



10-2020

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Recommended Citation

Amado, Abel Djassi. (2020). Whose Independence? Cabo Verdean-Americans and the Politics Of National Independence Of Cabo Verde (1972-1976). *Journal of Cape Verdean Studies*, 5(1), 36-53.

Available at: <https://vc.bridgew.edu/jcvs/vol5/iss1/5>

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WHOSE INDEPENDENCE? CABO VERDEAN-AMERICANS AND THE POLITICS OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE OF CABO VERDE (1972-1976)

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, I argue that anti-colonial politics in the late colonial period of Cape Verde had an important diasporic content. During the 1960s, Cabo Verde began a long, increasingly violent effort to attain independence from Portugal (finally achieved in 1975). Diasporic Cabo Verdeans in the US responded in surprisingly variable ways to the political resistance claiming their national homeland. In this paper, I focus on responses by two political groups that emerged as central in the Cabo Verdean diaspora: the PAIGC-USA Support Committee and the Juridical Congress of World Cape Verdean Communities. I argue that these two groups constituted a political reification of important socio-ideological cleavages that emerged within the global Cabo Verdean community from the 1960s. The fall of Portugal's fascist regime (Estado Novo) in 1974, and the subsequent independence agreement with the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde (PAIGC), crystalized these political differences. The zenith of intra-community, politico-ideological conflict corresponded to the Juridical Congress' declaration of independence of Cabo Verde--in reaction to what many viewed as a grab for power by the PAIGC. In short, at a key moment in Cabo Verdean history, diasporic citizens exercised critical agency in seeking to influence, and even shape, the volatile political landscape in their homeland.

Keywords: PAIGC-USA Support Committee; Juridical Congress of World Cape Verdean Communities; Diaspora Politics; Cabo Verdean Independence Politics.

Introduction

On December 18, 1974, the Government of Portugal and the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) signed what became known as the Lisbon Agreement, which initiated a process for Cabo Verde to achieve independence from Portugal seven months later (on July 5, 1975). The independence agreement translated into the *de jure* political predominance of the PAIGC and the silencing of political forces that opposed the views of that liberation movement. By the end of 1974, the Union of the Peoples of the Islands of Cabo Verde (UPICV) and the Democratic Union of Cabo Verde (UDC)—the two parties that engaged in direct competition with the PAIGC during the second half of 1974—were simply wiped out of the political chessboard.¹ In the months leading to the formal proclamation of the independence of Cabo Verde, the epicenter of opposition political against the PAIGC shifted from Cabo Verde to Cabo Verdean communities abroad, chiefly in the United States.

The PAIGC's ascension to power on the islands crystalized the socio-political split among Cabo Verdean diaspora, with clearly discernible groups engaging in either a *politics* or an *opposition politics* vis-à-vis the homeland.² In the mid-1970s, two important political formations were the key actors in the politics of national independence of Cabo Verde among Cabo Verdean-Americans, namely the PAIGC USA-Support Committee and the Juridical Congress of World Cabo Verdean Communities. Apart from ideological differences, the leadership of these two political groups represented the socio-political fragmentation of the community in the late 1960s and 1970s. Cabo Verdean community was a fragmented community along the issues of social classes, racial and ethnic identity, and generation.

In this paper, I want to advance three main points. First, Creole diasporas extend to their host country their homeland's socio-identitary disputes and imaginings.³ That is to say, socially fragmented diasporic communities are likely to fashion diverse—if not mutually antagonistic—political projects for their homeland. Second, diverse sections of the diasporic community develop distinct political projects. Third, organized factions of the diaspora resort to a myriad of political instruments and strategies to connect with foreign, international and transnational actors in order to legitimize and further entrench their own political views and perspectives.

¹ José André Leitão da Graça, *Golpe de estado em Portugal: traída a descolonização de Cabo Verde!* (Praia, Cabo Verde: Edição do Autor, 2004); José Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde: os bastidores da independência* (Praia: Spleen, 2002).

² Michel S. Laguerre, *Diaspora, Politics, and Globalization* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 40.

³ I use the term “Creole diaspora” in reference to the recent history of immigration of Creole peoples throughout the Atlantic World. Creole diaspora, as such, different-generations of peoples living and settling abroad from Cabo Verde, the key group under study, Jamaicans, and Haitians, to cite the best-known cases. In other words, the term applies to fragments of creole societies living abroad. Their creole condition, historically at the intersection of African and European civilizations, allow them to easily navigate in cultural landscape of Western world as well as to negate essentialized identity imposed onto them. Thus, for instance, both Cabo Verdeans and Haitians in the United States often reject their identity attachment to the African-American community. On this matter see, Marilyn Halter, *Between race and ethnicity: Cape Verdean American immigrants, 1860-1965* (Urbana: Univ. of Illinois Press, 1993); Regine O. Jackson, “The Uses of Diaspora among Haitians in Boston,” in *Geographies of the Haitian Diaspora*, ed. by Regine O. Jackson (New York and London: Routledge, 2011), 137. Though the term Creole diaspora might give the sense of a monolithic social experience shared by these creole societies, the reality is the opposite. Thus, one can find the cases of recent or modern diaspora (Cabo Verdeans) and incipient diaspora (Jamaicans and Haitians), if one uses the typology proposed by Gabriel Sheffer. For more on this, see Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora politics: at home abroad* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 75.

Theoretical Framework

In a study of diaspora politics concerned with social behaviors and institutions created by diasporic citizens who aim to shape and alter political outcomes in their homeland, it is helpful to start by addressing the concept of diaspora. “Diaspora” is essentially a contradictory concept, as the term entails both dispersion and unity: it refers to the international spread of human communities that, at the same time, sustain a principle of symbolic or real unity through emphasizing common ancestry and national origin.⁴ Like any other sociological entity, diasporas are imagined communities.⁵ Political and social actors, chiefly those who command both cultural and material capital, may develop and disseminate a variety of narratives, discourses, and perspectives to explain and sustain the essence of that community. Diaspora communities imagine themselves in respect to their homeland, with which they maintain direct or symbolic relationships. In this regard, Michel Laguerre distinguishes between an “active” diaspora, whose members maintain actual ties to the homeland, and a “passive” diaspora, whose members develop only symbolic ties with the homeland.⁶ Within the same diasporic community, one may encounter sub-groups that maintain different kinds of ties and contacts (real or symbolic) with the homeland. In spite of the difference between these ties with the homeland, these different subgroups of a diaspora may remain engaged in a constructive discourse with their homeland—and among themselves.

