

**ABSTRACT****NEGOTIATING CULTURAL SURVIVAL: TRADITION AND CHANGE IN TRADITIONAL ENACTMENTS OF ST. LUCIA**

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This dissertation makes an original contribution to scholarship on Caribbean Festival Arts by theorizing on the specific mechanisms of cultural survival that enable some practices to continue seemingly uninterrupted while others wane into obscurity or manifest in new forms. Mechanisms of survival refer to the processes that facilitate a chain of transmission which results in the continued, sustained, efficacious practice of a cultural form. Focusing on the Flower Festivals and the Christmas Masquerade Tradition, the dissertation argues that survival becomes dependent on the capacity for a duality of expression, change and tradition, as these mark its ability to keep pace with changing societies. A cultural performance framework is employed, as it foregrounds conflict and negotiation as necessary to cultural survival, and it acknowledges the importance of context to the analysis of traditional enactments, as well as the correlation between the context of an enactment and its meaningful continuity. Findings also allow for conclusions on the standing of the cultural traditions in contemporary society, and four possible survival statuses are identified. By isolating the mechanisms of survival, this study makes a case for policies and practices regarding preservation, transmission and retention to begin with understanding the organic processes that have secured the meaningful continuity of the cultural traditions.

**Keywords:** St. Lucia; Flower Festivals; Christmas Masquerade; La Rose; La Marguerite; Toes; Papa Djab; Djab Dèwò; Cultural Festivals; Cultural Performance; Cultural Survival; Traditional Enactments; Cultural Traditions