The illegible state in Cape Verde: language policy and the quality of democracy
THE ILLEGIBLE STATE IN CAPE VERDE: LANGUAGE POLICY
AND THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY

by

ABEL DJASSI AMADO
B.A., Technical University of Lisbon, 1998
B.A., University of Massachusetts, Boston, 2001
A.M., Boston University, 2011

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

2015
DEDICATION

This doctoral dissertation is dedicated to my daughter, Kenya Maria, “Keke.” Her presence around has been truly inspiring and has allowed me to take an extra mile towards finishing this project. While an at-home father—intermittently for the past three years—this work has benefited enormously from my daughter’s unconditional and ever-present love.

This thesis is also dedicated to my mother, Maria Felicia Monteiro Amado, who has always believed in me and has provided, unconditionally, full support in all the endeavors I have taken throughout my life. Nha Kumasita, I can see further because on your shoulders I stand.

I also want to dedicate this doctoral dissertation to one of my best mentors, Kumandanti Bailo (RIP), my brother, a true inspirer, from whom I learned a lot about practical politics from the former Portuguese colonies in Africa. Your lessons and guidance are never forgotten.

I also dedicate this dissertation to monoglossic Cape Verdeans, chiefly the poor and older generation, the voiceless whose silence has been imposed upon them.

Last, but not the least, this thesis is a written celebration of the Cape Verdean language. Resisting past and current deniers of its modernizing and political quality that language is yet to be fully accepted as the official language of the state or linguistically legitimate.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The completion of this doctoral dissertation, a multi-year project, was facilitated by the direct support of different individuals, on whose moral and/or academic shoulders I now stand. First and foremost, I would like to express my thankfulness to Professor Timothy Longman for his abundant, stimulating and thought-provoking comments on different drafts of this dissertation as well as for guidance and suggestions that have significantly improved the quality of this work. Professor Édouard Bustin, from the day one of my experience here at Boston University, has always been a reliable mentor. He has read several drafts of this dissertation and made significant suggestions on how to improve the quality of this work. Professors Michael Woldemarian and Taylor Boas have also contributed with great insights and comments. I am truly indebted to their remarks and their time spent going over the previous drafts.

While at Boston University, I have had the best luck of closely working with Jennifer Yanco. I cannot thank her enough for all for her enormous support to this project. Jennifer has read several chapters, in their different versions, and has provided insightful comments as well as marvelous suggestions on the writing style.

Academic production does not happen in isolation. It is essentially a social task. If I am able to have this doctoral dissertation completed it is because I have enjoyed being part of a tight-knitted community, the African Studies Center, and companionship and support from my colleagues here at Boston University as well as. I cannot thank ASC without making it personal: a special thank you is directed to Joanne Hart, the backbone of the Center, whose earnest friendship and professionalism warm the Center.
My colleagues at the Political Science Department, Ceren Ergenc, Ahmet Selim Tekelioglu, Anshul Jain and Joseph Berger deserve special mention for their comments on some chapters of this doctoral dissertation. I have also benefitted from support from colleagues from other departments, mainly from the Department of Anthropology, namely Tenzin Jimba, Leonardo Schiochetti, and Arianna Huhn. I also benefited from outstanding comments from my good friend, Michael Panzer.

For a decade now, since I embarked on this journey, I have a battalion of people behind me, pushing me to go forward and never backward. To all the members of my family—and my family is huge—my special appreciation for believing in me. My sister Nesby deserves a special mention of appreciation: If now I am able to finish this dissertation is that it all started with her guidance and direction into the realms of higher education when I first moved to the United States.

I cannot finish the acknowledgment without referring to my nephew/godson, Jairson Ascenção. In spite of his young age, he carefully read this dissertation and provided valuable suggestions about the writing style of this dissertation.

The last—but most definitely not the least—my deepest appreciation goes to my lovely wife, Helia Resy. I am truly indebted to your patience and your support, while I was “constantly absent,” even when at home. Your being patient and supportive when my stress levels were reaching the sky made this final project possible. This dissertation is now completed because of your unconditional support.
THE ILLEGIBLE STATE IN CAPE VERDE: LANGUAGE POLICY
AND THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY

ABEL DJASSI AMADO

Boston University School/College of Arts and Science, 2015

Major Professor: Timothy Longman, Professor of Political Science

ABSTRACT

To what extent does language policy affect or have an impact on the quality of democracy? In third wave democracies of sub-Saharan Africa, a diglossic language policy—the type of policy that organizes the languages of the community in an asymmetrical manner, in which the language of the former colonial power assumes political and social predominance—constitutes a powerful hindrance to engaging citizenship. Such a policy perpetuates the linguistic divide between the state and society. Subsequently, ordinary citizens’ political departicipation ensues, with serious consequences on the quality of democracy.

Deriving from the data gathered in Praia, Cape Verde, through a combination of archival research, informed direct and focus groups interviews, during summers of 2010 and 2011, I argue that diglossic language policy limits the quality of democracy by way of lower classes’ diminished surveillatory and initiatory political participation. Diglossic language policy creates and reinforces a state that is linguistically detached from society. The state, as such, is illegible to the non-high language speakers, who may find it very difficult to follow its operations, procedures, and processes. Ultimately, state illegibility
breeds low levels of surveillatory participation on the part of non-high language speakers. Inability to “read” the state translates into failure to properly supervise it. At the same time, initiatory political participation, the entering and engaging in political discussion and deliberation with peers or state agents, is also constrained. This state of affairs derives from: a) inaudibility, the notion that political communication in the vernacular is of less value; and b) ridicule, the idea that to speak the high language incorrectly is to succumb to public derision, a condition that invalidates the message.

In the final analysis, diglossic language policy preserves the divide between elite and masses, whereby the latter participation in politics is limited to voting. While it creates the conditions for political effervescence at the top, through elite pluralism and competition, the Schumpeterian elite democracy freezes the bottom. Given the limited forms of political participation of ordinary citizens, states with diglossic language policy, such as Cape Verde, should not be considered quality democracies.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## Contents

DEDICATION

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ABSTRACT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE: THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY AND LANGUAGE POLICY

CHAPTER TWO: POLITICAL HISTORY OF CAPE VERDE: FROM A COLONY OF PORTUGAL TO A MICRO-ISLAND STATE

From the Early Years to the fall of Estado Novo

The First Republic, 1975-1991

Transition to Multi-Party Electoral Democracy in Cape Verde

The State of Electoral Democracy in Cape Verde

Conclusion
CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN CAPE VERDE

Colonial Language Policy in Cape Verde: The Ideology of Empire .................. 115
Portuguese Colonial Language Policy and Planning ........................................ 118
Nativist Linguistic Nationalism ........................................................................ 138
The Creole Language, Race, and Social Classes ............................................. 150
Creole Societies and the Politics of Language ................................................ 157
The International Weight of the Portuguese Language .................................... 160
Conclusion ..................................................................................................... 166

CHAPTER FOUR: THE ILLEGIBLE STATE AND DEMOCRATIC CONTROL..... 169

Citizens’ Perception about the State in Cape Verde ...................................... 170
Comprehending the State: The Media, the State and the Citizen in Cape Verde .... 177
The Illegibility of the State and diminished Surveillatory Participation ............ 183
Linguistic Strategies of the State Elite in Cape Verde: The Language of the State and the state of Languages ................................................................................. 202
Conclusion ..................................................................................................... 208

CHAPTER FIVE: RESTRICTED INITIATOTORY POLITICAL PARTICIPATION:
DIGLOSSIA AND POLITICAL NONPARTICIATION IN CAPE VERDE ........211

The Politics of Ridicule ................................................................................... 214
The Politics of Inaudibility ............................................................................ 224
Silencing and Managing Citizens’ Political Participation .............................. 237
Blocking Initiatory Political Participation ....................................................... 240
Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 245

CHAPTER SIX: LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY: A COMPARISON OF CAPE VERDE, TANZANIA, AND SOUTH AFRICA ........... 247

Tanzania’s Political History and Language Policy ............................................................... 248

South Africa: from Apartheid to a Multi-Lingual Electoral Democracy ................... 254

Contemporary Linguistic Landscape in Tanzania and South Africa ......................... 265

Political Participation and Effective Democracy in Cape Verde, South Africa, and Tanzania ............................................................................................................. 273

Conclusion ................................................................................................................................. 287

CONCLUSION .......................................................................................................................... 290

Towards Effective Democracy .......................................................................................... 301

Which Language Policy for Cape Verde? ................................................................................. 306

BIBLIOGRAPHY ......................................................................................................................... 315

Primary sources ......................................................................................................................... 315

Secondary Literature .................................................................................................................. 316

CURRICULUM VITAE ................................................................................................................. 346
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. The electoral dominance of the PAICV and MpD ............................................. 103
Table 2. Multi-party elections in Cape Verde (from 1991 to 2011) .................................. 105
Table 3. Illiteracy in then Portuguese Africa (1960) ....................................................... 133
Table 4. Social Class and the Main Language of Communication .................................... 154
Table 5. Modes of language functioning in Cape Verde .................................................. 156
Table 6. Creole Languages and the Lexifiers ................................................................. 159
Table 7. The Mediascape of Cape Verde ........................................................................ 180
Table 8. Matrix of State-Ordinary Citizen Communication ............................................ 192
Table 9. Citizen-State Officials Contacts (percentage of respondents) ............................ 208
Table 10. The Constitution and the Language Policy ....................................................... 268
Table 11. Turnout in Legislative Elections in Cape Verde, South Africa and Tanzania .... 274
Table 12. Regime type and Party System in Cape Verde, Tanzania and South Africa ... 274
Table 13. Citizens’ contact with local and national representatives and state officials .. 280
Table 14. Citizens’ discussion of political affairs........................................................... 285
Table 15. Contemporary Linguistic Landscape in Cape Verde ........................................ 312
Table 16. Major Foreign Communities in Cape Verde ..................................................... 314
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. From Diglossic Language Policy to Less Democratic Quality .......................... 35
Figure 2. Legislative Elections in the First Republic......................................................... 90
Figure 3. Legislative Elections in Cape Verde in Numbers (absolute numbers).............. 106
Figure 4. State-Society Political Relations in Democratic Regimes................................. 190
Figure 5. The flow of information and control between the State and Citizens............. 194
Figure 6. Pathway to Retreat from Initiatory Participation............................................. 213
Figure 7. Evolution of Freedom House ranking of Cape Verde, South Africa and Tanzania............................................................................................................. 275
Figure 8. The Democratic Continuum ............................................................................. 302
CHAPTER ONE: THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY AND LANGUAGE POLICY

On October 13th, 2011, in “Conserva em Dia,” a television talk show from Cape Verde’s national television channel that focuses on current social and political issues, the topic of the day was fisheries and their social, economic and environmental impact. On that episode, three individuals whose livelihood and professional life revolved around the question of fisheries were invited as guest speakers and commentators: Esperança Riviera, representing a network of artisanal fisheries community-based organizations (the Rede Organizações Profissionais de Pesca Artesanal), Rafael Menezes, the president of a local fishermen association, (Associação Armadores Pescadores e Peixeira Praia Santa Maria), and Óscar Melício, president of the National Institute for the Development of Fisheries (INDP), an autonomous state agency.

In linguistic terms, that day’s show was characterized by code-switching, that is, the alternating between two languages, the Cape Verdean language, the national language of the country, spoken by all, and the Portuguese language, the official language of the state and the language of prestige and social status. Between the anchorwoman and Esperança Riveira and Oscar Melício, Portuguese was the language of communication.

---

1 I prefer the term Cape Verdean language to Cape Verdean Creole—though the speakers of the language often refer to the language simply as “Creole.” The latter is ideologically charged and may negatively in the analysis that is to be conducted. For instance, as noted by Louis-Jean Calvet, “the term creole tends to designate quite simply something that one does not wish to call a language.” See Louis-Jean Calvet, *Towards an Ecology of World Languages* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006), 174 (added italics).
However, the Cape Verdean language was the choice for communication between the reporter and Rafael Menezes. The linguistic choice is, in itself, an indication, or a marker, of social status and level of formal education.

Right at the beginning of the show, when Mr. Menezes was first given the opportunity to speak, and after thanking them inviting him, he went on to state, “I would like if each one of us, who could speak in [Cape Verdean] Creole, to speak in that language, for there are fishermen, there are our colleagues who…do not have much formal education…and who want to understand the easiest words [in order for us to have] not a beautiful show but something that [the fishermen] understands.”2 Responding in Portuguese, the anchorwoman stated that “[a]bout the language question, our show is made for not only to the fishermen but to all Cape Verdeans who are watching us and those who live abroad who speak Portuguese. Thus, the rule of the show has always been Portuguese, Creole. There is no problem here.” The anchorwoman simply did not get the point: Mr. Menezes wanted to amplify the realm of the participants in this public debate. Mr. Menezes, as representing a social stratum with high stakes in the issue of fisheries, wanted to include the fishermen, by eliminating any need for intermediary elements in this debate. If the debate was all in the national language, the local fishermen would more easily get the gist of what the commentators were saying about something on which their livelihood depends. Mr. Menezes, as the president of the local fishermen association, seemed to have been primarily interested in opening the content of the debate to his

fellow colleagues. In so doing the public debate would have included ordinary citizens from different aspects of life, particularly those with rudimentary knowledge and skills in the Portuguese language.

The situation is a good illustration of the extent that language policy, in its de facto and de jure character, serves as an instrument to restrict the number of participants in the public debate, curtailing ordinary citizens’ chances for further political education. That day’s show is also an interesting example of what I call the politics of inaudibility. In spite of being a national language, spoken throughout the country—and by the Cape Verdean diaspora throughout the Atlantic World—the vernacular language is yet to be recognized as respectable idiom to be used in the official public sphere, including in the media. The concept of politics of inaudibility, as I see it, is linked to political exclusion. This is to say that the voice of the ordinary citizens, who are not proficient or skillful in the official language of the country, the Portuguese language, are often unheard.

Political activists, thinkers and community leaders across the planet are now arguing for the opening of the ordinary citizens’ channels of political participation in the conduct and management of the public affairs of their respective states. In the past few decades, it has become quite common to watch in the news ordinary citizens’ social movements, whether protesting, rioting or confronting the forces of security. The so-called “Arab Spring” when ordinary citizens flocked to the streets leading to regime changes in Tunisia and Egypt, and the recent mass urban protests in Brazil, motivated by the country’s chronic high levels of state corruption and poor services, or individual actions of state employees to reveal state secrets, as in the case of Edward Snowden, are
indications that the average citizens seek not only to reclaim a venue of actual participation in the political affairs but also to do whatever towards the objective.³

Protests and other forms of contentious politics are the last resort mechanisms at disposal of ordinary citizens to force an entrance into politics.⁴ These mechanisms are often used when all other available forms are exhausted. People choose these mechanisms of participation, in great part, because the socio-political institutional arrangement does not provide channels for the real and effective partaking in the management of public business. Language policy, this dissertation argues, is one of the many established socio-political institutions that can effectively limit or prevent ordinary citizens’ engaging political participation.

This doctoral dissertation is a study of the quality of democracy.⁵ The primary assumption of this dissertation is that the quality of democracy is directly and intimately linked to the question of public participation in the political affairs of their respective polities. As such, this dissertation stresses that more and better political participation breeds more and better democracy—beyond electoral democracy. As a scholarly discussion of politics in an African context, it critically departs from the superficial and

---


shallow understanding of what constitutes a democracy. The quality of democracy is something that increases with the quantity and quality of citizens’ participation. If democracy is, as the etymology implies, “the rule of the people,” then citizens must act in all different forms and stages of government, from the debate on policies, to its making and implementation. What ultimately increases the quality of democracy is the intensity and extensity of citizen participation.

One of the basilar arguments of this doctoral dissertation is that language policy that reinforces the social dominance of a language that is alien to a great majority of the people in effect limits the intensity and extent of political participation. When the state and the social and political elite maintain a language, derived from the colonial experience, as the main—if not the only—language of public administration, education, judicial matters, and media, the political outcome often alienates the great majority of the people. A linguistic wall is created around the state that makes it impenetrable to the ordinary, vernacular language speakers. Effective political participation in the realms of public debate, policy making and implementation, as such, is drastically reduced.

This doctoral dissertation makes a theoretical contribution about the study of democracy and the state. It brings forth the concept of the “illegible state,” that is, the fact that the public institutions and personnel are often not properly supervised by the general population as they live in two distinct linguistic communities. In other words, the state’s main vehicle of formal (and often informal) communication is a language that a sizeable percentage of its population either does not understand or has only a rudimentary
understanding of it. This linguistic situation (or diglossia), I argue, curtails political participation—in its different forms.

Limiting political participation to electoral activity ultimately results in concomitant freezing of the quality of democracy. Therefore, this dissertation does not accept the argument proposed by many scholars, such as Staffan Lindberg, who argue that quality of democracy increases with the number of free and fair elections held.\(^6\) Successive elections, if not accompanied by opening of other non-electoral fields of political participation, may simply lead to elite democracy.

Effective democracy is about minimizing, or even totally removing, the obstacles to political engagement. In other words, an effectively democratic regime is the one that frees all the structural, institutional and cultural impediments that often block citizens from partaking in the whole processes of choosing the composition of the government as well as the outcomes—in kind and degree—that should derive from these authorities.\(^7\) Non-participation in an effectively democratic society should be the realm of purely individual choice. That is to say that personal preference is to be only element that should make individuals to refrain from active participation in the whole political business.

There are a myriad of real and potential obstacles to effective political participation. Social class, level of education, availability of resources such as time and/or money, having or not having public skills such as capacity to public speech, geographic location, age, mental capacity, language policy, and so on, are some

---


important factors that may hinder effective and engaging citizenship. This dissertation focuses on one of these real obstacles to full participation in politics, namely language policy. Institutional and social practices, dictated from the state, may curtail or limit the ordinary’s citizen political participation. This means that we must look at two interrelated things. On the one hand, the state policies that describe, dictate and enforce which language(s) are to be used in official domains and/or as the medium to certain functions (e.g., public education, the realm of state bureaucracy, and so). On the other hand, the social practices and policies that overemphasize one language (or a group of languages) as prestigious and a symbol of status and social distinction, constitute powerful obstacles to ordinary citizens’ political participation. The set of government-sanctioned policies that mandate and define the domains in which some languages are to be used—often at the expense of others—coupled with the social practices that emphasize one or more languages as prestigious, and, ipso facto, the language of modernity, science and public debate, have a significant impact in overall willingness and capacity of ordinary citizen to actively participate in the political affairs of the polity.

This dissertation focuses on the impact of language policy on the level of political participation. Two main reasons have dictated the focus on language policy. First, the

---

theme has received little attention within the field of political science in general and comparative politics in particular. There are only a few political scientists who have analyzed the language question as a variable that helps us understand democratic experiences. While it does not aspire to establish a “linguistic turn” in political science, this doctoral thesis goes along the lines of taking language policy very seriously if one is to understand and grasp the whole processes and operations of politics.

Second, around the globe political communities have been split along the lines of official language speaking elite and the local and indigenous languages speaking masses. Nowhere is this more evident than in sub-Saharan Africa. While the actual percentage of fluent speakers of English, French and Portuguese is relatively small, these languages are the official language of the state, education, public administration and the symbol of high social status. The study of political implications of language policy choices constitutes, thus, an attempt to address a real-life problem, for it behooves social sciences to limit its comfortable presence in the ivory tower and be in contact with the reality.

One of the main focuses of this dissertation, as mentioned above, is language policy. With an eye on language policy, this doctoral dissertation seeks to explain why the great majority of people do not engage in or involve themselves in certain types and forms of political participation. To understand the processes and hindrances to full political participation is, in itself, a strategy to redress the situation. To find the cure for

---

the disease one must first understand the disease. If democracy is to be a system in which citizens are “omnipresent” and can have their interests and dislikes heard throughout the whole processes of policy making and implementation, one must start by looking at the language situation.

**Literature Review**

A quality democracy cannot be disassociated from ordinary citizens’ engaging political participation. Ultimately, a democracy is to be measured as “good” or as “bad” if citizens are—or are not—participating in different stages of the election of government, policy making, and policy implementation. The literature review that follows weaves the notions of political participation with that of the quality of democracy.

A branch of democratic studies that stretches back to the 1940s maintains that quality democracy to be inversely correlated with general masses’ political participation. In other words, the less the intensity and extension of political participation translates in a quality democracy. Joseph Schumpeter’s 1942 book, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, a statement about an elitist theory of democracy, argues that democracy is a *political method* whereby competitive elites fight for people’s vote.¹⁰ Democracy is a “method” of seeking power—through popular cast votes. Schumpeter writes that:

“[d]emocracy is a political method, that is to say, a certain type of institutional arrangements for arriving at political – legislative and administrative – decisions and hence incapable of being an end in itself, irrespective of what decisions it will produce under given historical conditions.”¹¹

---

¹¹ Ibid., 242 (emphasis in the original).
Democracy is fundamentally about a process of “arriving at decisions.”\(^{12}\) That is to say, democracy is an “institutional arrangement that would place decision-making power in the hands of a few individuals who had attained the confidence of the people.”\(^{13}\) People’s participation is restricted to “accepting or refusing the men [sic] who are to rule them.”\(^{14}\) Once politicians are voted into power, the citizens are to return to the comfort of private lives, for they have fulfilled their democratic duty. This means that the process of public policy, the output of the government, is to be left to the experts and professional politicians. Accordingly, common citizens, lacking education, social and technical skills, simply cannot interfere in this rather tricky and complicated business. Moreover, evidence was lacking that the common people “hold a definite and rational opinion about every individual question.”\(^{15}\) Schumpeter, therefore, is calling for a technocratic order, a political system whereby a government of experts exercises full and unrestrained control over policies and system outputs.\(^{16}\)

For Schumpeter democracy exists when two conditions are met: first, there is a pluralism among the elite, who compete for access to power, and, second, the common citizens are called, from time to time, to pronounce about what section of the elite should be put in authority over them. Uncontrolled, unguided, and unrestrained political participation by the common citizens may ultimately lead to democratic breakdown. For

\(^{12}\) Ibid., 243.
\(^{14}\) Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy, 285.
\(^{15}\) Ibid. See also, Irene L. Gendzier, Managing Political Change: Social Scientists and the Third World (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1985), 112.
\(^{16}\) Snauwaert, Democracy, Education, and Governance, 21.
Schumpeter less citizenship, measured in terms of minimal engagement in politics, translates, therefore, into better democracy.

What I call the “Schumpeter’s legacy” made—and still makes—an impact on scholarship on democracy. This Schumpeter legacy is divided into two major pillars, namely the centrality of elections as the defining element of democracy and limited participation of the general citizens in politics. The Schumpeterian legacy can be understood as the fear that increased political participation by the general masses may undermine political stability and ultimately leading to political crises and breakdown.17 Thus, the fear of the illiberal masses whose entrance in politics would cause either democratic decay or political decay, is the condition for democratic elitism.

Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, in their now-classical study *The Civic Culture*, echo Schumpeter, when they argued that the called pre-modern political cultures were not conducive to active civic and political engagement.18 The book is a statement about a culturalist approach of political science. To these two political scientists, parochial political culture tends to dominate politics in the developing world. For this reason, political regimes in these new states were to be controlled. Echoing Schumpeter, Almond and Verba state that “[i]n all societies, of course, the making of specific decisions is concentrated in the hands of very few people. *Neither the ordinary citizen nor ‘public opinion’ can make policy.*”19 Almond and Verba, like many other modernization theorists, are agreeing to the fact that political life is a two-tiered scheme:

19 Ibid., 136 (Italics added).
the elite and the ordinary citizens, those with decision-making powers and the
constructors of policy that affect the whole polity and the group of people over which the
former exercises command authority.\textsuperscript{20}

Robert Dahl is another central name in the empirical study of democracy. Dahl
renovated the Schumpeterian notion of democracy. Though Dahl’s ideas have evolved
over time, an “essential continuity” in his theory of democracy can be discerned.\textsuperscript{21}
Democracy, according to Dahl, is but a principle that political communities should strive
to reach. Empirically, human communities are far removed to that principle. Thus, he
opts for the concept of polyarchy when dealing with the empirical study of democracy.\textsuperscript{22}
Polyarchy is defined as a political system sustained by two pillars: opposition (among
plural elites) and participation (through electoral involvement of the citizens).

Dahl’s earliest writings on democracy, as other writers of the same period, do not
emphasize or highlight political participation by common citizens. His views were that no
contradiction could be found between a democratic regime and limited or even
nonparticipation. His conceptualization of democracy was fundamentally Schumpeterian,
based on the notion that it was a method, a process of reaching political decisions. In his
own words, Dahl considers that:

What we call ‘democracy’—that is, a system of decision-making in which leaders
are more or less responsive to the preferences of nonleaders—does seem to
operate with a relatively low level of citizen participation. Hence \textit{it is inaccurate

\textsuperscript{20} For a critique of modernization theory elitist democracy, see Irene L. Gendzier, \textit{Managing Political
Change: Social Scientists and the Third World} (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1985); Nils Gilman,
\textit{Mandarins of the Future: Modernization Theory in Cold War America} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins


to say that one of the necessary conditions for ‘democracy’ is extensive citizen participation.”

Democracy is primarily about competition among the elites. Dahl’s political elitism was centered on the notion that outputs from the system can be reached without or minimal participation from the general populace. He is rather skeptical about positive political contribution of the common citizens, chiefly those occupying the lower socioeconomic ladder. In *A Preface to Democratic Theory*, Dahl is quite clear in condescending view vis-à-vis the poor citizens: “current evidence suggests that in the United States the lower one's socioeconomic class, the more authoritarian one's predisposition […].” This idea that the lower classes of the society are essentially anti-democratic and tends to be predisposed to authoritarianism stems from Schumpeter’s own analysis, as noted above. It follows that ordinary citizens’ political participation must be limited—lest that “an increase in political activity [of lower socioeconomic classes] brings the authoritarian-minded into the political arena.”

According to Dahl, efficient and high-quality political decisions and public policies result mainly from elite bargaining and negotiation. The elite know what is best for the polity. In a way, Dahl places much emphasis on stability of the system as a whole. Strong political institutionalization precedes massification of politics. Stated differently, there is the assumption that ordinary citizens’ autonomous and qualitative

---

26 Ibid., ibidem.
27 Dahl, *Polyarchy*, 44.
participation in politics may ultimately create a tremendous pressure onto the system as whole, which eventually would lead to a political crisis. Dahl, thus, writes that “[i]n the future as in the past then, stable polyarchies and near-polyarchies are more likely to result from rather slow evolutionary process than from the revolutionary overthrow of existing hegemonies.”

By the 1970s, political participation became a major theme in political science. Two main strands have developed in studies of political participation. First, there are those who take a normative approach to the phenomenon. Carole Pateman and Benjamin Barber are perhaps the most known and widely cited representatives of this approach. While this dissertation is not about political theory, a brief comment on their work is warranted here. Pateman’s book is essentially a response to Joseph Schumpeter’s elitist conceptualization of democracy. As shown below, Schumpeter claims that that democracy is about the political elites competing for votes—not more than that. Pateman’s case is a defense of a participatory theory of democracy. Against democratic elitism, Pateman contends that participation reinforces—rather than provoking decay of—democratic institutions. Barber’s Strong Democracy is a critique of liberal democracy, whose main pillar is individualism. His conclusion is that participatory

---

28 Ibid (Italics added).
30 Joseph A. Schumpeter, Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy.
31 Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory.
democracy is superior to what he terms “thin democracy” (that is, liberal democracy), given the fact that excess liberalism tramples democratic institutions.\(^{32}\)

On the other hand, there are those who seek to understand political participation from the empirical point of view. The study of democracy became a study of the logic of participation and the goal was to learn the extent that participation caused more democracy. Sherry Arnestein may well be one of the first to write on the subject. In her article “A ladder of citizen participation,” Arnstein analyzes different degrees of political participation.\(^{33}\) She proposes a ladder of seven different degrees, which are then grouped into three major types of political participation: nonparticipation (manipulation and therapy), tokenism (informing, consultation, and placation) and citizen control (partnership, delegation, and citizen control). The basic point of the model is that citizen’s degree of decision-making clout increases as we move upward in the ladder. Thus, in the first two instances (manipulation and therapy), citizens do not effectively and engagingly participate in politics. Rather, the objective is “to enable powerholders to ‘educate’ or ‘cure’ the participants.”\(^{34}\) As we move upward in the ladder, “increasing degree of decision making clout” is attached to citizens.\(^{35}\)

While modernization theorists were rather wary of the masses’ participation in politics, they sought to elaborate theories that explain and prescribe active political

\(^{32}\) This line of argument puts Samuel Huntington’s thesis upside down. In his paper, “Political Development and Political decay,” Huntington argues that excess participation leads not to democracy but to what he calls “political decay.” Barber counter-argues the ideas of Huntington by nothing that modern liberal democracy is failing exactly because of that. The remedy, therefore, is more participation—and not less. See Huntington, “Political Development and Political Decay.”


\(^{34}\) Ibid., 217.

\(^{35}\) Ibid., ibidem.
activities. Myron Weiner’s 1971 book chapter may be one of the first theoretically comprehensive reports on the subfield of political participation. Political Participation was defined as a citizen-based channel to either demonstrate their support for and/or to demand upon the government. Political participation is limited to the actions that are conducted within the limits provided by the laws. Violent forms of political participation (such as rebellion, revolution) are excluded as it would be contrary to the core of democratic practices and value—mainly that of stability and rule of law. Political changes, even if good, made as the outcome of violent participation may be counterproductive in the long run, as it may inaugurate the precedence that violence can be used as a tool to change—while the strengths should be used for change within the legal framework. Political participation also understood as the medium to influence the actions of the state bureaucracy (unelected officials).

In the early 1970s, as the USA was going through a lot of grassroots political engagement and mass protest movements, Sidney Verba and Norman H. Nie sought to explain what accounts for political participation. The authors define political participation as “acts that aim at influencing the government, either by affecting the choice of government personnel or by affecting the choices made by government personnel.” The authors’ key objectives are to learn about the participants in social movements and the motives that make them actively enter into politics. They basically

37 Ibid., 163.
39 Ibid., 2.
conclude that the social economic forces influence who partakes in politics. This is the called socio-economic status model (SES), according to which the higher the socio-economic status of one individual the more participation in political life of the community. Later comparative research conducted on the topic by these authors concluded that the SES model varies across different states.\(^{40}\)

Samuel Huntington and Joan Nelson’s study of political participation in the developing world is another valuable analysis. They start their book by noting that “[b]roadening political participation is a hallmark of political modernization,” and they define political participation as any “activity by private citizens designed to influence government decision-making.”\(^{41}\) Political participation is the dependent variable of their study and the objective of the investigation is “to shed some light on how various changes associated with modernization affect patterns of participation.”\(^{42}\)

More recently, Verba and others revisited the topic and brought newer and fresher perspectives.\(^{43}\) The understanding of political participation is approached by turning it upside down. The authors’ main goal is to create a theory that explains why some people fail to take part in politics. They contend that three main reasons keep people outside of politics: inability (“because they can’t”), unwillingness (“because they don’t want”) and being ignored by active participants (“because nobody asked”). Political participation, as


\(^{42}\) Ibid., 10.

proposed by Verba et al., results from the available resources (time, money and civic skills) at the possession of the individual.

In spite of new directions of the study of democracy, the same idea of democracy as a political system based on electoral participation nonetheless maintained. Scholars who study democratic transition did not depart as much from Schumpeterian democracy. Take for instance the seminal work of Guillermo O’Donnell and Philippe Schmitter.\footnote{Guillermo A. O’Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, \textit{Transitions from Authoritarian Rule} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986). It should be noted that the field of transitology was not inaugurated by these scholars. For instance, Dankwart Rustow was one of the first to write about democratic transition, a decade and half before the take-off of democratic transition studies. See, for example, Dankwart Rustow, “Transitions to democracy: Toward a dynamic model,” \textit{Comparative Politics} 2 (April 1970): 337-363.} For these two authors, a fundamental feature of regime transition in Southern Europe and Latin America in the 1970s and 1980s was the employment of the political pacts. O’Donnell and Schmitter recognize the undemocratic characteristics of pacts when they write that “they are typically negotiated among a small number of participants representing established (and often highly oligarchical) groups or institutions [and] they seek to limit accountability to wider publics.”\footnote{Guillermo A. O’Donnell and Philippe C. Schmitter, \textit{Transitions from Authoritarian Rule} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 38.} Similarly, Larry Diamond, Juan Linz and Seymour Lipset’s characterization of democracy are basically minimalist: competition, electoral participation and civil and political liberties.\footnote{Larry Diamond et al, “Preface,” in Larry Jay Diamond, Juan J. Linz, and Seymour Martin Lipset, \textit{Democracy in Developing Countries: Vol 2, Africa} (Boulder, Colo: Rienner, 1988), xvi.}

A point that one must make reference to is whether more participation leads to better governance and/or provision of public goods. In other words, the extent that the “invasion” of the political sphere by the average citizen leads to better political solutions and a quality democracy.
The reduction of democracy to electoral participation is particularly visible among large N comparativists. This minimalist definition of democracy is based on the notion that a state is democratic provided that the political leadership is chosen via competitive elections. According to Adam Przeworski, democracy is not more than “a system in which parties lose elections.”47 After all, elections are easily observable and measurable political phenomenon at disposal of the political scientists. Samuel Huntington’s study of what he termed the third wave of democratization fully embraces Schumpeterian notion of democracy, which, as noted above, elections are the central characterizing element.48 The application of this model is also found in Przeworski and others’ comparative study of democracy.49 Przeworski’s inclination towards the minimalist conceptualization of democracy is explain by his opposition to consensus-based model of democracy, which he believes not to be practicable.

Guillermo O’Donnell notes that scholars who follow the Schumpeterian legacy provide a definition of democracy “centered on fair elections, to which they add, often explicitly, some surrounding conditions, stated as freedoms or guarantees that are deemed necessary and/or sufficient for the existence of this kind of election.”50

The move towards electoral democracy, at the global level, during the last quarter of the twentieth century—a phenomenon aptly called the third wave of democratization—gave new impetus to the study of democracy. Scholars began to note the wide diversity of the proclaimed democratic regimes around the globe.\textsuperscript{51} Liberal Democracy had become a key element in political discourse (though often not in practice).\textsuperscript{52} Careful scholars began to note severe problems with the new democracies. In a global comparative perspective, scholars noted that the dichotomy democratic-non-democratic does not hold true. Rather, what exists is a regime continuum, in which the two extremes are the authoritarian/totalitarian and fully democratic regimes.\textsuperscript{53} Therefore, assuming that there is a minimal definition of democracy, scholars began to talk about different degrees of democratic condition.

To many, the analysis of democracy is about a dichotomy. For instance, Adam Przeworski and others maintain the either/or approach—instead of the democratic continuum.\textsuperscript{54} Such an approach is flawed as it includes states with different levels of democratic history, experience and culture, in the same camp. By so doing—that is, grouping different experiences under same label—there is the danger of conceptual


\textsuperscript{53} Linz and Stepan, \textit{Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation}, 38.

stretching, as noted by Giovanni Sartori.\textsuperscript{55} This means that the analytical concepts are to be stretched to the point that it can include diverse cases. All-encompassing concepts essentialize political realities and, as such, distort and negatively impact political analysis. Moreover, as noted by Zachary Elkins, such an approach is “insensitive to the incremental, and sometimes partial, process that characterizes many democratic transitions.”\textsuperscript{56}

To many scholars it makes sense to speak of a “gradation of democracy.”\textsuperscript{57} For instance, Larry Diamond, basically informed by Richard Sklar’s notion of developmental democracy, considers democracy to “emerge in fragments or in parts.”\textsuperscript{58} This means that, across the different democratic experiences that one finds around the globe, it is possible to find a number of points in the democratic regime continuum. This explains why different adjectives and qualifiers have been used by scholars to describe different levels of democratic experiences, leading David Collier and Steven Levitsky to write about “democracy with adjectives.”\textsuperscript{59} Some examples include Fareed Zakaria’s notion of

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{55} Giovanni Sartori, “Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics,” \textit{American Political Science Review} 64, 4 (1970): 1033–53. See also Collier and Levitsky, “Research Note: Democracy with Adjectives.”
\item \textsuperscript{59} Collier and Levitsky, “Research Note: Democracy with Adjectives.”
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
“illiberal democracy,” Philippe Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl’s concept of “electoral democracy” or Guillermo O’Donnell’s “delegative democracy.”

Recent scholarship on democracy favors a theoretical perspective that seeks to compare actual and existing electoral democracies with an ideal democracy. Scholars of comparative politics began to pay closer attention to the “varieties of democracy” at the global level. Larry Diamond and Leonardo Morlino have noted that “as democracy has spread over the past three decades to a majority of the world’s states, analytic attention has turned increasingly from explaining regime transitions to evaluating and explaining the character of democratic regimes.”

That the topic has attracted attention to scholars and policy makers can be seen in the fact that several databases, indexes and webpages are devoted to the topic—often each proposing its own processes and dimensions to measure the quality of democracy. The case of Freedom House is quite illustrative in this regard. Its index of democracy is widely used not only by scholars but also within policy circles. According to their seven-point index, regimes vary from “free” (1-2.5), “partially free” (3.0-5.0) and “not free” (5.5-7.0), depending of their total scores, calculated from civil and political liberties.

---

62 Other websites that provide an index of democratic experience around the globe are the Polity IV (http://www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm) and IDEA (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, http://www.idea.int/).
63 The elements that are taken to calculate the index are, as follow: Political Rights (Electoral process—executive elections, legislative elections, and electoral framework; Political pluralism and participation—party systems, political opposition and competition, political choices dominated by powerful groups, and minority voting rights; Functioning of government—corruption, transparency, and ability of elected officials to govern in practice) and Civil Liberties (Freedom of expression and belief—media, religious,
This index, as well as others that were not mentioned here, is characterized by the following features: first, the notion of an ideal democracy (whether real or utopian) against which the case studies are to be compared with; second, the formula of assessment to include different dimensions (i.e., not one-dimensional); and, the last but not the last, the assumption that the unit of study be, at least, minimally democratic.