The term ‘diaspora,’ which derives etymologically from Greek (*speiro* = *to sow*, and *dia* = *over*) was initially applied to the Jewish social condition of historical dispersion from Palestine.⁷ Since the twentieth century, the term has been stretched to include the experiences of other national and ethnic groups dispersed in different countries. The concept of diaspora entails the notion of organic and substantial connection, real or imagined, with the homeland.⁸ Homeland, like other forms of collective identity, is not static; different sections of homeland society often engage in a debate on what constitutes actual national identity. Dominant perspectives—and their challenges—on national identity migrate along with migrants. Diaspora views on the identity of the homeland structures and influences their political attitudes and actions towards their homeland.

Diasporas, as argued by Paul T. Zeleza, are basically discourses, insofar as they form a catalog of narratives about self and homeland.⁹ Reaffirming their socio-identitary uniqueness within the context of the hostland entails the development of a discourse on the homeland. In such an endeavor of producing a narrative on the nation/homeland, diaspora groups symbiotically interact and clashes with views on the homeland produced by their fellow public intellectuals and activists both in the homeland and hostland. The concept of nation may,

⁴ On the notion of diaspora, see Eliezer Ben-Rafael, “Diaspora” *Current Sociology* 61, no. 5–6 (September 2013): 842–61. doi:10.1177/0011392113480371.

⁵ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined communities reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* (London: Verso, 2016).

⁶ Michel S. Laguerre, *Diasporic Citizenship: Haitian Americans in Transnational America* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 8.

⁷ Gabriel Sheffer, *Diaspora politics: at home abroad* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 9; Milton J. Esman, “Diaspora and International Relations,” in *Modern Diaspora in International Politics*, ed. Gabriel Sheffer (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1986), 333.

⁸ Lisa Anteby-Yemini and William Berthomière, “Diaspora: A Look Back on a Concept” *Bulletin Du Centre De Recherche Français À Jérusalem* 16 (2005): 262-270.

⁹ Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, 2005. “Rewriting the African diaspora: beyond the Black Atlantic,” *African Affairs*, 104, 414 (2005): 35-68.

likewise, be considered a “tradition of argumentation,” as John Shotter has argued.¹⁰ As for the notion of the collective self, several different and contradictory perspectives prevail. And, as for the tradition of argumentation, like most other social and cultural products, that travels along with migrants and settles among diasporic communities. Dominant perspectives on collective social identity in the homeland are adopted and crystalized by those in the diaspora who maintain strong linkages with that homeland.

In the enterprise of imagining a diasporic community, cultural and political entrepreneurs may interact and negotiate with a myriad of social groups and communities from at least three different geocultural spaces: the homeland; the mainstream sector of the host society; and marginalized groups of that host society. Most obviously, both direct contacts and symbolic ties with the homeland inform how diasporic groups imagine themselves and their nation. Events in the past constrain and limits the choices in the present, creating, thus, a path dependence. Times of political crisis present opportunities to break political and social path dependence; as such, these moments may permit new visions of the nation to arise. Such altered conceptualizations of the homeland may result from a myriad of factors, ranging from social class, generation, direct or symbolic contact with the homeland, and contact with excluded groups of society, to assimilation into the mainstream community of the host nation. Diaspora politics connects both the homeland and the host country through formal organizations, which are basically political tools through which “diasporic politicians’ stress both the welfare of the community and their attachment to homeland affairs as an important incentive of their political participation in the hostland political process.”¹¹ In other words, through community-based and/or broader political organizations, diasporans seek to influence political outcomes in the homeland. Put differently, diasporic citizens engage in long-distance nationalism. Ultimately, while living away from their homeland, diasporans’ strategic political engagements focus on producing particular political outcomes in that homeland.

Despite the foregoing generalizations, it is important to emphasize that diasporas are not monolithic socio-political entity. Although their members derive from the same homeland and often share a combination of values and symbols, ranging from language and culture to other critical social elements, diasporic communities are fragmented; different social cleavages, such as social classes, generation, and even region from the homeland whence groups come, tend to create fractures; often, these divisions become politicized.

In contemporary times, diasporic citizens typically develop a myriad of organizations and networks, through which they base their cultural and political activities.¹² These organizations constitute significant political tools, conferring a number of advantages to their members, ranging from the pooling of resources to being a mark of political modernity. These diasporic political organizations have three audiences in mind. First, they engage in internal communication, as they seek to represent what they perceive to be the view of the community they belong. In a way, these organizations tend to see themselves as a microcosmic representation of their community. Second, they seek to engage with the host country’s government and/or its political leadership. As they are rarely able to shape policies through electoral politics or conventional political participation, given their numerically size, diasporans

¹⁰ John Shotter, *Cultural politics of everyday life: social constructionism, rhetoric and knowing of the third kind* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1993).

¹¹ Laguerre, *Diaspora, Politics, and Globalization*, 3-4.

¹² Ben Rafael, “Diaspora,” 843.

often resort to a strategy of ethnic lobbying as the vehicle through which they might influence policies. Beyond these local efforts, the last audience of these organizations is the homeland.

Diasporic communities engage in a dynamic process of imaging the nation. As diasporas are not sociologically monolithic, their different segments advance different—and sometimes contradictory—interpretations of the nation. When a given narrative of the nation becomes dominant, sections of the diaspora that do not endorse such an interpretation mobilize many types of resources—human, material, and symbolic—to disseminate a counter-narrative, designed to undermine and subvert the perceived dominant narrative about the nation. Through political organizations and actions, including ethnic lobbying before different levels of the host nation’s government, different components of the diaspora will seek to influence the debate on the nation and its political future.

On the Cabo Verdean Diaspora in the United States

Although the literature on the Cabo Verdean diaspora is quite rich and robust, studies on the Cabo Verdean diaspora and/or immigration tend to be carried out almost exclusively by anthropologists, historians, and demographers.¹³ These studies tend to emphasize the cultural aspects of the diaspora and/or to trace the history of its origin and development. Few studies yet exist on Cabo Verdean diaspora politics: perhaps because few political scientists have written on the relations between Cabo Verde and its diaspora, scant attention have been to the role that the latter has played in defining and shaping politics in the former.

