simply “a place with a vibrant music economy” (5). Two of the key factors in the development of a music city and its economy are audience development and, as a natural progression, music tourism. With these factors in mind, developmental strategies used in Lisbon and Toronto can be analyzed through the lens of two particular scapes: mediascape and technoscape. Appadurai defines mediascape as a “landscape of images,” referring “both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information... and to the images of the world created by these media” (590). By technoscape, Appadurai means “the global configuration... of technology and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously impervious boundaries” (589). To put it simply, the development of technology and its access provides a means by which information can be produced and distributed across a worldwide network. This expansion has positive and negative implications for the music city. For example, the Music Business Handbook and Career Guide says of recent technological development:

Unlawful file sharing via [peer to peer] networks posed significant problems in world markets, but the advent of streaming music sites such as Spotify and Pandora... reduced [peer to peer]’s impact... In the late 1990s, many experts forecast that online music sales would quickly come to represent a large proportion of global record industry income. These predictions were soon proven premature, in part because the necessary infrastructure was not in place and in part because of only a tentative commitment by major record companies, which feared the Internet would reduce their degree of control over their release. However, within a few years the digital revolution, which now included mobile as well as online recorded music sales, was firmly established... In 2017 digital accounted for a trade value of \$9.3 billion, or 54% of total recorded music revenues (Baskerville, 522).

As digital technology continues to develop, the tenants of peer to peer sharing has evolved to inform networks defined primarily through interactions in social media. The Spotify streaming service allows consumers and creators alike to share music playlists, opening the door to opportunities in marketing, branding, and advertising. Social media services without music business as a core enterprise still contribute to cultural exchange within the mediascape; for example, Facebook's platform provides a free domain for artists to feature news, biographies, digital products, and other forms of critical content. Snapchat, a multimedia messaging app used globally, began as a photo-sharing service. As it developed in use and popularity, Snapchat introduced a curated news service, providing its users with topical highlights in cultural, political, and musical news, among others. Social media technology benefits music cities in its cultivation of audiences beyond traditional borders. Self-managed artists, industry professionals, and music venues can all benefit from the ease of access presented by these services. Little to no capital is required to feature content on social media sites and applications, encouraging the primary actors in music business further incentive to target international audiences. In 2017, Portugal's tech industry raised over \$350 million in venture capital. In the past three years, private equity investments in Portugal have more than tripled to €7 billion and, according to recent industry data, investors have begun to "flock to a rebounding economy hungry for capital" (Delille). Lisbon has witnessed a growing number of qualified international professional relocate to Portugal (Delille). We can expect to see the genesis of future music technology innovations in Lisbon as the city's technological identity continues to develop. Likewise, Toronto has established itself as a notable site for the development of music technology. The Music Technology MeetUp hosted in Toronto describes itself as "the largest group in North America focused on the music and Technology communities... for anyone who is interested in connecting with veterans in the Music and Technology industries" (meetup.com). Collectively, these developments in music technology and social media provide individuals with investments in the development of music cities to reach international audiences, create and engage with content consistent to their interests, and cultivate international audiences. This cultivation then results in global cultural flow, informing the paradigms and practices of both music city representatives and their consumers. As a result, music tourism extends beyond previously ventured boundaries, providing much-needed patronage and engagement for the music city. However, the ease of access provided by these technologies can have the opposite effect. As consumers continue to engage with musical content across social media streaming services, motivations to provide a physical presence within the music city and its venues diminishes.

The final of Appadurai's scapes to require introduction is the financescape. Appadurai himself describes the financescape as "a more mysterious, rapid, and difficult landscape to follow than ever before as currency markets, national stock exchanges, and commodity speculations move... through national turnstiles at blinding speed" (590). Regarding Lisbon, Toronto, and the development of music city networks, the following assertion by Appadurai is cause for concern:

...the global relationship among ethnoscapes, technoscapes, and financescapes is deeply disjunctive and profoundly unpredictable... [t]hus, even an elementary model of global political economy must take into account the deeply disjunctive relationships among human movement, technological flow, and financial transfer (590).

## Conclusion

According to Appadurai, these three scapes are disjunctive and express mutually exclusive possibilities. Despite Appadurai's assertion to the contrary, these scapes undeniably inform and direct the trajectory of one another's global cultural flow. The presence of Portuguese immigrants from Lisbon in Toronto has established a cultural network based on relationships and identity formations founded within the realm of the ethnoscape. The technoscape, with its global exchange of technological innovation, maintains the endurance of these relationships and identities. Thus, informed by the previous two scapes, individuals continue to maintain capitalist exchange within networks of the finanscape. Stemming from a complex history of colonialism and immigration, Lisbon and Toronto have developed as symbiotic nodes among the larger structure of global music and media networks. By examining each of Appadurai's scapes within the context of Lisbon and Toronto's transnational relationship, one can better understand the effects of global music exchange and the development of the music city itself. As a contemporary example of the value such an exchange produces, one might consider the success of Shawn Mendes, a Canadian singer, songwriter and model. Through the lens of the ethnoscape, Mendes's personal background connects Portugal to Canada. His father, Manuel Mendes, is a Portuguese immigrant to Toronto's Little Portugal from Porto, a coastal city in northwest Portugal. This fact alone carries with it the weight of the democratic idealizations previously addressed in context with the end of the Estado Novo regime. Additionally, Mendes's mother is an immigrant from England, casting him as the very manifestation as the young, Portuguese act embracing western democratic musical norms and making up for lost time, as described by Trefor. In 2013, Mendes achieved international recognition after posting covers of popular songs on the now defunct video-sharing application called Vine. The lip-synching app Tik-Tok is an app of equivalent interest to Vine to make note of regarding new talent. The technoscape and its connection to mediascape networks were integral in Mendes's success, providing him with access to an international marketplace, free of capital investment. Finally, Mendes's position as an artistic node between Portugal and Canada can be illustrated by the commission of his single "In My Blood" by Portugal's Football Federation for the 2018 World Cup. Portuguese lyrics were added to the song in an act of cultural hybridity, which translated as: "I will believe! That we are going to make it, that we are going to conquer... We are Portugal. A single voice and heart" (Wass). Mendes, who is a Canadian citizen and does not speak Portuguese fluently, was readily accepted by the Lisbon-based football team and their fans as an avatar of the Portuguese identity. As previously explained by Saraiva to Trefor: "...it takes a generation for people to truly feel (some-what) free." If one were to predict the future of Lisbon and Toronto's global cultural give-and-take, it would likely echo the circumstances surrounding the success of Shawn Mendes: music and music figures connecting with international audiences through ever-changing developments in social media, at times constructing and profiting from personal identities for purposes of authenticity, marketability, and profit. As consumers, we take for granted the orientation of the artist and their affiliation to varying national identity. Both Lisbon and Toronto are encouraging the development of musical hybridity, with a focus on cross-genred music and artistic collaboration. So long as these efforts continue, the relevancy of the music city should continue to not only survive, but thrive.

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