While the list of the dimensions that are used for assessing the quality of democracy is long, some of these elements are found in different studies that seek to measure how democratic a unit of study is (or units of study). Dimensions such as accountability—vertical and horizontal—civil and political rights, political participation are often found in all different models of assessing the quality of democracy.\(^\text{64}\)

Earliest studies of the quality of democracy can be traced to Robert Dahl. For him democracy is “a political system [which] one of the characteristics of which is the quality of being completely or almost completely responsive to all citizens.”\(^\text{65}\) For the regimes that approximate to that ideal democracy Dahl calls them polyarchy, or “relatively (but incompletely) democratized regimes, [that is, …] regimes that have been substantially
popularized and liberalized, that is, highly inclusive and extensively open to public contestation.”66 In his later work, Dahl talks about the “ideal democracy,” sustained by five fundamental pillars: effective participation, voting equality, enlightened understanding, and control of the agenda and inclusion of adults.67

Carolyn Logan and Robert Mattes, focusing on twenty African cases, devise a new index of democratic quality.68 While accepting the dimensions proposed by Diamond and Morlino (with some minor modifications), Logan and Mattes follow a different path—that of bottom-up approach that relies on public opinion of the common African citizens. Informed by Mill’s words that “citizens know where the democratic shoe pinches,” they propose an index constructed through careful analysis of the responses provided by the ordinary citizens to a series of questions. Studies and analysis of the quality of democracy have been mainly in two directions: global comparative study (e.g., Polity IV and Freedom House), in which the measures are to be applied to all the states and the area-regional.69 Many scholars shy from constructing a universal formula that can be applied for the analysis of the quality of democracy.

Leonardo Morlino and others indicated their frustration about the multitude of techniques and models of assessments developed by scholars. They write that, “despite substantial and widely shared concerns about democratic quality, scholars rarely agree about measurements and classifications; nor can most current models fully adjudicate

66 Ibid., 8.
69 global comparative study (e.g., Polity IV and Freedom House); (Morlino et al. on Asia-Pacific; Logan and Mattes on Africa; Levine and Moline and others on Latin America, and so on).
issues of directionality, endogeneity, and potential trade-offs between measures of ‘good’ democracy.”

Some scholars, such as Logan and Mates, complained that the mainstream study of the quality of democracy was essentially dominated by the approach that stresses either behavioral measures or the collection of experts’ judgments on the cases of study. They proposed that the study of the quality of democracy be informed by the actual “lived experiences and subjective evaluations of ordinary citizens.”

Levine and Moline bring an interesting point to the quality of democracy approach when they note that the concept should not to be taken for good government. They note that “the quality of democracy depends on the operation of processes whereby the population selects and controls its government and influences public policies, and not on the efficacy of government in the solution of the problems of the country.” Their approach, as such, emphasizes more the action and agency of the citizens—that is, the extent that they influence the outcomes and policies from the government—and less about how these outcomes are produced.

Scholarship on democracy and political participation often neglects the importance and significance of language and language policy. It can be said that common to these different sub-fields of democratic studies is the conspicuous absence of

---

73 For an example of exception see Jürgen Habermas, Theory of Communicative Action, trans. Thomas McCarthy (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).
the analysis of the impact of language and language policy on the overall process of democracy. The obvious analytical negligence is due to two main factors. First, the empirical theory of democracy often tends to be biased in favor of the elite class (as noted above). As a consequence, not much attention has been paid to the linguistic divide that exists between this class and the masses and to the extent that this divides may actually be counterproductive to the overall democratic construction. Linguists have for some time called attention to the phenomenon of “elite closure” in post-colonial societies, based primarily on proficiency of the European language inherited from colonialism.\textsuperscript{74}

Yet, the impact of the mechanism of “elite closure” in the democratic process is yet to be profoundly studied.

Language policy and planning has been simply defined as “[m]aking deliberate decisions about the form of a language.”\textsuperscript{75} In order to better understand the concept of the language policy and planning, one must try first to break down its constitutive elements: first, it is made of two different stages, namely that of planning and that of the policy itself—as the term clearly indicates. Second, there is the source of the process, often to be the state itself or an organism within the state (for instance, many of the modern states have either a ministry or a department whose key task is to devise the language policy and planning). Third, there is the subject or the planned element (that is, the language itself). Fourth, there is the target of the project policy, which in most of the cases coincides with the geographical boundary of the nation-state.


Language policy and planning has two basic elements: description and prescription. That is to say that, on the one hand, language policy and planning *describes* the linguistic status quo by pointing out the fault lines or the areas of intervention. On the other hand, the language policy and planning often includes prescriptive elements as it *prescribes* a set of interventions that are to be done in the future.

For a political scientist or for a “policy scientist,” the term “policy” often refers to a set of principles and procedures emanating from a center of authority with the objective to redress a particular aspect of social life or in its totality. Put differently, the term language policy is a misnomer—at least from the point of view of the policy or political sciences. To some political scientists such Harold Lasswell, the analysis of public policy is fundamentally about the actions (and omissions) of the governments.\(^76\) This is to say, public policy analysis is to understand what the government does (or fails to do). Therefore, when one is talking about public policy one is making a reference to a combination of different things that include (but are not limited to) legislation—to include budgets—governmental regulations, administrative and executive orders, judicial decisions and government actions that are not taken.\(^77\)

Language policy, as accepted by sociolinguists, constitutes the combination of two essential elements: a) the acceptance of the members of a speech community on certain language items (such as sounds, words or grammar) and language varieties (codes


\(^77\) Ibid.
or dialects) and, b) the ideologies that sustain those choices.\(^7^8\) As such, unlike the case of the political scientists who will place the center of gravity of any policy in the domains of the state power, for the sociolinguistics the epicenter of language policy is the society at large. Language policy, thus, can be thought to be horizontally defined insofar, as argued by Bernard Spolsky and Richard Lambert, it is based on the “common agreement” of the members of a speech community.\(^7^9\)

Language planning, on the other hand, can be described to be vertically formulated. That is to say, it emanates from the formal center of authority, i.e., the state. As noted above, modern states often include among their institutions a particular agency that focuses on the language questions.\(^8^0\) Thus, for B. Jernudd and J. Das Gupta, it is the “political and administrative activity for solving language problems in society.”\(^8^1\) The approach, as such, is top-down, as through administrative and legal decisions the state sought to modify linguistic patterns and/or behaviors of the members of a given society. The verticality of the language planning in form and content leads Haugen to distinguish it from what he terms as language “happening,” that is, “social movement without unifying control.”\(^8^2\)

\(^7^9\) Ibid.
\(^8^0\) The form of the agency of the state that focuses on the language question is diverse. It can be part of the government cabinet. In some states the language issue is controlled by the Ministry of Culture and/or the Ministry of education, the two most important elements in the formulation and implementation of language policy and planning. The agency itself may also be an autonomous organization supported by the state, such as the case of Académie Française.
language planning is a top-down directive and, at the same time, *directional* and *justificational*: not only does it prescribe about the routes to be taken but it also provides a set of elements to justify such a direction.\(^{83}\)

Between language policy and language planning the borderline is a thin one; they are interwoven and mutually influence each other. As such, it makes much more sense to talk about language policy *and* planning. That is to say that the two elements overlap each other and the lines of influence is two-way road. As for examples, it is important to remember that societal language ideologies—mainly the dominant one—often find its way through state legislations and directives, and these in turn may influence how people think about the languages of their community.

R. de Cillia and B. Busch, divide the practice of language policy and planning into three major trends: a) a “consciously planned policy” that directly tackles the language question pertaining to a given speech community; b) a language policy as a subsidiary of existing laws that tackle other societal issues, such as education policy, consumers laws, and so on; and c) a “laissez-faire” politics in which minimal or no intervention by the central authority is observed. Portuguese colonial language policy fits the second category: the policies on language were often integral parts of laws and policies designed to either frame the colonial policy in its totality or to tackle particular fields of the colonial social life (e.g., native policy).\(^{84}\)


For Bernard Spolsky, language policy is an umbrella concept that is made up of three fundamental elements: “the habitual pattern of selecting among the varieties that make up its linguistic repertoire; its language beliefs or ideology—the beliefs about language and language use; and any specific efforts to modify or influence that practice by any kind of language intervention, planning or management.” It is only the last component that really corresponds to the intervention of the political authorities (the state, central or local) in the matters of language (policy).  

A contribution in the study of language policy that cannot be neglected is that of analysis of diglossia. Charles Ferguson’s seminal paper brought in the analysis of diglossia to the forefront of language policy and practices. By analyzing closely related languages, he concludes that predominant language becomes the marker of prestige and status. Joshua Fishman furthered the analysis of diglossia by applying it to situations where unrelated languages are present.

At this point, two conclusions, therefore, can be reached: first, scholars from different fields have recognized that language does impact the overall political game, either in the domestic or international aspect of it; and, second, the literature is still timid and quite limited indeed when it comes to understanding and analyzing the influence and impact of language policy on democracy—particularly in societies characterized by a

---

linguistic divide and with a one-sided language policy. In other words, the literature has failed to answer (let alone to respond to) questions such as: How does the linguistic divide influence democratic practice? Will a fair language policy create more democratic conditions for the full and active political participation of the citizens? Can a fair language policy increase popular participation in the national politics as well as increase people’s control over the elected leaders?

Some scholars have probed the influence of language/language policy on the political life. Thus, language policy has been considered as an essential element in nationalist politics. Language policy also has been considered as part of a strategy of domination by the elite in post-colonial states through the mechanism of “elite closure.” Furthermore, it also has been considered as a critical component of some states’ foreign policy, insofar as an increasing number of states are developing and implementing language spread policies as part of their strategies for international relations. Still other studies make a linkage between language policy and imperialism.

In the sub-field of democratic studies, the linkage between democracy and the language question has been tackled more by the political theorists and by the sociolinguists, who have been advocating a new development in human rights, namely

---


the linguistic human rights. If so many writers, activists, scholars from other subfields are considering the impact of the language question in the overall quality of democracy, this, in itself, is a reason as to why the research should be conducted.

Against this background, the dissertation asks the following question: *to what extent does language policy affect or have an impact on the quality of democracy?*

Phrasing in a different way, this thesis looks at the mechanisms through which language, language ideologies, policies and practices influence how people behave politically. The guiding question of the dissertation can be broken down into several questions of a more limited scope that can better help the analysis of democratic quality. Thus, the thesis asks

- Does language policy affect social behavior? The question is related to the extent that people react differently in light of the language that is spoken around them.
- Does the dominant language, the language of authority and state, breed departicipation, understood as the non-political withdrawal from partaking in the public affairs?
- Can the quality of democracy be divorced from electoralism and be assessed beyond the conditions of civil liberties? To put it differently, can it be a true democracy where there are several structural constraints to common citizens’ active participation in the public affairs of the community?
Theoretical Framework: The Quality of Democracy and the Language Question

In this dissertation, language policy includes not only the policy part itself but also the planning stage. In this way, I am indebted to Thomas Ricento. He notes that he “deliberately use[s] ‘Language policy’ as a superordinate term which subsumes, ‘language planning.’” Language policy research is concerned not only with official and unofficial acts of governmental and other institutional entities, but also with the historical and cultural events and processes that have influenced, and continue to influence, societal attitude and practices with regard to language use, acquisition and status.”

I understand language policy as including not only the actions and omissions of the state institutions but also the whole context within which the debate on language takes place. In this regard, the concept of language ideology is of capital importance.

Language policy can be said to define not only the actors but also the arena of politics. Yet, lack of interest by political scientists in probing the interaction between language and politics has meant a scarcity of heuristic devices that can help advance our understanding of the phenomenon. Recently, sociolinguists and other scholars have developed many analytical concepts, such as linguistic human rights or linguicism that can be employed to fully understand the intersection between language and politics.

---

These concepts are employed to describe the raw nature of political regimes, democratic and nondemocratic alike. These concepts have been pushed by theorists of multiculturalism who tend to argue that true democracy implies recognition of minority groups’ particularities, including the use and practice of their own language in the public and private spheres.93

Democracy, however understood implies the political presence of the people. The latter is assumed to be the foundation and the source of legitimacy to the instituted government. A democratic government, as such, is a type of political rule in which the people have a say in the political process. A question that has made scholars hours of work is the extent of what the people have to say in the overall political process. The proposed definition of democracy is citizen-centered. This means that emphasis is placed upon full and engaging participation of the citizens in all and varied aspects of political life, ranging from partaking in the elections, in the public and political debates, contacting and demanding accountability on the part of the state agents, and participating in the process of policy making and implementation. This definition of democracy is contrasted with that of electoral democracy.94 Risking oversimplifying, electoral democracy is here defined as a political system in which the extent of citizen

---


94 One of the most influential statement of electoral democracy is Joseph Schumpeter’s. This author considers that democracy to constitute no more than a political method through which elite compete for popular votes. For more on this see Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1950).
participation is limited to the process of routinely choosing the rulers. This means that in between elections, the citizens are not actively part of the political system, chiefly in what concerns the debate, making and implementing public policies.

The argument that this dissertation develops can be schematically thought as following: diglossic language policy and linguistic practices > social system in which the mother tongue is devaluated and illegible state > curtailed political participation > not a quality of democracy (see figure 1).

**Figure 1. From Diglossic Language Policy to Less Democratic Quality**

A diglossic language policy and practice can be understood as the institutionalization of a linguistic hierarchy in which different languages are confined to different domains. In such a situation, there is one language that becomes a high language and other (or several) who are relegated to a subordinate position (low language). The high language is the language for socially-valued functions such as formal education, public bureaucracy, commerce and business, administration of justice and mass media. On the other hand, the low language is consigned, socially and

---

95 Ferguson, “Diglossia;” Fishman, “Bilingualism with and without Diglossia.”
institutionally, to the private realm. It is to be used within the intimate circle of friends, family members and neighbors. Through social and political, formal and informal rules and norms, the low language is kept out of the formal public domains.

Coupled with the diglossic language policy, the path dependence of language policy leads the post-colonial state, its personnel and apparatuses rely heavily on a language that is not the mother tongue of its citizens. The operations, procedures and processes of power are conducted through the medium of a language that many—if not most—do not fully understand. This situation creates what I call the illegible state. The state is said to be illegible when its operations, processes and procedures cannot be fully grasped and comprehended by a significant portion of its citizens. An illegible state, as such, is a concealed state.

The proper understanding of the concept of illegible state warrants a brief discussion of the state. Joel Migdal writes that the state is the mountain that every political scientist has to climb at one point.96 A number of scholars have delved on the question of the state.97 However, this is not the place for an exhaustive review on the subject. It suffices to note the contribution of Max Weber, according to whom the state is “a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of

---

97 The literature of the state is quite vast and extensive. It is beyond the scope of his dissertation to review this body of work. Yet, some landmark scholarship on the state includes: Peter B. Evans, Dietrich Rueschemeyer, and Theda Skocpol, Bringing the State Back In (Cambridge : Cambridge university press, 1999); Theda Skocpol, States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia, and China (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); Fred Block, “The Ruling Class does not Rule: Notes on the Marxist Theory of the State,” Socialist Revuion, 7 (1977): 6-28.
physical force within a given territory.\textsuperscript{98} Basing on this Weberian understanding of the state, I define the state as the constellation of institutions and personnel that commands, or purport to command, legitimately or not, the social, economic, and political destiny of a population in a given territory. The illegibility of the state refers thus to the fact that many citizens simply cannot properly understand or grasp the actions and omissions carried out by these state personnel and institutions. These citizens, who don’t fully grasp the high language, cannot perform such a task for they don’t understand the boundaries within which the state actors are supposed to act.

The social context in which the mother tongue is taken to be politically worthless—that is to say without any worth in terms of being used for the performance of modern functions—limit and restrain political participation on the part of those citizens who are not proficient in the official language. Similarly, given the fact that the state is “illegible,” this situation curbs the citizens’ capacity to openly supervise and oversee the actions (and omissions) of the state and/or its agents. Lastly, curtailed political participation is tremendous burden on the overall quality of democracy. A good democracy is that in which the general citizens do not face as much of informal and formal obstacles to their participation.

One of the most salient aspects of political participation is at the level of political debate. Politics, chiefly in the electoral democratic regimes, is ostensibly about communication among different actors, individual and collective, seeking a resolution of

key issues that pertain to most or to all. The importance of communication in the political resolution of issues and conflicts has been highlighted by Jürgen Habermas, who has developed the called theory of communicative action. According to this theory, cooperation among members of a polity is ultimately the consequence of a deep engagement in the dual processes of deliberation and argumentation.\textsuperscript{99} In other words, through effective communication, actions spring up.

The typical dictionary definition of participation is “to take part in.”\textsuperscript{100} The definition hints a fact that to speak of participation means to be part of a group activity or dynamic. To take \textit{part in}, therefore, is to be \textit{part of}. As such, it encompasses an idea of association, either informally or formally, with other people. Scholars define political participation as conscious social activity carried out by the citizens with the goal of changing the composition of government and/or the government’s policies.\textsuperscript{101} In other words, to participate in politics is fundamentally about pursuing two inter-related objectives. On the one hand, political participation is about shaping how the government looks like. In other words, participation in politics often is about defining and classifying \textit{who} gets to be at the helm of the state. On the other hand, political participation may not be as preoccupied with those in control of the state but with what is being decided. Basically, in this mode of participation, it is about helping, designing, and implementing the “allocation of scarce resources.”\textsuperscript{102}

\textsuperscript{99} Habermas, \textit{Theory of Communicative Action}.
\textsuperscript{101} Huntington and Nelson, \textit{No Easy Choice: Political Participation in Developing Countries}.
\textsuperscript{102} The phrase is borrowed from David Easton’s proposed definition of politics. For more on this see, Eugene F. Miller, “David Easton’s Political Theory,” \textit{Political Science Reviewer} 1 (1972): 184-235.
To speak about political participation is to contrast it to other political behaviors such as apathy and alienation. These two latter forms of political behaviors are on the opposite side to political participation. Yet, there is a distinction between the two. Alienation is not the same as apathy. As defined by Weiner, alienation implies “intense political feeling concerning the futility of political action.” As such, alienation can be put in the category of what Albert Hirschman called “exit.” I prefer the Hirschman concept of exit to Weiner’s alienation—as this term suggest false consciousness, and, as such, mobilized and controlled, though by subtle and unrecognized forms, by exogenous agents (lack of agency). Apathy, on the other hand, suggests total or partial lack of interest in the political matters.

Victor Webb notes that political participation is fundamentally about “citizens [being] involved in one of three ways, viz. in (i) decision making (at the local levels), in (ii) being consulted about issues that concern them, and/or in (iii) simply being kept informed by politicians.” Effective democracy is strengthened when citizens engage in more and better forms of participation. That is to say that when the quantity and quality of political participation is increased, the whole democratic system significantly improves. The quantity of political participation refers to its extension, that is, the raw number of people actually and effectively partaking in politics, through different forms and formats. The quality of political participation, on the other hand, indexes its intensity,

103 Ibid., 162
106 Barber, Strong Democracy; Pateman, Participation and Democratic Theory.
107 Ibid.
the depth of partaking in politics, getting involved and following the processes and operations of power.

To participate politically in a given event or situation is to make oneself *voluntarily* present.\(^{108}\) The “presence” in political participation can be physical, such as partaking in a street protest against a given government policy, or virtual, such as writing a letter to the state official. But then the question that one needs not fail to ask is what constitute political participation. This term refers to the arena of power relations. Politics is the social game for the distribution of power and influence.\(^{109}\) Given that the ultimate source of political power is the state, political participation is about state-society relations: the extent to which the latter may influence, change or shape the former.\(^{110}\)

There are basically two “autonomous” arenas of politics: high politics, or politics at the level of the state institutions and the political elite, and low politics, or politics at the grassroots, at the level of the ordinary citizens and how these, whether individual or in conjunction with others, seek to influence the composition and/or the output of the state. Political participation makes a linkage between the two arenas of politics, between the arenas of high and low politics. While there are other mechanisms that link the two

---

\(^{108}\) Huntington and Nelson, *No Easy Choice*.


\(^{110}\) The concept of political participation is analytically distinct to political mobilization—though, in practical terms, the two overlap. Analytically, the two concepts are related to social projects and/or dynamics that target the composition and/or the structure of the state and power relations. Participation, unlike mobilization, presupposes agency on the part of the individual. He or she autonomously decides to partake in the political processes. Mobilization, on the other hand, stresses the role of the state or political entrepreneurs in bringing people to a given cause. For more on the concept of political mobilization, see, for instance, Lars Rudebeck, *Guinea-Bissau: A Study of Political Mobilization* (Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1974).
realms of politics, such as political mobilization, the concept of political participation posits initiative and ownership of the actions on the part of the ordinary citizenry.

For analytical purposes, I categorize political participation into two major formats: surveillatory and initiatory participation. I will show below that the dividing line between the two formats and modalities of participation is blurry and unclear. Let me first discuss what I call surveillatory political participation. It is the type of political participation through which citizens supervise and control the actions, and quite often the omissions, of those acting on their behalf. Through surveillatory participation, citizens act to supervise and control the state in order to ensure that it won’t go beyond the imposed institutional limits. Surveillatory political participation is mainly about two correlated elements: first, it involves observation and inspection of the state, and, second, it implies that actions are taken in light of the results from the first element. The process of observation and inspection of the state (and its agents) naturally involves an understanding of the institutional boundaries of the state, that is, the institutional limits within which the activities of the state are to be conducted. To control is above all to have an idea of the institutional borders. In other words, surveillatory political participation is intimately linked to the notion of “enlightened understanding” of politics. According to Robert A. Dahl:

[t]o acquire civic competence, citizens need opportunities to express their own views; learn from one another; engage in discussion and deliberation; read, hear, and question experts, political candidates, and persons whose judgments they trust; and learn in other ways that depend on freedom of expression.111

With enlightened understanding of the political landscape, citizens’ political actions may be towards demanding accountability from the actions (or omissions) committed on their behalf. Surveillatory political participation, therefore, implies what can be called state literacy, insofar as it is important to have a minimum of understanding of the processes, procedures, and operations of power.

The other form of participation I call initiatory political participation. I define initiatory participation as the concerted acts of the citizens towards providing signals and indications to those in the positions of authority about expected political output, be these laws or policies. Initiatory participation, as such, has to do with the political initiative taken by the citizens themselves, free from enlistment of the state and social elites. In other words, initiatory political participation is related to the activities, whether individually or collectively carried, that seek to essentially impact the state’s output (such as a policy, a law, a service, and so on). This form of participation is called as initiatory insofar as the citizens themselves come up with innovative and inventive alternatives and/or complements to state’s outputs. Basically, initiatory participation is about seeking to shape outcomes deriving from the decision-making bodies and/or personnel of the state. A mass protest or citizen-campaign of gathering signatures to propose a change in a law or policy sent to the legislative body constitute examples of initiatory political participation.

Political participation is a multi-modal process. It ranges from voting—perhaps the most common and conspicuous form of political participation—to other less visible forms such as contacting a state representative/official, partaking in the public forums
and debates, including the official ones such as public hearings, taking part in a peaceful
demonstration against certain policies and/or certain socio-political practices that can be
prejudicial to the common good.

Intensive and extensive political participation ultimately results in a quality
democracy. In other words, the more people participate and the more types of
participation are used the better the overall democratic condition of the regime. A quality
democracy is essentially about effective and engaging participation of the common men
and women. Effective participation is something that can be thought in terms of depth
(active and engaging participation) and breadth (different modes of political
participation). There is a value in political participation. For one, it is pedagogical. To
participate in politics is to learn about political process. At the same time, active
citizenship is self-reinforcing insofar as the more one acts politically the more the
likelihood that one will continue to engage in the political matters of the polity. In this
sense, political participation can be taken to be a different type of “capital,” one whose
use leads to its increase. In this vein, S. J. Rosenstone and J. M. Hansen state that “the
more involved people are in social life, the more likely they are to be mobilized, the more
likely they are to be offered the social incentives toward activism, and the more prone
they are to take part in politics.”¹¹² Ultimately the more people participate in politics the
more their elected and non-elected officials will be responsive to them. This is to say,
intensive and extensive political participation brings more and better political
accountability.

A Note on the Methods

This doctoral dissertation is, above all, a case study in comparative politics. This means that focus was placed upon one subject, which a thorough analysis is to be conducted. Todd Landman noted that its key objective “is the process of describing the political phenomenon and events” in one political entity (Cape Verde islands in this case). Knowledge in this case is built by an in-depth study.

The process of data collection for the dissertation project involved a variety of researches, in a period that extended, intermittently, from May of 2010 to September 2012. Given that the approach of the thesis is that of historical institutionalism, I spent three months doing archival research at the Arquivo Nacional Histórico (National Historical Archives), the Biblioteca Nacional (National Library) and the Archives of the Assembleia Nacional (National Assembly), all in the capital city of Praia. My ultimate objective with the archival research was to learn about the development of language policy in a historical perspective as well as the contours of the public discourse, by the colonial and autochthone intellectuals and officials, in what refers to language practices and policies. In other words, discourse analysis is a major component of this thesis. I first started by looking at the different colonial and post-colonial newspapers. These newspapers are valuable sources of information about different language ideologies that

113 Todd Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2003), 5. The advantage of case study has been noted by several scholars. John Gerring, for instance, has noted that “[w]e gain better understanding of the whole by focusing on a key part.” By paying attention to one particular case can be translated in a more in-depth knowledge of the relationships—current and historical—between the variables under study. This is so as a case study analysis provides a “holistic, thick (a more or less comprehensive examination of a phenomenon).” See John Gerring, *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 1 and 17.
have developed since the colonial times. Since the early twentieth century, newspapers have become a site of debate on various issues, including on the role of the vernacular and/or about the socio-political relationships that should develop between the Cape Verdean and Portuguese languages.

I also paid particular attention to the *Boletim Oficial*, the government official gazette, where all policies and legislations that were passed were to be published in order to become effective. A careful reading of the *Boletim Oficial*, from the colonial to the post-colonial times, provides a pictorial description of the development of language policy in a historical perspective. Given that what is found in the *Boletim Oficial* is the “end product”, I also went on to look at other sources, mainly newspapers and the archives of parliamentary debate. The many articles and opinion editorial pieces published in the newspapers, along with the parliamentary debates, are important to help the research to fully understand the stream of the colonial language ideology, its weight as well as its continuity way in the post-colonial times. At the National Assembly, I read over the archives of parliamentary debates, chiefly in the two constitutional reform debates—in which the language question was a major and central element.

In summer 2011, I organized key informant interviews and focus groups. I followed the semi-structured interview approach with the key informants. I limited my interviews to ten key informant interviews—some of which were conducted outside Cape Verde, in Portugal and in the United States. The reason for this is that the dissertation seeks to stress more the voice of the ordinary citizens, the main subject of study, and less on the opinions, however valuable, of the learned and highly-trained elite. Informants
were chosen in terms of their knowledge, as result of their own professional or academic experiences, of the linguistic situation in Cape Verde. As such, I interviewed two former ministers of education (Corsino Tolentino and Victor Borges), and a former minister of culture (Manuel Veiga), who, for many, is still the banner of the movement for officialization of the Cape Verdean language, writers and literary critics.

Focus group interviews were conducted in different parts of the capital city of Praia. Praia, like most of the post-colonial capital cities, is the political, social and economic hub of the country. As such, people from all different sectors of society and from different regions and islands of the country flock into the city where better economic opportunities could be found. This means that it was possible to draw quite large representative group of people, from different regions of the island of Santiago (where the city is located) as well as from other islands of the country. Given the fact that the peripheral areas of the city are inhabited from people from different areas of the country, a random sample of participants proved to be the mechanism that brought representativeness to the study.

A total of six focus groups interviews were conducted. The focus groups consisted of six people. Meetings were held at different locations, private homes and public spaces, provided that the used space was isolated from external interferences. The goal of the focus group interviews was to capture political perspectives from

114 Among the participants of the focus group interviews, the majority was from the island of Santiago, where the interviews were conducted. With the exception of the islands of Santo Antão, Boa Vista and Maio, there was at least one participant from the other islands.

115 Three of these meetings were conducted in private homes. The other three meetings were conducted in public spaces: two in the private offices at the local neighborhood health and community center and at a café.
different socio-economic groups. I used the following criteria for the selection of the members for the focus group interviews: level of education (ranging from those with no formal education to college-graduates), age (as young as 19 years old to citizens in their sixties), origin and place of residence (from different islands and residing in major neighborhoods of the capital city) and gender (an equal representation of men and women).

In order to guard their privacy, participants in the focus group were identified by numbers (participant 1, participant 2, and so on). On my notes, in order to avoid confusion, I identified participants by combining a Roman number for the cycle of the focus group interview with the Latin number for the individual participant (e.g., participant I.1, for the individual who participated number 1, for the first focus group interview).

I conducted the focus group interviews with three main goals in mind: first, I needed to understand how the average citizen constructed and perceived the current linguistic situation of the country, where one language, the one that is not their everyday language, is clearly dominant. Questions were made to bring in the perceptions and their general feelings about the diglossic situation of the country as well as to understand the political consequences of this situation. Second, it was also my goal to understand how political knowledge—the idea of the processes and operations of politics in everyday life—is constructed among the average citizen. Given that the media, the elite and the state in general almost always make use of the Portuguese language as the medium of
communication, I want to learn about the extent that an “enlightened understanding” of politics is actually possible.

In some instances, I employed the method of direct observation. I chose one state agency where much engagement with citizens could be observed—the chosen agency was the Conservatory of the Registry, in the neighborhood of Txada Santu Antoni. Through an on-site observation, the goal was to capture how people behaved linguistically and the extent that this impact on the quality of services provided.

On different times, I also enjoyed of many dialogues, online and face-to-face, with what can be called “language activists,” that is, individuals who write extensively, mostly on the local newspapers, with the goal of promoting the national language. In this regard, I have taken advantage of social media connections and interviewed or discussed with key linguists and linguistic activists. While my original plans included interviewing several key informants, I decided to follow a bottom-up approach: focus, thenceforth, was to be on the ordinary citizens, the major actors of everyday politics.

The Choice of Cape Verde as the Case Study

Cape Verde is a micro-archipelagic state, made up of nine inhabited islands and several uninhabited small islands and islets, with a population of about half a million. After some five centuries of Portuguese colonial domination (whose settlement began in 1462), the country became independent in 1975.

---

Two languages dominate the linguistic landscape in Cape Verde, the Portuguese language and the Cape Verdean language—also known as the Cape Verdean Creole (or “Kriolu”). The history of the Portuguese language in Cape Verde, in a way, is weaved with colonialism. Like other former colonies, an imposition of the European language was carried out by the colonial state, particularly during the period of modern colonialism (after the Berlin Conference of 1884-85 to the mid-twentieth century). Through social and political institutions, which often made use of physical violence, the Portuguese language became the socially and politically dominant language in the islands—the language of the elite and the educated. Since independence, the position of the Portuguese language was reinforced with the post-colonial state reaffirming the social and political predominance of that language. Still to this day, to be able to speak fluently in the Portuguese language is a marker of social distinction. In spite of great investments in mass education, which is entirely conducted in Portuguese, the number of totally fluent speakers of Portuguese is relatively low: a fluent speaker of the Portuguese language is almost always a highly educated individual (with college degree).

The Cape Verdean language is the national language and mother tongue to almost all. It is a Creole language, that is, a language whose origins and development are tied up to the historical mixture of the European and African languages. In the case of the

---

117 The people of Cape Verde colloquially call their language simply as “Creole” (Kriolu). It should be noted that the term “Creole” is also used to refer to national identity (Creole as Cape Verdean) or culture (such as Creole cuisine).

118 The Creole language is often distinguished from a pidgin insofar as the former has two critical characteristics: a) structurally more complex; b) has gone through a process of nativization, that is, it has native speaker. See for instance, John A. Holm, An Introduction to Pidgin and Creoles. (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Pierer Muysken and Norval Smith, “The study of pidgin
Cape Verdean language, it forms through the interconnection between Portuguese with several languages from West Africa, mainly Wolof, and Mandinka, dating back to the early sixteenth century. In sociolinguistic terms, the Portuguese language is the lexifier of the Cape Verdean language: the former furnishes the lexica that forms the lexical corpus of the latter.

The term “Cape Verdean language” was first created around the time of independence. Hitherto the language was often referred to as Creole, “Dialect-Creole,” but never as a language. In this doctoral dissertation the phrase “Cape Verdean language” is preferred as it is more precise in terms of the description (given the fact that “creole” is still a term that brings in a lot of controversy). Data from the Ethnologue point that in 2010, the year of the last census, little less than 492,000 speakers of the Cape Verdean language, of which 325,000 spoke the Sotavento dialect and 167,000 spoke the Barlavento dialect.
It should be noted that the Cape Verdean language is not confined to the islands of Cape Verde. Given the history of international migration, the language can be found in different parts of the Atlantic world, from Western Europe to North America, from West Africa to South America.\footnote{122} As a consequence, the Cape Verdean language is the language of transnational and diasporic communication, either between the people from the homeland with the diasporic sites or among different diasporic communities themselves. Interestingly enough the Cape Verdean language gets far more attention among some of the countries that host the Cape Verdean communities than in the islands of Cape Verdean themselves. It suffices to say that in southern New England (particularly in the city of Boston), for the first time ever, the language has been used in bilingual education and some key information from the city government is actually translated into the Cape Verdean language.\footnote{123}

It should also be noted that the post-colonial language policy that was in Cape Verde was based on the dominant state ideology, historically constructed by the European socio-political history, according to which each state should and must have only one official language. The modern state-building process in Europe, which started in late medieval ages, was based on the principle of dominance of a single language over the

\footnote{122} On the Cape Verdean immigrant communities in the Atlantic world see Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling, ed., \textit{Transnational Archipelago Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora} (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008).

\footnote{123} On the Cape Verdean immigrant communities in the Atlantic world see Luís Batalha and Jørgen Carling, ed., \textit{Transnational Archipelago Perspectives on Cape Verdean Migration and Diaspora} (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008).

territory. The language (more properly the dialect) of the kings became the language of the state. In time, through political communication, mass mobilization and education—or what Benedict Anderson calls “the revolutionary vernacularizing thrust”—that language became the language of the nation.124

At the time of independence (1975), the state elites in Cape Verde, qua social agents—and, thus, taking cues from experiences of elites elsewhere—understood that state-building could not be based on the principle of bi-lingualism (or multi-lingualism). The debate in the early independence was fundamentally about replacement (Portuguese or Cape Verdean language) and never about complementarity (Portuguese and Cape Verdean language). Given the low social status of the Cape Verdean language, the power structures sided with the monopoly of the Portuguese language—while advocating for the status of national language to be given to the Cape Verdean language, in order to placate the few linguistic nationalists.

In spite of its smallness, the islands have attracted a lot of international attention. Scholars, development experts and lay people alike, all make the claim that the country is an example of democracy for the continent.125 The dissertation challenges this and notes that in spite of the relatively pacific transition of power following elections, the ordinary citizen is yet to feel and act as an integral part of the system. The gap between the elite politics and the participation of the common citizen is perpetuated by the combination of

---

government-sanctioned language policies and the linguistic social practices that, in effect, limits the scope of participation.

Three main reasons have dictated my choice of Cape Verde as the case study for the analysis of quality of democracy. For one, for the past decade or so, the country has been hailed as the example of democratic experience in Africa and in the developing world in general. An aerial view of political democratic experiments in the country seems to agree with the overall statement that Cape Verde is a fully democratic nation.\textsuperscript{126}

Second, there is a line of political argument with a long history that ranges from Jean Jacques Rousseau to the most recent empirical studies of Robert Alan Dahl and Edward R. Tufte to Dag Anckar that contends that small political communities produce a more vibrant and efficient democracy than bigger units.\textsuperscript{127} By including a linguistic dimension to the political phenomenon, I also seek to scrutinize this theory. In theory, smallness of the political unit may be a powerful variable forcing the intensity and extensity of citizens’ participation in the political business of the polity. The argument goes that living in small polities should imply, logically, more direct contacts and communication—which, as it will be seen below, is not the case in Cape Verde.

Third, studies of the quality of democracy, while having provided valuable knowledge in the subfield, are mainly characterized by superficiality. A major disadvantage of large-N studies is that breadth takes over depth. As such, particularities are often lost in the process of analysis. That is to say that reliance on the statistical data

\textsuperscript{126} See, for instance, Meyns, “Cape Verde: An African Exception.”
often makes the analysts neglect the role of history and social ideologies in the formation and development of patterns of political behavior. The uncovering of these patterns of behaviors is facilitated by an analysis that focuses on “thick description,” as noted by Clifford Geertz.\textsuperscript{128} Political agents behave within cultural and sociological contexts, if scholars fails to examine the context, they may produce erroneous, if not fatally flawed, understanding of political behavior. Finally, as a native of Cape Verde islands I have the benefit of having an insider comprehension of the cultural and sociological context, within which politics takes place. Being socialized in the culture, I can easily discern some social and political behaviors which may take an outsider some time to grasp. Moreover, as a fluent speaker of both Portuguese and Cape Verden Creole I can easily decipher communications, speeches and utterances in general, produced in those languages. The threat of what can be called “insider’s bias” is combatted throughout the dissertation by taking a critical attitude of the self.

This study allows one to understand the extent that language policy and practice and their impact on the intensity and extension of political participation—and, ipso facto, the quality of democracy. The key element of this study is the uncovering of the mechanisms and processes that hinder or limit ordinary citizens’ political participation. By so doing it becomes easier to understand political participation and democracy in Creole societies (particularly those from the Caribbean) and in the third wave electoral democracies in sub-Saharan Africa.