The historical process of diasporization of Cabo Verdean people developed in relation to distant geographies, namely the Portuguese colonial empire (of which the islands were a constituent part until their independence in 1975), along with the wider Atlantic world. Colonial policies, coupled with harsh natural and climatic conditions, compelled Cabo Verdeans to seek life alternatives elsewhere. From the mid-nineteenth century, the Portuguese colonies of São Tome and Principe, Angola, and Guinea-Bissau were the main destinations to Cabo Verdean migration. Since the late nineteenth century, and particularly during the early twentieth century, thousands of Cabo Verdeans migrated to other destinations, such as Brazil, Argentina, the United States, Senegal, and, later, other Western European states such as France, Italy, United Kingdom, and the Netherlands.¹⁴

Almost a century ago, Albert Jenks wrote that in cataloguing the history of immigration to the United States, the history of Cabo Verdeans constituted its “curious chapter.”¹⁵ In fact, the presence of Cabo Verdeans in the United States has been traced back to the late 1600s or early 1700s, beginning with the trans-Atlantic whaling industry.¹⁶ However, mass migration of Cabo Verdeans to the United States expanded significantly in the late nineteenth century, peaking in

¹³ Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling, ed., *Transnational archipelago perspectives on Cape Verdean migration and diaspora* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2008); Deirdre Meintel, “Cape Verdean Transnationalism, Old and New,” *Anthropologica* 44, 1 (2002): 25-42; Halter, *Between race and ethnicity*; G.S. Gibau, “Diasporic Identity Formation among Cape Verdeans in Boston,” *The Western Journal of Black Studies*, 29, 2 (2005): 532-539; Laura J. Pires-Hester, “The Emergence of Bilateral Diaspora Ethnicity Among Cape Verdean-Americans,” in *The African Diaspora: African Origins and New World Identities*, ed. Isidore Okpewho, Carole Boyce Davies, and Ali A. Mazrui (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999), 485-503. António Carreira, *The people of the Cape Verde Islands: exploitation and emigration*, trans. Christopher Fyfe (London: C. Hurst, 1982)

¹⁴ Carreira, *The people of the Cape Verde Islands*; Batalha and Carling, *Transnational archipelago*.

¹⁵ Albert Jenks quoted in Halter, *Between race and ethnicity*, 1.

¹⁶ Carreira, *The People of the Cape Verdean Islands*.

the 1910s and 1920s. As Deidre Meintel has pointed out, the late nineteenth century and the first quarter of the last century constituted a period of intensive transnationalism, with some twenty thousand Cabo Verdeans entering the US in the first two decades of the twentieth century, alone.¹⁷

Cabo Verdeans were probably the first Africans to voluntarily mass-migrate to the United States. In fact, the notion of voluntary migration to the US has been a dominant trope among Cabo Verdeans and Cabo Verdean-Americans, often presented as a sign of collective distinctiveness and source of pride.¹⁸ Migration to the United States has occupied a central place in the group's collective subconscious, and many public intellectuals have connected the Cabo Verdean diaspora with the socio-economic and cultural advancement of Cabo Verdeans more generally.

For a variety of reasons, migration from Cabo Verde to the United States declined significantly from the 1920s onwards. New immigration policies in the United States during the late 1910s and early 1920s made it difficult for the islanders to move to the United States. The period from the 1920s to the 1960s corresponds to what Deidre Meintel calls "the retreat of Cabo Verdean transnationalism."¹⁹ During this period, contacts with the homeland became scarce and the Cabo Verdean community in the New England turned into itself. The few contacts that existed were carried out mostly through trans-Atlantic trade via packet ships. As historic homeland, Cabo Verde became a symbolic entity, a distant place whence the ancestors came.

By the 1960s, the key sites of presence of Cabo Verdeans in the United States were southern Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Towns and cities such as New Bedford, Wareham, and Boston (in Massachusetts), and Providence and Pawtucket (in Rhode Island), became hubs of Cabo Verdean communities in the United States. While excluded by the mainstream Anglo-Saxon society as well as the local Portuguese communities, most Cabo Verdean immigrant communities in New England also rejected any type of identification with African-Americans. "Creole" social identity was carefully deployed as a tool to distinguish them from African Americans. Identity labels such as "Bravas," "Black Portuguese," and later "Cape Verdean," were devices deployed to highlight social differences and distance between the immigrants of Cabo Verde and African-Americans—in spite of the fact that many among Cabo Verdeans shared phenotypic characteristics with African Americans.²⁰

Second- and third-generation Cabo Verdean-Americans were more attuned to the civil rights movement of the U.S., and the overall political environment and discourses of the 1950s/60s. The quest for equality and *de facto* citizenship resonated with many Cabo Verdeans, who experienced similar socio-economic and political plights to those of African-Americans. The context of the civil rights movement and the development of the more radical Black Power movement greatly shaped political behaviors and attitudes of young Cabo Verdeans. The social atmosphere of the civil rights movement and more radical Black activism of the late 1960s and early '70s influenced young Cabo Verdean-Americans in two main ways. First, at the level of identity politics, many began to accept and even proudly display Blackness. Second, the political

¹⁷ Meintel, "Cape Verdean Transnationalism," 31-33; Halter, *Between race and ethnicity*, 38; 41.

¹⁸ Halter, *Between race and ethnicity*; Raymond Anthony Almeida, *Cape Verdeans in America: Our Story*. (Boston: The American Committee for Cape Verde, Inc. 1978).

¹⁹ Meintel, "Cape Verdean Transnationalism."

²⁰ Halter, *Between race and ethnicity*; Gina Elizabeth Sanchez, *Diasporic [trans]formations: race, culture and the politics of Cape Verdean identity*, Unpublished PhD Dissertation (Austin: University of Texas at Austin, 1999), 83; Sidney M. Greenfield, "In Search of Social Identity: Strategies of Ethnic Identity Management Amongst Cape Verdeans in Southeastern Massachusetts," *Luso-Brazilian Review* 13, 1 (1976): 10.

atmosphere in the United States of the 1960s contributed to ethnic revival among a variety of ethnic groups that make up the social fabric of the country. Like other groups, Cabo Verdean-Americans began to imagine Cabo Verdean-ness—now named, *Caboverdeanidade*—as a condition of their singularity.²¹

In the decades following the end of the Second World War through the 1960s, political engagement among different segments of the Cabo Verdean community in New England oscillated between a politics of acquiescence and a more contentious politics. As anticolonial armed struggle erupted in the former Portuguese colonial empire in Africa, the Portuguese regime developed a sophisticated and well-orchestrated public diplomacy designed to conquer the hearts and minds of Americans, Portuguese-Americans, and Cabo Verdean-Americans.²² In the senior generation of Cabo Verdeans, the Portuguese government found valuable allies to disseminate a message promoting unity of the empire. In the late 1960s, as an indication of the ideology of a pluricontinental and pluri-racial Portuguese Nation, the Portuguese government invited Belmira Nunes Miranda, Attorney Roy Teixeira Sr., and Judge George Leighton—three well-known and respected members of the Cabo Verdean community in the United States—for a tour of two key spaces in the empire, Angola and Mozambique. These personalities became *interlocuteurs valables* for the empire and used their social and symbolic capital to disseminate a message emphasizing the unity of the Portuguese nation—hence, arguing against independence—across its colonial empire. For instance, Belmira Nunes Miranda, the only woman who accompanied the group, wrote for several months for the local community newspaper, *The Cape Verdean*, reporting on the wonders of the empire.