Organization of the dissertation

Apart from this extensive introduction, this dissertation includes five more different chapters and a section devoted to the general conclusions. The second chapter outlines a description of the political history of Cape Verde. Such a description is important as it provides the contexts that help us understand the developments of language policy as well as how certain language ideology becomes dominant. The chapter provides a description of the political history of the islands from a *longue durée* perspective, from the colonial period to the contemporary epoch.

Since the dissertation seeks to understand the impact of language policy on the quality of democracy, chapter three outlines the development of dominant language ideologies and policies in Cape Verde. It starts with the analysis of the Portuguese colonial system and policies and how these informed the language-in-education policies in colonial Cape Verde. The chapter analyses the extent that the development of anti-colonial nationalism in Cape Verde did not translate into linguistic nationalism. Rather on the contrary, mainstream anti-colonial nationalists, chiefly the ones attached to the African Party of Independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) maintained from the get-go that the main language of the organization as well as for the state in the construction is the Portuguese language. This line of thought, the chapter demonstrates, is still pervasive among Cape Verdean political and cultural elite.

The corpus of the dissertation includes chapters four, five, and six. In chapter four I demonstrate that the state in Cape Verde is surrounded by a linguistic bubble, namely the Portuguese language. Its institutional memory, the operations of power and political
procedures are constructed and disseminated mainly—if not totally—through the medium of the Portuguese language. This situation is particularly profound in the written realm. In this realm, documentations, memoranda, laws and regulations, and like, are entirely in Portuguese. In spite of the fact that the Portuguese is a language that has been in the islands for over centuries, it is nonetheless a language that one acquires only through educational training. The national language, that is, the language that is spoken by the citizens in their informal and daily social interactions is the Cape Verdean language. As most Cape Verdean citizens do not possess the adequate mastery of the Portuguese language, I contend that the state is made inaccessible to them. To say this differently is to claim that the state in Cape Verde is “illegible.” Subsequently, an “unreadable” state is, as such, a state that one cannot keep track of its actions and omissions. Therefore, the activity of citizen’s surveillance of the state is drastically limited.

In chapter five, I analyze the impact of current language policy in the ordinary citizen’s overall initiatory participation, mainly those citizens who are not proficient in the official language, Portuguese. I argue that through politics of ridicule and politics of inaudibility ordinary citizens’ opinions and overall participation in the public debate is severely curtailed and limited. I note that the local elite are fundamentally Schumpeterian in terms of political outlook: the masses of the people’s political participation are, effectively, limited to electoral participation.

Chapter six of the dissertation compares Cape Verde with the cases of Tanzania and South Africa. The three countries do have the same history of colonial domination—though the South African case, for most of the twentieth century, was more a situation of
internal colonialism. As a consequence, the language of the former colonizer (English and Afrikaner) became hegemonic in the post-colonial period. Tanzania is one of the few sub-Saharan African states to have used a native language, the Swahili language, as the language of education and public political matters. Post-colonial South Africa language policy was formulated on the principles of multi-lingualism and linguistic human rights. As such, the country is rather exceptional at the global level with its eleven official languages, sanctioned by the country’s constitution.

In the concluding chapter, I highlight the major points raised throughout the dissertation. I make the case that ordinary citizens’ extensive political participation has a direct and positive impact on the overall quality of democracy. I also emphasize that political participation in the public sphere is correlated with the language policy and practices, which can either be a hindrance or an impetus to further partaking in the political affairs of the community. To eradicate the diglossic language policy—at the state and societal levels—I conclude is a necessity of democracy. In the last section of the conclusion I provide an outline of language policy recommendation for Cape Verde—that can also be applied to many other Creole island-states, facing similar diglossic language policy.
CHAPTER TWO: POLITICAL HISTORY OF CAPE VERDE: FROM A COLONY OF PORTUGAL TO A MICRO-ISLAND STATE

The political history of Cape Verde is all but a history of citizens’ political participation in the formal realms of politics and policy making. Throughout its five hundred years of existence, tightly controlled formal institutions and venues of political participation characterized the islands. Modern colonialism, from the late nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth century, was essentially based on the principles and practices of bureaucratic authoritarianism. Since independence in 1975, the country has known two different types of political regimes: party authoritarianism from 1975 to 1990, and electoral democracy, from 1991 onwards. These two regimes essentially maintained the limited spheres and venues for citizens’ engaging political participation, in spite of the self-characterization as a democracy. ¹

The political history of Cape Verde resembles many other sub-Saharan African states. Until 1975, Cape Verde was a colony of Portugal. As was the case with other former colonies of Portugal, political independence and sovereign statehood came after a protracted war of national liberation, which resulted in the total collapse of the Portuguese authoritarian regime. The twin processes of state-building and nation-building

¹ It is interesting to note that the first post-colonial regime, under one-party rule, defined itself basically in terms of political participation of the citizens. In other words, the so-called Revolutionary National Democracy, which was the official title of the regime, particularly in the 1980s, was fundamentally based on the idea of participation of the citizens. In reality, however, what was practiced was guided and mobilized participation. See, for instance, Basil Davidson, The Fortunate Isles: A Study in African Transformation (London: Hutchinson, 1989), chapter 8; PAICV, III Congresso do PAICV. Relatório do Conselho Nacional (Praia: Departamento de Accao Ideologica do CN, 1988), chapter three.
started during the colonial period. Crawford Young notes that continuity from the colonial to the post-colonial states, defined in terms of political behavior, institutions and socio-political practices, is the norm.²

In this dissertation I follow the historical institutional approach. This means that I categorically maintain that “history matters.”³ Historical processes and developments are extremely important and of high analytical value to the researcher as they permit one to grasp contemporary state of affairs and patterns of behavior. How people respond politically today can be answered by looking at the institutional arrangement and social practices of the past. For this reason, historical contextualization of the case under study is warranted.

This chapter is divided into three main sections, corresponding to a major historical era. The first section provides a brief description of the colonial history, focusing in the last fifty years of the colonialism (1926-1974). Then, I depict the rise and fall of the one-party state in Cape Verde, the political regime that was constructed right after the fall of the Portuguese rule in 1975. This section is best organized as a comparative study because it allows better understanding of the regime. The third section of the chapter highlights the process of democratic transition in Cape Verde, which started in 1990, and the rise of electoral and pluralist democracy.

From the Early Years to the fall of Estado Novo

The archipelago of Cape Verde is a reversed C-shaped constellation of ten islands and several islets off Coast of Senegal—more specifically the Cap Vert promontory, from which the name of the islands derived. Its total area is 4,033 km², roughly the same size as the state of Rhode Island. Relatively to their position to the dominant winds, the islands are divided into two main groups: Leeward islands (Maio, Fogo, Santiago, and Brava) and Windward islands (Santo Antao, Sao Vicente, Sao Nicolau, Santa Luzia, Sal, and Boavista).

The Portuguese, moved by earlier experiences of creating plantation economies in other Atlantic islands (Azores and Madeira), were the first to permanently settle in Cape Verde, in 1462. In order to foster the settlement of the Iberians and other Europeans in the islands the Portuguese royal authorities granted to the residing European population special rights of trade with West Africans, which included slave trade. The participation in the Atlantic slave trade brought great riches to Cape Verde, to the point that the islands were frequently assaulted by French and English privateers. Experiences with setting up a plantation economy were not successful and, thus, re-exportation of seasoned slaves became a major industry. This process of arrival, seasoning, and re-export of African slaves resulted in two major historical developments. On the one hand, it made the

---

islands what Bentley Duncan calls the “crossroads of the Atlantic.” The islands became a central port of call to the trans-Atlantic maritime navigation and trade, attracting ships and pirates from all of the European talassocratic powers in sixteenth through nineteenth centuries. On the other hand, it led to the development of a Creole society. This was essentially characterized by a hybrid culture and language—in which the Creole language, a mixture of Portuguese and main West African languages such as Mandinka and Wolof, became the main linguistic medium. Given the scarcity of European women in the tropics, Portuguese men, often through employment of physical and symbolic violence, eventually released their sexual desires onto African slave women. In time, a tripartite racial composition of the islands developed: the few and dominant whites, the many African slaves and mulatto population.

The end of the Atlantic slave trade in the early 1800s, enforced by the British navy, resulted in economic decay and abandonment by the Portuguese authorities. During the first quarter of the 19th century, the Portuguese royal authorities grew obsessed with Brazil, the jewel of the crown. Cape Verde and other Portuguese possessions in Africa were deemed of less strategic and financial value. As a consequence, throughout the nineteenth century, Cape Verdean society suffered from various social problems. Many who visited the islands around this period noted famine, petty criminality and other social diseases. Politically, the regime in the islands resembled that of an oligarchic system. The actual power-bearers of the islands were the wealthy families involved mainly in

---

6 Duncan, Atlantic Islands, chapter 9.
8 Wilson Trajano Filho, Pequenos mais honrados: um jeito português de ser na metrópole e nas colônias. (Brasília: Universidade de Brasília, Departamento de Antropologia, 2003), 12.
legitimate and illegitimate trade with West Africa. Foreign actors seeking to engage in commercial activities in Cape Verde—or any other significant activity, for that matter—understood that the shortcut to success was to befriend the local power holders rather than seeking to court the established political authorities.

By the mid- to late-1800s, as imperialism and modern colonialism became the dominant political force in European and global politics, Portuguese authorities began to pay more attention to their African possessions. Whether because of politics of prestige or motivated by economic imperialism, Portuguese modern colonialism in Africa had a new momentum. Institutional and social reforms were carried out with the intent of reinforcing imperial rule. Thus, political reforms were formulated to extend colonial oversight and rule from the metropolis to the colonies. To further the reach of imperial rule and to advance the penetration of royal authority in the colonies, Lisbon mandated the establishment of a printing press in the colonies in the mid-1800s—through in loco publication of the royal decrees and other juridical norms. The printing press, coupled with the development of a small-scale public education, led to the development of a local

---

10 The case of Samuel Hodges, businessman and US consul to the islands in 1818, is very instructive in this manner. He preferred to court Manuel António Martins, an extremely influential and powerful local man, having him as his business partner as well as vice-consul for the island of Boavista. For more on this, see George E. Brooks, “Samuel Hodges, Jr., and the Symbiosis of Slave and ‘Legitimate’ Trades, 1810s-1820s,” *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 41, 1 (2008): 101-116.
11 Portuguese imperial historiography is characterized by a fundamental debate whether Portuguese modern imperialism in Africa, of the 1800s, was propped up by issues of international prestige, as defended by Hammond, or whether it was economic calculation of the ruling class and the industrial and commercial bourgeois that motivated the control of those possessions. On the issue, see R. J. Hammond, *Portugal and Africa, 1815-1910: A Study in Uneconomic Imperialism* (Stanford, Calif: Stanford University Press, 1966) and W. G. Clarence-Smith, *The Third Portuguese Empire, 1825-1975: A Study in Economic Imperialism* (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 1985).
intelligentsia and, in time, the construction of an “imagined Cape Verden community.”

By the end of the nineteenth century, fierce competition among European powers resulted in a new course of action in Africa. Following the footsteps of other imperial powers, Portugal brought in modern technologies of power, incorporated in the modern colonial state, in order to facilitate the political economy of extraction.

The third quarter of the nineteenth century was an era of great imperial competition among European powers. Portugal, in spite of its smallness and powerlessness—often labeled in the press of the era as the “sick man of Europe”—entered the competition. In order to maintain and extend Portuguese rule in Africa, the rulers of Portugal understood that major political, administrative and colonial reforms were needed. As such, the whole colonial administrative and political enterprise was shuffled. Colonial boundaries were defined and redefined. For instance, what was then called Province of Cape Verde was dismembered in two distinct colonies in 1879, the islands of Cape Verde and the possessions on the West Coast of Africa (what became known as Portuguese Guinea—today’s Guinea-Bissau). At the same time, efforts were taken towards creating a new institutional and political environment of colonialism. In 1892, the government in Lisbon approved the Administrative Organization of the Province of Cape Verde. This new law effectively established the roots of modern colonial state in the province, by creating the governing bodies, their political authority

---


13 Since the third quarter of the 18th century, after the financial end of the royal charter company, the Companhia Grão-Para e Maranhão, the province of Cape Verde included not only the islands of Cape Verde but also the territories in West Africa (in what is today’s Guinea-Bissau and parts of Senegal). On the causes of the breakup of the Province of Cape Verde, see René Pélissier, *Naissance de la Guiné: Portugais et Africains en Sénégambie, 1841-1936* (Orgeval, France: Pélissier, 1989).
and power. It suffices to say that the new model of organization established the governor as the paramount power in the colony—a political principle that posterior regimes, regardless of their ideological and political inclination, would continue.¹⁴

Modern colonialism was backed by what can be properly termed the “knowledge-industrial complex.” European countries devoted a sizeable portion of their public and private resources towards establishment of a colonial knowledge center. Edward Said calls the whole process orientalism, “the corporate intuition for dealing with the Orient [and] a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.”¹⁵ Similar modes of thought were also applied to the case of Africa. African subjects, as such, went through a process that Gayatri Spivak calls “othering.”¹⁶ All of this was accomplished through establishment and institutionalization of a body of knowledge about the colonial others.¹⁷ In the case of Portugal, several institutions were created with the goal of constructing, amassing, and disseminating knowledge about the colonies. It suffices here to note the cases of the Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa (Geographical Society of Lisbon) and the Escola Superior Colonial (Colonial Higher School), founded in 1875 and 1906, respectively.¹⁸

Change in the metropolitan political regime, with republic supplanting monarchy, did not result in a change of life conditions for the colonized Africans. Thus, with the fall

¹⁴ Organização administrativa da província de Cabo Verde approvada por decreto de 24 de Dezembro de 1892 (Lisboa: Imprensa Nacional, 1893).
of the monarchy in 1910 and the institution of the republic, Portuguese political elites maintained the same discourses and practices of domination that the earlier generations experienced. In other words, Portuguese republicanism, while claiming its adherence to values such as equality, freedom and fraternity, was not extended to Africans. Rather, the level of economic exploitation was expanded.\(^{19}\)

In 1933, another major political rupture took place in Lisbon. The First Republic (1910-1926) gave way to the \textit{Estado Novo} (“New State”), officially created with the 1933 Constitution. The \textit{Estado Novo}’s colonial policy essentially brought highest levels of imperial domination. Ideologically, the new regime was an eclectic combination of traditional values, family and the Catholic Church, blended with modern ideas and practices of right-wing dictatorships of the 1930s Europe, chiefly German Nazism and Italian Fascism.\(^{20}\) The \textit{Estado Novo}, under the authoritarian command of António Oliveira Salazar, reformulated and rationalized the colonial state, stretching the scope of domination and extraction of resources. Tighter and more centralized control of the colonies became the official colonial policy. To that objective, new regulations, laws and decrees were enacted with the purpose of increasing and reinforcing the absolute control of Lisbon over the colonies. The Colonial Act of 1930 was an example of this trend.

Imbued with empire-building ideology and nationalist phraseology, it was effectively a


\(^{20}\) This is particularly in the second half of the 1930s, when Nazism and Fascism were ascending (while liberal democracies in Europe were in the state of political and economic crisis). See Philippe Schmitter, “The ‘Régime d’Exception’ that became the rule: Forty-Eight Years of Authoritarian Domination in Portugal,” in \textit{Contemporary Portugal: The Revolution and Its Antecedents}, Lawrence S Graham and Harry M. Makler, eds. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1979), 15. Also see António Costa Pinto, \textit{Salazar’s Dictatorship and European Fascism: Problems of Interpretation} (Boulder: Social Science Monographs, 1995).
supra-constitutional law that re-constructed the notion of Empire and the Portugal’s historical duty and mission in the tropics.\textsuperscript{21}

The \textit{Estado Novo} stretched from 1933 to 1974. For analytical purposes the period can be further subdivided into two major epochs. In the first phase of the \textit{Estado Novo} (1933-1951), coinciding with the rise and fall of European fascism, colonial policy was informed by a \textit{mística imperial} (imperial ethos). Portuguese political elites became gripped with finding a position within the concert of the European powers. At the discursive level, the regime propaganda highlighted the notion that “Portugal is not a small country,” as its empire cover large territories in Africa and small holdings in Asia and Pacific (Macao, East Timor and Territories in the Indian subcontinent). Propaganda campaigns, such as colonial expositions, were carried out, both in the metropolis and abroad, to spread the image of a gigantic Empire. In the colonies, the policy of assimilation, whose legislation was basically borrowed from the French colonial thinking and practices, was given a truly legal corpus and actual enforcement.\textsuperscript{22}

Following the end of the World War II, the characteristics of global politics radically changed. Therefore, the \textit{Estado Novo} felt compelled to undergo reforms that were at least nominal. At both political and discursive levels, the Estado Novo made an abrupt 180-degree turn, designed to appease Portugal’s international critics and African


\textsuperscript{22} From 1926 to 1961, a myriad of legislations was created with the objective of formalizing the sphere of the natives. It suffices to note the cases of the 1926 Political, Social and Criminal Statutes of Natives from Angola, and Mozambique, the 1930 Colonial Act, the 1933 Organic Charter of the Portuguese Colonial Empire, the 1933 Overseas Administrative Reform and the 1954 Statutes of the Natives. For an in-depth study of the colonial legislation, that includes the principle of assimilation, see Wilensky, \textit{Trends in Portuguese overseas legislation for Africa}.
anti-colonial nationalists. From the 1950s to the end of the colonial system in 1974, the lusotropicalist ideology became the official ideology of the *Estado Novo*, which sought to transmit the idea of Portuguese colonial exceptionalism, based on humane and caring relationships with the tropical peoples.\(^\text{23}\)

The changing realities of the post-World War II world meant that concepts such as “colony” or “empire” became political liabilities. This led Portugal to radically change its legislation and constitutional terminology. These concepts were simply erased and substituted for supposedly more politically neutral ones, such as “overseas province.”\(^\text{24}\) In the years preceding World War II, the notion that Portugal was not a “small state” was the dominant political discourse. In the post-World War II era, the official discourse began to stress the notion of a pluri-continental nation by noting that African territories were integrally Portugal. This was basically compiled under the ideology of *Isto é Portugal* (“This is Portugal”). Ideologically, the regime embraced the “theory” of lusotropicalism, first developed by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s.\(^\text{25}\)

According to this theory Portugal’s colonization in the tropics, unlike those of other

---

\(^{23}\) The theory of lusotropicalism was first put forth by the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre in the 1930s and 1940s—to be rejected by policy makers and the political elite of the regime. The Brazilian sociologist theory was first exposed in his *Casa Grande e Sanzala*, first published in 1934. While the theory was known in Portugal in the 1930s and 1940s, the regime clearly demarked away from such a position. In the first two decades, the regime was essentially marked by the ideology of racial purity, which clashed with the notion of lusotropicalism at its heart. In the early 1950s, with the changing of the situation, Freyre was invited for a tour throughout the Portuguese empire. His travels were reported in his *Aventura e Rotina*. For more on the subject, see Ellen W. Saapega, *Consensus and Debate in Salazar’s Portugal: Visual and Literary Negotiations of the National Text, 1933-1948* (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008); Cláudia Castelo, “O modo português de estar no mundo.” *O luso-tropicalismo e a ideologia colonial portuguesa (1933-1961)* (Porto: Edições Afrontamento, 1998).


Europeans, was based on humane and cordial relationship between the Portuguese and tropical peoples. The belief that the nation had territories in other parts of the world, mainly in sub-Saharan Africa, fed the impression that the nation must be defended at all costs. Thus, Portugal stubbornly opted to fight a three-front war against the anti-colonial African nationalists in the 1960s and 1970s.

The discourse of lusotropicalism, aimed to whitewash the Portuguese colonial presence in sub-Saharan Africa, was categorically rejected by anti-colonial nationalists. As in the case of other colonies in empires in Africa, Africans from the Portuguese Empire began to challenge the colonial status quo. Amilcar Cabral from Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau and Mario Pinto de Andrade from Angola were the two of the most articulate, vocal and cogent critics of the lusotropicalist ideology.

The modern colonial history of Cape Verde cannot be understood in isolation. As a part of a large but underdeveloped and extremely authoritarian empire, Cape Verde was linked to Portugal and her other colonies. The movement of people and ideas, as well as the establishment of formal and informal alliances against Portuguese colonialism in the

---

26 Many of the Africans who went to Portugal in the 1940s and 1950s for college were in the forefront of anti-colonial nationalism. They began to develop strong personal and political connections. Those links would become politically relevant some years later during the process of national liberation struggle in Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde (and even after the independence). The Casa dos Estudantes do Império (The House of the Students of the Empire), an institution established by the Estado Novo in the late 1940s to house incoming college students from the empire as to permit their easier assimilation in the metropolis became the venue for the circulation and diffusion of nationalist ideas and ideals. Mário Pinto de Andrade, an Angolan nationalist who were in Lisbon in the 1940s, labeled that group as the “generation of [Amilcar] Cabral,” insofar as Cabral, by far, became the most influential of all the nationalists in the then Portuguese Africa. On the subject, see Mario de Andrade, Amilcar Cabral: essai de biographie politique (Paris: F. Maspero, 1980). Also see Mário de Andrade, Origens do nacionalismo africano: continuidade e ruptura nos movimentos unitários emergentes da luta contra a dominação colonial portuguesa, 1911-1961 (Lisboa: Publicações Dom Quixote, 1997).

post-World War II, made Cape Verde a piece in a bigger puzzle. As in the case of other African colonies, the 1950s was a period of blossoming for anti-colonial organizations.\footnote{Ronald Hodell Chilcote, *Emerging Nationalism in Portuguese Africa: Documents* (Stanford, Calif: Hoover Inst. Press, 1972).}

Several political organizations were created by Cape Verdeans in the 1950s and early 1960s, including the PAIGC, the most successful. It was a bi-national anti-colonial united front, formed by people of different social backgrounds from Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde and led by Amilcar Cabral, up to his assassination in 1973.\footnote{See Patrick Chabal, *Amilcar Cabral: Revolutionary Leadership and People's War* (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Mustafah Dhada, *Warriors at Work: How Guinea Was Really Set Free* (Niwot, Colo: University Press of Colorado, 1993).} PAIGC’s main political objectives were the national independence of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau and, then, the fusion of these two states into a federal political unit.

In 1972, while still waging an anti-colonial armed struggle, the PAIGC carried out elections for the setting up of a National Assembly, which would unilaterally declare the independence of Guinea-Bissau in September 1973. A few months following the declaration of independence, the new state of Guinea-Bissau was recognized by more than eighty states. In fact, Guinea-Bissau was Portuguese colonialism’s Achilles’ heel for the war in that West African territory proved extremely burdensome, in human and material resources, for the Portuguese state. This situation eventually led to the coup d’état in Lisbon in 1974 and the subsequent fall of the Estado Novo.\footnote{Patrick Chabal, “The End of Empire,” in *A History of Postcolonial Lusophone Africa*, ed. Patrick Chabal (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), pp. 16-17. Also see Richard A. H. Robinson, “The influence of overseas issues in Portugal’s transition to democracy,” in *The Last Empire Thirty Years of Portuguese Decolonization*, ed. Stewart Lloyd-Jones and António Costa Pinto (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2003).} The fall of the regime opened the path towards formal recognition of independence of Guinea-Bissau by
Portugal in September 1974. After that, Portugal and the PAIGC went on to resolve the question of Cape Verde.

In the islands of Cape Verde the fall of the Estado Novo provoked a major political earthquake, as new political organizations were formed and appeared in the public sphere. Besides the PAIGC, which maintained secret cells in Cape Verde, the Union of the Independent People of Cape Verde (UPICV), and the Democratic Union of Cape Verde (UDC), were other major parties that flourished in the second half of 1974. Like the PAIGC, these two parties embarked in a process of mass mobilization for their respective causes. Political rallies, meetings, and other mechanisms of mobilization were the main tools of these parties in order to stir the population toward their respective political goals and objectives. It should be noted that, in spite of the conspicuous presence of the general population in the sphere of politics, one cannot talk about political participation. Rather, the appropriate concept is mobilization. The general population’s entrance into political realms was not autonomous but guided and controlled by the political leadership of these three parties.31

The UPICV, formed in the late 1950s, disappeared much of the 1960s only to resurface in May 1974. At this time, their political view had radicalized. Inferring from its political discourse and judging from the UPICV’s written record, the party leaned towards Maoism and Pan-Africanism. UPICV categorically rejected the PAIGC Cape

---

Verde-Guinea-Bissau federalist project, defending, instead, a “sole Cape Verde.” This political project was essentially about a “go-alone” independence: a sovereign state of Cape Verde politically uncommitted to any other state. This political proposal, obviously, was particularly aimed at combating the PAIGC’s aspirations of creating a federal union between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau.

The UDC’s political position on the independence question was rather ambivalent. Unlike the other two parties, whose political activities resorted to mobilizing followers towards the goal of a total and immediate independence, the UDC’s political leaders, believing that the country might have some economic and social difficulties standing on its own, sought a rather gradual approach. Instead of a radical

---

32 For an insider account about the rise and fall of the party, see José André Leitão da Graça, *Golpe de estado em Portugal: traida a descolonização de Cabo Verde* (Cape Verde: s.n., 2004).

33 The scholarly literature on pre-independence period is very scarce. To the best of knowledge of this writer there has been no serious attempt to explain the politics of the hot semester of 1974 in Cape Verde, where three major parties were competing for power and recognition. On the subject see José Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde, Os bastidores da independência* (Praia: Instituto Camões, Centro Cultural Português, 1996). Information about the UPICV are mainly attained through the above-cited book by its former leader, Leitão da Graça, as well as a collection of pamphlets, flyers, brochures of the UPICV publicized throughout the second semester of 1974 in possession of the author of these words (in digital format)—the expression “sole Cape Verde” is taken from one of the UPICV flyer, where the full sentence is: “The People of Cape Verde noisily demand and yell for a sole Cape Verde. Down with the PAICV. Hooray for Cape Verde.”

34 This is visible in the first two points of the UDC Manifesto of May 1974. See União Democrática de Cabo Verde, *Manifesto* (Cabo Verde: s.d. 1974). The UDC, in effect, enjoyed clear support and sympathy from General Spinola, the man in charge of post-revolutionary Portugal until his fall in September of 1974. General Spinola was one of last military commander in Guinea and had perceived that the struggle cannot be won military. He devised, as such, a political solution to the colonial war, advocating for a federalist solution between Portugal and African colonies, similarly to what de Gaulle had proposed some fifteen years earlier to France’s then African colonies. The UDC was arguably a Spinolist party. First, the fact Radio Barlavento, a radio station under its control in 1974, always opened its services with “Aqui é Portugal” (here is Portugal). See, for instance, Aristides Pereira, *O meu testemunho: uma luta, um partido, dois países* (Lisboa: Notícias, 2003), 273. Second, the fact that the party’s political documents, chiefly the various pamphlets and flyers it dispersed throughout the second semester of 1974 highlighting the phrase “um Cabo Verde Melhor” (often the phrase is capitalized).” The phrase is clearly a borrowing from the Spinola’s policy of “Por uma Guinea Melhor,” (*for a better Guinea*) a policy implemented in Guinea-Bissau in the late 1960s. The goal of the policy was basically to conquer hearts and minds of the people against the PAIGC. See António de Spinola, *Por uma Guiné melhor* (Lisboa: Agência-Geral do Ultramar, 1970).
political solution as, the UDC favored the maintenance of political linkage to Portugal, whereby the islands would get relative autonomy.

For the PAIGC and UPICV there was a direct connection between Pan-Africanism and independence. Independence meant the reinforcement of a putatively repressed African identity by the colonial authorities. As a creole society with two poles of cultural reference (Europe and Africa), independence meant emphasizing the African cultural references. The UDC was a political organization formed by the local social and economic elite and members of the colonial bureaucracy, whose social identity was that of a cultural connection to Portugal. To these Cape Verdean elite, Cape Verde and its people and culture were an exemplary case of a “romance experiment in the tropics.”

This explains the rejection of any political or cultural linkage to mainland Africa. The UDC portrayed itself as longing for political autonomy within the new political regime constructed in Portugal following the revolution of April 1974. Political decentralization and autonomy—and not independence—were the ultimate political goal.

---

36 A number of respected members of the local culturati were rather skeptical about the future of Cape Verde as an autonomous state. Many believed that demanding independence was more like taking a jump in the unknown abyss. Henrique Teixeira de Sousa, a well-known medical doctor and writer, is a good example of this line of thought. Teixeira de Sousa argues that Cape Verdelan independence should be put off in spite of being part of a larger historical and global struggle for national liberation since the eighteenth century. On this subject, see Henrique Teixeira de Sousa, Cabo Verde e o seu Destino Político (São Vicente, Cape Verde: Edição do autor, 1974).

The idea of autonomy, it should be noted, has a long history among Cape Verdelan political and social elite. During the late colonial period, Duarte Fonseca, as the deputy in the Portuguese National Assembly in the 1950s and 1960s have advocated the need for granting the status of “adjacent islands”—the same legal figure applied to the archipelagos of Madeia and Azores. General Spinola, Portuguese ruler following the revolution, talked about a Portuguese federation—influenced by De Gaulle’s Communauté française—where autonomy, and not political independence, was to be granted to the African territories.
The second half of 1974 was a period of complex and multifaceted political competition between these three political organizations. A veritable war of propaganda developed among them. This war of propaganda occurred mainly in through various pamphlets, posters, brochures, and flyers that were distributed in urban areas. The propaganda war was also in terms of “occupying” the public space with political message. Political Graffiti on the walls throughout the country became a major vehicle of disseminating political messages. For the educated people, the “war” was essentially at the level of the newspaper with the articles of opinion. Through dissemination of word of mouth, pamphlets and other oral and written media, each party was representing itself as the defender of the interests of the Cape Verdean people. At the same time, each of these parties was accusing the opponents as serving the foreign interests. By the end of 1974, the PAIGC had subdued both the UPICV and UDC. These circumstances, facilitated by the radical section of the Portuguese military who maintained strong sympathies and respect for PAIGC, can be explained by the following factors. First, the PAIGC was far more organized than the unstructured, understaffed and disorganized UPICV and UDC. The higher level of political organization is often correlated with political success.\(^{37}\) As a political organization with more than a decade of active political experience that included leadership in an anti-colonial war, the PAIGC had clearly-defined structures and hierarchy, with its members aware of their roles and functions. Second, in structural

terms, the UDC and the UPICV resembled the elite party, detached from society. The UDC was more a political gathering or association of the members of the cultural and political elite of the late colonial society. The UPICV, on the other hand, was a political organization centered around one figure, José Leitão da Graça. Unlike the case of the PAIGC, these two parties lacked a critical component, that of the intermediary political entrepreneurs who could mobilize and link the masses to the party elite. These intermediate leaders were among the first to stimulate the political consciousness of the people, in the aftermath of the April Revolution in Portugal. Incidentally, many PAIGC sympathizers and associates were behind the formation of the Grupo de Acção Democrática de Cabo Verde e Guiné-Bissau (GADCV, Group of Democratic Action of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau), a civic organization formed around May 1974 that demanded independence to both Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau.

Third, given the fact that PAIGC led a successful campaign of national liberation, it enjoyed wide international recognition. It suffices here to note that the United Nations General Assembly and the now defunct Organization of African Unity (OAU) considered the party as the “sole and legitimate representative of the people of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde.” As such it was relatively easier for the PAIGC to mobilize external resources for the independent state of Guinea Bissau, created in September 1973, as they could rely on diplomatic connections established during the war. With the PAIGC as a

---


39 For a personal account of the works of these political entrepreneurs in Cape Verde in the months after the fall of the Estado Novo, see Jorge Querido, *Um demorado olhar sobre Cabo Verde* (Lisboa: Chiado, 2011), particularly 187 ff.

government in Guinea-Bissau, the PAIGC in Cape Verde had unconditional support from its sister party, which could use political or financial resources in Cape Verde.

**The First Republic, 1975-1991**

Capeverdianists often speak of two different post-colonial epochs: the First Republic, from 1975 to 1991, the period of one-party regime, and the Second Republic, following the multi-party elections of 1991. According to Richard Lobban, the First Republic is further divided in two sub-periods: from 1975 to 1981, the “one party, two states” regime, as the PAIGC monopolized all the political power in both Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde. I call this period the “First Republic, part I” (or “Primeiríssima República,” in Portuguese). The decade of 1981 to 1991 is the period of “one party, one state,” as the PAIGC ceased to exist in Cape Verde, and in its place a new party, the African Party of of Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV) formed the government.41 The first five years of post-colonial state is here labeled the very first republic is in order to make a distinction with the subsequent period. The transition from “one party, two states” to “one party, one state,” was at different levels: first, a symbolic transition, with the changing of the name of the ruling party from PAIGC to PAICV, by dropping “G”, which represented Guinea-Bissau. Second, there was a constitutional and political reform, as the Constitution of 1980, approved few months before the breakup of the PAIGC, went through a cosmetic cleaning process, whereby all references to the political

principle of unity with Guinea-Bissau were completely removed. Third, at the institutional levels, both at the level of the party and of the state, all of the bi-national political and bureaucratic structures, such as the inter-governmental conference or the free trade zone, developed and constructed from 1975 to 1980, were completely dismantled after the November 14th coup in Guinea-Bissau (of which more below).42

When the Estado Novo regime fell in Lisbon, in part as the consequence of the colonial wars, anti-colonial struggle took a new shape. From being covert and mainly in the countryside, the struggle moved to be about open mobilization of the population, particularly in the urban areas. The situation in Cape Verde was no different. Before the April Revolution that toppled down the dictatorship in Lisbon, anti-colonial politics in the islands was basically limited to clandestine political activities by the PAIGC cells.43

With the fall of the Empire, different political forces, from within and without, emerged. The history of the PAIGC in Cape Verde is quite interesting. The party was basically a political coalition of those seeking to end Portuguese colonialism in Cape Verde. Within its ranks it was possible to find people from different cultural backgrounds as well as with different—and something competing if not antagonistic—political ideologies.

Starting in May 1974, three different groups within PAIGC emerged—and, in time, some of them competed for control of the party, and, ipso facto, of the state. The PAIGC in Cape Verde was made up of a constellation of three different socio-political factions, with different political agendas, who engaged in an internal competition for power. These

43 For an insider perspective of the clandestine struggle in Cape Verde, see Querido, Um demorado olhar sobre Cabo Verde.
three groups were: the “combatants” (the Guinea-Bissau or the mainland segment), the technocrats (the Lisbon segment) and the activists (that is, the activists whose terrain of political activity was Cape Verde).  

The PAIGC segment from the mainland was made up almost exclusively by the historical leadership of the party who participated in the liberation struggle in Guinea Bissau. This group included figures such as Aristides Pereira, who succeeded Cabral in the leadership of the party, Pedro Pires, who became the first Prime-Minister of the country, Abílio Duarte, and Silvino da Luz. Politically, they were more pragmatic and less influenced by ideological idealism. The experience of the liberation struggle had made them seasoned political activists who understood the weight of political dogmatism.

However lacking technical expertise or cultural capital, as most of them did not have any college-level training and were aware of this shortcoming, the “combatants” held significant political capital. The combatants’ legitimacy to lead the party supposedly derived from party history. Some of the combatants were the initial leaders of the party (e.g., Aristides Pereira, Abílio Duarte). Other joined the party during the early stages of the liberation struggle, becoming high ranking member of the party, such as the case of Pedro Pires, who would become the head of the PAIGC Cape Verde National Committee. The fact that they worked together or under direct leadership of Cabral implied their legitimacy and predominance within the party. The party’s incessant discourse of maintaining the ideological and political legacy of Cabral essentially meant that it should be ruled by those who were most familiar with those ideas and practices. That is to say

---

44 Ibid.; Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde*.
45 Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde*. 
that those who were closely in touch with Cabral and his political thought. Moreover, and as a consequence of their direct participation in the liberation struggle, they enjoyed great prestige and status among the people of Cape Verde (and in Guinea Bissau for that matter), for they were perceived as the liberators. Furthermore, these men were directly involved in the diplomatic negotiations between the PAIGC and the new post-revolution regime in Portugal leading to the independence of Cape Verde.

The technocrats constituted the group of Cape Verdeans whose personal connections among them were created and reinforced during their experience as college students in Portugal, mainly in Lisbon and Coimbra. They were known as the group of Lisbon, insofar as its members were university students PAIGC sympathizers and members who met in the capital city of Lisbon in the 1970s, right before the fall of the dictatorship. The group is called “technocrats” for two main reasons. First, these were individuals who had college degrees or were in the process of getting college education. They entered into the politics of national liberation while as university students in Portugal. Second, and given the fact that they had higher education training, they shared a perception of themselves as better equipped with the analytical and theoretical tools necessary to understand and act upon the modern world. The group’s key capital was cultural, sustained by an advanced technical expertise that a college education provides. With the fall of the Portuguese dictatorship in April 1974, the members of this group moved back to the islands and occupied leading positions in the political process of independence transition.
The third group within the PAIGC was the Cape Verden group. These included political activists and party propagandists who had acted in the islands since the early 1960s. Their main site of political action was the countryside of the island of Santiago, the biggest island, where class relations between landlords and peasants had been conflictive. Their key role was to secretly disseminate the message of the party among the population as well as to recruit new members to the cause. Most of the individuals of this group had no college education—thus, they lacked technical and cultural capital. And because they were far from the center of the actual political and military conflict, they could not amass a significant amount of political capital within the party. Following the party reorganization in Cape Verde, preceding independence, the group was almost completely cast out in the intra-party political game.

In spite of the social and political differences from within, a measure of unity was reached and the party could thus rule the state. After independence in 1975, one of the first measures of the PAIGC was to translate the international recognition as the sole representative of the peoples of Cape Verde (and of Guinea Bissau) into a political reality. The Law on the Political Organization of the State, known by its Portuguese acronym LOPE, a provisional supreme law in place of a constitution, confirmed the absolute political predominance of the PAIGC, institutionalizing political monolithism:

---


47 On March 2nd, 1975 (some four months before the independence) meeting of the PAIGC National Council of Cape Verde (CNCV) it was decided that the new composition of that body. The number established was 33, of which, 20 were combatants, 10 from the group of Lisbon, and the remaining 3 from the Cape Verden group. The 5 members of the Permanent Secretariat of the CNCV were all drawn from the combatant groups. See Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde*, 417.
The Sovereignty of the People of Cape Verde is exercised in the interests of the working masses, who are strictly linked to the African Party of the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC), which is the leading force in our Society.\footnote{The LOPE was to be a temporary political constitutional solution until the National Assembly passed the actual constitution of the country. It had a temporal limit of ninety days until a new constitution is passed. See Assembleia Nacional Popular, “Lei da Organização Política do Estado,” Boletim Oficial da República de Cabo Verde, 5 de Julho de 1975, 4. (my translations) The article in particular and the law in general, borrows extensively from the political constitution of Guinea-Bissau, which reserved a special political role for the PAIGC. See, “Constituição da República da Guiné-Bissau”, Casa Comum, http://hdl.handle.net/11002/fms_dc_39813 (accessed June 6, 2013). In its 4th article, the Constitution of Guinea-Bissau stated that: “In Guinea-Bissau power is exercised by the working masses strictly linked to the African Party of Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde, which is the political leading force of society.”}

The LOPE, as such, was de jure birth certificate of the one-party state in Cape Verde. The origin of one-party state in Cape Verde, and in the former Portuguese Africa in general, is different from the patterns that emerged in other parts of Africa. In the former British and French colonies, independence came through “constitutional decolonization.”\footnote{Patrick Chabal, “Revolutionary Democracy in Africa: The Case of Guinea Bissau,” in Political Domination in Africa: Reflections on the Limits of Power, Patrick Chabal, ed. (Cambridge [Cambridgeshire]: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 85.} Independence took place with the opening of the political sphere and the extension of the suffrage to the masses. From the late 1950s and early 1960s, multi-party politics, however frail, were a reality in francophone and anglophone Africa. African nationalists were particularly electoral entrepreneurs insofar as they proved capable of mobilizing the electoral bases and capitalizing on the votes of the masses for their own political projects. Political constitutions, modeled after French and British political systems, were hurriedly adapted by the departing colonial powers. In some cases as in Ghana, the establishment of the one-party rule takes place gradually. Through a combination of coercion and positive incentives, Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana dismantled the British legacy of
Westminster democracy and, in its place, instituted one-party state in 1964. In the case of Tanzania, institutionalization of the one-party state in 1965 was simply a confirmation of the electoral hegemony of the Tanganyika African National Union (TANU). The one-party state did not start with independence in the former British and French colonies. Rather, the establishment of the one-party state was a calculated effort of the post-colonial leaders to cling to power and to keep potential and real opposition at bay. The construction of the one-party state, in its de jure and de facto aspects, took place months or even years after independence.

In Portuguese-speaking Africa, the one-party state was instituted, de facto and de jure, before or at the time of the formal declaration of independence. One-party rule was instituted at the same minute that the post-colonial flag was raised to symbolize the birth of an independent African state. The period of transition, that is, the period between the Revolution of April 1974 and the actual declaration of independence on July 5th, 1975, was essentially a period in which a silent pact was firmed between the key nationalist party and the departing Portuguese forces. In Cape Verde, in spite of the voices of

---

50 See, for instance, Aristide R. Zolberg, Creating Political Order: The Party-States of West Africa (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1966), particularly the chapter on Ghana.
52 The PAIGC in Guinea Bissau, having declared the independence in 1973, had one of its conditions for the negotiations with the Portuguese in 1974 that only that party was to be negotiated with. In Cape Verde, as mentioned earlier, by December 1974, the PAIGC was the only party exercising political activities on ground—with the opposition parties completely silenced. In Mozambique, the negotiations for independence were between the Portuguese forces and the FRELIMO, who assumed predominance of national politics even before the proclamation of independence. The case of Angola is rather different as there were three competing nationalist parties (UNITA, MPLA and FNLA). The agreement for independence brought the three organizations and the Portuguese authorities. It was decided that multi-party elections would take place before independence. Instead, a war for control of the capital city, Luanda, ensued. The MPLA won the city and maintained de facto control of the state days before the proclamation of independence on November 11, 1975.
UPICV and UDC, Portuguese forces aided PAIGC, to the extent that by December 1974, the month of the agreement between Portugal and PAIGC on the Cape Verdean question, the opposition was almost completely silenced.\textsuperscript{53}

Early post-colonial high politics in Cape Verde had a distinctive configuration. It was essentially two-dimensional, branching out between party and state politics. The PAIGC, as noted above, was a supra-national party with political and institutional tentacles both in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde. The party’s top structures such as the Congress (the party’s highest body), the Higher Council of the Struggle and the Executive Council of the Struggle were bi-national, with representatives coming from the two territories. Important decisions were not taken at the level of the state, but rather at the level of the party. On the other hand, there were politics at the level of each state—mainly through National Commissions of the PAIGC. These institutions were the policy-making bodies, while the state institutions, such as the People’s National Assembly, essentially took the role of a rubber stamp institution.

Profound changes in the party and in the regime happened with the Third Congress of the PAIGC in 1977. In this meeting, political vanguardism was officially embraced.\textsuperscript{54} Party membership was to be tightly controlled. Ultimately the party’s top leadership had total control over who gets to be admitted. The Third Congress, the first

\textsuperscript{53} Leitão da Graça, \textit{Golpe de estado em Portugal}.

\textsuperscript{54} Political vanguardism was informally adopted by PAIGC, during the liberation struggle, in the mid-1960s. Cabral, the ideologue-in-chief of the organization, devised its own doctrine of political vanguardism whereby the vanguards would what he called the “best sons and daughters of the people.” Moreover, the idea of political vanguardism can be found in Cabral’s distinction between revolutionary force, assumed by the revolutionary petite bourgeoisie, and physical force, assumed by the masses mainly the peasantry. On the Cabralian notion of political vanguardism see Amilcar Cabral, “Not Everybody is of the Party,” in Amilcar Cabral, \textit{Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings}, trans. Michael Wolfers (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1979).
post-colonial congress of the party, was fundamentally characterized by an ideological eclecticism: references to nationalism, pan-Africanism, third-worldism, and Marxism. Notwithstanding all the Marxist-Leninist phraseology the PAIGC fell short of declaring itself a Marxist-Leninist party, a position that was taken by other liberation movements in power in Angola (MPLA) and Mozambique (Frelimo) in the same year.55

While in control of the state, the party faced a series of political crises from 1975 to 1981.56 Power in post-colonial states is often frail. Threats against the state, whether originating domestically or beyond the borders, are all present in the first few years of independence. In spite of the politics of anti-colonial nationalism and its rhetoric of equality, *realpolitik* becomes the dominant approach following independence. Factions are created and a zero-sum game among factions ensued. Early post-colonial politics in Cape Verde is no exception. A series of political crises developed in the first five years of the post-colony. Three important political crises have defined politics of the post-colony: the “Trotskyist” crisis of 1979, the crisis of political unity with Guinea-Bissau of 1980

---

55 The year of 1977 was the year of many political events in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa. It was the year of the first post-colonial congress of the parties in power (MPLA in Angola, FRELIMO in Mozambique and the PAIGC in Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde). Following the independence in 1975, the year of high hopes, the following years of 1976 and 1977 can be characterized as the next-day syndrome. Little by little, high expectations that the independence was supposed to deliver became social frustrations as the state (and the new state elite) increasingly de-linked from the society [on the subject, vide Joshua Forrest, *Guinea-Bissau: Power, Conflict, and Renewal in a West African Nation* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1992).

Social frustrations lead to the formation of organized dissent against the regimes. In Angola, it was from within that a faction within the MPLA unsuccessfully attempted to stage a coup—leading to a Stalin-like purge of the party and the state in its wake. On this subject, see David Birmingham, “The Twenty-Seventh of May: An Historical Note on the Abortive 1977 ‘Coup’ in Angola,” *African Affairs*. 77, no. 309 (1978): 554-564. In the case of Cape Verde, the year of 1977 marked the formation of a political organization among the Cape Verdeans living abroad, the UCID. See Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde.*

56 Political crises were one of the key themes in comparative politics, particularly in the heyday of the political development theory in the 1960s and 1970s. Political crisis was perceived as key condition for political evolution. Political development was, as such, understood in terms of success to resolve the various crises that afflict the community. On the subject, see Leonard Binder, ed., *Crises and Sequences in Political Development* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1971).
and the agrarian reform crisis of 1981. These crises can be classified into two major groups: intra-party crises (domestic and transnational) and crises of state authority (or crises of society disengagement from the state).\(^{57}\) It is important to emphasize these three crises as they defined the contours of Cape Verdaen politics. Today’s political discourses, from different quarters, are filled with references to these crises. The crises meant the redrawing of the boundaries of institutions as well as the new definition of political actors—which would impact politics of democratic transition in the late 1980s.

The “Trotskyist” crisis was the first major political crisis in Cape Verde. This crisis was a domestic intra-party crisis insofar as it deals with the development and rise of a faction within the Cape Verdaen section of the party. Power struggles within the party were mainly between the combatants (the “Guinea group”) and the Lisbon group. The origins of the struggle can be traced back to the early days of anti-colonial struggle in Cape Verde, following the fall of the Estado Novo (1974-1975).

Besides different level of technical expertise, the two groups were also split along age and ideological lines. Thus, one can speak of a generational and ideological conflict between the two groups.\(^{58}\) The intra-party political conflict was essentially presented as a clash between those defending the ideological party line that derives from Cabral’s thought and those proposing an alternative and more radical ideology. In time, the Lisbon

---


\(^{58}\) Arguably the Lisbon group was characterized by intellectual snobbism. As they were college graduates, many (if not all) perceived that they were fit to lead the party and the state. In this aspect, Erico Verissimo Ramos, of the Lisbon group, states that “the quality of our discourse was superior to the other two [groups], though we were the most radical.” See Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde*, 554 (my translation and italics). See also José Vicente Lopes, *Aristides Pereira: minha vida, nossa história* (Praia: Spleen, 2012), 254 ff.
group would be labeled by the party leadership as “Trotskyist.” This label derives mainly from the fact that the most outspoken members of the group developed a political discourse that embraced Trotskyist phraseology.

The two groups were aware of their differences and both sought key positions within the structures of the party and the state. Yet, overall decision-making power rested in the hands of the combatants, who constituted the majority within the leadership PAIGC-Cape Verde. Those outside the main circles of power, mainly the Cape Verdean and Lisbon factions, basically had three alternatives. First, there was a choice between political apathy and withdrawal. Second, political nepotism, that is, by making themselves out to be a political client or protégé to the party’s notables. The third option was voicing. This was the option taken by the Lisbon group.

The Secretary General of PAIGC, Aristides Pereira, noted the problems of ideological divisionism in his report to the Party Congress two years following independence. By the time of the Third Congress of the PAIGC, in 1977, the combatants had totally assumed the leadership of the party in Cape Verde. The party highest bodies were kept away from those perceived to be affiliated with the Trotskyists. Little by little, the political arena of action for the “Trotskyist”, within and without the

---

59 The presence of the group within the structures of the party was first noted in the first meeting of the PAIGC National Commission of Cape Verde, the highest body of the party in the islands in May 1976. In that meeting, Silvino da Luz read a paper, “A Evolução do Trotskismo, o seu Aparecimento e o Desenvolvimento de uma Corrente Trotskista no Seio do Partido” (“The Evolution of Trotskyism, Its Origins and Development of a Trotskyist Trend within the Party”). It should be noted that the description of the group was fundamentally in terms of ideological difference to the party line—while other variables, such as education, socialization in Portugal, among others, were minimized. For more on this see Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde*, 545.

party, began to shrink. Exit, and not voice, began to appear as the most viable alternative. In 1979, the final blow took place as the two members of the government, affiliated with Trotskyism, renounced to their position. Such a move prompted two outcomes: tightening of party structures and purge within the party and state.

With the “rectification” campaign that followed the crisis, controlled admission to the party was put into effect. Total commitment to the ideas of the party, that is to say, the ideological line as defined in the party’s main bodies, was to be a key condition for admission. Political factionalism in Cape Verde was relatively mild: it did not result in any murder of those perceived to have deviated from the party line. This places Cape Verde in stark contrast to the other one-party states in Portuguese-speaking Africa. In Angola, Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, dissent within the ruling party had basically resulted in massacres.

The second major political crisis of post-colonial Cape Verde resulted from the coup d’état in Guinea-Bissau, led by Nino Vieira on November 14, 1980. For the Guinean section, the party had traditionally benefited the Cape Verdean section, since the days of the liberation struggle. Coupled with this supposed political advantage of the Cape Verdean section within the party was the fact that political leadership in Guinea-Bissau, under Luiz Cabral, had a terrible record of economic management and wrong

---

61 The two were Manuel Faustino and José Tomas Veiga. In justice, their action was more a combination of voice and exit. The renounce of their governmental position was preceded by a letter to the leader of the government, the Prime Minister Pedro Pires—and the leader of the PAIGC-Cape Verde. In that letter, the two complained that of lack of internal democracy within the party as well as the fact that the party became de-linked to the society at large (“the party is seen as a strange thing” they claimed). For more detailed description of this event see Vicente Lopes, *Cabo Verde*, 562.

Moreover, by the end of the 1970s, a power struggle had ensued between Luiz Cabral, the president of the country, and Nino Vieira, the country’s prime minister. In fact, it seemed that the former was doing all that he could to strip the latter of all effective political power. The constitutional reform, announced by the Guinean president Luiz Cabral on November 10th, 1980, was the last straw. Basically the powers of the president were to be strengthened while the position of principal commissioner (prime minister) was to be eliminated.  

The November 14th (1980) coup essentially meant two things: a) the political death of the federalist project (the union of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau) and b) the end of the PAIGC in Cape Verde. The crisis started as intra-party conflict and later became a diplomatic crisis between the two states. At first, the Cape Verdean section of the party—particularly the Secretary General of the party, Aristides Pereira, who was at the same time the president of Cape Verde—approached the coup as an issue of disrespect of the party statutes and practices. On January 20, 1981, the Cape Verdean wing of the PAIGC, in a national conference, turned into a constituent congress, founded the African Party of Independence of Cape Verde (PAICV). The formation of a new party led to a review of its political structures, goals and objectives. Yet, at the level of

---

the state nothing much changed. Political authoritarianism, under the one-party model, was maintained in spite of the reforms made to adapt to the post-coup situation.

The third crisis with deep political implication was the crisis of the Agrarian Reform Law in 1981. The question of agrarian reform was one of the key contention points between the state and the society. This question constituted one of the key policy goals of the PAIGC in Cape Verde following independence. When the PAIGC took power in Cape Verde, the majority (60%) of the people lived off the land. Agriculture was one of the main economic activities of the country and the one that employed the most people. According to the official view at the time of independence, however “the actual agrarian structures serve neither the objectives of production, nor the social objectives of the regime.” Confusion and misinformation, particularly disseminated by those opposing the PAIGC/PAICV rule in Cape Verde, coupled with naiveté of the ruling group, increasingly delinked from society, led to the failure of the agrarian reform and further isolated the regime to the eyes of some sectors of the people. The public discussion of the proposed bill of agrarian reform led to a manifestation of force between the security forces and the rural population in the island of Santo Antao in August 1981. The actual clash between the rural population and the security forces resulted in one death. However, what followed was worse. Those thought to be the organizers and/or involved in the revolt against the agrarian reform were illegally arrested, detained and

---

tortured for months. The whole event in Santo Antao indicated that the “high modernist” regime in Cape Verde, like all others in Africa and elsewhere, did not want to leave any room for dissent in its top-down developmental projects.

In the first few years of the First Republic, the party’s rhetoric of “national reconstruction” could mobilize the rural population behind its developmental project, chiefly through propaganda and other means of penetration into society. By the mid-1980s, particularly in urban areas, society had become “delinked” from the state and the party. The state, under total control of the party, increasingly lacked effective means to mobilize and capture the urban population. A crisis of legitimacy ensued as the society became increasingly disengaged from the state.

Since its formation in 1975, the regime survived a succession of crises, both at the party, state and societal level. A quick glance at the electoral results indicates the growing erosion of the regime’s legitimacy. Like other one-party states, Cape Verde held regularly single-list legislative elections. These elections were essentially non-competitive and plebiscitary in character. Two national elections were held, in 1980 and 1985. The graph (figure 2) presents the actual number of elections in Cape Verde. Two general

---

72 Chazan and Azaria, *The Precarious Balance*.
73 In this regard, it differs from the Tanzanian case, where one-party elections were rather competitive, and two candidates designated by the party often compete for the same seat. For more on the competitive one-party elections see Henry Bienen, *Tanzania: Party Transformation and Economic Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967).
74 I include the elections of 1975 as to bring the full electoral picture—and to compare with the two other elections. The 1975, as the elections for the independence and to the establishment of a Constituent Assembly is totally different from the other two.
conclusions can be made by looking at the graph: first, the gap between the registered voters and the voter turnout increased significantly from 1975 to 1985. The percentage of those participating in the electoral activities is represented by a declining line. Second, the voter turnout is almost directly associated with the number of those voting “yes” for the regime. This is so because those who were against the regime simply preferred not to cast ballot as they had no other political alternatives to choose from. Thus, abstention can be understood as a type of vote against the regime. Urban areas, mainly the capital city Praia and the second most important city Mindelo, registered higher numbers of electoral abstention. It was in the latter that the highest number of ‘no’ was casted.75

Figure 2. Legislative Elections in the First Republic

By the late 1980s, the signs of “the third wave of democratization” were clearly visible. Like elsewhere, the regime came to face a major political dilemma: either to open

---

75Colm Foy considers that this somehow represents confidence to the system, as they “felt the confidence to manifest their opposition through the ballot box.” See Foy, Cape Verde, 63.
the political sphere to competition or augment its authoritarianism. In light of the global rise of a discourse of democracy and human rights, the regime first tried to duck from the growing diasporic and international pressures. In this aspect, Aristides Pereira, the president of the republic and the secretary general of the PAICV, speaking to the National Assembly in December 1987, mentioned that “the Cape Verdean democracy is not dictated by “fashion” [modismo].” By “fashion” he meant contemporary global discourse and practice of multi-party democracy. Yet, the juggernaut of democratization was too strong for a small, aid-dependent island-state to duck.

During the Third Congress of the PAICV, in 1988, earlier divisions between softliners and hardliners surfaced. Softliners of the regime rehearsed some opening, however timid. In this aspect, one of the major political principles presented to the Congress was the thesis on civil society, drafted by João Pereira Silva and Jacinto Santos. This principle was rejected by the hardliners of the regime. Nonetheless, it became clear to all that some liberalization was warranted as to support the regime itself.

Against this backdrop, the regime opened the economic realms with the so-called strategy of extraversion that permitted the free flow of foreign direct investment in Cape Verde. Economic liberalization was only the first step in what would be the total process of dismantling the one-party state. By the end of the decade, pressures from domestic and international quarters were amounting. In 1990, the one-party state was formally dismantled and new institutions were created to facilitate the transition towards multi-

---

party democracy. Domestic and international forces influenced the political turn in Cape Verde. As early as 1987, the political leadership of the PAICV noted that changes in the political and economic structures were in order, if the goal was to save the state and/or the regime. The Third Congress of the PAICV, understanding that international political economy had changed and this would impact the country, decided for liberalization of the economy, by opening to foreign private investment—the policy of “extraversion of the economy.”

Transition to Multi-Party Electoral Democracy in Cape Verde

At the end of the 1980s, political dissatisfaction was high among the growing college-educated urban class who were kept outside the main circles of power. Political power entrenched in the hands of the old generation, who came from the continent after the liberation struggle. At the same time, urban youth population had grown restless and impatient given high levels of youth unemployment and lack of socio-economic opportunities. In urban areas such as the capital city of Praia and Mindelo, some confrontation between the youth and the security forces were registered. Ironically, the youth, who were the force behind the political ascendancy of the PAIGC in 1974-75, became the gravediggers of the incumbent party, once the political arena had been opened. Furthermore, from about 1987-1988, a number of anti-regime underground pamphlets and brochures, highlighting the pitfalls of the “Pirestroika,” were secretly
distributed. Similar to the cases of democratization in Latin America, economic liberalization preceded political democratization.

In the early months of 1990, domestic political opposition, hitherto covert and private, became public and organized into a political movement. The Movimento para a Democracia (“Movement for Democracy”, known by its acronym MpD), created formally in March 1990, was an umbrella organization gathering middle-class intelligentsia from different social ideological background and whose common denominator was the opposition to the one-party regime of the PAICV. This political organization became the main escape valve for all those who had past or present conflict with the regime. In its founding document, the Declaração Política (Political Declaration) of March 1990, the MpD pressured for reform of the political structures of the state towards multi-party electoral democracy.

The 1990 political transition in Cape Verde was essentially a top-down process, taking place without much control and participation of the society at large. The regime engaged the organized opposition parties and political pacts about the whole process towards multi-party electoral democracy were agreed upon between the governing and opposition parties. The processes, institution design and implementation were the

79 This is a play of the words using the concept of Perestroika, opening, as formulated by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, to the Cape Verdean conditions. Perestroika was to be Pirestroika, after the Prime Minister and second-in-charge of the party, Pedro Pires.
81 The Political Declaration was basically a political document cum political petition informed by the principles of liberal democracy. It consisted of three main three main parts. First, there is a short preamble that provides the justification for the new political organization. Second, the main corpus of the document, describes the regime while at the same time prescribes a new set of political principles that should guide the political processes. Third, there is a list of 580 signatures. For a copy of the Declaração Política, see the webpage of the party at www.mpd.cv.
consequence of the pact between the PAICV and the opposition parties, MpD and UPICV. It was a case of what is known in the literature as a “pacted transition.”

The process of democratization, as such, came about with minimal—or perhaps guided—participation of the ordinary citizens. The institutional design of the electoral democracy to be created in Cape Verde was the result of the political game between the incumbent party and the MpD. These negotiations not only established the “rules about the rules,” but also created the new institutional arena within which the electoral combat was to take place. The general citizenry was kept out of the loop—only to be informed, and never asked about their opinions—once the political deal was affirmed. This situation was a typical application of the Schumpeterian model, according to which democracy is no more than a “political method” of choice of which section of the elite is to rule.

Accordingly, the general citizens’ political participation is confined to choose, via voting, who gets to form the government.

The founding elections of 1991 provoked a political dismissal of the PAICV—which lost all three of the elections, the legislative, presidential and municipal elections to MpD. As in some countries in the continent (e.g., Zambia), multi-party electoral democracy resulted in a change of the regime and government. The MpD won with over 66% of the votes, controlling over two thirds of the seats in the National Assembly. The assumption of power by the new party led to the process of total revision: political, economic, and symbolic. In control of the parliament, the MpD went on to craft new

---


83 Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy.*
political structures for the country. The new constitution of 1992, heavily infused with liberal concepts and language, moved away from the 1980 constitution.

The 1980 constitution—approved in October 1980, a month before the coup d’État in Guinea-Bissau that dismantled the federation utopia between the two states—was essentially a catalog of radical political ideology. For instance, in its first article, the state of Cape Verde was defined as a “sovereign, democratic, laic, unitary, anti-colonialist and anti-imperialist republic.”\(^\text{84}\) In political economic terms, while private property was guaranteed under the constitution, the state was guaranteed the role of main and central economic actor (something that would be changed in the late 1980s, with the reforms following the Third Congress of the PAICV in 1988). Moreover, the constitution was silent in terms of the civil and political liberties.\(^\text{85}\) Aristides Lima, a constitutional scholar linked to PAICV, argues that the fact that the 1980 constitution directed to the socialist path did not mean a thing. The *pays légal* did not coincide with the *pays reel*. He maintains that the system was basically what he calls “an administrative and paternalist system of power.”\(^\text{86}\) From the economic perspective, the new regime created by the 1992 constitution moved rapidly to embrace the market economy against the perceived state-

---

\(^\text{84}\) “Aprovada a I Constituição da República de Cabo Verde,” *Voz di Povo*, 22 October 1980. As the consequence of the coup, the constitution went through a swift reform in February 1981, in which the chapters on unity between Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau was eliminate as well as any reference to the PAIGC—which, changed to PAICV.


controlled economic system of the 1980s. The neo-liberal idea of the better state the less state became the dominant discourse of the state.87

As noted above, the founding elections of January 1991 produced powerful shockwaves throughout the system. The opposition, under one umbrella organization, the Movement for Democracy (MpD), a loose coalition of anti-PAICV establishment, won the legislative elections, capturing, as such, more than two thirds of the seats at the National Assembly. Such an outcome (62% of the votes) provided the MpD with extensive powers to revise the system.

As a consequence, a series of systemic revisions were carried out. It should be noted that MpD had campaigned under the banner of mudança (“change”). Change was thus proclaimed as this party held radically distinct political worldviews compared to the PAICV. If one takes seriously the political discourse of its leadership and the documents that emanated from the party, the party was basically a liberal political organization. It sought, therefore, to put forth a program of liberalization of politics and economy, once in power.

The September 1990 reforms of the 1980 Constitution, which formally topped down the one-party regime and paved the way to multi-party electoral democracy, had instituted a semi-presidentialist system, modelled after the cases of France and Portugal.

87 Beyond political and economic reforms, the new regime also embarked into a set of new reforms on the symbolic fronts. The country’s independence flag, arms and national anthem, often taken to be representative of African heritage of the people and culture, were all dropped for a new set of symbols that would place the country closer to Europe. National days were changed and many of the streets and roads’ names were changed to the colonial times. Old statues and monuments, erected by the Portuguese in the late colonial period, particularly from the 1940s onwards, were brought back to their ‘rightful’ place, re-inventing thus the tradition.
For the MpD that system was not the most appropriate for Cape Verde. The party had long argued against the system of semi-presidentialism and proposed in its place what they called a *parlamentarismo racionalizado* (“rationalized parliamentarism”).88 The semi-presidentialist system, as laid out in the constitutional reforms of September 1990, placed great governing powers to the president. This is to say that the power pendulum tilted towards the President. For the MpD, the parliament should be the “vital center of the political system,” and, ipso facto, the president was not have any governing functions or to have the powers to intervene in the governing processes.89

In spite of the resistance by the part of the PAICV, the opposition party, which argued that the MpD should simply reform the 1980 Constitution, the National Assembly, now under qualitative control by the MpD, went on to discard that constitution and to produce a new one (the 1992 Constitution, which is still in force). The new constitution (1992) represented an ideological rupture. First, it completely rejected the structure and phraseology of the 1980 Constitution, which, in its original format, was basically informed by soviet constitutionalism.90 As noted above, in the first fifteen years of independence, the country was basically rule under one-party regime. In spite of the discourse of non-alignment and the fact that it had good relations with both the West and the Communist bloc, the regime inclined towards the latter. Second, it fully embraced the

---

89 Ibid., 200.
Portuguese constitutionalism to the point that a Cape Verdean legal scholar writes that the 1992 Constitution “has as its main direct source the 1976 Portuguese Constitution.”

According to the 1992 Constitution, there are four “bodies of sovereignty:” the President of the Republic, the Government, the National Assembly and the courts of law. The president is elected through direct suffrage, without any direct affiliation with the political parties. In political terms, the presidential powers are more or less ceremonial. Yet, the president can nonetheless influence policies mainly through two channels. First, the president can exercise political influence over the government and the parliament. While the president does not have any role whatsoever in the process of policy making, he or she can signal which paths can be taken, if the policy is to have his/her approval. Second, and related to the first, the president is still the last approving institution of major laws or policies.

The government in Cape Verde, like in any parliamentary system, is a section of the parliament. The most voted party gets to form the government—and its leader is to be appointed as the Prime Minister by the President. In formal terms, the parliament (the National Assembly), elected directly by the people, is the locus of sovereignty and political power. In actuality, the government is the true center of all political power. This is because of several reasons. First, given the tight party discipline that characterizes the political system in parliamentary electoral democracy, the governing party almost never

---

91 Aristides Lima quoted in Fonseca, Cabo Verde: Constituição, Democracia, 197.
93 In constitutional terms, the president is an independent political force. This means that the office is to be completely free from any political links with any political party. He/she is to be arbiter of the system. In spite of this, in practice the presidential elections are centered on party politics as much as legislative elections.
gets to be challenged by its own members in the parliament. Thus, the parliament, in several aspects, becomes the rubber stamp institution of the government. Second, the government is in almost total control of the resources of the state. In Cape Verde, like most of the states in sub-Saharan Africa, the state is the main employer and basically the major locus of economic activity. To control the state is often translated into controlling the access to it (jobs, importing licenses, contracts, and so on).

The MpD political leadership was ideologically and socially eclectic, resembling a political constellation of anti-PAIGC/PAICV individuals. That is to say, the cement that glued them together was less the ideology but rather their dislike of the previous regime. While in opposition to the regime of PAICV, the organization held itself together. However, once in power, it became clear that the organization was basically a weak coalition of anti-PAICV politicians. Intra-party differences, caused by ideological differences and by the politics of personality, surfaced and were poorly managed. As a consequence, it was just a matter of time before irreparable fissures started to be noted within the party. Politics of personality was an important factor in the fractures that characterized the MpD in the 1990s. Soon after gaining power, politics of personality dominated within the party. Carlo Veiga, the party leader, practiced a strong and centralized control of the party and government, creating fissures among other high-level party members. Personal differences soon became the key political feature within the party. Ascension within the party ranks depended upon personal linkages to the party

---

bosses. In 1994, after three years in power, the inevitable happened. A faction of the MpD, led by Eurico Monteiro and Jorge Carlos Fonseca, broke away from the party and formed a new political organization, the Party of Democratic Convergence (PCD). The authoritarian leadership style of the president of the MpD, Carlos Veiga, was presented as one of the key motives for such a political move. A similar thing would happen some six years later, when a new faction of the MpD, led by Jacinto Santos, again opposing Veiga, would break away from the MpD. When, in 2000 DATE, Veiga announced that he was running for president of the country, two different lists were created within the MpD, competing for the votes of the party congress delegates in order to form the next party directing body. On the one hand, there was the list led by Gualberto do Rosario, a list with close links with Veiga. On the other hand, there was the list of Jacinto Santos, one of the key founders of the movement. The fact that Veiga used his position in the government to favor his chosen candidate led to the faction led by Santos to break away from the MpD. As a consequence of the internal struggle within the MpD, Santos and his colleagues and supporters broke away from the MpD and created a new party, the Party of Democratic Renewal (PRD).

Party politics and formation of political parties in Cape Verde have been less influenced by ideology than by personal differences among the political elite. The case of MpD is itself an example of this trend. It first started as a civil society coalition, whose

---

96 Many critics talked then about “constitutional coup d’etat.” On this subject see Onesimo Silveira, A Democracia em Cabo Verde (Lisboa: Edições Colibri, 2005), 185 ff.
primary objective and common denominator was the so-called “anti-PAICVism.” By 2001, the year of elections, the MpD was a fragmented party with a shattered social credit. Poor management of the country’s economy, a succession of political scandals and rumors of corruption, a divided party, coupled with the fact that the PAICV brought in new and more vibrant blood resulted in the defeat of the incumbent party during the 2001 legislative elections. The elections of 2001, unlike those of 1991 and 1996, had quite a low turnout. The general population dissatisfaction and disillusionment vis-à-vis the political class resulted in almost fifty percent of voters not going to the polls. The elections resulted in PAICV returning to power, which has managed to maintain the electoral gains since. If one follows Huntington’s criteria of democratic consolidation, the return of the PAICV to power in 2001 is the mark of such consolidation.

Since the first multi-party elections in 1991, the trend had been for the same party and its supporting presidential candidate to win the same electoral cycles. The 1990s, as noted above, was the decade of the MpD. In the same period, the two presidential elections were won by the candidate (António Mascarenhas Monteiro) favored by that party. Likewise, the first decade of the 2000s saw the return of the PAICV to power. Pedro Pires, the former prime minister during the one-party state and former leader of the PAICV, and, thus, supported by this party, won the 2001 and 2006 presidential elections. However, the 2011 elections provoked a rupture with this trend. For the first time, the party that won the legislative elections (PAICV) failed to have its candidate to win the

presidential elections—which was won by Jorge Carlos Fonseca, favored by the opposition, MpD.

How can the political system in Cape Verde be characterized since the turn towards electoral democracy? Matthew S. Shugart notes that semi-presidentialism can be aptly classified as a political system in which three major characteristics are to be observed: “A president who is popularly elected; The president has considerable constitutional authority; There exists also a prime minister and cabinet, subject to the confidence of the assembly majority.” As such, a pure semi-presidentialist system, in which the case of France is perhaps the best example, is fundamentally characterized by what has been called as dual executive. Yet, all the other characteristics of semi-presidentialism are found in the Cabo Verdean political system. It can be argued then that the case of Cabo Verde is a situation of soft semi-presidentialism. According to the definition proposed by Shugart, Cabo Verde cannot be fully classified as a semi-presidentialist regime, insofar as the president lacks “considerable constitutional authority.”

Matthew S. Shurgart and John Carey consider that semi-presidentialism can be divided into two main sub-groups: president-parliamentarism and premier-presidentialism. In the first sub-category, the main distinguishing feature is the fact that the head of government (the prime minister) and his/her team (the cabinet) report to both

---

the president and the parliament. In the case of premier-presidentialism, the government is almost entirely controlled by the parliament—at least, in principle. Institutionally, Cape Verde’s case approximates the latter classification: government is formed from within the parliament and the president of the country has the power to appoint the head of the executive and his/her team.

The State of Electoral Democracy in Cape Verde

In general terms, the party system in Cape Verde is a de facto two-party system, dominated by the two main parties, the PAICV and MpD (see table 1). Giovanni Sartori argues party system assessment should take into consideration only those parties that have either blackmail or coalition potentials. Since the political opening 1991, the two parties (MpD and PAICV) have maintained at least 70 out 72 seats in the parliament—making the system a concentrated party system. It meant that to form or to block the government, it was not necessary to court other parties. As the PAICV won the elections for the third time in a row, the dominant party system is in the making.

Table 1. The electoral dominance of the PAICV and MpD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MpD+PAICV</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>91.05%</td>
<td>90.05%</td>
<td>96.30%</td>
<td>94.95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MpD+PAICV/</td>
<td>79/</td>
<td>71/</td>
<td>70/</td>
<td>70/</td>
<td>70/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MP: Member of Parliament
Source: African Elections Database (http://africanelections.tripod.com/)

Popular participation in the elections has not been constant. In the first multi-party elections, a little more than 75% of the registered voters went to cast their votes. One interesting thing about electoral politics in Cape Verde is the vote of the Cape Verdeans immigrants. Since 1991, Cape Verdeans residing abroad not only have the right to vote for the legislative and presidential elections but also the right to elect their own representative to the National Assembly—yet, they cannot vote for local government.\(^{104}\)

Post-colonial politics in Cape Verde has been entangled with diaspora politics. From liberation struggle to the processes and the struggle for democratization, the communities of Cape Verdean abroad have played an important role.\(^{105}\) Unlike those in Cape Verde, the immigrant communities, particularly in Western Europe and North America (that make up the bulk of the voting Cape Verdeans abroad) are less dependent on the Cape Verdean state, having built their own autonomous sources of income.

For this reason, parties are increasingly seeking to tap the financial resources of the immigrants as to better their electoral fight. This provides them with some leeway to combat electoral clientelism. At the same time, the votes of the immigrants have become crucial and determining in some of the elections.\(^{106}\) The growing electoral importance of the diaspora led to the two parties agreeing that a new electoral census among Cape

---

\(^{104}\) According to the current Electoral Code, there are three extra-territorial electoral districts, representing the Cape Verdean diaspora: the circles of Africa, Americas and Europe and the rest of the world. Each of these circles elects two representatives to the National Assembly.

\(^{105}\) UCID, the key political party opposing the PAIGC/PAICV one-party state was formed among diasporic Cape Verdians. Other political organizations were also created against the one-party state (e.g., Circulos CaboVerdianos para a Democracia). See Michel Lesourd, “La diaspora capverdienneet son role dans’archipel du Cap-Vert. Développement, politique, identité” *Hommes & Migrations*, no. 1256 (Juillet-aout 2005): 52-65.

\(^{106}\) The presidential election that opposed Carlos Veiga and Pedro Pires, the two former leaders of MpD and PAICV, resulted in the defeat of the former when the immigrant votes were counted (as he won in Cape Verde).
Verdeans abroad was to be made. In the elections of 2005, the two main parties mutually accused each other of corrupting the electoral census for their own advantage. By 2008, the MpD and the PAICV reached an agreement to have a new electoral census among Cape Verdeans abroad (the previous ones were nullified). The new census proved a drastic reduction in the number of registered voters abroad (see Figure 3).

Table 2. Multi-party elections in Cape Verde (from 1991 to 2011)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MpD</td>
<td>78,454</td>
<td>93,249</td>
<td>55,586</td>
<td>74,909</td>
<td>94,674</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(66.41%)</td>
<td>(61.30%)</td>
<td>(40.55%)</td>
<td>(44.02%)</td>
<td>(42.27%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAICV</td>
<td>39,673</td>
<td>45,263</td>
<td>67,860</td>
<td>88,965</td>
<td>117,967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(33.59%)</td>
<td>(29.75%)</td>
<td>(49.50%)</td>
<td>(52.28%)</td>
<td>(52.68%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCD</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>10,211</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(6.71%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCID</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>2,369</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4,495</td>
<td>9,842</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(1.56%)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(2.64%)</td>
<td>(4.39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSD</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1,030</td>
<td>620</td>
<td>702</td>
<td>429</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.68%)</td>
<td>(0.45%)</td>
<td>(0.41%)</td>
<td>(0.19%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADM (Coalition PCD/UCID)</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>8,389</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(6.12%)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRD</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>4,630</td>
<td>1,097</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(3.38%)</td>
<td>(0.64%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PTS</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>1,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(0.46%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: African Elections Database

In spite of the discourse of democracy and the institutional innovations brought by the implementation of liberal democracy in the country, political participation is limited to electoral participation. Other forms of political participation either are non-existent or
insignificant. In two decades of liberal democracy, citizens rarely challenged the policies and/or the rules decreed by the government. A culture of political passivity still exists among a significant portion of the population. Collective actions, particularly in the form of peaceful political protest, are infrequent, sporadic, and characterized with low turnout.