By contrast, the next generation imported and adapted to social strategies, discourses, and organizations developed in the context of the civil rights movement. In fact, many young Cabo Verdeans joined and even led some radical Black American organizations. For instance, Salah Matteos, a second-generation Cabo Verdean-American, became involved with the organization led by Malcolm X in the first half of the 1960s and, through that organization, became aware of the ongoing armed struggles for independence in Africa.²³ Frank “Parky” Grace, a second-generation Cabo Verdean-American, led the Black Panther Party chapter in the city of New Bedford, Massachusetts.²⁴

Manuel T. Neves, the founder and editor of *The Cape Verdean*, indicated his annoyance over, and displeasure with, the fact that many young Cabo Verdean-Americans had adopted the language and symbols of Black Power movement.²⁵ Yet, civil rights and Black Power movements were one of the main avenues through which Cabo Verdean ethnic and diaspora

²¹ Marlyn Halter, “Cape Verdeans in the U.S.” in *Transnational Archipelago. Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora*, ed. Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1008), 35-46.

²² Thomas J. Noer, *Cold War and Black liberation: The United States and white Africa, 1948-1968* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1985), 74; Vasco Ribeiro, “Lobistas, assessores de imprensa e relações-públicas norte-americanos que serviram o Estado Novo (1942-1974),” *Media & Jornalismo* 19, 35 (2019): 56.

²³ Personal Communication with Sallah Matteos, November 5, 2019.

²⁴ Jama Lazerow, “A Rebel All His Life”: The Unexpected Story of Frank “Parky” Grace, in *In search of the Black Panther Party: new perspectives on a revolutionary movement*, ed. Jama Lazerow and Yohuru R. Williams (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 104-157.

²⁵ Manuel T. Neves, “Power Struggle among Cape Verdeans in New Bedford,” *The Cape Verdean*, May 1969, 1; See also the letter to the editor by the Portuguese Consul, Jorge de B.A. Freitas, “Letter to the Editor,” *The Cape Verdean*, January 1971.

politics developed.²⁶ For its part, the Portuguese government's official position was to limit, if not completely nullify, the political influences of the Black Power movement among Cabo Verdean-Americans. In a letter to the editor that he published in *The Cape Verdean* in 1971, the Portuguese General Consul (Jorge de B. A. Freitas) argued that "Black Power is the movement of Black Americans—and Cabo Verdeans are Luso-Americans."²⁷

In short, the presence of Cabo Verdeans in the United States has a long history. In the United States, Cabo Verdeans have come to understand that their ideas about race, informed by the Portuguese racial ideology, did not match those prevalent in the United States, where the dominant racial ideology is that of a binary (white v. non-white), significantly distinct from the idea of racial continuum practiced in Portuguese empire. Older generations of Cabo Verdeans tended to cling to this racial ideology and rejected any type of identification with African-Americans. By the 1950s and '60s, the new generation of Cabo Verdean-Americans, born and raised in the United States, began to accept and adopt their blackness.

Diaspora Politics of National Independence: Organizations, Actors, and Ideologies

In the months following the April 1974 Carnation Revolution in Lisbon, which brought an end to the 41-year right-wing dictatorship called the *Estado Novo*, a vibrant and heated political debate about the nation ensued among Cabo Verdeans both at home and in the United States. Several socio-political groups were formed, each advocating for a different understanding of what would constitute the Cabo Verdean nation and its destiny, in light of the ongoing process of decolonization of the Portuguese colonial empire. The idea of diaspora leads to the assumption of it being a monolithic social entity, when in reality it is rather a diverse and eclectic collection of groups, with each holding its own understandings and imaginings—sometimes, internally contradictory—of the homeland, its culture, its future, and its destiny. As argued by Cape Verdean-American anthropologist G. S. Gibau, Cabo Verdeans in the US are fragmented, characterized by identity conflict.²⁸ By the late 1960s and early '70s, Cabo Verdean-Americans' social differences produced a strikingly diverse set of perspectives on the essence and future of the homeland. These diverse perspectives manifested themselves through the formation of two main political groups: the PAIGC-USA Support Committee, and the Juridical Congress of World Cape Verdean Communities.

Founded in the late 1950s, the African Party for the Independence of Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde (PAIGC) was a political organization made up of Cabo Verdeans and Guinean-Bissauans engaged jointly in the politics of national liberation of their two then-Portuguese colonies in West Africa. In the early 1960s, as it became clear that Portugal resisted dismantling its colonial empire peacefully, the PAIGC developed an intense political campaign to mobilize Cabo Verdeans and Guineans both at home and abroad.

The idea of establishing a cell and/or a support committee of the PAIGC in the United States dates back to the beginning of the armed struggle for national liberation. In the early 1960s, the leadership of the PAIGC began to cultivate relationships with Cabo Verdeans residing in the United States. A small number of Cabo Verdeans in the United States, who met regularly to discuss the prospects of Cabo Verdean independence in light of the ongoing decolonization in

²⁶ Salahudin Matteos, "The Cape Verdeans and the PAIGC Struggle for National Liberation: An Interview with Salahudin Omowale Matteos," *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies*, vol 3, 3 (1973): 43-48.

²⁷ Jorge de B. A. Freitas, "Letter to the Editor," *The Cape Verdean*, January 1971.

²⁸ Gibau, "Diasporic Identity Formation."

Africa, contacted the headquarters of the PAIGC in December 1961.²⁹ A few months later, the party appointed Pedro Pires, then the leader of the PAIGC bureau in Dakar, Senegal, as the contact person with the Cabo Verdean diaspora in the United States.³⁰ From 1961-63, there were regular exchange of letters and other forms of communication between the PAIGC and members of the Cabo Verdean diaspora in the United States.³¹ In 1962, during a visit to the United States, the leader of the PAIGC, Amílcar Cabral, met with Cabo Verdeans and proposed a political organization called the Associação Hesperitana to serve as an auxiliary member of the movement he led.³² However, this effort did not result in any concrete political linkage.

Ten years later, a small group of young Cabo Verdean-Americans, led by Salah Matteos, founded the PAIGC-USA Support Committee. Like many of his companions, Matteos, had political training in the context of the U.S. civil rights movement, and through his active participation in the radical struggle for dignity and equality of African-Americans. As Amílcar Cabral himself recognized early, the struggles of African-Americans and colonized Africans have long been connected.³³ Through his early engagement in the former, Matteos became aware of the struggles for African liberation. In 1972, Matteos travelled to West Africa to join the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau. The PAIGC leadership advised him to return to the USA and form a support committee. That idea had support from Cabral, who, in his last visit to the United States, argued for the necessity to create a PAIGC Support Committee.