Moreover, other forms of political participation, chiefly those that require far more resources and time, such as contacting, in written format, the representatives or the state officials, are nonexistent. Other forms of participation such as taking part in public debate and discussion are limited by the institutional constraints. At the same time, mechanisms of open political debate such as public hearings on a legislative bill or political consultations are almost inexistent in the country. Other instruments of active and engaging citizenship such as initiative of law, while mandated by the Constitution, are yet to be implemented.
Theorists of democracy point out the direct link between the robustness of civil society and high levels of political participation and democracy in general.\footnote{See, for instance, Robert D. Putnam, Robert Leonardi, and Raffaella Nanetti, \textit{Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy} (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).} One of the key measures of the strength of civil society is through participation in civic and professional organizations. Data from the Afrobarometer, which measures participation in secondary organizations, clearly indicate that civil society in Cape Verde is feeble.

At the realm of civil society organizations, close to three out of four Cape Verdeans do not take part in any secondary group.\footnote{In here I am only taking into consideration the community-based organizations and other associations from the bottom. The goal is to analysis the “politics at the bottom.” As such, certain secondary associations, such as professional associations and/or professional trade unions are not part of the analysis. Not only they are relatively small in terms of their size—vis-à-vis the total population—but also they do not represent the typical and ordinary citizen. I am interest in learning about the political conditions of the ordinary citizen.} \footnote{Afrobarometer, \textit{Summary of Results, Round 5}, \url{http://www.afrobarometer.org/files/documents/summary_results/cve_r5_sor.pdf} 2012, 15 (accessed on February 1, 2015).} 72\% of the respondents of the Afrobarometer survey responded that they have never been part of any civil society organization. The data provided by the Afrobarometer allow us to draw two observations: on the one hand, there is a trend for the percentage of those who are not a member of a community organization to decrease. In the first rounds, 82\% of the respondents responded they did not belong to any of these organizations. By round five of surveys, the number dropped ten percent, to 72\%. On the other hand, those who identified themselves as active members of a community-based organization has doubled, from 8\% in the second round to 16\% in the fifth round. Nonparticipation is the norm—or,
according to Suzano Costa, “civic lethargy” has been the norm.\textsuperscript{110} At the same time, many of the civil society organizations that have been created are falling prey to the state or to the political parties.\textsuperscript{111}

One of main reasons for lethargic civil society in Cape Verde has to do with the long history of political authoritarianism and rigid control of society. As noted above, During the late colonial period, the institutionalization of the Estado Novo in Portugal—and subsequently its tentacles in the colonies—whose key political principle was the more state the better state and corporatism basically blocked attempts to create an autonomous and independent civil society. Even professional and socioeconomic associations were under tight control of the corporatist state. The colonial state in Cape Verde, the reflection of the metropolitan state, was fundamentally an example of what Philippe C. Schmitter calls state corporatism.\textsuperscript{112}

Independence did not translate in either autonomy or liberation of civil society. The corporatist control of society and its organization was simply changed in the predominance of the party over both the state and society. As noted above, the party (PAIGC/PAICV) was legally and constitutionally represented as the “guiding force of society and the state.”\textsuperscript{113} Societal organizations were only permitted under the guidance of the party. In a way, Cape Verde, from 1975 to about 1990, was basically a “conscription society:” society, that is, its constituent groups—children, youth, women,

\textsuperscript{111} Ibid.
labor, peasantry, neighborhood—was submitted to administered mass organizations, under tight and direct control of the party.\textsuperscript{114}

Another factor that militated against the formation of robust and autonomous civil society in Cape Verde was the rise of clientelist politics. While some scholars note that the state in Cape Verde may not be neo-patrimonial—at least not in the same fashion as continental African polities—electoral democracy may have provided a fertile ground for the development of clientelism.\textsuperscript{115} Electoral politics are increasingly mixed the clientelist politics. According to Herbert Kitschelt three major patterns of voter-politician linkages can be discerned: charismatic, clientelist, and programmatic (policy-based) linkages.\textsuperscript{116} Cape Verdean electoral politics and participation in general orbit around the charismatic and clientelist linkages. This situation not only impedes the development of an autonomous civil society but also has led to a phenomenon of capture community-based organizations by the political parties.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Major political processes in the islands of Cape Verde, from the anti-colonial struggle for independence to the more recent political processes of democratization were almost


\textsuperscript{115} Patrick Chabal writes that Cape Verde “arguably never was neo-patrimonial.” See Patrick Chabal, “The Quest for Good Government and Development in Africa: Is NEPAD the Answer?” \textit{International Affairs} 78, no. 3 (2002), 456.

always controlled and dominated by the local social and political elite. In spite of the
discourse of popular participation, with a widespread use since 1975, the local political
elite always assumed the command of major political changes. The general population
was given the role of spectator, observing from a safe distance all the major changes
 occurring. As power runs in the number, the general population was kept at arm's length
to be mobilized whenever possible so as to demonstrate to the opposite side the capacity
to draw power and legitimacy from the general population. For instance, all the
 negotiations toward opening the political system in 1990 were among the elite, that is,
limited to the political leadership of the government and the recently formed political
organizations. Yet, both sides resorted to public rally and street gatherings in order to
mobilize their respective portion of the population.

Throughout much of the Cape Verdean colonial political history, active
engagement in politics was reserved only to a handful. The general population had no
other options but to resort to “everyday forms of resistance.” As noted above,
community-based organizations have been captured by political parties and used as a
political tool for patronage and clientelism. This has resulted in the lack of autonomy and
independence of the civil society in face of the political actors and the state in general.
There is, as such, a deficit of a culture of active participation. Having being socially
trained that politics is the realm of the few, a number of citizens have yet to break the
psychological prison. The political elite, through discourse and practice, nurture the idea
that politics at the level of the state and policy making in general is the realm of the

117 The phrase is borrowed from James C. Scott, Weapons of the Weak Everyday Forms of Peasant
experts and professional politicians—something not to be left in the hands of the general population.

Moreover, during the first decade and a half of the post-colonial period, autonomous political participation was not only discouraged but also severely controlled. On the contrary, the Cape Verdean one-party state, like all other states of its genus, emphasized public display of authority and power. The regime was characteristically founded on the notion of appeal to the people. For this reason, it may be classified as a populist socialist regime.\textsuperscript{118} Any major political event and/or holiday were the opportunity to draw the people around the flag. Mass meetings and commemorations were quite common during the dictatorial years of PAIGC/CV.

During this period, citizens’ political participation was strictly controlled, guided and limited. For instance, the law limited the rights to assembly and organization of political organizations. It was controlled in the sense that the venues, functions and domains of participation were tightly guarded by the political elite and the state ideological and security apparatus. It was also limited in scope, time, and domains. This means that the process of participating in the political affairs was restricted to the modes dictated by the state (e.g., voting, participating in a political rally led by the party, and the like); time (the electoral period, that comprises the electoral campaign, the election itself and the period right after elections); domains (restricted to the casting of votes).

The 1990s meant the transition towards multi-party electoral democracy. This means that the citizens could enjoy the opportunity to make a choice in the elections,

between two or more sets of policy alternatives or parties—unlike the elections during the First Republic, which were essentially plebiscitary. Since the founding elections of 1991, the country has managed to have five rounds of elections (legislative, presidencial and municipal elections). These elections have resulted in the peaceful transference of power, from one political party to another (from PAICV to MpD in 1991, and from the latter to the former, in 2001). Prima facie, Cape Verde is an example of democracy.\textsuperscript{119} The country has been hailed as exemplary democracy, for elections generally were peaceful and apparently “free and fair.”

\textsuperscript{119} See, for instance, Meyns “Cape Verde.”
CHAPTER THREE: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE POLICY IN CAPE VERDE

In 1986, in the local weekly state-owned newspaper, *Voz di Povo* an interesting debate on the language question developed. The debate first started with an op-ed piece by Daniel Benoni, entitled “O Crioulo, Língua Oficial Porque? Par que?” (translatable as “The Creole language, official language: Why? For What?”).¹ The author’s key argument—and fear—is that any state-sanctioned policy of making the Cape Verdean Creole into official language would result in the total abandonment of the Portuguese language. The author feared the “substitution” of Portuguese by Cape Verdean Creole. To this author and to many that shared his ideas, the Cape Verdean language is not a modern language and, for this reason, its use may lead to regression in the development path. The key point was that there can’t be room for an actual bilingualism, since the outcome of any language policy is always a zero-sum game. He further argued that the key proponents of the policy were those who “express[ed] badly in Portuguese.” Benoni’s article provoked an avalanche of criticism, mainly from those with some inclination for linguistic nationalism.²

---

The importance of this debate cannot be overstated. In spite of the authoritarian regime in place, this 1986 debate on the language question took place in almost complete freedom of expression and thought. At the same time, the debate brought in the major issues about the language question in Cape Verde, particularly the issue of the relationship between the vernacular and the Portuguese language and the question of the functional roles to be accomplished by the Creole language. It is also interesting to note how colonial language ideology, informed by social Darwinism, could still find adherents in the post-colony. And lastly, this was the very first time that an open debate on the Cape Verdean language question in the post-colonial period occurred.

This chapter outlines the development of the language ideologies in a historical perspective. It first starts with a description of the colonial language policy and seeks to understand the extent to which the colonial policy of the Portuguese Estado Novo in general might have been “glottophagic,” that is, the systematic and calculated removal of the vernaculars from the colonial public sphere. Then, I depict the development of the language debate from the perspective of the colonized. That is to say, I embark upon a critical discourse analysis of major political and social documents that deal, directly or indirectly, with the issue of languages. I also provide a descriptive explanation for the post-colonial language policy, from independence to contemporary days.

---

Colonial Language Policy in Cape Verde: The Ideology of Empire

Many scholars who study post-colonial politics and society in Africa agree that there is an institutional continuity between the colonial and the post-colonial states.\(^4\)

Notwithstanding the revolutionary and radical rhetoric of rupture with the colonial state that many African leaders espoused, the truth of the matter is that the post-colonial state rests on the debris of the colonial state.\(^5\) The process of institutional continuity is particularly observable in language educational policy, that is, the choice of the language to be used as the medium for schooling. Through corporal and symbolic violence, this rule was reinforced among African children.\(^6\) This situation, in a way, contrasts to the case of British colonial policy of indirect rule in Africa that sustained, to some extent, the preservation of indigenous language. In the former Portuguese colonies—and to some extent former French colonies in Africa—the colonial public sphere was the reserved domain of the Portuguese language, the only medium of education, from primary through university-level learning. Thus, it becomes imperative to look at colonial history and its development if one seeks to understand the development of politics and policy making in post-colonial Africa. To understand the development of language ideology, practices, policy and planning in the post-colonial state, one must look at its colonial dimension, insofar as the former is greatly informed by the latter.

---


\(^6\) Within the school yard, it was expressly prohibited to engage in conversation in the mother tongue. Those found in such an act were often severely punished.
While the Portuguese had settled the islands since the second half of the 1400s, it was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that a modern and rationalized state, the outcome of modern colonialism, was erected in the islands. From this point on, and particularly in the twentieth century, Portuguese authorities designed and implemented a planned policy of domination that included linguistic domination. Thus, it is important to describe the colonial language policy from a historical perspective. Yet, the focus here will be on language policy in the late colonial period (1930s-1970s), for this was the period of greatest political, social and linguistic control.

The native languages in the former Portuguese colonies in Africa, in contrast to many indigenous African languages in Southern and West Africa under British colonialism, were not the target of language planning (particularly corpus planning—i.e., graphization and lexical modernization), in part as the consequence of Portugal’s own colonial policy. Modern Portuguese colonialism was fundamentally based on the pillars of assimilation and the central role to be played by the Catholic Church. Assimilation policy, or the process of turning Africans into acculturated Portuguese, was a double sword policy that involved a total commitment to the Portuguese culture and, concomitantly, a categorical rejection of the native culture and language. In its turn, the Catholic Church, particularly in the last half-century of Portuguese colonialism in Africa, enjoyed moral and material support from the state—making it, as such, as the religious arm of Portuguese colonialism. Therefore, the Catholic Church was to play a central role

---

in the diffusion of Portuguese culture and language among the Africans to be evangelized.

Alastair Pennycock, while focusing on the British example, suggests that the analysis of colonial language policy must pay close attention to the issues of its complexity and contextuality. The analysis of colonial language policy is but a piece in a web of relations and, as such, it has to be done in connection with development of other discourses and practices of domination (e.g., the discourses of civilizing mission, white/Western superiority, colonial peace, and so on). The contextuality of language policies refers to the fact one must carefully study the local conditions and the extent that they produce unique situations in the promulgation and/or application of the stated language policy.⁹

The study of colonial language policy is of an analytic value insofar as it allows learning about the formation and development of a dominant language ideology in the post-colonial context. Language ideology refers to the attitudes, beliefs and myths constructed about language(s).¹⁰ We all espouse such attitudes and values. Often, these values and attitudes are informed more by stereotypical and prejudiced views about the role and domains of a language. Yet, these belief systems influence and, to some extent, inform the formation, development or even change of institutions—to include language

---


policy. Language policy, after all, has been defined as the “manipulative tool in the continuous battle between different ideologies.”

Portuguese Colonial Language Policy and Planning

In this section, I critically look at the development and the contours of the colonial language policy. I seek to look beyond the language issues. To that desideratum I make connections between the language and other aspects of social life, chiefly politics. Therefore, I follow the ecology of language approach. Einar Haugen, one of the first proponents of this approach, defines it as “as the study of interactions between any given language and its environment.” I tackle the colonial socio-political structures in general in order to better grasp the language question. Only by presenting the whole picture of the colonial policies and practices can one aim to understand the impact of the colonial language in the minds of the colonized and in the colonized societies in general.

One of the outcomes of colonialism and colonial language policy in particularly was bifurcation of the society and the rise of a diglossic situation. The sphere of the formal power and authority became extremely rigid and rock-hard linguistic domain, reserved, socially and legally, for the colonial language. In other words, the realm of

---


12 Shohamy, Language Policy, 45.


14 Haugen, The Ecology of Language, 325.
colonial politics, public administration, schooling, and the administration of justice
became the domaine réservé of the European language. The encounter with these
institutions meant that one needed to use the socially dominant language—the European
language. Yet, the dominant language was an idiom foreign to most. As such, the
Africans who mastered the colonial language became the social intermediaries between
the great masses and the colonial state. During this process these Africans could
accumulate economic, social and symbolic capitals. The situation created incentives to
maintain the linguistic status quo.

Portuguese colonial authorities had never instituted an autonomous language
policy. By the term of autonomous language policy I simply mean the enactment of
legislations and institutional practices and procedures of the state that focus primarily and
ultimately on the language issue. One cannot find a piece of legislation directed at the
language issue. Rather, in the Portuguese colonial context, language policy was a
subsidiary of other specific policies (such as native policy, education policy, and so on).
Thus, one finds indications and signs of promotion and diffusion of the Portuguese
language in legal documents such as the Colonial Act of 1930 or Organic Charter of the
Portuguese Empire of 1933.

While Portuguese maritime explorers might have reached the shores of what is
today the islands of Cape Verde around 1460, and shortly after the king ordered the
settlement of Cape Verde, it was only in the second half of the nineteenth century that
modern colonialism was implemented in Cape Verde—as well as in other parts of
Africa. The few Europeans (Portuguese mostly) who settled engaged in slave trade, forcefully importing West Africans into Cape Verde—as early as in the first half of the 1460s. Scarcity of European women led to the violent control and enjoyment of the African women’s body. This essentially produced the mulatto population in Cape Verde.

Until the second half of the nineteenth century there was no clear institutional articulation of a colonial policy. Extraction of material benefits, mainly via trade with the coastal areas of West Africa, was the primary and the only objective of the Portuguese royal authorities. By the second half of the eighteenth century, as Brazil rose to become the jewel of the empire, the islands were pretty much left to their own. At that time, the effective and capable state in Cape Verde was absent. Powerful social forces not only competed with the instituted legal authorities; but at times, superseded the role of the public authorities. The actual power of the governors, coming from Europe, depended much from the local notables than from the authorities in Lisbon which had the power to nominate the governors and other high ranking officials of the state.

Though the Portuguese had been in contact with Africans and had maintained some territorial possessions in coastal areas of the African continent since the late fifteenth century, it was only in the late nineteenth century that it started to apply the

---

15 By modern colonialism I mean the historical process through which European powers went on to establish modern state to effectively control and better extract the resources from the African territories. The highest point of this process was the (in)famous Berlin Conference of 1884–85, where European powers established ground principles to guide the conquest and scramble of the continent. See, for instance, Dennis Laumann, *Colonial Africa 1884-1994* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

16 See, for instance, George E. Brooks, *Western Africa and Cabo Verde*, particularly chapter 6 on Manuel Antonio Martins, one the most powerful men in Cape Verde in the first half of the 1800s.
principles and the practices of modern colonialism in Africa. It was during that period that the processes of rationalization of the colonial state were carried out: the edification of a modern state apparatus, with a clearly defined territory and population over which it enjoys jurisdiction. The apparatuses of colonial power, in order to magnify its efficacy and capacity of domination, developed and sustained an industry of scientific knowledge, fundamentally focused on analyzing and understanding of the non-European peoples. Across Western Europe imperial expansion was concomitant to the expansion of the industry of knowledge on non-European peoples and cultures. Portugal was not indifferent to this trend. The last quarter of the 1800s and early 1900s was the era of development of colonial science in Portugal—or what is often called as the colonial knowledge. It suffices here to note that the creation of key institutions of colonial knowledge such as the Lisbon Society of Geography (1875), the School of Tropical Medicine (1902) or the Higher Colonial School (1905).

Colonial institutional building fed the totalitarian drive insofar as the colonial state sought to maintain control in different sectors and aspects of public life in the colonies. The colonial project sought mainly to create a new (African) man, delinked from its past and native culture, who had been perceived to constitute a social liability. The new man to be constructed was to be in the image of the European—thus, the

18 Didier, “Savoir colonial.”
narcissism of colonialism. Language was one of the key tools employed in this process of social engineering. In the case of France and Portugal, it was assumed that their respective language has a value other than facilitating communication. Their language, insofar as being the language of culture and civilization, leads to behavior modification. It is against this backdrop that one must understand the contours of language policy in the colonies. Colonial policies and practices often change in function of the international environment or the domestic causes from the colonies themselves and/or from the metropolitan power domestic politics.

Modern bureaucratic rationalization of the Portuguese colonial state in Africa was carried out mainly through two fundamental pillars. First, through the exportation of printing press technology from Portugal to its African colonies, the legislations and other decrees of the kingdom could properly be disseminated to the overseas subjects. Arguably this was as an attempt of the royal authorities in Lisbon to regain authoritative control in the African colonies, so as to avoid another debacle as in Brazil, which became independent in the first quarter of the century. Lisbon’s attempts to regain penetrative control over the colonies were mainly directed against two different types of threats: against those who were undermining the colonial authority within the colony, and against external powers—chiefly United Kingdom and Germany—who coveted Portuguese territories in Africa. Printing press technology, which reached Cape Verde in 1842, played a pivotal role in entrenching the position of the Portuguese language as the dominant language. In the realms of the written sphere, the Portuguese language became overwhelming. Reports written by public administrators and travelers to the islands in the
first half of the 19th century provide evidences of a conspicuous character of the Creole language in the public sphere. By the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century, systematic colonial policy would not only halt language development of the vernacular but also hinder its use in the colonial public sphere.

The second major development was the formation of a public school system in the colonies. Until the late nineteenth and mid-nineteenth century education in Portuguese African colonies—and in Portugal for that matter—was an enterprise of the Catholic Church. Instruction was mainly about training the locals to become, or to assist the priest in his religious functions. In the nineteenth century, the Portuguese authorities instituted public schools in the colonies to advance the “civilizing mission” and to train local cadres to fulfill the lowest ranks of the colonial bureaucracy. Ultimately, this situation led to the entrenchment of a dominant position of the language of the colonizer vis-à-vis the local languages. The school, as such, became the site of social mobility, permitting the attainment of the two vehicles for social success in the colonial society: the technical know-how, essential for certain positions within the imperial and local bureaucracy, and the Portuguese language, the language of empire, which little by little became the marker of social status and prestige. The advancement of the Portuguese language in Cape Verdean public space was followed by the rise of a language ideology that debased the Cape Verdean language. The native language, labeled as a corrupt version (corruptela) of the Portuguese language, was deemed unworthy for any serious public function—from public administration to schooling.

---

19 For an excellent analysis of these reports, see Trajano Filho, Pequenos mas honrados.
Modern colonialism is a system of domination embedding a legitimizing ideology.\textsuperscript{20} Notions such as the French \textit{mission civilisatrice}, the Portuguese \textit{missão civilizadora} or the Anglo-Saxon \textit{white man’s burden} were employed to justify the colonial penetration and the establishment of colonial rule in tropical Africa—and other parts of the world.\textsuperscript{21} Colonial enterprise was self-portrayed as a duty of the civilized to bring up the “primitive” and the “backward” to the path of modernity. It subsumed a cultural superiority of the West over the non-Western people.

For the British, the English language was too complicated for the minds of the “primitive” people. Therefore, their language was to be kept away from the majority of Africans. Exception was to be made for the selected few who would be taught the English language, in accordance with the British doctrine first put into force in India—the so-called Macaulay Doctrine.\textsuperscript{22} The system of indirect rule seemed to favor the development of the indigenous languages and their employment in the public. In British Africa particularly, these situations ultimately led to the development of “vernacular

\textsuperscript{20} Osterhammel, \textit{Colonialism}.
\textsuperscript{22} In the 1830s there was a heated debate between what Janina Brutt-Griffler calls “Anglicists,” who were arguing for the use of the English language in public instruction, and the “Orientalists”, as the name implies, those inclined to see the use of the Indian vernaculars as the medium of education in higher education. As the person in charge of public instruction in India in the 1830s, Thomas Macaulay sided with the first group and proposed that it should be the policy of the colonial authorities to create a new breed of Indians, “a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect.” For more on this issue see Janina Brutt-Griffler, \textit{World English: A Study of Its Development} (Clevedon [u.a.]: Multilingual Matters, 2002), 39-41.
newspapers.” For the French, on the other hand, civilization is expressed solely in the French language, the language of high culture and arts *par excellence*. The theory behind the French model was essentially to civilize the uncivilized through the means of language and culture. In reality the situation did not diverge as much from the British colonies: training a small number of middlemen who could mediate between the colonial authorities and the great African mass. Fluency in the French language was in one of the core elements deciding the social status of the African people. The Portuguese followed a similar model as the mastery of its language became one of the preconditions and prerequisite for the African to transition to a higher social and legal status, from the condition of native to that of *assimilado*.

To understand the history of predominance of the Portuguese language in Cape Verde—as in other former Portuguese colonies—one must necessarily look at the development of colonial legislation and practices. From the mid-nineteenth century, as the colonial state began to modernize and to develop itself along the lines of the modern European state—that is, with capacity to enforce rules and laws over a population within a given territory—there seems to be a concerted and organized “attack” against the

---


One does not find similar experience of development of a vibrant indigenous written public sphere in colonial French or Portuguese Africa. In these colonies, journalism and social criticism in the written format was almost exclusively in the French or Portuguese languages. In the case of Cape Verde islands, in particular, in spite of vibrancy and explosion of the written press in the late 19th century and the first quarter of the 20th century, all of these newspapers and reviews were published exclusively in Portuguese.

24 See, for instance, Conklin, *A Mission to Civilize*, 84. Conklin writes that “[t]he use of French, moreover, was crucial to making the leap from barbarism to civilization.”

vernacular. Informed by the dominant social ideology of the time, according to which different people correspond to different stage of cultural and civilization development, the “attack” against the vernacular was perceived ultimately as an offensive against obscurantism, primitiveness and backwardness of the African culture. The process of civilization was understood to be essentially of two main stages: in the first instances, there is the destruction of all the obstacles imposed by tradition and primitiveness, and, then, in the second phase, the *tabula rasa* would be inscribed the values, norms, and principles of civilization.

As early as the third quarter of the nineteenth century, the colonial state expressly prohibited the use of the Cape Verdean vernacular in the education of children. In 1921 a colonial law, informed by the assimilation ideology, was established that basically eliminated the use of the African vernaculars as a medium of education, with the exception of teaching religion and the Portuguese language in the first years of primary education. As noted by Eduardo Ferreira, in the last instance, such a regulation gave comparative advantage to the Catholic Missions, who, unlike the various Protestant missions, were filled with Portuguese nationals.26

In 1933 an authoritarian regime was established in Portugal, which finally put an end to the democratic experiences carried out by the so-called Portuguese First Republic (1910-1926).27 The military had trusted the power to the civilians, who, under the

---

27 The First Republic was officially terminated with the coup d’etat of May 1926, which instituted what is called in Portuguese historiography as the regime of National Dictatorship. The military in command, conservative in outlook, brought in to the government like-minded individuals, such as António Salazar,
leadership of Antonio Salazar, instituted the (in)famous Estado Novo (literally the “New State”). The Estado Novo was essentially characterized by centralizing tendencies. All the power and authority were concentrated in Lisbon. In order to better understand the Estado Novo’s colonial language policy it is important to study the anatomy of that regime. Salazar’s regime, chiefly in the first two decades, was essentially conservative and heavily influenced by the doctrine of the Catholic Church.\textsuperscript{28} The linkage between the State and the Church was particularly noticeable in what concerns the development of a new colonial policy. It has been suggested that the “Social Catholics” constituted the core ideologues and politicians of the Estado Novo, to include the regime’s supreme leader, Salazar himself. Like many dictatorships in 1930s Europe, the regime instrumentalized nationalist feelings as to strengthen national cohesion while diverting society’s attention from the problematic conditions of the economy. The organic elements of the nation, chiefly the language, culture and history, were calculatingly (ab)used as to instill national pride among the masses.\textsuperscript{29}

The Colonial Act of 1930 is the foundation of the regime’s colonial policy, radically changing the political architecture of the empire.\textsuperscript{30} Drafted by the three main

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\end{flushright}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{30} An interesting fact about the Colonial Act was that it had legal and juridical autonomy. That is to say that when it was approved it replaced the Chapter V of the Portuguese Republican Constitution of 1911 (which, it should be noted, was in the process of being dismantled). Even with the establishment of the new political constitution of 1933, the one that officially establishes the Estado Novo, it guaranteed the extra-constitutional character of the Colonial Act. On the subject, see Wilensky, \textit{Trends in Portuguese overseas legislation for Africa}, 127.
\end{flushright}
ideologues of the regime, Antonio Salazar, Arminho Monteiro and Quirino de Jesus, the act sought to design and implement administrative centralization, whereby Lisbon, through a Ministry of the Colonies, would assume total and absolute control over the colonies. The Colonial Act instituted, officially and formally, the Portuguese Colonial Empire—later to be reinforced by the Organic Charter of the Portuguese Colonial Empire of 1933. These two legal documents all sought to sustain the political discourse that “Portugal não é um país pequeno” (*Portugal is not a small country*). The discourse of Empire was often used by the Portuguese elite to compensate for the economic backwardness within the European context. Unable to fully explore the colonies to prop up the industrial sector in the metropolis, the rationale for the empire was essentially spiritual. The empire, as such, is “a task of transcendent meaning in the spiritual order.”

The politics of international prestige informed colonial legislation, policies and social practices of the first two decades of the Estado Novo. In the early years of the Estado Novo there was a conspicuous and generalized preoccupation with theoretical notions of a “Greater Portugal.” Portugal’s nineteenth-century image as the Europe’s “sick man” was to be dismantled and it was through imperial grandeur that such objective

---

31 Arminho Monteiro, *Os portugueses na colonização contemporânea* (Lisboa: Divisão de Publicações e Biblioteca, Agência Geral das Colónias, 1933), 11.
33 Alexandre, *Velho Brasil, novas Áfricas*, 224.
could be attained. At the same, and in relation to what was said in the previous sentence, it became a political and ideological necessity of the ruling elite of the Estado Novo to reclaim a presence within the concert of European powers.

The regime of Estado Novo was conservative and traditional at its core. To the political elite of the Estado Novo—particularly the supreme leader of the regime, António Oliveira Salazar—traditional Portuguese values could only be found in the rural villages and small towns.\textsuperscript{34} The Portuguese peasant embodied the ideal-typical representation of the traditional values and worldview. This explains the constant praise of the Portuguese commoner by the elite of the Estado Novo. As more and more Portuguese colonists moved to Africa hoping to make their fortune, the official discourse of the Estado Novo began to highlight the Portuguese common man as a key agent of colonization in Africa. These were thought to be a mirror for the indigenous people. Portuguese colonizers in Africa were to “reflect the noblest \textit{Portuguese virtues}.”\textsuperscript{35} Such an ideology finds its way to in the colonial legislation that reserves critical roles to be developed by the common Portuguese colonist in the moral expansion of the empire and, by extension, the Portuguese culture and language.

As a constitutive element of the strategy of predominance of Portugal in the overseas territories, the Estado Novo designed policies and started political practices conducive to the spreading of the Portuguese culture and language. To that end, different and various vehicles were to be utilized. Thus, apart from the state institutions of the


\textsuperscript{35} dos Santos, \textit{Breves Conceitos para um Ideario de Colonizacao Portuguesa}, 20 (italics added).
Estado Novo, the Portuguese settlers themselves were considered to constitute a valuable vehicle of language and culture diffusion in the tropics.\(^{36}\) Such thinking basically meant two things: first, no matter the social and educational background of the Portuguese settler, he was placed on a higher position vis-à-vis the African native (or even over the assimilados) and, second, that the settler was the moral and civilization mirror to the native—thus, the settler was the model from whom the native would copy and mimic cultural norms and values of a “civilized” people.

World War II changed the structures of international relations radically. The epicenter of world power, hitherto in Western European capitals such as London, Paris and Berlin, moved to the East in Moscow and across the Atlantic to Washington, DC. In East Asia, the British soon realized that they could not bear another war and had to agree on the independence of their possessions in the Indian subcontinent. Decolonization became thus a key political concept in global political affairs and it spread like fire across from the Asian to other parts of the world. By the late 1940s and the 1950s, political agitation became a constant in the then French and British Africa, leading eventually to the withdrawal of those colonial empires.\(^ {37}\)

In the early 1950s, as a response to this changing international reality, the Portuguese governing elite embarked in the double and reinforcing processes of legislative cosmetics and ideological reformulation. Colonial legislation and regulations


were stripped of the terms such as “colony,” or “empire”, as they started to have pejorative connotations. Ideologically, the regime embraced the Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre’s theory of Lusotropicalism. This theory, adapted to become the Portuguese regime’s official ideology, was constructed over three key pillars (or myths): miscegenation, profound humanism and a true universalism. In a nutshell the theory of lusotropicalism posited that the Portuguese, unlike other European colonial powers, had a better and a more humane relationship with the people of the tropics—thus, Portuguese colonial “exceptionalism.” This explained why the Portuguese were to engage the tropical people both culturally and biologically leading, as a consequence, to a rise of a truly hybrid and miscegenated society (the “lusotropical”). In other words, the Portuguese colonial project was truly open, racially blind, and assimilationist.

Against this backdrop, the Portuguese language was given the task of fostering loyalty to a pluri-national and multi-racial nation. Marcello Caetano, one of the leading organic intellectuals of the regime, saw in the Portuguese language as the medium to connect diverse people that make up the empire. He argues that “the principle of spiritual assimilation demands an easy communication among all members of the Portuguese

---

38 Castelo, “O modo português.” While the theory of lusotropicalism dates back to the early 1930s, it was at first rejected by the Estado Novo as it afflicted great strokes at the “racial purity” of the Portuguese population. See also Alexandre, Velho Brasil, novas Áfricas, 227.
39 Reiter, “Portugal: National Pride and Imperial Neurosis,” 82.
40 In this aspect, as an example, Gilberto Freyre, in his O Mundo que o Português Criou (cited in Reiter, op. cit., 83), writes about “a unity in sentiment and culture.”
41 One of the most incisive criticisms of the political application of the theory of lusotropicalism, while criticizing the theory itself, is Bender, Angola Under the Portuguese. He argues quite convincingly that the biological miscegenation in the tropics, for instance, had nothing to do with an innate inclination of the Portuguese people to mix with other people but rather was the logical consequence of the gender imbalance among the settler population.
Needless to say the instrument of communication among the members of the supposedly culturally united community was the Portuguese language. The use of other languages within the *Espaço Luso* (Luso Space) was not an obstacle to the principle of unity of the Nation/Empire but also a powerful obstacle to a supposedly eventual assimilation into Portuguese culture.

Notwithstanding the late colonial discourse of lusotropicalism and assimilation, the reality was quite different. Statistics of the late colonial period, for instance, undoubtedly indicate the failure of the colonial assimilation policy. The Portuguese colonial system was inherently contradictory. While professing a civilizing mission and the necessity to bring up the “uncivilized” African, the system permitted few escape valves for the Africans themselves to escape the domination trap. Rather than permitting the opening of the public sphere, the system enclosed itself. Fluency in the Portuguese language was a key element for social and economic upward mobility. Such a thing could be only attainable through schooling—public or carried out by the missions. Judging by colonial statistics (table 3), it is easy to conclude that the poor performance of the Portuguese colonial system. The table indicates that only a minority had access to education (public or ecclesiastic): less than 5% of the total African population, and about 22% for the case of Cape Verdeans. In other words, this means that only those 5% had any chances to participate in the colonial sphere—by attaining the status of *assimilados*.

---

42 Marcelo Caetano, *Tradições, Princípios e Métodos da Colonização Portuguesa* (Lisboa, Agencia Geral do Ultramar, 1951), 44.

Table 3. Illiteracy in then Portuguese Africa (1960)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Illiterate Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Illiterate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angola</td>
<td>4,145,266</td>
<td>4,019,834</td>
<td>96.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>148,331</td>
<td>116,844</td>
<td>78.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>510,777</td>
<td>504,928</td>
<td>98.85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>5,738,911</td>
<td>5,615,053</td>
<td>97.86%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Anuário Estatístico do Ultramar, Instituto Nacional de Estatística, Lisbon, and calculations by the author.

The situation in the Portuguese colonies would improve a little from the late 1950s as external and domestic pressures were amounting. Similar to other European colonial powers, Portugal had to embark upon colonial developmentalism, that is, concerted policies designed to finance public infrastructure in the colonies to foster economic development and overall quality of life to the colonial populations. For instance, it was only in the late 1950s that the first high school was to be opened in Guinea Bissau (while the second high school was opened in Cape Verde in 1960). In spite of these efforts, which were too late and too little, organized military resistance by radical anti-colonial nationalists led to a three-front war in Angola (1961), Guinea (1963), and Mozambique (1964). As a last minute attempt to appease the Africans, the colonial developmental machine was put at work. During the campaigns against national liberation struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, as part of the strategy to conquer the hearts and minds of the rural population, more social projects that included public health and schooling opportunities to Africans were created.


\[45\] António de Spínola, Por uma Guiné melhor (Lisboa: Agência-Geral do Ultramar, 1970).
The Catholic Church and Language Diffusion Policy

A more complete understanding of the reach of the colonial language policy implies that we should also look at an important agent of language diffusion, the Catholic Church, chiefly its missionaries. Colonial domination was multifarious and diverse tactics and instruments were employed to manufacture consent among the dominated. Christian missions were but another tool at the disposal of the colonial state to such an objective while, at the same time, they were also used in the training cadres for the lower echelon of the colonial bureaucracy. As a consequence, the colonial state sought to maintain a tight control and supervision of the works of the missions within its border, particularly those coming from other states.\(^4\)

In the case of Portugal under Estado Novo, the Catholic Church was clearly utilized as the religious wing of colonialism. This institution was charged not only with the diffusion of the Catholic faith but also with the propaganda of the Portuguese culture and language. From the discursive and symbolic points of view, the regime insisted in its historical role of *Padroado Português* (Portuguese Patronage) and the planned use of the Cross of Christ to represent the state. The missions, therefore, were privileged agents of language spread policy in the colonies. Through a combination of positive and negative reinforcements—easing of the conditions for the Portuguese Catholic missionaries who would serve as a cultural and linguistic agents while making difficult for non-Portuguese

missionaries to exercise their duty in Portuguese-controlled Africa—the regime aimed to limit the scope of other European languages in its colonies.\footnote{Adriano Moreira, \textit{O novíssimo príncipe: análise da revolução} (Braga: Intervenção, 1977), 166}

Compared to the northern European and American Protestant missions, the Catholic Church enjoyed relative sympathy from the regime. As early as October 1926, a few months after the end of the First Republic, the new regime, controlled by conservative military officers, showed clear favoritism to the Catholic Church in the context of the overseas possessions.\footnote{The Portuguese I Republic was essentially laic and it did seek to widen the gap between the state and the Church. As such, it limited drastically the role of the Catholic missions in the colonies and in its place it created the Civilizing Missions (laic missions for the promotion of the Portuguese culture and language). Instituto de Missões Coloniais (ou Instituto de Missões laicas, as it was known).} The 1926 Estatuto Orgânico das Missões Católicas Portuguesas de África e Timor (Organic Statutes of the Portuguese Catholic Missions in Africa and Timor), the 1940 Concordat between the regime and Vatican and the same-day Missionary Agreement, all worked to help establish a predominant position of the Church in colonies. In addition, the primus inter pares position of the Catholic Church was already guaranteed in the political constitution of 1933. For instance, the article 140 basically considered Catholicism as the informal religion of the regime. The Constitution considered that:

\begin{quote}
The Portuguese Catholic missions overseas and the establishments for training personnel for their services . . . shall be protected and assisted by the State, as being institutions of education and assistance and instruments of civilization.\footnote{Cited in Ferreira, \textit{Portuguese Colonialism}, 64}
\end{quote}

The 1941 Estatuto Missionário (Missionary Statutes) made clear that the Church was religious wing of the colonial enterprise: the Catholic missions were considered the
“institutions of an imperial utility and of eminently civilizing sense.”\footnote{See Estatuto Missionario, decreto-lei nº 31.207, de 5 de Abril de 1941.} Furthermore, the unholy alliance between the colonial state and the Catholic Church was expanded with the creation of the Junta das Missões Católicas Ultramarinas (Board of the Overseas Catholic Missions) in 1941. The law establishing such an institution states that the ultimate goal was to “to develop the collaboration spirit which, in the name of higher colonial interests, has to orient the State-Missions relations.”\footnote{Article 1 of the Estatuto Missionario, decreto-lei nº 31.207, de 5 de Abril de 1941.} All the above-mentioned laws and regulations indicate how the Catholic Church had almost a monopoly of proselytizing souls in Portuguese African territories. While in the cases of Mozambique and Angola, the Portuguese could not do much and they had to accept non-Portuguese and non-Catholic missions, in Cape Verde, the Catholic Church had almost a complete monopoly—though there were other Christian denominations in the islands but without any significant social and religious significance.\footnote{Federico Cerrone, \textit{História da igreja de Cabo Verde: 450 anos da igreja em Cabo Verde} (São Vicente: Gráfica do Mindelo, 1983).}

A proper assessment of the impact of the Catholic missions in the language question in Portuguese Africa warrants a comparison with other missions in British territories, where, up to a point, a religious laissez faire policy was put into force. This comparison permits one to uncover the development of language practices and ideologies that would inform post-colonial language policies in different parts of the African continent. Risking oversimplification it can be stated that Protestant missions tended to
favor the use of the native languages for the purpose of the evangelization. Their reliance on the vernacular as the medium of religious proselytizing paved the way for many African indigenous language development and modernization—standardization and graphization. Due to the theological differences between the Catholic Church and the Protestant missions, vernacular languages from areas in which the former was dominant or held monopoly in terms of evangelization were very unlikely to have been developed or used for the goal of religious missions. This should not be taken to mean that the Catholic Missions in colonial Africa relied entirely on the language of the colonial powers for the purposes of evangelization. First, the native language had to be used, at least in the early contacts between the priest and the native population. Second, it was relatively easier and cheaper, at least in the first moments of the encounter, to use the vernacular. Instead of having the whole village to learn the language of the colonizer, the missionaries themselves, a few of them, learned the language of the people to be evangelized. Yet, the goal was not to maintain the vernacular as the medium of proselytizing.

A typology of Christian missions in Portuguese colonies may be suggested: colonies, such as Angola and Mozambique, in which the Catholic Church was preponderant but Protestant and other denomination missions were also present; Cape Verde and the islands of Sao Tome and Principe were colonies in which the Catholic Church had absolute or close to absolute religious monopoly, and the case of Guinea-

\[53\text{ On the protestant missions’ influence over use of the vernaculars, see John P. Ragsdale, Protestant Mission Education in Zambia, 1880-1954 (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 1986), chapter 2.}\]
\[54\text{ See Estatuto Missionario, decreto-lei nº 31.207, de 5 de Abril de 1941. Also see Moreira, O Novissimo Principe, 166.}\]
Bissau, where the Catholic Church had total monopoly in areas where Islam did not establish itself.

The case of Southern Africa indicates that the protestant churches, with their bottom-up approach to religious activities, relied extensively on indigenous languages.\(^55\) With such a decision, there were the earliest attempts and practices to create and alphabet, codify, and modernize certain languages in Southern Africa. A number of indigenous languages in Southern Africa owe their written forms to the efforts of the missionaries themselves. In a way, the Catholic missions in Cape Verde had fewer incentives to work on towards the linguistic modernization of the Cape Verdean language. Rather, on the contrary, the Church became one of the pillars of the colonial power structures propagating the dominant language ideology.\(^56\)

**Nativist Linguistic Nationalism**

Earliest nativist defenses of the Cape Verdean language can be traced back to the first quarter of the twentieth century. As noted above, modern Portuguese colonialism of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century was particularly imbued with scientific racism and European/Portuguese supremacy. The other side of the colonial ideology and practice was the categorical debasement of the indigenous culture and language. These represent the opposite side of the evolution continuum, where the European culture was placed at the top of the scale. Binary thoughts so typical of colonialism were applied in the

---

\(^{55}\) Samarin, “The Linguistic World of Field Colonialism.”

\(^{56}\) Moreira, *O Novissimo Principe*, 166.
language sphere, whereby the dichotomy primitive/civilized is constructed at the
linguistic level by the African vernacular/European language dichotomy. The nineteenth-
and twentieth-descriptions of the Cape Verdean language attest to this beliefs. Often it
was labeled and called as “língua de trapos,” (language of rags) “corruptela,” (little
corruption [of the Portuguese language]) “lingua infantil” (child language) and other
derogatory terms.\textsuperscript{57} Civilization, modernity, citizenship and development, therefore,
cannot be attained via African vernaculars. Needless to say, this ideology was accepted
and even promoted by some of the colonized intelligentsia. As noted by Isabel Feo
Rodrigues the mid-20\textsuperscript{th} century Cape Verdean colonized intelligentsia made tremendous
intellectual contribution to the colonial domination project.\textsuperscript{58}

The earliest defenses of the Cape Verdean language were carried out by the
nativist liberal thinkers such as António de Paula Brito (1852-1894), Eugénio Tavares
(1869-1930) and Pedro Cardoso (1890-1942).\textsuperscript{59} Through artistic expressions such as
music and poetry and other activities such as op-ed pieces published in the colonial
newspaper, these two thinkers were zealous defenders of the native language. Pedro
Cardoso, one of the first to make public defense in favor of the native language, noted the
inestimable value of the mother tongue as a medium of education—some thirty years

\textsuperscript{57} Sérgio Neto, Colónia mártir, colónia modelo: Cabo Verde no pensamento ultramarino português (1925-
1965) (Coimbra: Imprensa Universidade de Coimbra, 2009), 90
\textsuperscript{58} Isabel P.B. Fêo Rodrigues, “Islands of Sexuality: Theories and Histories of Creolization in Cape
\textsuperscript{59} See, for instance, N. Quint, “Les Apontamentos de António de Paula Brito (1887) ou la naissance d'une
127-153.
before the famous UNESCO’s position that children education bear better fruits when conducted in the mother tongue.60

The generation of Claridade, the literary cultural movement that spanned, intermittently, for almost 15 years (1936-1960) also had a say in the language question. Metalinguistically, the review promoted the native language. On its first number, a poem written in Cape Verdean Creole made the cover page. The fact that the cover of the journal had a poem in basilectal Creole is in itself a socio-political statement. The context of the text illustrates the significance of having a cover, of a first number of a major journal of the colonial elite, published in 1936. The second half of the 1930s was the time that the Estado Novo began to affirm itself as the new regime in Portugal and in the Empire—once all the opponents were almost totally neutralized and crushed. As an ultra-colonialist, nationalist, and conservative regime, the Estado Novo was essentially about glorification of Portuguese culture and language. Accordingly there was no room for any exhibition of the colonized languages in the public realm. The colonial public sphere, chiefly in the urban areas, was to be completely exorcized of the native languages, leaving it open for the complete and hegemonic domination of the Portuguese language.61

Baltazar Lopes da Silva, one of the most prominent members of the Claridade Movement, took an important step towards the affirmation of the language. His 1957

---

60 See, for instance, Brito-Semedo, A construção da identidade nacional. Also see Almada, Bilinguismo ou Diglossia?, 128-129.

61 A good example of this attempt to eradicate the mother tongue from the formal public sphere is within the domains of schools—a phenomenon that Calvet calls glottophagy. Through state laws and school regulations (that included corporal punishment and/or the employment of humiliating devices) school children were constantly reminded against the use of the Cape Verdean language within the school yard. See Louis-Jean Calvet, Linguistique et colonialisme; petit traité de glottophagie (Paris: Payot, 1974). See, for the case of Cape Verde, Brito-Semedo, A Construção da Identidade Nacional, 270.
study of the Cape Verdean language, the first scholarly study done by a native speaker, brings much insight to the understanding of the social roles of the language. Yet, Lopes da Silva could not dissociate himself from the dominant colonial language ideology. For once, he maintained the colonial label that insisted that the Cape Verdean language was a dialect—and not a language on its own right. The employment of this label is politically consequential, as it aims to describe a certain identity point of view. In other words, the Cape Verdean creole is taken to be a dialect of the Portuguese language, the language that provides most of its lexicon. If follows, thus, that the two languages (Portuguese and Creole) are closely and intimately related, to the point that one cannot speak of an autonomous linguistic system in Cape Verde. Subsequently, the people of Cape Verde, like their language, were unbreakably tied up to the Portuguese culture and nation.

Anti-colonial political nationalism of the late 1950s through 1970s was not accompanied by a fervent linguistic nationalism. In spite of declaratory exaltation of the native language, the nationalists of the 1960s did not pay as much attention to the language question. Anti-colonial activists were far more interested in the question of political independence and the issue of national development, minimizing thus the issue of language. The PAIGC, the party which led the liberation struggle and would in time form the post-colonial government in Cape Verde, did not have a rigorous and explicit language policy. Rather on the contrary, its language policy in many instances was built on the footsteps of the colonial language policy—e.g., the predominance of Portuguese in

---

education and public administration. The party’s position on the language question can be found in Amilcar Cabral’s own writing. In his *Análise de Alguns Tipos de Resistência*, Cabral laid out his thinking on language. He takes a purely instrumentalist approach, arguing that a language is no more than “an instrument for the men to relate among each other, an instrument, a means to speak, to express the realities of life and of the world.”

Colonial language, as an instrument, does not lead in itself to political and social alienation. Cabral argues rather on the contrary that the colonial language can be put at the service of the goal of national liberation and development insofar as it is the language of modernity. At the same time, Cabral, like many other African nationalists of the time, was rather skeptical of any socio-economic and political value of the vernaculars—at least, right away. Fears of ethno-nationalisms and what he calls “opportunism”—defense of one’s own ethnic language by many ethnic entrepreneurs—might have dictated his rather ambiguous position on the various indigenous languages.

Taking the distinction made by Eric Hobsbawm between mass, civic political and ethno-linguistic nationalism, it can be argued that PAIGC's nationalism was essentially

---

64 Amílcar Cabral, *Análise de alguns tipos de resistência* (Lisboa: Seara Nova, 1974), 101. In this way, Cabral is taking a position that is directly antagonic to what was taken by other radical anti-colonial nationalists such as Franz Fanon. For this leader of Algerian independence, language can never be a neutral and value-free instrument. Rather, on the contrary, the colonial language is a powerful and hidden vehicle for cultural expansion and alienation. For more on this see Franz Fanon, *Black Skin White Mask* (New York: Groove Press, 1967).

65 In this regard, Cabral further asserts that “we must take advantage of the experiences of others, not only of our experiences. However if we want to employ that experience so we can use it in our land, *we must employ the expressions of other languages. Well, if we have a language that can explain all of this, we shall use it. There is no harm in so doing.*” See Cabral, *Análise de alguns tipos de resistência*, 104 (my emphasis).

66 Yet, PAIGC program and official discourse was filled with declarations in defense and support of the African indigenous languages, including the Cape Verdean creole. See, for instance, the PAIGC Program, in Rudebeck, *Guinea-Bissau.*
civic-territorial. Unlike ethno-nationalists, whose idea of nation is based on essentialist notions such as ethnic belonging, civic nationalists construct the nation based on the already defined territory. All of those who reside within the limits of the territory are, ipso facto, part of the nation—regardless of their ethnic origins. As a territorial and civic nationalist organization, PAIGC aspired to construct a new State—a federal state—that made up of the two colonies, Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau. As such, the new post-colonial state would have to be fundamentally multi-ethnic and multi-linguistic. The two territories share two common languages: the Portuguese language, the language inherited from colonialism, and the Portuguese-based Creole language. It should be noted that Cape Verdean Creole, chiefly the southern dialect (Sotavento), is mutually intelligible with the Guinean Creole (Kryol). Yet, while in the case of the former it is a native language of the people, in the case of the former Creole had essentially performed the role of communicative instrument across ethnic boundaries. In other words, Creole is nativized in Cape Verde—which is not the case in Guinea. This situation guarantees a comparative advantage to Cape Verdeans in the post-colonial federalism, should the Creole language was included as the official language.

The period between the fall of the Portuguese dictatorship on April 25, 1974, and the Independence on July 5, 1975, can be said to have been the zenith of cultural and linguistic nationalism in Cape Verde. While the official historiography has tended to show that the key political actors of this period were, in a way or another, linked to

---

PAIGC, spontaneous civic organizations were created, mainly in the urban areas, to buttress up the Cape Verdean language. For the first time, a heated debate on the language question took place in the public sphere, particularly via the written press and within civil society organizations. High school students of the capital city of Praia, for instance, demanded that the national language be used, in substitution of the Portuguese language, as the medium of instruction. New forms of writing Creole were put forth that would graphically augment the linguistic distance between the language and its lexifier.

The new post-colonial government, led by the revolutionary PAIGC, maintained the policy of “Portuguese-only” in education, media and public administration. Carlos Reis, the first minister of education in the post-colony, considered “indispensable the teaching of Portuguese.” The Ministry of Education’s decision was the result of the youth—particularly students from the high school in the capital city of Praia—reluctance to retain the Portuguese language as the medium of education.

The fact that many high school students were on the forefront of linguistic nationalism is not purely a historical accident. The precinct of high school, first in Mindelo (island of São Vicente, since 1917) and later in Praia (island of Santiago, since 1960), was a major linguistic battleground. The high school, taken to be the ideal typical

---

69 One the linguistic strategies used by cultural entrepreneurs to construct a linguistic distance between Portuguese and Creole, in the written form, is the employment of the letter “K.” Portuguese alphabet did not include such a letter. Kaoberdiano Dambara, with his *Noti*, a collection of revolutionary poems written in Creole, might have been one of earliest proponents of this trend. The use of the letter “K” was justified as a mechanism to embrace africanness (the idea, though wrong, was that the letter “K” was very African as they were extensively used in many African languages). For the whole debate, see, for instance, Virgilio Pires, “O ‘Crioulo Reinventado,’” *Novo Jornal Cabo Verde*, September 5, 1974.
71 Oliveira Almada, *Bilinguismo ou Diglossia*, 128.
area of modernity and cultural advancement, was supposed to be a “Portuguese-only” site. State and high school norms and regulations outlawed the used of the Cape Verdean language within the areas of high school. For this reason, Dulce Almada uses the expression “field of the linguistic exclusion” to refer to the ideologies and practices within the high school precinct.72

The main argument of the Ministry of Education was based on two main propositions. First, there was the influence of the colonial evolutionism, according to which the Cape Verdean language was supposedly as not developed as Portuguese.73 Second, there was the idea that the Cape Verdean language was not unified given the plurality of dialects.74

The Ministry of Education’s decision to follow a “Portuguese-only” education language policy can be interpreted in terms of political motives. To submit to the pressures of the students to institute the use of Cape Verdean language as a medium of education corresponds to submitting to societal demands. This would have created a terrible political precedent, which would create great political problems in future. It should be noted that the regime’s political creed was that the party guided society—and not the other way around.

72 Almada, *Bilinguismo ou Diglossia?*, 128-129.
73 The gist of the argument of the Ministry of Education can be found in one of its own communiques. According to which, “according to the laws of linguistics, our Creole is of relative recent formation and will have to continue its evolution, to become richer and to affirm itself, before it becomes a language, in the classical sense of the word.” Ministry of Education cited in Oliveira Almada, *Bilinguismo ou Diglossia*, 130 (my translation).
74 Ibid, ibidem.
At the same time, and related to the above explained reason, the decision for “Portuguese only” in education may be explained as a political strategy to undermine societal linguistic nationalism. Societal autonomy was something that the regime did neither want nor tolerate. If left unchecked linguistic nationalism would eventually evolve into political nationalism. In spite of its anti-colonial nationalist record, the PAIGC was moved by political pragmatism. Uncontrolled societal nationalism—linguistic or otherwise—would eventually clash with political pragmatism of the regime.

The importance of this decision cannot be overstated. It was a path-dependence changing moment. Ruth Collier and David Collier note that institutions endure throughout time and it is during the periods that they call “critical juncture” that institutional reforms are made possible.75

This political decision, however, did not deter the language debate, which prolonged for another two to three years, after independence.76 In the end, the post-colonial government followed a formula that was already entrenched in most of states in the region: the distinction between official and national languages, whereby Portuguese is granted the status of the former and the Cape Verdean language the status of the second.77

In spite of this purely “declaratory” policy on the national language, it is not until the late

1990s that some attempts were made towards changing the political status of the mother tongue in Cape Verde.

Political discourse in post-colonial Cape Verde, as in other parts of Africa, was fundamentally based on the notions of economic development, leading the language question as a secondary issue. The ideology of “National Reconstruction”, put forth by the PAIGC in both Cape Verde and Guinea Bissau, attests to this situation. Within the new post-colonial government, there were some linguistic nationalists who wanted to see the status of the language—or the language question—brought in to the fore. In spite of this, there were some attempts towards language corpus development.78

In 1979, under leadership of Dulce Almada Duarte and financed by UNESCO, a linguistic colloquium took place in Mindelo (Cape Verde). The goal of the meeting was to bring Cape Verdean and international scholars, writers and educators, to discuss the language issue—pertaining to the Cape Verdean language. A chief outcome of the meeting was the establishment, for the first time in history, of a standard orthography for the language, based on the phonetic-phonological model.79 Given that the model made extensive use of diacritics, particularly circumflexes, critics labeled it as the “alfabeto de

---

78 See, for instance, Manuel Veiga, ed., I Colóquio Linguístico Sobre o Crioulo de Cabo Verde, (Praia, INIC, 2000).
chapéu” (translatable as the hat’s alphabet, given its overuse of the diacritical marks, chiefly the circumflex).80

In 1989, another meeting was convened, which brought in those engaged in literacy campaign and education. Given the level of criticism of the model adopted in 1979, the meeting radically changed the alphabet to be proposed for the writing of the Cape Verdean language. Unlike the model of 1979, fundamentally informed by linguistic theory, the new system adopted in 1989 relied on the sociolinguistic aspect of it—particularly whether it would be accepted or rejected by the community.81

Multi-party electoral democracy, instituted in 1991, has given new impetus to the language debate. In 1993, under the aegis of the Linguistics Department of the National Instituto of Culture (INAC), a new writing proposal was considered—the Unified Alphabet for the Writing of the Cape Verdean language, known by its Portuguese acronym ALUPEC. The new model was so-called as unified alphabet given the fact that it sought to create a consensus between the two previously adopted models (1979 and 1989). In 1998, the government approved, for experimental use, a new orthography called ALUPEC (Unified Alphabet for the Writing of Cape Verdean Language).82 A “war of orthography” ensued, as those opposing ALUPEC criticized and debased it for it being de-linked with the Portuguese etymology. Debate on the language question in Cape Verde has always been with Portuguese as the reference: either for linguistic distancing or closeness. Moreover, as those leading the project decided to choose the basilectal Cape

80 Veiga, “Introdução,” 1; Almada Duarte, Bilinguismo ou Diglossia, 187-205.
81 Veiga, “Introdução”, 13; Lima da Cruz, “No Limiar, do Bilinguismo,” 76.
82 On the history of this orthographic system, see Veiga, “Introdução.”
Verdian Creole, this has further augmented opposition among the cultural elite, still attached to the Portuguese language.

Constitutional reform debates of the following year simply made clear that the political elite were not really interested in granting the status of official language to the mother tongue. Party politics, in a way, dictated the outcome, as it had created a “winner-take-all” aura. Almost on every issue, including the language question, the two parties were irreconcilable. In the end, the Constitution was amended to dictate a Portuguese-only official language—though there is a clause mentioning that the state would take measures towards advancement of the mother tongue (again a mere declaratory policy). Incompatible political perspectives between the two parties would play again in the 2010 Constitutional reforms debate. As a decade earlier, nothing had changed in the Constitutional approach to language policy: the same old principle, established in 1999, was kept almost intact.

The issue of process of officialization of Cape Verdian Language has been eroded by two inter-related forces, one endogenous and the other exogenous. At the endogenous levels, there has been a language conflict regarding which dialect of the language to be chosen as the standard norm. Some linguistic nationalists from the island of Santiago, such as Manuel Veiga or Marciano Moreira, believe that the dialect of Santiago is an ideal choice, because of the island’s demographic, political and economic weight. Focus has been, for symbolic reasons, on the basilectal Creole of Santiago, the one that is farther from the lexifier. Local elites mainly from Sao Vicente, the second most important island of Cape Verde, were those who are expressing dissent against such a
move. As far as the exogenous threat that account for the subordinate position of the mother tongue in the formal public sphere, it can be found in the global politics of the Portuguese language, which is developed below.

**The Creole Language, Race, and Social Classes**

Language is more than a simple communicative device. Its functions are not merely related to the conveying of expressions, ideas, ideals and emotions. A language is also an index of social standing, distinction and power. The language that one talks often brings paralinguistic assumptions about the speaker. In this section I seek to highlight the historical connections that exist between the Creole language, social classes, and race.

One way to properly analyze the connection with the above-mentioned variables is to create temporal classifications about social perceptions on the Cape Verdean language. In other words, a periodic cataloguing can be established depending on the predominance of a certain language ideology. It should be pointed out that this periodization is purely analytical and the time slots are not to be taken as written in stone. In fact, as it will be shown below, representations about the language from one stage often finds it being reproduced in the following stages. In the first stage, from the beginning of colonization and slavery in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries to the development of modern colonialism in the second half of the nineteenth century, the

---

83 Creolists talk about Creole continuum to refer to the different levels of the Creole language, ranging from the basilect, that is, the Creole dialect far removed from the lexifier (the acrolect or the European language that furnishes the lexicon) to the mesolect, the mid-range, or a variant of Creole that is made to approximate, in lexicon, phonology or even syntax, the lexifier. For more on this see Derek Bickerton, *Dynamics of a Creole System* (Cambridge University Press, 1975).
Creole language was classified as the “language of the blacks.” In the second stage, from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s and 1940s, the central representation on the Cape Verdean language was that it was a language of low and uneducated social classes. Since the independence, the Cape Verdean creole was given the status of a national language.

Earliest records about description of the Cape Verdean language, as previously noted, were basically derogatory and deprecating. In the early nineteenth century the Creole language was a national language, spoken by almost all—including those coming from Europe. This situation would change with the advent of modern colonialism in the mid-1800s. The deleterious descriptions about the Creole language of the second half of the nineteenth century onwards became were given “scientific” support, as they were influenced by the theories of scientific racism and Social Darwinism. The discourse of civilization and primitiveness—the central element in the colonial discourse and practice—extended to the camp of linguistics: non-European languages, particularly Creole and African languages, were taken to be without any social and cultural value.84 Early scientific description of the Creole languages categorized them as a construct of an inferior race.85 In Portugal, the idea of Creole as a product of an inferior race was also developed by several scholars. Thus, Vasconcelos wrote that Creole languages were “modifications that the European civilized languages suffered in non-European lands, in

84 Calvet, *Linguistique et colonialism*.
the month of the people of inferior civilization.” The baby talk theory of development of Creole found its heyday around this time. According to this theory, Creole develops as the minds of the slaves/Africans were similar to that of a baby. For this reason, the slaves/Africans, were thought to be equipped with “primitive” minds and, as such, could only distort the European languages.

Modern Portuguese colonialism in Cape Verde (mid- to late nineteenth century) produced radical social changes. First, little by little the power of the landed class was drastically reduced. Second, and as noted above, there was a renewed attempt of the colonial state to penetrate and truly control and manage society. One of the mechanisms to such a desideratum was the implementation of public education in the colony. Third, these new developments eventually led to the formation of what can be called a colonial public sphere—a site of dialogue and interchange among the local elite. The colonial public sphere included not only actual physical spaces such as clubs, libraries, theaters but also “virtual” areas such as newspapers. The development of these institutions is dated back to the mid-1800s. The ultimate consequence of these developments was the reinforcement of the Portuguese language—at the expense of the Creole language, which was pushed out of the public arena.

87 See Holm, An Introduction to Pidgins and Creoles, 33.
88 Pereira, As Revoltas; António Carreira, Cabo Verde, formação e extinção de uma sociedade escravocrata (1460-1878). ([Lisbon]: Com o patrocínio da Comissão da Comunidade Económica Europeia para o Instituto Caboverdiano do Livro, 1983).
In terms of racial composition, Cape Verde is divided into three large groups: whites (about 1%-2%), blacks (about 30%) and mulattoes (about 68%).\(^9^0\) The dominant racial ideology in Cape Verde, since the late colonial period, heavily influenced by Brazilian ideologies of Lusotropicalism, racial democracy and *mestiçismo*, maintains that the country is a colorblind society.\(^9^1\) The ideology of *mestiçismo*, the cult of the mulattoes and miscegenation, has since the 1930s became the dominant social ideology in Cape Verde. The nation has been imagined as a Creole or mulatto society, which presupposes that cultural marks taken to be quintessential African to be suppressed.\(^9^2\)

Under close scrutiny this idea of a colorblind society easily breaks apart. For one, a form of cultural racism persisted according to which European systems of values, aesthetic forms and ideas of human beauty superimpose African’s. Second, the positions of authority and power are often occupied by those of light-skin color. The few blacks that are in these positions may well be a form of token representation. Black Cape Verdeans, particularly those from the countryside, face more obstacles to social upward movement than other social categories. While other racial categories can be found among

\(^9^0\) It is to be noted that racial classification in Cape Verde, which inherited from Portugal colonial classification, differs from that of the United States. In the former, a racial continuum exists and the classification of the race is in terms of culture and physical appearances. On the other hand, in the USA, traditionally the so-called “one drop rule” mandate that ancestry—and not other variable—as the defining element of race. In this vein, a person is taken to be black if at least one of his/her ancestor is black—regardless of his phenotypical characteristics. On the distinction between the two models of race see Thomas E. Skidmore, “EUA Bi-Racial vs. Brasil Multirracial: O Contraste ainda é válido?” Novos Estudos 34 (1992): 49-62.


lower classes, a large percentage of black Cape Verdeans, descending from the former slaves and/or poor peasants, make up the bottom of the social ladder.

In terms of social classes, society in Cape Verde can be categorized in three major social classes: upper class, middle class and lower class. Given the diglossia since the colonial times, coupled with the fact that the state is still the major employer, social mobility is dependent on cultural and linguistic capitals (formal education and Portuguese, respectively). Upper classes have more contact with the Portuguese language. Family and professional reasons permit the members of this class to use the Portuguese language on a daily basis. Among members of this class one finds a particular sub-category that I call “Afro-Lusitans” (of which more below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Class</th>
<th>Members</th>
<th>Medium of Communication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Upper Class</td>
<td>Liberal professional</td>
<td>Bilingual: Portuguese and Creole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Medium to High-level State Employees</td>
<td>Public Sphere: Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Big-Medium Business</td>
<td>Private Sphere: Portuguese/Creole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle Class</td>
<td>Low-echelon state employees</td>
<td>Creole (<em>sermo politicus</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private business employees</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower class</td>
<td>Peasantry</td>
<td>Creole (<em>fundo</em>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban working people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban and Rural unemployed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Baltasar Lopes da Silva, *O dialecto crioulo de Cabo Verde*.

Upper and middle classes have far more contact with the Portuguese language—either in their public and private lives. The predominance of this language has resulted in a new type of Creole, heavily influenced by the morphology, syntax and neologisms from Portuguese. Baltazar Lopes da Silva noted in his study of the Cape Verdean language more than half a century ago of the existence of two types of the Cape Verdean Creole:
the “crioulo fundo” (literally “the deep Creole”), the traditional Creole, and what he termed *sermo politus*, used among the culturati and intelligentsia.93

The current linguistic situation in Cape Verde can be further understood with the resource of the functions carried by the two languages (see table 5). Albert Valdman, in his study of Haiti, considers different situations in which the two languages (French and Haitian Creole) are used as the medium.94 The vernacular function refers to the application of the language for day-to-day communication with those who are part of the intimate circle (friends, family, and neighbors). The vehicular function, as the name indicates, is about establishing a communicative bridge with other social groups, within or outside the community. The third aspect discussed by Valdman is the referential function: which language is employed for the transmission of the cultural heritage of the society. The magico-religious functions have to do with the application of the language for extra-earthly forces. The case of the functions of symbolization of power has to do with the fact that a language is a marker of social status and an instrument of social and political power.

93 Baltasar Lopes da Silva, *O dialecto crioulo de Cabo Verde* ([Lisboa]: Imprensa Nacional de Lisboa, 1957), 43. It should also be noted that in other Creole societies one also find this dichotomy. For instance in the case of Haiti, a distinction has been made between the vulgar Creole, spoken by the masses, and the Creole spoken by the elite. See for instance Bambi B. Schieffelin and Rachelle Charlier Doucet, “The ‘Real’ Haitian Creole: Ideology, Metalinguistics, and Orthographic Choice,” *American Ethnologist* 21, 1 (1994), 181.

Table 5. Modes of language functioning in Cape Verde

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language Functions</th>
<th>Monolingual Community</th>
<th>Bilingual Community</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vernacular</td>
<td>CVL</td>
<td>CVL/PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicular</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>within Cape Verde</td>
<td>CVL</td>
<td>CVL/PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>outside Cape Verde</td>
<td>CVL</td>
<td>PL/FL/EL/CVL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referential</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magico-Religious</td>
<td>CVL/PL</td>
<td>CVL/PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolization of Power</td>
<td>PL</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PL: Portuguese; FL: French; EL: English; CVL: Cape Verdean Language.


Many among the political and economic elite believe that language does not have any real impact onto one’s socio-economic upward mobility—and, at the same time, political aspirations. For instance, Victor Borges, a former minister of education and foreign affairs, during the 2000s, claims that technical knowledge, resulting from college education, and not fluency in the Portuguese language, as the main root cause for social advancement.95 He pointed out that there are many Cape Verdeans, raised in non-Portuguese speaking countries (but in a western European language such as English or French), who returned to Cape Verde and yet made it.96

This argument has two main faults. First, the relationship between Portuguese and other European languages, such as French and English is not the same as that vis-à-vis the Cape Verdean language. Given the power and economic structures as well as international prestige that underpins those two languages, their speakers are more often

95 Victor Borges, interviewed by Abel Djassi Amado, Bridgewater State University, September 27, 2011.
96 Victor Borges uses the case of José Brito, as an illustrative example. Brito was born and raised in Côte d’Ivoire, of Cape Verdean parents. When he first moved to Cape Verde, in the 1980s, to become part of government, his knowledge of the Portuguese language was inferior of a typical member of the political and cultural elite. One fact that cannot be neglected is that he was fluent in another European language (French), which carries as much power and prestige as the Portuguese language.
than not embraced with social prestige and distinction. Second, knowledge production and dissemination has been tied up with these European languages.

**Creole Societies and the Politics of Language**

The islands of Cape Verde are one of many sovereign and dependent territories in which a creole language is widely spoken by its population. Jamaica, Haiti or Mauritius are examples of independent and sovereign states with a Creole language spoken throughout the territory. The cases of Martinique and Guadeloupe (integral part of the French Republic), or the called ABC islands—Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao—part of the Netherlands, are examples of dependent Creole societies. The politics of the Creole language, whether in independent sovereign states or in dependent territories, can be analyzed in terms of similarity or difference.

One common point, which can be applied to all societies with a Creole language, is the legacy of the colonial language ideology, in which Creole is considered all but a language. Without exception, these different creoles were labelled as “broken,” “degenerate,” “corrupt” languages. Needless to say that these Creoles were—and still are—thought not to have the properties to serve in certain, official and public domains—such as education, public administration, and the like. Diglossia, the social and political superimposition of one language over another, is a sociolinguistic condition common to
most of creole societies. Given the fact that a large segment of society stigmatizes the Creole language, the process of its officialization and/or use as a medium of education has often been controversial and difficult.

If one takes the current “co-habitation” with the lexifier language, two main types of speech communities can be found (see table 6). The first situation is related to the cases in which the Creole language “cohabits” with its lexifier. This category can be further broken down in two distinct subcategories: a) the cases of Cape Verde, Jamaica or Haiti, in which the lexifier is the official language of the state, the main language of politics and the main language of education; b) the cases of Mauritius or Seychelles where the lexifier (French in this case), while still in use, is not the language of power, a position that is held by English. The second category corresponds to situations where a Creole language “cohabits” with another European language as the high language, which is not its lexifier. The examples of the ABC islands (Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao) are illustrative examples of this categories. As these islands are politically dependent and are an integral part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Dutch is the main language of power. The lexifier of their creoles (Spanish and Portuguese) are absent in those speech communities.

---

97 For the study of Diglossia in Haiti, see Valdman, “Diglossia and Language Conflict in Haiti;” Schieffelin and Doucet, “The ‘Real’ Haitian Creole.”
Table 6. Creole Languages and the Lexifiers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Lingua Franca</th>
<th>Lexifier</th>
<th>Official and Political Language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Haiti</td>
<td>Haitian Creole</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>French/Haiti</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jamaica</td>
<td>Jamaican Patwa</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td>C.V. Creole</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Papiamentu</td>
<td>Portuguese/Spanish</td>
<td>Dutch/Papiamento</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mauritius</td>
<td>M. Creole</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>English/French/Creole</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seychelles</td>
<td>S. Creole</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>English/French/Creole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ABC islands: Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao.
Source: Compilation by the author.

With this this typology in mind it would easier to concur with C. Jourdan’s argument that when the Creole language and its lexifier share the same speech community, the former often lacks linguistic and sociocultural legitimacy. In order words, the process of making the Creole languages official and/or upgrading their social status (status planning) in their respective habitat depends on the existence of the lexifier—or lack thereof. Social and political recognition of the Creole languages have been more forthcoming in the second subcategory—as in the islands of Mauritius or Seychelles—and in the second category (the ABC islands).

In the cases of Cape Verde, Jamaica or Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, given the presence of the lexifier, particularly in the realm of the officialdom, has made the process of turning their respective creole into a medium to be used in education and other formal domains extremely difficult. For one, given the fact that the Creole lexical corpus borrows extensively from the base language, historically there has been a social stigma attached to the Creole, which considers it as an erroneous way of speaking the high language.

Moreover, language conflict has also been observed within the Creole language itself, relatively to corpus planning (standardization and graphization of Creole). Several scholars have noted that the campaign for standardization and graphization of different Creoles are indeed a linguistic battleground. The choice for an orthography, more than a simple choice of which symbols should be used to write the language, is above all a political statement. Those proposing a pro-etymology orthography seek to strength the links between the Creole language and its lexifier. On the other hand, those seeking to construct a more phonological orthography aim precisely the linguistic independence by increasing the symbolic differences with the lexifier. Given the situation, these post-colonial Creole islands have developed into a system of mandarinate, in which the defining element is the knowledge of the lexifier. This is because the state has been controlled by a tiny linguistic elite.

The International Weight of the Portuguese Language

The legacy of the Portuguese colonial language policy has resulted in two interrelated phenomena, lusophilia and the Afro-Lusitan identity. I define the concept of lusophilia as a set of beliefs and attitudes considering the superiority of the Portuguese culture and language, particularly in the context of colonized culture. This concept explains the

102 The term is borrowed from David D. Laitin, Politics, Language, and Thought: The Somali Experience, 10.
reasons why the Portuguese language has become a target of exaltation and adulation in the post-colony. The adulation of the Portuguese language is either direct, through statements exalting the putative qualities of the language, such as its lyricism and aesthetics, or indirectly, through continuous efforts to invest far more time and resources into mastering that language (vis-à-vis native language).

Adulation of the former colonizer’s language is something that can be observed across post-colonial Africa. No other example fits better here than Senegal’s first president, Leopold Senghor. Senghor, a man of letters, was widely known for his love, worship and admiration of the French language. This explains why he was behind la Francophonie project. Noting the differences between the French and African languages, Senghor writes that:

Because we are cultural half-castes, because, although we feel as Africans, we express ourselves as Frenchmen, because French is a language with a universal vocation, because our message is addressed to the Frenchmen of France as well as to other men, because French is a language of “graciousness and civility.” ... I know what its resources are because I have tasted and digested and taught it, and it is a language of the gods. 103

Senghor is not alone in this. Several other post-colonial intellectuals and political activists have also shown same adoration for the language of the former colonial power.

103 Leopold Senghor cited in Bernh Lindfors, “Politics, Culture and Literary Form in Black Africa,” Colby Quarterly: Vol. 15, 4 (1979). Available at: http://digitalcommons.colby.edu/cq/vol15/iss4/5 (emphasis added). The case of Leopold Senghor is an excellent example in this situation. Arguably Senghor was highly influenced by the propaganda of the French colonial state which diffuses the idea of cultural superiority of the French culture and language. Following the independence of Senegal and its rise to the Senegalese presidency, Senghor turned to be one of the most ardent Francophile in the former French African colonies. In this respect, Senghor is known to have stated that the French language is “a particularly efficacious instrument of knowledge and...reason. In its verbs the French language emphasizes time, the abstract, over the appearance, the concrete.” See Leopold Senghor Speech given January 1980, reprinted in Revue des Parlamentaires de Langue Française, March 1980, no. 38, 8, cited in Brian Weinstein. The Civic Tongue: Political Consequences of Language Choices. New York: Longman, 1982, 31.
For instance, for the Haitian writer Léon Laleau, the knowledge of the French language and its figures of speech is equivalent to “belong[ing] to a kind of international order. Even in a country of racial discrimination the biggest doors hesitate to close to a black man who can use French elegantly.”  