The PAIGC USA-Support Committee was an organization independent from the party's political structures: the members of the support committee did not constitute party cadres or members. Rather, they were essentially committed sympathizers to the party's ideology and cause. In the history of the PAIGC, there were other support committee created that aggregated immigrant communities (e.g., the support committee in Côte d'Ivoire in 1963).³⁴ The Support Committee purported to function like a transmission belt between the party leadership and the diaspora community. The main task of the organization was to engage in campaigns of mobilization and information, so as to instill political awareness among Cabo Verdean Americans of the ongoing struggle for national liberation that was taking place in Guinea-Bissau.³⁵ In late 1973, the PAIGC-USA Support Committee began to publish *No Pintcha* (Bissau-Guinean Creole for "let's move"), a newspaper that served as a vehicle to disseminate news from the PAIGC, updates on the ongoing liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau and Cabo

²⁹ Correspondence from Dulce Alves to Aristides Pereira, 26 December 1961, Fundação Mário Soares / DAC - Documentos Amílcar Cabral, http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_38444 (2020-10-25)

³⁰ Correspondence from Aristides Pereira to Pedro Pires, 13 January 1962, Fundação Mário Soares / DAC - Documentos Amílcar Cabral, http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_37261 (2020-10-25)

³¹ Correspondence from Roy Teixeira to Aristides Pereira, 1 November 1963, Fundação Mário Soares / DAC - Documentos Amílcar Cabral, http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_36485 (2020-10-25); Correspondence from Roy Teixeira to Amílcar Cabral, December 2, 1963, Fundação Mário Soares / DAC - Documentos Amílcar Cabral, Disponível HTTP: http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_36840 (2020-10-25)

³² Amílcar Cabral, "Estatutos da Associação Hesperitana para a Liberdade, a Democracia e o Progresso de Cabo Verde", Fundação Mário Soares / DAC - Documentos Amílcar Cabral, http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_42651 (2020-10-25).

³³ Penny M. Von Eschen, *Race against empire: Black Americans and anticolonialism, 1937-1957* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997); Piero Gleijeses, *Conflicting missions: Havana, Washington, and Africa, 1959-1976* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Noer, *Cold War and Black liberation.*, Peter Karibe Mendy, *Amílcar Cabral: a nationalist and pan-Africanist revolutionary* (Athens : Ohio University Press, 2019).

³⁴ Pedro Pires, "Relatório da missão de criação de um Comité de Apoio ao PAIGC em Abidjan," October 20, 1963, Fundação Mário Soares / DAC - Documentos Amílcar Cabral, http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_41401 (2020-10-25).

³⁵ Matteos, "The Cape Verdeans and the PAIGC," 46.

Verde, and political news from the community in the United States. *No Pintcha* was a trilingual newspaper featuring articles, opinions and other pieces in Cabo Verdean Creole, Portuguese and English. *No Pintcha* ultimately became a forum for the promotion of the political ideals of the PAIGC, chiefly that of national independence and the political unity between Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau.

Additionally, the Support Committee was instrumental in mobilizing resources, both symbolic and material, from different sections of mainstream American society. For instance, Salah Matteos, the chair of Mobilization and Organization Section of the PAIGC-USA Support Committee, led a campaign before the United Church of Christ (UCC) in May 1974; that convention which took place in Hyannis, Massachusetts, resulted in the UCC recognizing the Republic of Guinea-Bissau as an independent nation.³⁶ Beyond this explicitly political goal, the support organization's work also addressed other key issues, ranging from education and social awareness, demonstrations and rallies against Portuguese interests, to contacts with other organizations in the United States.

Furthermore, the PAIGC-USA Support Committee was socially and politically integrated in ethnic politics and coalition-building. Leaders of the committee were either members of and/or worked closely with III Pyramids, Inc., a multi-ethnic coalition of non-governmental organization founded by Cabo Verdeans, African-Americans, and Native Americans in 1969. The PAIGC USA-Support Committee also engaged in coalition-building with other mainstream progressive groups. Its leader, Salah Matteos toured US universities to campaign on behalf of the PAIGC struggle in Africa. Taking advantage of its connection with other progressive organizations, in 1973 the PAIGC USA-Support Committee secured a substantial grant (\$18,000.00) from the Episcopal Church, through its General Convention Special Program.³⁷ In the first half of the 1970s, the PAIGC-USA Support Committee was instrumental in creating one of the most durable myth abouts Cabo Verdeans in the USA, namely that the size of the community was about 300,000.³⁸

Just as the PAIGC gained momentum and seemed unstoppable in its quest to gain power in Cabo Verde, in early 1975, a new political organization was created by Cabo Verdean-Americans: the Juridical Congress of World Cape Verdean Communities. Two socio-political factors explain the dynamic process that led to the formation of this second group: the December 18 Agreement between the Government of Portugal and the PAIGC, and a trip by a Cabo Verde-born Portuguese diplomat (Aguinaldo Veiga) to the United States.

The December 18 Agreement, which marked the fall of the Portuguese dictatorship, was itself linked to the anti-colonial war in Guinea-Bissau, coordinated by the PAIGC. In August 1974, Portugal recognized Guinea as an independent nation. Following this development, Portugal and the PAIGC began to discuss possible modalities for Cabo Verde to, likewise, achieve independence. On December 18, 1974, Portugal and the PAIGC reached a political agreement in Lisbon. While the Lisbon Agreement did not translate into a direct transfer of power from Portugal to the PAIGC, it was, nonetheless, a significant political victory for the party, insofar as other Cabo Verdean political parties, such as the Union of the Independent

³⁶ "News from the Support Committee," *No Pintcha*, April-May 1974, 2.

³⁷ Benjamin S. Fernandes, II, "Presentation to the UN Special Commission," *No Pintcha*, May 22, 1974; "ALSC Encourages Coalition on Survival" *Bay State Banner* (1965-1979), Dec 20, 1973. "Grant Made to Liberation Group," *Boston Globe*, September 22, 1973, 27.

³⁸ Laura J. Pires-Hester, *A study of Cape Verdean-American ethnic development: the emergence of bilateral diaspora ethnicity and its impact in a southeastern New England locality* (PhD diss., Columbia University, 1994), 133.

Peoples of Cabo Verde (UPICV) and the Democratic Union of Cabo Verde (UDC), had not made it to the independence talks. A new government of transition was appointed by the independence agreement, and it included representatives appointed by the PAIGC.