Similar patterns of thinking are seen in post-colonial Cape Verde. It is not uncommon for the literati, intellectuals and intelligentsia, to declare public adulation for the Portuguese language. Ondina Ferreira, for instance, a former minister of culture during the 1990s, and perhaps one of the most ardent proponents of a Portuguese-only (as official language) policy, writes that:

A calamity, because [the Portuguese language] is the richest communication medium that we have in terms of the development of logical, philosophical, ontological, existential, technological and scientific thinking. Because it is a source of communication forged for such and stands to lose this wealth of communication with a “laissez passer” and some contempt to his intellectual community that does not leave the arena in defense of the Portuguese language.

Ondina Ferreira thinks that the wave of Creole as an official language is very powerful to the point that it may force the Portuguese language out of the islands. In fact, elsewhere she talks about the dangers of the “impurity” of the Portuguese language as it is spoken in Cape Verde. The confluence of the two languages in a small space would lead to negative interferences of the subordinate language onto the dominant, official language.

---


Ondina Ferreira adopts a superstratist approach to the Cape Verdean language, according to which there is a close and direct genetic linkage between the Cape Verdean Creole and the Portuguese language.\textsuperscript{106} She states that “Portuguese paternity of our language cannot be negated.”\textsuperscript{107} This is a common notion accepted by most of Cape Verdean lusophile superstratists: the understanding of the language is made static at the level of the lexicon, and conveniently casting aside other linguistic aspects such as syntax and morphology, which approximate the language to West African linguistic systems.\textsuperscript{108} How a Creole language is constructed becomes, as such, an ideology of identity.

The second outcome of the modern colonial language is the formation of a social group who I call the \textit{Afro-Lusitans}. I adopt this from the insight of Mazrui’s concept of Afro-Saxons, an African social group who increasingly use English as the main vehicle for daily and private communications.\textsuperscript{109} My concept of Afro-Lusitan refers to the Africans who have Portuguese as their mother tongue or have opted to make the Portuguese language as the language of the private sphere—that is, the language used within the realm of friends, family and intimacy in general. For the Afro-Lusitan, the

\textsuperscript{106} In contact linguistics, the subfield that study how two or more languages interact with each and their mutual influence and/or the development of a new language (i.e. Creole language), the superstratum language is the language of the dominant group (and substractum is the language of the dominated group). A superstratist language ideology emphasize the connection between the language and its lexifier, the language of prestige. In the case of Creole language, the superstratist language ideology would posit that these languages are no more than a transformation of the European languages. See, for instance, Pierer Muysken and Norval Smith, “The study of pidgin and creole languages,” in Arends, Jacques, Pieter Muysken, and Norval Smith., ed., \textit{Pidgins and Creoles An Introduction} (Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Pub. Co, 1994), 3-14.

\textsuperscript{107} Ondina Ferreira, “Afetos Linguisticos e outras Questoes”, \textit{Expresso das Ilhas}, November 22, 2006, 8.

\textsuperscript{108} Macedo, \textit{A Linguistic Approach to the Capeverdean Language}.

Portuguese language is not only a medium of societal (and private) communication. It is the *identitary* element par excellence, which permits the distinction to other social groups. The use of the Portuguese language in private sphere reinforces their special identity. In the post-colonial context, in which there is a premium on fluency of the European language, this group is very well positioned as it has complete mastery over the dominant language.

Historically, several voices among Cape Verdean intelligentsia have long argued that the Portuguese language was the essential and the only plausible medium capable of fully inserting the country in the proposed Luso-Brazilian community. The Afro-Lusitan and the lusophiles may have been the social strata that most supported the maintenance of special relations with the former colonial power. Their privileged position in the post-colony, as agents of the state and/or members of the local intellectual and intelligentsia community, simply reinforces the Portuguese language domination, particularly because: a) they are social role models and the group as a whole establishes what is socially acceptable; b) their close relations with the metropolitan elite, who make use of this connection to further and deepen the relations between the post-colony and the former metropolitan power.

---

110 The discourse of special relations between the former colonial power and the former colonies has becoming dominant, particularly in the post-Cold War era. In part of the retreat of the superpower from the former Portuguese colonies (mainly Angola and Mozambique), the new language spread policy carried out by Brazil and Portugal, the changes in the political regimes in the former Portuguese colonies (from radical one-party states to multi-party electoral democracy), facilitated the strengthening of relations with Portugal. What the discourse of special relations fail to mention is the history of violence, structural or otherwise, perpetuated by the colonial power during the years of colonialism.
More recently, the political and social predominance of the Portuguese language was reinforced with the institutionalization of a language-based international organization, the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries (CPLP, in its Portuguese acronym).\textsuperscript{111} The constituting document of the CPLP considers that the group constitutes “geographical discontinuous space but identified by a common language [i.e., the Portuguese language].”\textsuperscript{112} Underpinning the CPLP is the ideology of \textit{Lusofonia}. It is, in a way, a newer version of the lusotropicalist ideology, seeking to whiten history by completely erasing the legacy of violence and imposition that was part of the colonial experience. Lusofonia, as an ideology and an institution finds its predecessors in the colonial period: arguments for the establishment of Luso-Brazilian Community; Lusotropicalism; Zona Escudo (monetary and fiscal unity). The key tenet of the ideology of Lusofonia is the notion that the Portuguese language constitutes a “historical link and a common patrimony resulting from the multi-secular coexistence.”\textsuperscript{113}

Organizations such as la Francophonie or the CPLP reproduce the dominant position of the European languages in the former colonies. At the same time, they create new structures for “strategy of extraversion” that is, the instrumental attachment to the

\textsuperscript{111} The CPLP was officially created in Lisbon in 1996 by the head of states of the seven states that have Portuguese language as the official language: Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal and Sao Tome and Principe. While it is based on the principle of equality, Portugal and Brazil are clearly the two countries that could reap the most benefits from the organization that supports and spread the language. It is important to note, however, that the CPLP pretends to be an organization that is beyond linguistic promotion/protection. The objective is the edification of a moral international community based on liberal values (e.g., one of the conditions for membership is that the candidate-state must have the rule of law). La Francophonie was created in 1973. Weinstein defines it as “a worldwide movement of interlocking elites working toward permanent association on linguistic grounds […] seek[ing] to advance the use of French for the sake of the language and to pursue political and economic interests in and between states.” See Weinstein, “Francophonie.,” 485.


\textsuperscript{113} Ibid.

**Conclusion**

The aim of the chapter was to present a short description of the Portuguese colonial language policy as well as the development of a nativist discourse on the mother tongue. Looking back to the past is a mechanism that allows us to uncover present social forces and the extent to which these forces might have gathered momentum over the years. From the historical institutionalist approach, the colonial language policy can be well characterized by path dependence: the cost (political or otherwise, for the local elite or others) of changing it may be well over the costs of maintaining.

The study of the colonial language policy permits one to better understand how the institutions of the state and other non-state institutions, particularly the Catholic Church, embed the European language in their core. The institutional linkage between the colonial and post-colonial states implied that the language of the former colonizer would maintain a privileged status within the society. As the status of the colonial language suffers minimal or no change within the configuration of the post-colonial society, post-colonial politics resembles much of the old political structures of the colonial period: the splitting of two different realms, the state and the society, defined, among other things, by
the prevailing language in each domain. The linguistic divide, as such, reinforces the
distance and curtails the people’s participation in the processes of controlling the state.

The colonial language policy still has an impact on the dominant language
ideology. The post-colonial elites’ beliefs and attitudes towards language have been
described as biased in favor of the former colonial language (and, not infrequently, biased
against the indigenous languages). Often, the former colonizer’s language is exalted and
constructed as the only viable means towards social, political and technical modernity.
Subsequently, efforts are constantly made to block any attempts to promote the
indigenous languages.

The Portuguese language is the sole official language of the state. Revolutionary
enthusiasm of 1974 and 1975 did not translate in the higher status for the Cape Verdean
language. Such a situation may be the result of the fact that the PAIGC, the party that
fought for independence and controlled power after independence, supported territorial
nationalism that did not much emphasize the language as a symbol for mobilization. It is
also the result of the fact of the political objective of unification of Guinea-Bissau and
Cape Verde. In the event of such a unification, making the Cape Verdean language an
official language in Cape Verde would have given a comparative advantage vis-à-vis the
Bissau-Guineans

The post-colonial state building and its emphasis on nation-building paid no
serious attention to the language question. While political discourse emphasized the
national language, political practice seemed to condemn the Cape Verdean language to its
secondary status and role. During the first fifteen years, the language question was not
placed among the key issues in the governmental agenda. It suffices to note that
government and/or party documents included no design for status planning of the Cape
Verdean language. The elites’ linguistic conservatism prevailed.

The opening of the political realm and the subsequent transition to electoral
democracy in the early 1990s created new opportunities for the national language.
Attempts were made towards corpus planning of the Cape Verdean language—through
the creation of an official alphabet, the so-called ALUPEC. In spite of these
developments, current language policy in Cape Verde remains that of a diglossia, with
the predominance of the Portuguese language guaranteed in the domains of authority and
power. It is not uncommon for the elites to defend the higher status of Portuguese, often
at the expense of the mother tongue.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE ILLEGIBLE STATE AND DEMOCRATIC CONTROL

To many citizens, the state in Cape Verde is concealed because it is illegible. To understand this situation I developed the concept of illegible state, which, as it will be seen below relates to the fact that the common citizens find it quite difficult to supervise the state, its institutions and personnel. This is so because of the linguistic gap between them. The state has developed a linguistic shell difficult to be penetrated in by a sizeable proportion of its citizens. This means that the comprehension of the state and its operations is a herculean task for the many. Yet, the process of gathering information on the state is a sine qua non for the citizens’ proper supervision and democratic control. The use of the Portuguese language, in spite of its linguistic proximity to the Cape Verdean language, the people’s mother tongue, provokes a political short-circuit between the state and a significant number of population, whereby the power of control of the latter over the former is greatly reduced.

The chapter argues the state’s almost sole reliance on the former colonial language impairs the ability of the monoglot citizen—those who are not proficient in the Portuguese language—to grasp its operations, procedures, and processes. The difficulty of understanding the nuts and bolts of the state is in part caused by the linguistic differences. This, in turn, negatively impacts the citizens’ overall ability to exercise vertical accountability over the state’s elected and appointed officials. Moreover, the media, a channel that could simplify the state for the citizens, is linguistically allied to the
state. Media information is overwhelmingly in the high language (Portuguese), which hinders the enlightened understanding of politics. This, in the last instance, translates as an overall decrease of the quality of democracy insofar as a sizeable portion of citizens can’t access the performance of the state from which they are linguistically isolated.

This chapter is divided into four main sections. Following the introduction, I examine the people’s own perception and mental constructions regarding the state and its agents—particularly the high-level state agents. Then, I proceed to look at the relationship that exists among the state, media and the citizen. My point is that the media is not helping the process of making the state legible for the common citizen insofar as it allies linguistically with the state. I introduce the media and their role in this linguistic divide and the extent that they may contribute to further isolation of the state vis-à-vis society. In the third section, I explore the state illegibility, weak democratic control and its impact on the quality of democracy in Cape Verde. Then I analyze all the linguistic strategies of the state elite. In the conclusion where I critically highlight all the major points throughout the chapter.

**Citizens’ Perception about the State in Cape Verde**

In this section, I will start by describing how the common citizen perceives the state, from the linguistic point of view. In other words, my key objectives are to: a) highlight the dominant language ideology that pervades the Cape Verdean society—though most are unaware of it; b) demonstrate the extent that this ideology truly informs the way that people see the state.
The further up a state agent is in the administrative ladder the more the linguistic distance that he or she has vis-à-vis the common citizen. Certain offices of the state are more linguistically friendly to the citizen than others. I often asked my informants about their linguistic interaction between with the state’s offices. During one of the focus groups interviews, a male high school graduate, in his early twenties, told me:

There are state agencies in which if you can’t speak Portuguese you would not go further. I have been through so many constraints for not knowing to speak Portuguese correctly.¹

The state agents, particularly those placed in high echelon of the public administration bureaucracy, use primarily Portuguese. For instance, in the courts the working language is Portuguese, even when the defendant does not speak the language (in which case, he or she must count on the translation or explanations from his or her attorney). In some other agencies, particularly those that deal with the average citizen on a daily basis communication takes place in the Cape Verdean language. As part of my research, I visited some of the state’s agencies to observe how people behaved socio-linguistically. One of the state offices I often visited was the Conservatory of the Records in the neighborhood of Txada Santu Antoni. Primary communication between the citizen and the clerk was in the native language. In other institutions, such as the Ministry of Foreign Relations, the encounter takes place in Portuguese. Yet, even when Portuguese is used the trend, people tended to respond in their native language. A young female informant told me that in the state offices where Portuguese is the primary language use,

¹ Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Brasil (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 11, 2011. The focus groups interviews were all conducted in the Cape Verdean language. All translations of the interviews were done by the author.
many of the citizens conducting business with the state would retort in the Cape Verdean language. She said that:

> Creole has a lot of [social] weight. It is difficult to go to the [public] administration [offices] and to speak Portuguese. Even when we are communicated with in Portuguese, we often respond in Creole.²

Bilingual citizens do not face similar constraints. Their being fluent in the high language is a form of symbolic capital that can be used to their advantage. To be proficient in Portuguese is to be fully equipped with what Pierre Bourdieu calls linguistic capital, that is, high social value and distinction deriving from being proficient or a native speaker of a dominant and prestigious language.³ This ultimately results in preferential treatments by the state agent. Language is understood by all as a marker of social identity and status within society. Being fluent in the language is an asset that can be translated in tangible advantages. Speaking the dominant language often means a drastic improvement in the services provided by the state. To put it differently linguistic differences incur different levels of access to the state. A female informant, in her mid-twenties working for the community radio station, recounted an experience she had at the Conservatory of the Records in the neighborhood of Txada Santu Antoni (in the city of Praia):

> Like everybody else, I was waiting for my number to be called to be attended by the clerk. Then, a gentleman came in and went straight to the clerk. He began to speak in Portuguese and things changed automatically. The clerk became friendlier. About ten minutes later he took the paperwork he came in for and left—while we were all waiting for our turn.⁴

---

² Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011.
³ Bourdieu, *Language and Symbolic Power*.
⁴ Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Achada Santo Antonio-Artica (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 2011.
Similar situations are common, I was told by many. It was no surprise for me to learn that they either had experienced directly or have heard of it. In fact, being myself a native of the islands, I recall how speaking Portuguese in public was an asset that opened doors and made services go faster. Situations like this create a perception that the state categorizes and creates a hierarchy among its citizens. It leads to a common perception that some citizens are effectively more equal than others.

This type of situation can also be extended to the access of information about the state. The monolingual citizen is doubly disadvantaged. For one, he or she cannot access the information about the state directly for not having the proper skills to grasp the information which are locked in a language that is different from what he or she uses. Even worse, as a speaker of subordinate language, the language of low prestige, the ordinary citizen may find him/herself with a limited capacity to extract information from/about the state—and/or from its agents.

My informants were aware of the linguistic distance that exists between the vernacular and the language of power. In spite of the fact that Creole derives from the Portuguese language, it is an entirely different. The use of one language or the other result in either political inclusion or exclusion. A young man told me that

I believe that [communication] in Cape Verdean language is far better […] some of my colleagues may understand it better when it is in Cape Verdean language than in Portuguese. [Moreover] there are many words in Portuguese that many people often don’t get to understand what it is discussed.

---

5 Macedo, A Linguistic Approach to the Capeverdean Language; Manuel Veiga, Diskrison strutral di lingua kabuverdianu (Praia, Cape Verde: Institutu Kabuverdianu di Livru, 1982).
6 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011.
Another young male, with high school diploma and searching for job, went further:

I also believe that in Cape Verdean language people understand better […] and interpret better the sentences [uttered]. The Portuguese language has many words that one has hard time understanding them. So, when you are around a politician [who speaks in Portuguese language] you are pointlessly clapping your hands as you may have no idea what you are supporting.7

A third informant, a young woman in her early twenties, commented:

I believe that both the Portuguese and the Cape Verdean languages should be made official languages. Sometimes, many people face embarrassment as in many state’s offices as they can’t speak Portuguese.8

Many of my informants (and I have observed similar situations) have told me that the use of different languages in the public administration means different treatment. Some of them have even recounted their own experiences regarding this. One of the experiences that is quite anecdotal is worth sharing here:

My friend [who is a proficient bi-lingual] asked me to go with him for some errands—that included various stops at different state offices for certain documents that he need to take to the port authorities as to get some of his stuff he imported from Portugal. In the first few offices we went my friend spoke Cape Verdean language with the clerks. While he obtained the necessary paperwork he needed, they gave him some hard time. He then decided that thenceforth in the other offices and at the Port Authority he would speak Portuguese. Not only did it become relatively easier for him to get what he was looking for, but the office manager came from the inside to talk to him to make sure that everything was fine.9

---

7 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011.
8 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011.
9 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Achada Santo Antonio-Achada Riba (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 2011.
This situation is understood by almost all. The members of the political and cultural elite understood that their using the Portuguese translates into faster and more efficient results. Take for instance the affirmation of the writer Rui Figueiredo:

[In Cape Verde] people use Portuguese, when in contact with others and expect respect. When you go a [state] service, to a store or to a place where you would get a service in [the island of] Sao Vicente you start talking to the people in Portuguese. Because certainly they would call you Mister; and give you a better service.¹⁰

What is important to retain from the above quotations is the perception of the language in social interaction. Portuguese is accepted as the currency of high social status and education. Those employing it are often taken to be part of the higher echelon of the social and political ladder. In other words, the employment of the Portuguese language invites respect, admiration, and high opinion about the speaker. Therefore, it becomes one key element of social distinction—by the speaker and the audience alike. The Portuguese language is a marker and symbol of high social position and authority. As a symbol of authority, Portuguese becomes intimidating.

The state is perceived to be a linguistic construct. That is to say, the state is the realm in which one language (Portuguese in the case of Cape Verde) is to have the predominant role and to be used for its functions. There was an almost a consensus among my informants, regardless of their social and academic background, that the top state agents must be fluent in the official language, the language of wider communication that permits the linkage between the country and the international community. A

common mentality is that the role of the state is essentially to muster material and moral support from abroad. The process of seeking foreign aid implies that the state agents be proficient in an international language. A young man in his twenty, with high school diploma and looking for job, tells me that one of the roles of the President of the Republic is to engage with foreign governments so as to procure developmental aid. In his own words:

The President of the Republic is a person who travels abroad searching for aid, doing this and that. If he/she speaks only [Cape Verden] Creole, for me, he/she should not be in that position. A person that speaks only Creole should not exercise such a post.  

In the same line, another young man who had not concluded high school education considers that:

a President of the Republic or a Prime Minister or a minister who speaks only Cape Verden Creole is not good since there are times in which it is good to speak Creole but there are also times that one needs the Portuguese language more than Creole…But to be able to speak just Creole, even for us who are not the President of the Republic sometimes when we go to some place we feel frustrated let alone a President. A President who is not able to speak in Portuguese is too bad.

Still another informant put it as:

A President of the Republic who speaks only in Creole can’t be possible. It is not good. [It is] too negative. Too negative as there are many Presidents who come to Cape Verde [for state visit].

The above citations give a clear idea how the common citizens think of a state. It should be stressed, as noted above, that this position is defended by the members of the

---

11 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Brasil (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 11, 2011.
12 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Brasil (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 11, 2011.
13 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Brasil (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 11, 2011.
political and cultural elite. As an apparatus of power, its personnel should (or perhaps) must use the language which has more prestige and power attached to it. At the same time, significant traces of a variation of a high language ideology that developed since the years of independence can also be found. There is the notion that the state needed Portuguese for international communication, a role that the native language could not fill.

It should be noted that since late colonial period the Cape Verdean cultural—and later political elite—has created a representation of themselves as powerful intermediaries with the outside world. Given the history of calamities and other natural and man-made disasters, the dependence to foreign aid—private charity and public assistance—is something that has been recorded since the early nineteenth century. Against this backdrop the elites have positioned themselves as the interlocuteur valable with the international world. As the gatekeepers, information and/or resources coming from abroad are to pass through them. Their social value is increased in terms of the control of the access to foreign information and resources.

Comprehending the State: The Media, the State and the Citizen in Cape Verde

Accountability warrants knowledge of the limits of the institution and/or the agents under supervision. The citizens’ democratic control of the state, as such, implies that these have

15 For a great discussion of the role of the Cape Verdean cultural and political elite as the intermediary see Jose Carlos Gomes dos Anjos, Intelectuais, literatura e poder em Cabo Verde: lutas de definição da identidade nacional (Porto Alegre, Brasil: UFRGS/IFCH, 2002).
16 International immigration and new technologies of information have, in a way, decreased but not eliminated the power and role of the local elite in terms to access to the foreign resources and information.
an understanding about the operations as well as about the legal and political limits within which the state is allowed to act. In the contemporary society, the understanding of the state derives mainly from indirect sources, namely, the media. In what follows, I argue that the media contributes to the further linguistic isolation of the state in Cape Verde insofar as most of what is transmitted is done so in the language that most people understand only superficially or none at all.

The media in Cape Verde can be classified as local, when owned and servicing to the nationals, and foreign, when programming has almost nothing to do with the social reality of the country. Globalization, the process of shortening space and time, allowing for the instantaneousness of information across states’ borders, and the development of new technologies of information have had tremendous impacts in the Cape Verdean mediascape. While the global media are very influential and important, they are nonetheless accessible only to a minority of the people—those with either linguistic or economic capital to engage with the international media.

The second path of communication between the state and the citizen is through the media. Most Cape Verdeans either do not have access to the internet or are computer illiterate. As such, the impact of the online media is quite limited. Print media circulation is relatively small limited to a couple of thousands per week (consumed by the culturati and highly educated class). The media that have more impact are the television and the radio broadcasts. Most of the radio stations are locally-based, that is limited to an island or to a group of islands. The RNCV, the state-owned national radio station, is the
exception as it has nationwide coverage. As for the television broadcast so far only the
national television state has nationwide coverage.

The logic of the market has dictated that private radio stations be focused almost
entirely to entertainment programming, instead of programs that focus on informing and
forming the population. National in-depth news and their analysis are almost an exclusive
area of the National Radio and Television stations—the RTC, the Cape Verdean Radio
and Television Broadcast Company. Almost all of the programs in those two media are
presented in Portuguese—more so in the television than in radio broadcast (see table 9).

While Portuguese is not the mother tongue for almost all Cape Verdean citizens,
these, nonetheless, encounter with the Portuguese almost daily—chiefly via the mass
media, which relies almost exclusively in that language. The Brazilian Colloquial
Portuguese comes mainly through entertaining programs such as the Brazilian soap
operas which are a success in audience. The “erudite” Portuguese and the Standard
European Portuguese (the norm from Portugal) are used mostly by the local cultural and
the political elite in their oral and written communication needs. The employment of
these uncommon and unfamiliar words has a marker of distinction and social prestige.17

The use of “erudite” Portuguese by the local elite accomplishes many other
political and social objectives. It also constitutes a technique of manipulating social

---

17 Portuguese has been defined as pluricentric language, given the fact that it has two main and
recognizable standard versions, both in spoken and in written forms: the European and American (Brazil).
perception insofar as the usage of a “difficult language” is perceived as face value for other socially rewarded qualities such as intelligence and technical competence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Corporation</th>
<th>Main Language Used</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>TV broadcast</strong></td>
<td>TCV (state-owned)</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tiver (private)</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Radio Broadcast</strong></td>
<td>RNCV (state-owned)</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Crioula FM</td>
<td>CVL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Praia FM</td>
<td>CVL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radio Comercial</td>
<td>CVL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Radio Nova</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mosteiros FM</td>
<td>CVL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Print Media</strong></td>
<td>A Semana</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expresso das Ilhas</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Nação</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Online Media</strong></td>
<td>A Semana</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expresso das Ilhas</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A Naçao</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Notícias de Norte</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Liberal Online</td>
<td>PL</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compilation by the author.

Television and radio broadcast reach throughout the country. The television is far more attractive than other traditional media such as print media or radio, because of its bi-dimensionality (voice and image). Entertaining programs constitute the bulk of what is broadcast in the national television in Cape Verde. Most of the programs presented on the national television broadcast, be them national or foreign, are about musical or other non-informative shows. Discussions of domestic socio-economic and political affairs are confined to the two types of shows: first, the news, particularly the 8:00 pm news, which present the most important political development of the day or week. The prime time
news takes about 50 minutes. As such, current political issues do not go through the process of careful and in-depth analysis. The second type of program is those in which informed commentators are invited to discuss some key issues of the week (e.g., “A Grande Entrevista” [The Great Interview] or “Conversa em Dia” [Updating Talk]). These two types of programs are almost exclusively presented in the Portuguese language.

Most of the people, from the peripheral areas of the city, do not pay much attention to the news. During the prime time news (from 8:00 pm to about 9:00 pm) the streets were often packed with people. Tropical climate invite people to be outdoors at night. People prefer to be outdoors, talking with each other or simply roaming around. From the open windows of many houses, a turn-on television set on an almost empty room could be seen. Often only one or another member of the family is watching the news (the majority are outside, as mentioned). Lack of interest in the news may be related to the fact that information is transmitted in a language that most people either do not understand or have rudimentary mastery.

The informed commentator interviews are almost exclusively in Portuguese. Almost always, the invited commentators are members of the leading strata of the society, a part of the local cultural and political elite. The use of the Portuguese language in these programs accomplishes two inter-related objectives: first, it legitimizes the commentator as an authority to comment on the subject under discussion, and, second, it

18 The situation drastically changes at 9:00 pm. That is the hour reserved for the Brazilian soap opera. Suddenly the streets become deserted and the family reunites in front of the television set. Brazilian soap operas are a big success. These soap operas use the most colloquial and popular Brazilian Portuguese that can be easily understood by most of the Cape Verdean speakers (recall that the mother tongue is almost exclusively based on Portuguese lexicon).
provides an opportunity for the individual to demonstrate his/her capacity to manipulate the Portuguese language. Linguistic exhibitionism leads to use of an esoteric Portuguese: uncommon lexicography, unusual grammatical and sentence constructions, and so on. Exoteric language is a key marker of expertise.

Such linguistic practices foster monolingual citizens’ political passivity. The Portuguese language is intimidating and discouraging. When these informative programs are on, monoglot citizens have few incentives to follow it. Little can be retained by those citizens who don’t have a complete mastery of the Portuguese language. Unless there is someone available who is proficient in Portuguese who can either translate or provide the gist of what is being discussed, the monoglot citizens finds themselves in a difficult situation because they are excluded from information. The information is presented not in a form that they can grasp the contents in order to have a formed opinion about the subject matter. Rather, a “veil of ignorance” is imposed upon the monoglot citizen. Thus, linguistic exclusion becomes political exclusion insofar as not being proficient in the high language hinders one access to the vital information and/or the political processes. Put in totally different words, linguistic choices in the media impact citizen’s enlightened understanding—another pillar element in modern democracy, the source for a proper and active civic and political engagement.
The Illegibility of the State and diminished Surveillatory Participation

The state’s over reliance on Portuguese leads to political exclusion. That language becomes an “instrument of deprivation.” Its sole use by the state for its daily operations and procedures deprives a sizeable segment of the citizens the access to the crude information. In this aspect, it can be argued that the constant use of the Portuguese as the state’s medium of communication deprive many citizens of their right to information and negatively impacts on the overall principle of political equality before law. The comprehension of the Portuguese language is hindered not only by these “difficult words.” Sentence and grammatical constructions may also hinder the understanding of a message passed through the Portuguese language by those who are not fully trained in that language.

It is against this backdrop that I talk of an illegible state in Cape Verde, that is, a state that is “unreadable” by the great number of its citizens. Its insistence in using only one of the languages, the Portuguese language, for most of its formal communications implies that most of the people simply do not grasp the information that derives within the state. The problem of the state illegibility in Cape Verde—and the argument can be extended to other post-colonial states in Africa—is double. It is, on the one hand, about the form. By form I simply mean about choosing which language(s) should be employed by the state in its formal and informal operations.

---

There is also the problem of content, or what Weinstein calls “language of politics.”\textsuperscript{20} This refers to the corpus of the language. It includes different techniques of manipulating the language (such as the word choice, tone, style and metaphor) as to fit a political objective. As the state elites are highly literate and has a complete mastery of the standard Portuguese, state’s rules, procedures, discourses and the like, are more often than not produced in an erudite language. Clearly it needs to be said that fluency in the dominant language is not a direct guarantee that one will understand all of the processes and operations of the state power (e.g., policies, laws, regulations, budgets, and other governmental outputs).

The state use of the language is twofold. Sometimes the state uses the vernacular for direct and top-down communication. Other times, the uses the standard language as the language of specialty, characterized by specific jargons and structures that is understandable only by those who are familiar with that language (the second language). Yet, the distance between the specialty languages to the mother tongue is far greater than between the mother tongue and second language.

The vernacular speaker’s encounter with the state is superficial. It is at best to acquire a service or a good that is provided by the state (e.g., a copy of the certificate of live birth in Conservatory of the Records). To truly understand the operations of power and the processes and procedures of the state entail that one goes to the core. To impose control over the state implies that one understand the institutional and legal architecture underpinning it. That is to say that to be able to fully question and/or to inquiry about the

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 7-11.
actions carried out (or failed to carried out) by the state officials one must know the institutional limits that the state imposes upon itself.

It should be noted, however, that I am not claiming that only by understanding the core of the state will the citizen be able to question the state. Apart from what can be called “institutional questioning,” the process of question whether the state’s actions (or lack thereof) might have trespassed the institutional limits imposed upon itself, one can also find moral and practical questionings. Moral questioning refers to the process of inquiring the extent that state’s actions is morally wrong and practical questioning is about the practical, economic and social efficacy and efficiency of the activities conducted by the state’s agents. Even when one does not know the institutional and legal limits of the state, one can still discern a moral and/or an inefficient action carried out by the state. The illegibility of the state, as such, is more linked to the institutional and legal framework that underpins it. The latter, as noted above, is essentially produced and guarded in the Portuguese language, a language that a great majority does not master. In the next section I explore the extent that the media aid or hinder the monolingual citizen in the process of simplification of the state.

The concept of the “illegible state” is an analytical tool that helps explains the citizens’ relationship to the state, an important focus of comparative politics. A clarification is warranted here in order to properly grasp the concept of illegible state. The concept of the state is not equivalent to the government. While in popular, and quite often, in media discourse “government” and the “state” are used interchangeably, the two are two different social-political entities. The government is but the executive and the key
administrator of the state. Institutionally, functionally and in terms of personnel the two
are quite distinct: the government is just one portion—perhaps the most important one—
of the state institutions. The other institutions that make up the state include the different
autonomous public organizations and enterprises, the judicial and legislative branches,
the office of the head of the state (the president and the monarch in the non-presidentialist
and monarchical regimes. As the government is a smaller portion of the institutions of the
state, it follows that the government’s personnel is a fraction of the state’s workforce.

For too many common citizens democratic oversight over the state is a difficult
and complicated business. The concept of state illegibility that is brought in here one is
important to understand why certain sections of the population do not fully exercise
supervisory activities over the state. The Oxford English Dictionary’s definition of the
term “legible” is “easily made out or deciphered.” Something is considered legible
when it can be broken down into its key constitutive parts for the fastest intellectual
absorption. James C. Scott theorizes about political legibility to refer “to a state’s attempt
to make society legible, to arrange the population in ways that simplified the classic state
functions of taxation, conscription, and prevention of rebellion.” Interested in the state-
society relations from a historical point of view, Scott analyzes ways and strategies
created by the state to better control its corresponding society. The ultimate political goal
of the state and its elite is to facilitate the penetration in the society for extraction and
mobilization of human and material resources. Making the society legible, thus, expedite

---

22 Scott, Seeing Like a State, 2.
the rule of the state. With discourses, practices and policies, the state becomes the Trojan horse to be deployed within the ranks of society. Scott’s point of departure is the following: pre-modern state lived with an unordered society, or what he prefers to call “social hieroglyph” so as to hint the enigmatic characteristic of the society—from the perspective of the state elite. The key distinguishing feature between the pre-modern and the modern states is the following: the latter is truly engaged in ordering, classifying, cataloging and controlling the population and the territory it administer. Therefore, “legibility [becomes] a central problem in [modern] statecraft.” 23 Through the above-described processes, the state’s activities vis-à-vis society are made easier for the former to become more knowledgeable of the latter; power is supported by the knowledge of the social. The latter supports and provides more substance to power. 24

The modern state, according to Scott, has created mechanisms and strategies to better map out its subjects, in order to proper dominate and rule over its population. The society is made “legible” permitting the state’s political management for the suitable extraction of human and material resources from the society. 25 The more the society is made legible, the more is the state capacity for extraction of resources from its respective society and/or to defend itself against potential, violent or otherwise, retaliations coming from the state.

Turning Scott’s theory upside down, I analyze how difficult it is to make the state legible to the totality or the greatest number of its citizens. In today’s world,

23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
characterized by a mounting adoption of liberal democratic discourse, theoreticians and politicians alike and at global scale have popularized the concept of public transparency. Such a concept implies making the state “transparent” to its citizens—and to the foreign states, organizations and other states’ citizens. That is to say, that the state should and must publish and disseminate its activities, omissions, plans, vital statistics, and so on, as to make possible the seeing through the state. However, as it will become clear below, the concept of legibility of the state is far beyond the concept of transparency; it involves more than the dissemination of the state’s information

The state uses a myriad of techniques and tools to make the society more (and easily) legible. Perhaps the most known method is that of gathering demographic, social and political-economic statistical information of the society over which it rules. Other methods include the management of the public space, mapping the territory, and application of ‘scientific’ methods to productive activities. All of this is related to what Michel Foucault has called governmentality, that is, a combination of practices, ideologies and beliefs constructed by the state to better dominate and seek compliance from its population.

26 In a way this is the guiding principle of the Transparency International, an international non-governmental organization whose key objective “is a world in which government, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption.” For more on this see, “Overview,” Transparency International, http://www.transparency.org/whoweare/organisation (accessed on February 15, 2015)

The notion of legibility can be better understood if analyzed in light of the concept of the “infrastructural power” of the state.\textsuperscript{28} Michael Mann defines infrastructural power as “the capacity of the state actually to penetrate civil society and to implementlogically political decisions through the realm.”\textsuperscript{29} To facilitate the two processes of penetration and logistical implementation of decisions, the state embraces its respective society in a complex, multifarious and permanent web of relationships. The state engages the citizens at the level of “banality,” that is, through the use of symbols and other mnemonic devices, subtle and understated identity markers and images that effectively colonize the minds of the citizens.\textsuperscript{30}

Society also initiates communication with its respective state, to gather information and/or to redress a situation perceived as against the institutionalized rules. This is related to the notion of social accountability (figure 5). The figure brings in combines the insight of Michel Mann, who, as noted above, considers that a key element of democratic states is the employment of infrastructural power over the society, with the views of accountability theory. The members of society, either individual or collectively, seek to oversee the actions (and omissions for that matter) of the state agents.

\textsuperscript{28} According to Michael Mann, historically two different types of power can be discerned in the state: the despotic power which, as the name implies, is simply the “power over society,” and the infrastructural power,” the power through society.” See Michael Mann, “The Autonomous Power of the State: Its Origins, Mechanisms and Results,” in States in History, ed. John A. Hall (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), 109-136.

\textsuperscript{29} Ibid. 113.

\textsuperscript{30} I am basing this observation on the arguments put forth by Michael Billig in his oft-cited book of Banal Nationalism. In that book, Billig argues that nationalism and national identity are often reinforced by subtle and unconscious devices that we rarely stop to think about—such as the iconic symbols of the nation-state like the flag, the buildings, the monuments, the currencies, and so on. Resting on this argument, I contend that the state is often imperceptible to the minds of the people: the police officer standing at the corner, traffic laws that we abide when driving, the flags and other national symbols, and so on. For more on the subject, see Michael Billig, Banal Nationalism (London: Sage, 1995).
Social accountability is an important pillar of modern democracies. Philippe Schmitter and Terry Karl note that accountability is one of the key pillars of modern democracy: the more the state elite are accountable to their actions, the more democratic a polity. The concept refers to the process in which one party (public or private, individually or collective) seeks to supervise and manage the actions conducted on its behalf by another party. As such, the definition contains three major components: first, there is the principal, or the party on whose interest an action is taken; second, the agent, or the acting party; and, third, there is the action itself, the element that is put under scrutiny.

Elsewhere Philippe Schmitter argues that, in every political regime, from the dictatorial to the democratic, state leaders and elite, in a way of another, account for their actions. The question that one must ask is to whom these elites are responding. The intension and extension of the process of accountability is what distinguishes a democratic to non-democratic regimes. While the intension of accountability refers to the complexity of the process of oversight in itself, the extension of accountability relates to

---

the number of citizens and/or institutions (both public and private) involved. Ultimately through the combined policies and practices that promote and reinforce linguicism the state restricts its extension.

The question that one needs to ask is how the state becomes illegible to the citizens. The simple and direct answer to the question is that between the state and the society the lines of communication must have had the fewest amounts of interference and statics possible. The communication channels that link the state to the citizen must be unhindered lest it have growing problems of miscommunication between the two parties. The use by the state of a language that is widely used within its border constitutes one of the key mechanisms to resolve the situation. When the state uses a language that is the mother tongue of a great number of the citizens it becomes easier for the latter to understand and track the paths taken by the state.