Many Cabo Verdeans, both at home and in diaspora, distrusted the PAIGC. The somewhat radical political line of the party included a number of principles that alienated many Cabo Verdeans. First and foremost, the PAIGC meant an ideological rupture with how the social identity of Cabo Verde had been constructed by the nation's *literati* since the early 1900s. A dominant trope shared by the islands' writers and poets was the assumption that Cabo Verde was fundamentally linked to the culture and civilization of Europe in general, and Portuguese in particular. Baltazar Lopes da Silva, the epitome of the generation of writers that became known as the "Claridosos," writes of Cabo Verde as a "romance experience in the tropics."³⁹ Against this Western-based interpretation of Cabo Verdean social identity, Amílcar Cabral, the leader of the PAIGC, suggested what he termed "African regionalism." In this model, the people of Cabo Verde were culturally African. Such an identity statement had political implications, as it removed Cabo Verde from the sphere of Western influence and instead made a case for it to be included in the concert of African states. Another central principle of the PAIGC—which constituted, at the same time, a key political objective—centered on the political unification between Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau. In fact, this idea had been codified in major documents of the party since its inception in the late 1950s and early '60s.⁴⁰

Beyond this specific goal, the PAIGC espoused a leftist, radical political ideology that included elements of Marxist thought. During the liberation struggle, the PAIGC developed strong linkages with the Communist states, which provided valuable material, diplomatic and political support.⁴¹ Portugal was a member of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a military alliance that included most of the Western European and North American States. As such direct support for the nascent state seeking independence from Portugal was never forthcoming from the Western states. Indeed, to the Portuguese regime, the PAIGC was no more than a puppet organization in the service of international communism—the Soviet bloc.

The independence agreement with the PAIGC meant the victory of a particular interpretation of Cabo Verdean identity. Many Cabo Verdeans saw the PAIGC as a catalog of things that they despised and/or rejected, ranging from pan-Africanism and political unity with Guinea-Bissau to international Communism and anti-liberal democracy. Many believed that Guinea-Bissau would eventually join the ranks of communist regimes; for this reason, the fear of a communist takeover in Cabo Verde was another main reason that many Cape Verdeans rejected the idea of political unification with Guinea-Bissau. Especially for Cabo Verdean elites living in the diaspora, the PAIGC was basically a stooge of Soviet imperialism, and they worried that independence with PAIGC in charge of the new government would translate into a Communist regime taking hold on the islands.

³⁹ Baltazar Lopes da Silva, "Uma experiência românica nos trópicos." *Claridade*, n. 4 (1947): 15-22; Norman Araujo, *A study of Cape Verdean literature* (Chestnut Hill, Mass: Boston College, 1966); Gabriel Fernandes, *A diluição da África: uma interpretação da saga identitária cabo-verdiana no panorama político (pós)colonial* (Florianópolis: Editora da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, 2002).

⁴⁰ PAIGC, (1973), "Estatutos e Programa do PAIGC," Fundação Mário Soares/DAC-Documentos Amílcar Cabral, http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_41611 (2019-11-19).

⁴¹ Abel Djassi Amado, "The PAIGC 'Congratulatory' Diplomacy towards Communist States, 1960-1964," *Lusotopie* 19, 1 (2020): 54-75; Julião Sousa "Amílcar Cabral, the PAIGC and the Relations with China at the Time of the Sino-Soviet Split and of Anti-Colonialism. Discourses and Praxis" *International History Review* (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.2019.1695139>.

A further factor concerned global diplomatic relations. At a time that the Cold War was entering into its post-*détente* phase, Cape Verdean opponents of the PAIGC hoped the anti-Communist argument could have helped win political support from the US government. In fact, according to XX, the official line of the US government in 1975 was that “we don’t want a base [in Cabo Verde], but we don’t want the Russians to have it either.”⁴² It was against these perceptions that the Juridical Congress was eventually formed by a small number of conservative Cabo Verdean lawyers living in the United States.

A second major factor that drove the founding of the Juridical Congress was the arrival of the Portuguese diplomat, Aguinaldo Veiga, in the United States. Born in Cabo Verde, Veiga made his career in the Portuguese imperial bureaucracy. In 1961, he was part of the Portuguese diplomatic delegation to the United Nations. During a visit to the United States in 1961, Veiga met some elites of the Cabo Verdean diaspora living in Massachusetts and Rhode Island.⁴³ Following the crumbling of the dictatorship in Portugal, in October 1974, Veiga published a short book about the politics of independence in Cabo Verde.⁴⁴ The book was a rejoinder to the PAIGC ideological line, criticizing those who argued for “total and immediate independence” for Cabo Verde, whom he called “impatient Cabo Verdeans.”⁴⁵ Furthermore, Veiga bitterly criticized the idea of a post-colonial unification between Cabo Verde and Guinea-Bissau--a project he considered contradictory, as it would lead to “independence in dependence,” as he characterized this model.⁴⁶

By the end of 1974, with the independence agreement reached, national debate changed from whether or not to seek independence, to what kind of national independence to embrace. Like many other political actors who were initially opposed to the idea of national independence, Veiga, began to focus on ways to preempt the PAIGC-led quest for independence from establishing a new government. Already, the PAIGC seemed to have an almost unstoppable momentum in its dynamic process of occupying the seat of power in Cabo Verde. To challenge that momentum, in December 1974, Veiga moved to the United States with a mission to swing the Cabo Verdean-American communities away from supporting that seeming likelihood. Veiga decided to move to the United States because of the size and relative prestige he believed the Cabo Verdean community in the United States had. For him, the Cabo Verdean community in North America was large and powerful enough “to speak up for the natives in the islands.”⁴⁷

The Juridical Congress Unilateral Declaration of Independence

In early February 1975, Aguinaldo Veiga met with Roy Teixeira, Belmira Nunes Lopes, Joseph Andrade and Ben Goncalves met in Sacramento, CA. There, the group discussed the idea of creating a new association.⁴⁸ They decided to form an organization named the Juridical Congress of World Cape Verdean Communities. The name was carefully chosen to reflect two predominant characteristics of the organization. On the one hand, the leadership of the

⁴² “Inside the Cape Verde Islands,” *Southern Africa* Vol VIII, no 3 (March 1975): 25.

⁴³ “Vote in Islands ‘Now’ PAIGC. Struggle for Independence to be decided by International Court,” *The Cape Verdean*, June 1975, 1; “Roy Teixeira ferido num desastre de viação,” *Diário de Notícias*, November 6, 1961, 1.

⁴⁴ Aguinaldo Veiga, *Construamos Cabo Verde Independente* (Luanda, Angola: na, 1974).

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁴⁷ “Cape Verdean Support Group Meet in Boston,” *The Cape Verdean*, March 1975, 3

⁴⁸ “Under Arrest,” *The Cape Verdean*, March 1975, 11.

movement rested in the hands of lawyers. On the other hand, the organization aimed to attract representatives of Cabo Verdean diasporas from around the world.

On February 22 and 23, the Juridical Congress held a conference at the Sheraton Hotel in Boston. The conference was led by five lawyers, aided by an advisory body of twenty people (seventeen men and three women). Reports indicate that over 2,500 people attended the meeting—it was, to date, the largest event ever held of Cabo Verdeans in the United States.⁴⁹ The meeting produced a “Resolution” that consisted of ten different points, which can be organized under the rubric of five different themes: (a) a declaration of “total and immediate independence” from Portugal (I); (b) the illegality and unconstitutionality of the prior Independence Agreement reached between Portugal and the PAIGC (II and III); (c) the denial of Portuguese sovereignty, and the claim that if Portugal maintained armed forces stationed in Cabo Verde, that would constitute an “invasionary force” (IV and V); (d) an assertion that both the PAIGC and Guinea-Bissau were enemies of the people of Cabo Verde, hence the transitional government in Cabo Verde was illegitimate (VI-VIII); and (e) the predominance of the attorneys within this political organization (IX-X).

The conference centered on three main topics: first, legal deconstruction of the Lisbon Agreement, signed on December 18, 1974; second, the resolution of a motion calling for the independence of Cabo Verde; and, finally, the organization of a government-in-exile. The conference centered on the legal deconstruction of the independence agreement with the members of the congress arguing but ultimately approving, a motion that declared the Independence Agreement between the Government of Portugal and the PAIGC legally void. This argument was based on the notion that one of the contracting parties in the agreement, the PAIGC, lacked legitimacy and mandate from the people of Cabo Verde. The final resolution stated that the PAIGC was “a foreign political group that never was elected, chosen, or accepted by the Cape Verdian [sic] people.”⁵⁰ For the Juridical Congress, the PAIGC was a foreign political organization originating and based in Guinea-Bissau. The notion of the PAIGC being a foreign body was something previously defended by Veiga, weeks before the meeting. In an open letter to the United Nations, Veiga had protested the PAIGC’s foreign activities in Cabo Verde.⁵¹ In fact, the Resolution of the Juridical Congress classified the PAIGC as “an invasionary force and an enemy of the People of Cabo Verde.”⁵²

Following the legal nullification of the Lisbon Agreement, the Juridical Congress voted to “proclaim and herewith effectively declare *the total and immediate independence of the archipelago of the Cape Verde.*”⁵³ The Juridical Congress’s unilateral declaration of independence, though without any real political implications for Cabo Verde, was part of a strategy of preempting the PAIGC’s political takeover and subsequent redefinition of the nation.

Lastly, the Resolution of the meeting called for the establishment of a government-in-exile that would seek recognition from friendly states around the world. The Congress granted the “jurist doctors, Roy J. Teixeira, Antonio J. Cardozo, Roy J. Teixeira, Jr., Harry I. Fernandes,

⁴⁹ “Cape Verde’s fate argued in Hub,” *The Boston Globe*, February 23, 1975, 30; Luis V. Overbea, “Cape Verdeans eye control of Homeland,” *The Christian Science Monitor* reproduced in *The Cape Verdean*, March 1975, 2.

⁵⁰ “Congress of Capeverdian [sic] Communities,” *The Cape Verdean*, March 1975, 8; Aguinaldo Veiga, “Open Letter to Committee on Decolonization of the UN,” *The Cape Verdean*, April 1975, 1-2.

⁵¹ “Reactionary Cape Verdeans Plan Action in US,” *Southern Africa* Vol VIII, no 3 (March 1975): 25.

⁵² “With 2,600 Delegates Cheering, the Juridical Congress Passed the following Resolutions on February 22 and 23,” *The Cape Verdean*, April 1975, 1 (italics added)

⁵³ “To the Cape Verdeans of the World,” *The Cape Verdean*, April 1975, 6.

and Aguiñaldo Veiga” the mandate to speak on behalf of Cabo Verde and its people.⁵⁴ As a visual representation meant to powerfully symbolize the constitution of a new government *in absentia*, the Juridical Congress also approved a new symbol of the state—a flag—which was then blessed by a Cape Verdean Catholic priest present at the conference (Reverend Father Benvindo Leitao).

Beyond these instrumental political goals, the Juridical Congress aimed to fundamentally define the socio-political identity of Cabo Verdeans both at home and abroad. Against the Pan-Africanist views on the identity of Cabo Verdeans, which was gaining traction in the 1970s, the movement sought to return to the Eurocentric approach to Cabo Verdeanness. This attempt was hardly uncontroversial. In fact, many Cabo Verdean-Americans saw the meeting as an unwelcome attempt to strengthen a Eurocentric emphasis of Cabo Verdean identity. Yvonne Smart is one participant who disagreed with the platform. At the meeting, she perceived a basic identity conflict between a “Eurocentric” and “Afrocentric” emphasis. As a Cabo Verdean-American associated with the Black Empowerment movement of the time, Smart and others attending the meeting, rejected the Juridical Congress leaders’ views. Smart described her group’s emphasis quite simply: “we were Afro-centric.”⁵⁵

The meeting did not go unnoticed by the PAIGC-USA Support Committee. On the first day of the meeting, the group brought some one hundred bodies, who protested outside the Sheraton Hotel on a cold, winter day. The protest included speeches by the leaders of the organization, including Salah Matteos. The PAIGC-USA Support Committee also issued a written statement that classified the meeting as an attempt of diasporic elites to safeguard their material interests, as well as to sow confusion and division within the Cabo Verdean community.⁵⁶

In the following months, as the process for independence began to take shape in the homeland, both groups of Cabo Verdean-Americans devised a number of different political strategies to either strengthen or weaken the position of the PAIGC in Cabo Verde. Part of the strategy followed by the Juridical Congress included ethnic lobbying before members of federal legislative and executive bodies. Thus, in April 1975, Aguiñaldo Veiga and Roy Teixeira, Jr., traveled to Washington, D.C., where they met with representatives from several congressional offices from New England states, California and Florida.⁵⁷

Meanwhile, in Boston, the two groups focused their attention on winning support from local representatives of the Cabo Verdean diaspora. In order to better learn about the situation, Senator Edward Brooke called for a meeting with the representatives of the two organizations and other stakeholders on April 18, 1975, in his office in the JFK Building. During the meeting, Brooke mentioned that the U.S. Congress had appropriated some five million dollars to Cabo Verde. The representatives from the Juridical Congress responded by suggesting that the distribution of the aid be trusted to an impartial agency such as the Red Cross. For their part, the PAIGC-USA Support Committee wanted to learn about the official position of the U.S. government vis-à-vis independence, but Senator Brooke did not provide much information. Overall, the meeting was a political defeat for the Juridical Congress insofar as their strategy of linking the PAIGC to the Soviet Union failed miserably. The idea that the PAIGC-Lisbon Agreement was an indication of its satellite status vis-à-vis the Soviet Union was rejected by

⁵⁴ “With 2,600 Delegates Cheering,” *The Cape Verdean*, 1.

⁵⁵ Phone Interview with Yvonne Smart, November 12, 2009.

⁵⁶ Overbea, “Cape Verdeans.”

⁵⁷ “Dr. Veiga in Washington,” *The Cape Verdean*, May 1975, 1; “Dr. Veiga,” *The Cape Verdean*, June 1975, 5.

Senator Brooke, who mentioned that even the U.S. government had its own agreements with the Soviet Union.⁵⁸

At this point, the first post-independence election was approaching. In this politically momentous climate, the strategy of the Juridical Congress shifted toward more toward international law. The leaders' idea was to take their case before an international court.⁵⁹ Veiga argued that the upcoming election in Cabo Verde had no legitimacy, and that the independence of Cabo Verde had to be confirmed in the Hague.⁶⁰

The Juridical Congress had both a negationist and a constitutive agenda. On the one hand, it negated the legality, legitimacy and constitutionality of the independence agreement between Portugal and the PAIGC. Through its resolutions and speeches by its leaders, it became clear that the group's objective was to seek the nullification of that independence agreement in an international court. On the other hand, the Boston conference supposedly invested a new sovereign state, with a government in exile and the sorts of key political symbols, such as a flag and a coat of arms, that are expected as part of modern statehood.⁶¹

After the formal independence of Cabo Verde, the Juridical Congress managed to maintain its political activity for another year or so. By the end of 1975, however, many members grew disappointed with the Juridical Congress. In a penetrating editorial in December 1975, Manuel Neves, whose reporting in the early months of that year. Had clearly been biased in favor of that organization, condemned the Juridical Congress, noting that "nothing has been accomplished."⁶² The organization became dysfunctional, with mismanagement of funds and distrust eventually leading to its political insignificance and eventual dissolution.

In fact, by the end of 1976, both the organizations I have been discussing here had vanished from the diasporic political scene--though for opposite reasons. The PAIGC-USA Support Committee disappeared because it had fulfilled its mission. By contrast, the Juridical Congress disappeared because it was unable to generate support for its members' quest to challenge the PAIGC's leadership in achieving independence and statehood of Cabo Verde. By the late 1970s, few members of the Juridical Congress maintained their opposition to the post-colonial regime in Cabo Verde. They maintained an engagement in opposition politics by joining forces with other dissenters, leading to the formation of another association, the Cabo Verdean Independent and Democratic Union (UCID).

Conclusions

Independence politics in the homeland have an effect among diasporic citizens. In the modern world, those citizens may use a myriad of strategies and institutions to shape political outcomes in their homeland. Among Cabo Verdeans in the United States, two main political organizations were formed at a critical moment in the homeland's political life. The PAIGC-USA Support Committee was restricted to the diasporic sites of southern New England (New Bedford and Boston areas) and maintained mostly symbolic connections with the homeland, as

⁵⁸ "Brooke meet [sic] with Cape Verdeans," *The Cape Verdean*, May 1975, 1.

⁵⁹ "Vote in Islands 'Now' PAIGC. The Struggle for Independence to be decided by International Court", *The Cape Verdean*, June 1975, 1.

⁶⁰ "Dr. Veiga," *The Cape Verdean*, June 1975, 5.

⁶¹ The approved flag is curiously similar to the autonomy flag of the Azores from the late 1800s. the flag, in a rectangular form, is vertically divided in two parts, dark blue and white. There are two columns of five stars each representing the ten islands of Cabo Verde. In between these two columns of stars, there are

⁶² "Editorial," *The Cape Verdean*, December 1975, 1.

its leaders were born in the United States and had no direct contacts with Cabo Verde. By contrast, the Juridical Congress was a coalition of Cabo Verdean elites from more dispersed diasporic sites ranging from New England to California—though it never attracted diasporic communities from beyond the US.

At the sociological level, the leadership of these two political organizations represented two distinct social categories of Cabo Verdeans in the United States. The PAIGC-USA Support Committee was led by young, high-school-dropout, second-generation Cabo Verdean-Americans who had close links with African-Americans and their struggle for social equality. The PAIGC-USA Support Committee adopted ideological stances of Pan-Africanism and imagined Cabo-Verdeanness in relation to blackness and Africanity. For its part, the leadership of the Juridical Congress consisted of highly educated Cabo Verdean-Americans, many of whom were born in Cabo Verde (Aguinaldo Veiga, Roy Teixeira) and had material interests in the islands (Roy Teixeira). The Juridical Congress maintained the traditional colonial discourse of Cabo Verde as a *mestizo*, “creole” society in which the vestiges of African culture have long been diluted, as argued by the Cabo Verdean intellectual, Baltazar Lopes da Silva.⁶³ This group was convinced that focusing on cultural and/or political connections to Africa would be tantamount to committing cultural genocide of the Cabo Verdean people.

Unexpectedly, these dramatically opposed ideological and social distinctions translated into divergent political projects for the homeland. For the older generation associated with the Juridical Congress, political independence represented. By contrast, for the young generation affiliated with the PAIGC-USA Support Committee, political independence under the aegis of the PAIGC represented a political victory of an African people against European colonialism.

The intense debate and campaigns regarding the political independence of Cabo Verde served to stir the community in the search of its self. Several other community organizations were created, or old ones became redesigned, to focus on claiming the uniqueness of Cabo Verdean identity. These organizations engaged mainstream political institutions with the goal of altering the perception towards the community as well as to give the community a voice in how it is perceived. For instance, through the work of the Cape Verdean Educators Collaborative, the Cape Verdean language became recognized as a ‘living foreign language,’ and thus a medium for bilingual education.⁶⁴ Similarly, the laborious lobbying and political activities conducted by the Cape Verdean Veterans Association of New Bedford ultimately resulted in the census of 1980 recognizing ‘Cape Verdean’ as an ancestry classification.⁶⁵

⁶³ Silva, “Uma Experiência Românica nos Trópicos”; Fernandes, *A diluição da África*.

⁶⁴ Pires-Hester, *A study of Cape Verdean-American ethnic development*, 146.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

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