The difference between the language of the state and that of citizens (the mother tongue), that is, between the politolect and the demolect, affects the lines of

---

33 There are many different forms of accountability, from institutional, private, horizontal and vertical. Explaining all these different types is beyond the scope of the chapter. What is of particularly interest to this chapter is the concept of social accountability. Staffan Lindberg writes that societal accountability “is involved where civil society and the media take actions aimed at forcing political, bureaucratic, business and legal decision-makers to give information on, and justifications for, their actions.” See Staffan I. Lindberg, “Accountability: the core concept and its subtypes,” Africa Power and Politics Programme (APPP) Working Paper, No. 1 (Apr, 2009): 14. It constitutes a type of vertical accountability, a bottom-up kind in which the state’s circle of power is put under surveillance by the outsiders. A key condition to this process is the free flow of information from the circle of powers to the circle of citizens. The media with its army of political commentators constitute a group of actors capable of providing, analyzing and commenting about the raw information about activities of the state and its elites.

The idea underpinning social accountability is the liberal principle that the people constitute the sole source of political legitimacy. While the people relegate part of the authority to the elected and nominated officials to conduct the political business, they do not totally relinquish their power. Elections are just one of the mechanisms of control. During election intervals, social accountability correspond to a mechanism of control in-between elections. The political class is put under surveillance—which may indeed lead to their removal before the end of their term, should they avoid following the basic social and political norms of action.
communication between the state and society. The concept of state-citizen communication can be useful to facilitate the understanding of the communicative interactions between the state and society. The flow of information between the two can be initiated by either party, orally or in a written format, with the objective of gathering knowledge about the processes and the characteristics of the other side. The state-citizen communication can be either direct or indirect. It is direct when a dyadic communicative relationship develops between a state agent and the citizen (e.g., an encounter between a police officer and a citizen). Alternatively, it is indirect when there is an intermediary between the citizen and the state. The state-citizen communication can be summarized in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of communication</th>
<th>Low Ranking State Official/ ordinary Citizen</th>
<th>Medium to high Ranking State Official/ ordinary citizen</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Oral Communication</td>
<td>LL+</td>
<td>unless clientelist/personal, no pattern of direct communication*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HL-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Written Communication</td>
<td>LL-</td>
<td>LL-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>HL+</td>
<td>HL+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LL (low language): the mother tongue of the citizens (Cape Verdean Language)
HL: high language or the state’s official Language (Portuguese Language)
+/-: denote whether the language is used the most or the least
* or during electoral campaign periods.

In many African post-colonial states, direct oral communication between the state and the citizen quite often takes place in the low language. The state agents such as the police officer, the clerks at the public administration providing direct information and/or

---

34 On the concepts of demolect and politolect see Brann, “The National Language Question.”
services to the population, and many other low ranking state officials engage in the mother tongue. These low ranking state officials often do not have a fluent command of the high language—thus, their subaltern position within the state hierarchy. Direct communications between state elite and the common citizen are scare—excepting the periods of election campaign or visits to the community by the elected state elite.35

Information and commentaries on the political processes and the architecture of power is channeled more often than not in the dominant language. Language ideologies and practices make a distinction between languages of modernity and tradition influence the choice of the medium to diffuse the performances of power. A language of modernity is accepted as the medium to transmit the political modernity. Other languages, according to the mainstream ideology in many post-colonial states, simply lack the necessary components or status to perform such a task.

To properly understand how the linguistic exclusion becomes political exclusion I develop the model that links the monoglot citizen to the state (figure 8). Often the information is made available in the state’s own channels (e.g., public speech of a state leader, the state’s official newspaper, or, more recently, the government’s webpage, among other channels). Alternatively, the information coming from the state may be disseminated through the mass media.

35 The public hearings can be conceived as a mechanism that would increase or facilitate the communicative encounter between the high echelon state official and the common citizen. Nowadays, different states, from states with a long history of democratic experiences to one-party states, such as China, are creating and developing the mechanisms of public hearings, with the double objective of supporting the initiatory and surveillatory participation of the citizens. See R. Kemp, “Planning, public hearings, and the politics of discourse,” in Critical Theory and Public Life, ed. John Forester (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1985), 177-201.
Insofar as the state operates almost exclusively in the high language, the monoglossic citizens simply cannot get access to the primary-source information. The state’s formal communications with the citizen is like hieroglyphics: not only does it rely almost always on a language that a sizeable portion of the society understands only partially (not to say anything at all), but also it uses an esoteric style of that language. Supposedly the mass media would fill in the vacuum of incomprehension by facilitating the process of interpretation of the processes of power. In modern democracies, the mass media have been considered as a crucial element in de-codifying the already complex political processes. The media, by following the diglossic language ideologies and practices, contribute to the further ineligibility of the state and the processes of power.

The model represents the flow of information and attempts of mobilization and control between the state and the citizen that goes through an intermediary, be this a truly bilingual citizen or the media. As such, it does not apply to the situations in which the
citizen, who is proficient in the high language, can access the information by going
directly to the state, without any linguistic intermediary.

There are two main paths for the monoglot citizen to grasp the meaning and
content of information about the political processes. The first path assumes that the
monoglot citizen him/herself has access to another citizen who is proficient in the high
language. The flow is the following: information about the political processes of the state
is acquired by a commentator/translator (a citizen who is proficient in the two languages,
that is, the low and the high languages and has personal relations with the monoglot
citizen). This commentator cum translator, in turn, passes the information to the
monoglot citizen. The direct linkage between an average citizen and an informed and
truly bilingual citizen who can explain the processes of government and politics can
either be through family relations or through some of the non-governmental organizations
(NGOs). More often than not, the monoglot citizens lack access to bilingual citizens. The
latter use different social spaces vis-à-vis the former—and, as such, the direct contact is
quite minimal. This situation is worse in the rural areas—or in the peripheral areas of the
urban Africa. Common rural folks rarely engage with bilingual citizens, the linguistic
middle-persons.

To shorten the gap between the elite and the people, the latter should have an
understanding of the political process as to better partake in politics. This, however,
should not be taken to mean that I am arguing that the citizens who do not understand the
processes and operations of power do not involve in politics. The argument has to do with
the quality of participation, for the comprehension of the state permits further and better control of the state and the state elites’ behavior.

Learning about the state, its procedures and processes, or high politics in general, is an important factor that may influence people to act politically. The understanding of high politics includes the comprehension of the predictability of the political processes (e.g., learning from the institutional architecture). That is to say that to learn about the state is to learn about how its institutions work. The importance of institutions in politics is that they set up the context and the arena within which politics should take place. When citizens understand the logic of institutions they understand the limits imposed upon those institutions. Enlightened understanding about politics allows citizens to identify the cases in which the state elite’s actions (or omissions) are beyond the limits imposed by the rules, norms and procedures of the state. Having an enlightened understanding about politics may trigger a willingness to act in order to prevent or redress the widening between the pays legal and the pays réel.

State illegibility in Cape Verde is reinforced by two social phenomena that are often found in post-colonial states. First, there is institutional linguicism. The concept of institutional linguicism denotes the ideologies and social practices, carried out by the state, through its agents, that subtly classifies and divides the citizens in terms of how they present themselves linguistically. Institutional linguicism refers to the fact that the state, its agencies and personnel, more often than not would assume a favorable position to citizens who are proficient in the Portuguese language. That is to say that the speakers

---

36 See Steinmo et. al., Structuring Politics.
of the Portuguese language often find it easier to get the services and/or the goods from
the state. To go to a state’s office and speak the Portuguese language may be a strategy of
speeding up the business that made the speaker go to the institution in the first place.

Political marginalization can be created by *linguicist* language policy that
institutionalizes and reinforces the predominance of the official language (the “high
language”). The term “linguicism” was proposed by Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, to mean,
“ideologies and structures which are used to legitimate, effectuate, and reproduce unequal
division of power and resources (both material and non-material) between groups which
are defined on the basis of language.”

Similarly, Robert Phillipson defines linguicism as
a system of domination whereby language, “is the crucial criterion in the beliefs and
structure which result in unequal power and resource allocation.”

Inferring from the
two given definitions, one can therefore conclude that linguicism is no more than
language-based ideology and practice of social domination. It is, as such, correlated to
other systems, ideologies and practices of social domination such as racism, classism,
sexism, and ageism, in which the domination is based on race, social class, gender, and
age, respectively.

A linguicist language policy can be simply considered as a diglossic language
policy writ large. Such a language policy reinforces the diglossic situation that
characterizes the society. As such, the dominant language, that is, the language employed
by the public authorities for its main functions, becomes the key, and often the only

---

37 Tove Skutnabb-Kangas cited in Robert Phillipson, “Linguistic Imperialism: a Conspiracy, or a
medium for the formal, official socio-political and economic life.\textsuperscript{39} It becomes the “language of high politics” insofar as the elite’s and ruling classes’ major political battles are conducted in the dominant language. The language of politics means that formal political activities, in the realms of the state’s institutions such as the bureaucracy, the parliament, judiciary, and so on, are conducted through the medium of the dominant language—in the African context, we are talking about Portuguese, English or French. It is the language that the state considers as the medium for most, if not all, of its key political transactions—through various legislation, rules, norms and judicial review processes. High politics, therefore, is not in the vernacular. In post-colonial Africa, the vernacular is almost never the language of high politics.

The concept of institutional linguicism is borrowed from the concept of institutional racism. This concept, first put forth by the black civil rights activist, Stokely Carmichael, is related to the way in which state’s processes and procedures tend to favor one social group (“race”) at the expense of others.\textsuperscript{40} Like racism, linguicism is thus discourse and practices of domination based on a constructed hierarchy of people. Institutional linguicism, therefore, is related not only to the social ideology but also the entire social practices, at the level of the state's institutions, whereby resource allocation, favorable treatment of the citizens and transference of valuable information is biased to the dominant language and/or its speakers. In the context of the post-colonial societies,

\textsuperscript{39} Formal political, economic and social life, therefore, happens in the dominant language. The language of the constitution, the judicial courts, and other governmental and state institutions, as well as the laws promulgated by the legislative bodies and different sectors of formal economy, including—and perhaps principally as it will be explained later—rely on the dominant language.

particularly in the African continent, where Portuguese, French and English is clearly the
dominant and hegemonic language, the dominant language consume a large part—if not
total, in some cases—of the state's own resources. For instance, as the public education is
conducted mainly through the dominant language, all of the state resources, from
textbooks to teachers, reinforce the hegemonic position of the former colonial language.
Dominant language speakers, as such, not only get a preferable treatment by the state's agents but also their access to the valuable information put out by the public authorities direct—that is, without the need of a translator—and fast. To talk about institutional
inguicism is essentially to say that the public authorities invest far more in the dominant language than in the national language. In other words, the allocation of values by the public authorities is disproportionate, with the bulk of resources gearing towards the language inherited from the colonial language (particularly in terms of education and cultural policies). The state, in acting, promotes more the language of the former colonial power.41 Regulations, policies, laws, studies, archives, and the like, are almost exclusive realm for the dominant language.

The second mechanism is official-language privilege.42 The concept refers mainly to the accruing of benefits and privileges from the public authorities (and even by the

41 This situation is even more problematic in the case of Angola or in Guinea-Bissau, where indigenous languages are almost neglected by the public authorities—in spite of the discourse of promotion of the native languages. See for instance Cá, Lourenço Ocuni, Perspectiva Histórica da Organização do sistema educacional da Guiné-Bissau, Unpublished PhD Dissertation (Campinas, São Paulo: Universidade Estadual de Campinas, 2004).
42 I am indebted to the literature on white privilege. Yet, major differences with the concept of white privilege; the mechanism that triggers the privilege is different; in the case of white privilege, eyes are the key sensors that facilitate the enjoyment of such privilege. For more on the issue of white privilege see, Ashley Doane, “Whiteness,” International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, William A. Darity, ed., (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2008), 87-89.
society at large) by the fact of being a fluent speaker of the official language of the state—which, in the post-colonial African state, is the language of the former colonial power. The official-language privilege may reflect either in the quickness of the response following an inquiry and/or in access to material and non-material benefits that non-Portuguese speaker may find difficult to access. This concept is a valid as it helps understanding the state-citizen relationships. The more one commands the official language the more privilege one extracts from both the state and society—chiefly in terms of access to information and/or the assumption of a higher social status. The official-language is in itself a form of capital or “property.”

In the case of Cape Verde—and the model can be applied to the cases of the former Portuguese colonies in Africa—this social mechanism of domination corresponds to what I call “Lusophone privilege.” To be a fluent and proficient speaker of the Portuguese language is a powerful symbolic capital that can easily be translated into other forms of capital, chiefly economic. Lusophone privilege manifest in different domains of society. It manifests with the agent uttering, with the audience learning that the former is a fluent Portuguese speaker.

A sizeable portion of the Cape Verdena citizens, as noted earlier, lacks mastery of the Portuguese language. It should be noted that the different individuals and groups have different levels of mastery of the Portuguese language. In general terms it can be said that the non-elite does not possess the level of full linguistic competence. The

---

increasingly complex and abstract processes of politics that characterize the contemporary state take place almost exclusively in Portuguese. For the common citizen this situation may constitute a hindrance to his/her ability to act politically as to exercise democratic control over the representatives and political leaders. To put it differently, the linguistic difference between the common citizen and the state leads to the waning of what I call surveillatory political participation. The key assumption behind this concept is that citizens, along with other institutions of the state, should be fully engaged in the process of making the state agents accountable for their actions (or lack thereof). Survellatory participation, as such, constitutes all the activities carried out by citizens, either individually or in conjunction with others, with the ultimate objective of supervising the activities carried out by the institutions and personnel of the state.

The state can be properly understood as a hierarchically-based and well-articulated network of institutions and personnel, with legitimate command authority over a territory and the people that resides within it. The personnel of the state can be divided into three major groups: the burocrats, whose entrance into the state apparatus is often through mechanisms of meritocracy (such as public service examination), the nominated and the elected officials. While the general population has almost nothing to say on about the burocrats, through political participation they can effectively decide about the composition of the state and its key agencies—from the government down to autonomous institutions and agencies. The citizens in an electoral democracy choose, through elections, what I call the “elected officials,” and these, on their own, “elect,”

44 My definition of the state borrows from the insights of Max Weber. See Weber, From Max Weber.
through political nominations and other practices such clientelism and patronage, the group of state personnel that I call “nominated officials.”

Linguistic Strategies of the State Elite in Cape Verde: The Language of the State and the state of Languages

In the previous chapters I have noted that the linguistic situation in Cape Verde islands is that of a diglossia, in which the Portuguese language has taken the higher social and political position. It is the language of prestige, status, and power. The Cape Verdean language, on the other hand, while being the native language spoken widely throughout the islands is the subordinate language. Cape Verde, therefore, can be considered a prime example of what Heinz Kloss calls an exoglossic nation-state, that is, the modern state in which “the national official language has been brought in from abroad, and its few native speakers do not form the majority of the inhabitants in any district or major locality.”

Like most states in sub-Saharan Africa, independence in Cape Verde did not usher in any major changes in language policy. The preference for the language of the former colonizer was (and still is) almost consensual among different sections of the post-colonial political and cultural elite. In linguistic terms—as well in other aspects—the

---

45 Heinz Kloss, “Notes Concerning a Language-Nation Typology,” in Language Problems of Developing Nations, ed. Joshua A. Fishman, Charles A. Ferguson, and Jyotirindra Dasgupta (New York: Wiley, 1968), 72. It should also be noted that a pervasive language ideology is gaining adherents among the cultural and political elite. I am referring to the idea of co-property of the Portuguese language, that is, the notion that Portuguese is as Cape Verdean as the Creole. The central element of this social ideology is the notion that the Portuguese language is not a foreign language and that it is as Cape Verdean as it can be. For this reason, there are writers who are calling for “nationalization” of that language, through formalization and codification of linguistic norms that reflect the local ways of speaking that language.
The post-colonial state is essentially a reproduction of the colonial state. Its operations, processes and memories are recorded and transmitted almost exclusively via the Portuguese language. The state in Cape Verde is fundamentally lusophone. It communicates, within and without, almost exclusively in the Portuguese language.

High politics, operations and practices of power in post-colonial Cape Verde are more often than not carried out through the means of the Portuguese language. The state, through its high-level agents plans, implements and acts through that high language. The mapping and charting of the state is almost exclusively in the Portuguese language. So are the state archives and institutional memories. Laws, public policies, high level and formal speeches by the cabinet members and/or high-echelon bureaucrats, communiqués, and the like, are the reserved domain for the Portuguese language. The state machine is thus oiled by the Portuguese language. In spite of the inroads made by the Cape Verdean language into domains that were until quite recently sealed to them (e.g., public administration, schooling, religious services, and so on), official information on the state are stored and disseminated almost exclusively in the dominant language. Thus, for a number of people the state is linguistically concealed. The former colonial language, while being the key language for the state’s arrangement, procedures and processes, is a language that a number of citizens do not master.

Language ideologies replicate the old colonial ideology that different languages have different social roles and functions. In the case of Cape Verde, the idea is that the Cape Verdean language may not be sufficiently “modern” for certain functions. Reliance

---

46 Young, *The African Colonial State in Comparative Perspective*. 
on the Portuguese language constitutes in itself a *necessity of modernity*—political and
economic. Ondina Ferreira, a former minister of culture, considers that the Portuguese
language is “the *richer medium* of communication that we have in terms of development
of the logical, philosophical, ontological, existential, technological and scientific
thought.”47 The Portuguese language is the shortcut to modernity—the role that, for the
proponents of this language ideology, the Cape Verdean language either can’t fill or does
it improperly or unsuccessfully.

Yet, post-colonial political developments and the recent regime to electoral
democracy have made it possible for a timid entrance of the native language into the
realms of politics previously closed to it. Like in many parts of Africa, the native tongue
is spreading to different domains, even though the former colonial language maintains its
ultimate dominance in politics and society.48 Public space is perhaps the domain where
the vernacular is quite successful in making inroads. Increasingly the vernacular is used
as the language of outdoor billboards, posters and other tools for public commercial and
political advertisement. After all, as noted by Elana Shohamy, “governments,

---

47 Ondina Ferreira, “A comunidade intelectual não sai em defesa da língua portuguesa”, *Expresso das Ilhas*,
defesa-da-lingua-portuguesa (accessed on December 13, 2013)—my translation and emphasis). Elsewhere she even
goes further to claim that the country is too small to have two official languages—
hinting, thus, that the use of the Portuguese language as the sole official language of the state sufficient for
the state and society goals. See Ondina Ferreira, “Ter duas línguas é demasiado,” *Africanidades*, April 25,
demasiadoA/Paacuteuteginal.html (accessed December 13, 2013)
48 For the case of Senegal where Wolof is increasingly between used as the medium in several domains see
Leigh Swigart, “Cultural Creolisation and Language Use in Post-Colonial Africa: The Case of Senegal,”
*Africa*. 64, no. 2 (1994): 175-189; Fiona MacLaughlin, “Dakar Wolof and the Configuration of an Urban
The Emergence of a National Lingua Franca,” in *Language and National Identity in Africa*, ed. Andrew
municipalities, NGOs, global and small companies, all use the public space as an arena for conducting their battles for power, control, national identity, recognition and self-expression.49

In the past twenty years or so the Cape Verdean language has made inroads into the public sphere. Multi-party electoral democracy, instituted in 1991, created new opportunities for the political use of the Cape Verdean language. Competitive electoral democracy may have something to do with nationalism insofar as it highlights and instrumentalizes national symbols, mainly the national language. Electoral democracy and nationalism are intrinsically linked to the idea of people (demos): etymologically and ideologically both look at the nation as the legitimizing source. The cultural nation becomes synchronized with the political demos (the voting citizens). Electoral democracy facilitated the penetration of the Cape Verdean language in the public and political realm insofar as it forced the political elite to rely on that language when competing for popular votes. In order to capture people’s vote, the political class increasingly elaborate what Pierre Bourdieu calls the “strategy of condescension.” Such a strategy consists mainly in deriving profit from the objective relation of power between the languages that confront one another in practice […] in the very act of symbolically negating that relation, namely, the hierarchy of the language and of those who speak them.50

At the time of elections, Cape Verdean politics seems to be in vernacular. Public speeches at rallies, party or candidate slogans, and a variety of electoral paraphernalia increasingly rely on the Cape Verdean language to attract the votes while presenting the

49 Shohamy, Language Policy, 111.
50 Pierre Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, 68 (italics in the original).
party/candidate as closer to the people. The political elite’s public usage of the Cape Verdean language during election periods may be part of a calculated strategy. Political parties and candidates in general understand that the number of the votes in their favor depends on their broader appeal—in instead of portraying as the party/candidate for one section of the society. Electoral strategies imply structural change in the organization to the extent that political parties increasingly become a “catch-all” organization that caters different sections and interests of the society. The use of the native language gives the idea of closeness and proximity to the electors, leading these to believe that voting for the individual uttering messages in the low language is tantamount to descriptive representation—that is, electing of one of them.

The use of the vernacular in the electoral campaigns is a calculated strategy to: a) bridge the politician and the electoral masses and b) manufacture the perception of descriptive representation. The instrumental use of the vernacular during electoral periods, thus, is part of the ad populum strategies. The use of the vernacular—the Cape Verdean language in this study—is intended to facilitate the conquering of votes.

In spite of all the developments mentioned above, the political and cultural elite in Cape Verde as in other parts of sub-Saharan Africa rely extensively on the former colonizer’ language for most of its communicative and functional needs. The cultural and political elite show a bias in favor of the Portuguese language in the public sphere. In

---

spite of the discourse of supporting the native language, the truth of the matter is that the Cape Verdean language is far from getting a respectable social and political status in the society and politics. This situation worsens with the use of basilectal variant for public communication.

Political contacts between citizen-elected official (and nominated officials, for that matter) are scarce in Cape Verde. In everyday politics, the state officials and politicians are almost isolated from the general public. Political contacts, when they do exist, are often communicatively one-dimensional, that is, the politician assuming the role of the speaker and the general public as the listening (and passive) audience.\textsuperscript{52} Bidiagonal communicative contacts between the state officials and the citizens are very low. A report from the Afrobarometer indicates such a state of affairs (see table 10). A great number of citizens do not contact their representatives as to make them accountable for their actions (or omissions) or to have their inputs in the making and/or implementation of policies. This situation cannot be simply explained by noting that the linguistic distance between the citizen and the state officials is translated into political language.\textsuperscript{53} Yet, one cannot discard this hypothesis.

In the following chapter I will discuss how the high language is often used as the tool of social intimidation. Political apathy is often bought by the use of the high

\textsuperscript{52} An example of this are the various acts of inauguration of public works, which often involves high ranking state officials (such as ministers and high-level state bureaucrats) and the population from the neighborhood where the project is being done. More often than not, these public acts provide opportunity for one-dimensional public speeches to the state officials (without having to worry about questioning by the public).

\textsuperscript{53} Another hypothesis that might explain this situation is the legacy of the long history of authoritarianism which trained people in not asking their state representatives any question.
language. The high level of political apathy may be the consequence of the diglossic situation that characterizes the society. The vicious cycle of political unawareness is, in part, triggered by the state that uses a language that most do not master as the language of communication and information. This linguistic distance reinforces political language insofar as not knowing (or not mastering) the language of power impacts on the information on and from the state one gets. In other words, the further one is from the language of the state the smaller the chances of having an enlightened understanding of the operations, processes and procedures of power.

Table 9. Citizen-State Officials Contacts (percentage of respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Member of Parliament</th>
<th>Local Government Councilor</th>
<th>Official of Government Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Few times</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Often</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Afrobarometer 2012

**Conclusion**

In Cape Verde, as in most of the post-colonial African states, there is a clear distinction in terms of the roles and functions of the languages used by the community and by the state. The predominant language ideology and practice, as produced during the colonial times and reproduced by the post-colonial elite, maintains that the citizens' mother tongue as the language of tradition—in opposition to the Europhone language, taken to be the language of modernity. It is the medium through which tradition finds its way into the
present. The language of tradition continues to thrive because of the popular cultural manifestations and these are said to survive because of the former. However, such a language has deep limitations. It simply cannot perform tasks of modernity. That is reserved for the Portuguese language. Such a language position reproduces the exclusion of a number of Cape Verdean citizens who don’t actively participate in the political processes of the country as they do not possess the necessary linguistic tools to understand and comprehend those processes.

Such a linguist language policy and planning has made the state unreadable to the majority of the citizens. The high language can only be learned in formal schooling. In African context that is the role reserved for the state. Political and economic crises of the 1980s and 1990s, coupled with the impositions of the international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund, greatly reduced the state capacity to provide this type of public good to the citizens. Few people have access to education, the medium through which mastery of the high language could be attained. Therefore, the linguistic divide between the exoglossic, the foreign language state and the vernacular society widens.

A number of the citizens cannot effectively communicate nor comprehend messages transmitted in the high language, the language of the state. This situation hinders the process of surveillatory participation. Information about the processes and operations of power do not trickled down to the monoglossic citizens—as those are constructed, reproduced and transmitted through the medium of the dominant language. This seriously impacts the enlightened understanding of politics and its actors by the
common citizen. In other words, inability to proper reading the state often translates in
the inability to effectively track and supervise the actions carried out on their behalf by
the state and its agents.

There is a political incentive for the elite to keep the state illegible. For one, those
to whom political accountability is to be submitted is kept at a relatively small number,
usually from the same social stratum (the upper classes). Moreover, and related to the
point above, political benefits, economic and material rewards can be extracted from the
illegibility of the state. The elites, as such, position themselves as the intermediary or
brokers between the local population and the international system. “Elite Closure,” as
noted by Myers-Scotton has to do with the management of political participation.54

54 Myers-Scotton, “Elite Closure as a Powerful Language Strategy.”
CHAPTER FIVE: RESTRICTED INITIATOTORY POLITICAL PARTICIPATION: DIGLOSSIA AND POLITICAL NONPARTICIPATION IN CAPE VERDE

In 1986, while visiting the islands of Cape Verde as part of the Brazilian presidential delegation, writer Jorge Amado noted that “life in Cape Verde happens in [Cape Verdean] Creole.”¹ In everyday social relations, the common man and woman engage each other almost exclusively through the vernacular, Cape Verdean language. The Cape Verdean language, in spite of its regional and class variations, is the language of affection, of friendship, and of family relations. In general, local intellectuals and culturati have adopted a positive posture vis-a-vis the national language, concurring that the vernacular is the “soul of the people,” in that it is the most visible trace of Cape Verdean identity.² Yet, the form of modern art considered as high culture—literature, mainly—has been almost the realm of the Portuguese language. At the same time, high politics, public formal schooling, the judicial system, the realm of state bureaucracy are conducted through the means of the Portuguese language. Diglossia, the social and political predominance of one language over the other, is the norm.

¹ Almada Duarte, Diglossia ou Bilinguismo, 21.
² Andre Corsino Tolentino, interviewed by Abel Djassi Amado, Praia, Cape Verde, August 10, 2011. The organicist notion that the mother tongue is what determines the essence of the Cape Verdean people was first developed in the early decades of the 20th century, by poets and writers such as Eugénio Tavares and Pedro Cardoso, and later, in the 1930s onwards, by one of the first native philologist, Baltazar Lopes da Silva.
This chapter explores the extent to which diglossic language policy leads to the political passiveness and submissiveness of a significant part of the citizenry, namely those possess little or no knowledge of the dominant language. The division of the political field into different linguistic fields, that of the dominant language at the state level and that of the vernaculars at the grassroots level, has an impact on people’s participation in the overall political dialogue and debate—other than electoral participation. The language of the state, which is the language of the elite, subtly excludes non-speakers from engaging in political discussions about policy making or changes to existing policies.

The diglossic situation impedes the participation of Creole monoglossic citizens, that is, individuals who are not proficient and/or who have only a rudimentary understanding of the socio-politically dominant language. These citizens can’t fully participate in the political business of the country. The lack of competence in the dominant language, the Portuguese language, is politically and psychologically consequential. It leads to political apathy through two key mechanisms that I call the politics of ridicule and the politics of inaudibility (see figure 4).

Full-fledged democracy can be experienced when citizens have few or no constraints, structural or otherwise, to their active participation in the overall process of political decision making. One of the fundamental limitations to the average citizen’s full engagement in the politics of his or her community has to do with language.

---

3 Barber, *Strong Democracy*. 
Whenever the language of politics is distant from the language that the citizen uses more recurrently, very likely he or she may be cast out of the political equation.

Figure 6. Pathway to Retreat from Initiatory Participation

In this chapter, I first describe what I call the culture of ridicule in Cape Verde, that is, the whole business of mockery based on the improper use of the Portuguese language. Then, I look at the issue of inaudibility. This is related to the fact that the truly monoglossic citizens, those who can only speak the mother tongue (Cape Verdean Creole), are not truly heard by the political elite, for they are not speaking the right language. This means that one’s level of engagement in the debate at the societal level is more often than not the consequence of the language one speaks. In the third part of this chapter, I touch upon the extent to which the politics of ridicule and inaudibility encourages people to retreat from active engagement in the political business of the community. In the conclusion, I highlight all the major points of the chapter.
The Politics of Ridicule

Full political participation, particularly in terms of effectively partaking in the public debate about a political relevant issue, is not without a cost. The cost can be in material or psychological terms. This is to say that the cost can either be in terms of a supposed loss of free time—which could have been devoted to other activities, including productive activities that bring in material advantages or simply to leisure. To participate in the political life of the community implies, as such, a cost of opportunity.

I start by presenting some illustrative cases that led to public ridicule. My point is that by bringing these cases into the light, we can show how many people will simply shy away from partaking in public debates in fear that any speech error in the prestigious language may put them in the center of public derision. The first case is in the virtual realm. Two main reasons explain my choice to include cases drawn from the virtual realm as illustrative cases of language-based ridicule. First of all, in spite of the global digital divide, the Cape Verdean urban youth is relative wired. It is common to find across the city of Praia several “cyber cafes,” where customers could access the internet—and other services such as video games—for a relatively low price (usually about a dollar an hour). Secondly, the topics of conversation and dialogue on the virtual realm often overlap with that of the real world. I first learned about the video on YouTube (explained below) through informal conversation with one of my interviewers, in the moments before starting the actual interviewing process.
A video posted on YouTube, titled “Falando Português ou Brutuguês?” (Speaking Portuguese or Brutuguese?), went viral among Cape Verdeans online. The video, which has over ninety-five thousands views and more than eighty comments, is about a fisherman who is being interviewed about marine turtles. As the interview is being conducted in Portuguese, the fisherman attempts to respond to the questions in the same language. Lacking knowledge and training in the Portuguese language, the interviewee tromps on the most basic grammatical rules of the language (as, for instance, the rule of agreement). The video constitutes an example of syntactic, lexical and phonological errors. The title of the video is very suggestive of the dominance of a certain language ideology. That is to say that a critical analysis of the title of the video itself reveals attitudes and beliefs regarding the use or the function of the languages. Not to follow the rules of standard Portuguese is to be a sub-human—after all, as shown above, Portuguese is the language of modernity and civilization. Not to follow the rules of agreement and other grammatical rules is to assume a monster-like figure. It is, according to the title of the video, to engage in a language that is appropriate to a monster, a Brutuguese. Arguably one finds the persistence of the colonial ideology in the title of the video. Colonialism, as it noted by one of most critical students, Franz Fanon, was essentially Manichean. The dichotomy between savage and civilized is implied in the title (the

---

Portuguese word for savage is “bruto”): savagery, the condition of being uncivilized, implies the distorted use of the civilized language.\(^5\)

For one commentator, this video was an example of a language “killer.” For another commentator, just one word was necessary to classify the situation: “Pretoguês” (blackguese)—clearly a play on words, whereby “português” becomes pretoguês (preto means black in Portuguese). Needless to say such a word has a long history that dates back to colonial times, when colonial officials often talked about “língua dos pretos” (the language of the blacks) to refer either to the native languages or the way that Africans spoke the language of the European.

Another video that has gone viral is a part of an interview, conducted by the national television station. A municipal officer from the local government of Santa Catharina, Santiago Island, was interviewed for a national television broadcast about the condition of stray dogs that were found to freely roam around the city.\(^6\) While explaining the policy to the reporter, who conducted the interview in the Portuguese language, the official committed a common enough mistake: he kept referring to “cãos” as the plural form for cão (dog), when the correct form is cães. While the plural form in the Portuguese language is often formed by adding an “s” at the end of the noun, there are some exceptions, as in the case of “cão.” The case in question is about a particular type of language error, which is common, that of a lexical error.

---


Deviation from the standard Portuguese often leads to mockery. This situation is particularly relevant in certain domains, chiefly in school. Among the youth, it is common to find examples of friends and/or classmates who are mocked for language errors while speaking Portuguese in the classroom. While conducting a focus group interview in the neighborhood of Brasil, one of the informants told me about an interesting case. He told that one day, while in a class, a school official came to his classroom while the teacher was lecturing. This official did knock on the door, but the teacher did not hear him. Another student, trying to get the attention of the teacher, said that someone was knocking on the door. However, the problem is how he did say it. He used a Creole language word—“konku”, which is a Creole word for “knocking on the door.” My informant further noted that still to this day his colleague is often derided for this language error.

In the same manner, another informant, who had recently graduated from high school, told me about how he and many of his fellow classmates would shy away from responding a question in the classroom, when asked by the teacher. He noted that:

When the teacher asks a question and he is asking for a volunteer to respond, most of us tend to sit quiet and not venturing to respond. Often it is not because we don’t know the answer. It is because we fear that if we make a mistake [in the Portuguese language] as we are attempting to respond the question, our classmates will make fun of us.8

The above situation was also described by another informant from a different neighborhood (Ponta d’Agu). My informant, a 22-year old, with some college education,

7 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Brasil (Praia, Cape Verde), August 11, 2011.
8 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Brasil (Praia, Cape Verde), August 11, 2011.
recounted that sometimes the students know the answer to the question posed by the teacher—but have difficulty in putting the answer in the standard Portuguese. She stated that often the answer is “under the tongue” and once the permission is given by the teacher to respond in Cape Verdean Creole, the student often gets to the point.9

What happens within the classroom setting is just a micro-cosmic representation of society at large. There is a general condemnation about deviation from the standard Portuguese. This condemnation is particularly carried by some sectors of the political and cultural elite who often claim that the Portuguese language is being contaminated, in form and content, by the Cape Verdean language. For instance, Ondina Ferreira, a former minister of culture, and visibly a lusophile, talks about the development of a new form of talking that she coins as “creoulese” (or “crioulês in original, a portmanteau of “Crioulo” and “Português”).10

The above examples suffice to illustrate what I call the culture of ridicule. By this, I mean the popular predisposition to focus on the form and not the content of the message, with the intent to mock and deride the speaker. The content of the message is put aside—regardless of its importance, relevance and significance. What is striking is that language errors easily spread. The Internet, which has made possible the construction of online social communities and the rise of anonymous online commentators, has significantly fueled the phenomenon of ridiculing people for language errors.

---

9 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011.
To communicate is essentially about deployment of a language, be this verbal, written or gestural. As I have noted before, the use of a language is not politically neutral. On the contrary, the choice to use one language over the other is politically relevant. It can either be an attempt to open the public debate to further participation or about limiting the number of those who can engage in the same debate. This is particularly relevant in the states where the language of the state, a prestigious language, assumed to have all the benefits of a modern and advanced language, is not the local vernaculars. Cape Verde, as it has been showed throughout this thesis, is a case in point. Political debate, particularly in the written realm, is almost exclusively in the Portuguese language. In spite of great advances in public education, whose medium is the Portuguese language, this language is still poorly mastered by most citizens.

The more social value attached to the dominant language, the more individuals come to be socially evaluated based on their competence in that language.” In most post-colonial states, proficiency in the dominant language is acquired through formal education. It is also through schooling that one acquires technical competence. Linguistic proficiency and technical competence, thus, overlaps. Competence in the dominant language is the yardstick by which the general (technical) competence is measured. More often than not individuals’ social respectability and prestige is linked to their capacity of being at ease when speaking the dominant language. As it is more complicated to judge the technical competence of an individual, his or her comfort with the dominant language is used as the gauge for his or her overall competence.
Alternatively, non-speakers of the dominant language will be negatively judged in terms of his or her technical competence. Politics of ridicule becomes quite common: failure to follow the basic rules of grammar or orthography of the dominant language is an invitation to public ridicule. Ridicule is a mechanism and strategy to minimize or play down the political role of the individual or his/her ideas by focusing not on the content of the message but rather on its form (e.g., grammatical red herrings). Modern technologies of information make the matter worse as they permit the instantaneous, anonymous, and globally reachable ridiculing comments. Many monoglossic citizens will simply shy away from discursive participation lest he or she be ridiculed.

The process of communication is sometimes contaminated with what sociolinguistics call speech error, “a mismatch between what we intend to say and what we actually say.”¹¹ This is like a slip of the tongue. Sometimes this is just the use of one word when we meant to use a different one; other times it can involve changes in morphemes or phonemes. These slips of the tongue are humorous and hilarious—particularly when they take place within the familiar setting of our homes and closed circle of friends. Speech errors are not to be confused with language errors. Speech errors are related to mental facilities and how the brain sometimes works. In other words, they happen at psycho-neurological levels. Language errors, on the other hand, involve syntactic, phonological and semantic errors. These errors occur when the speaker has not fully mastered a language and has not internalized the generally accepted patterns of the

language in terms of syntax, phonology and semantics. In other words, language errors are deviations from the accepted norm of a proper use of a given language.

Modern societies have developed complex languages, that is, languages that can be used in different and diverse domains, with a developed and rich lexica and a multitude of rules regulating syntax, phonology and semantics. While there is a vibrant subfield of language error analysis, scholars have yet to analyze the political implications of language errors.\(^\text{12}\) In post-colonial Africa, since the language of education, government and the formal public sphere is often the language of the former colonizer, only those who go through extensive and widespread education possess the necessary competence to use the language without language errors. Cape Verde is no exception. Portuguese is the language of the state and education. The acquisition of this language occurs almost always through formal education, as it is the medium of schooling. The Portuguese language is used in Cape Verde as if it were not a foreign language—a state of affairs that has led, as some scholars have noted, to very disastrous consequences for learners.\(^\text{13}\) Since Portuguese in Cape Verde is not considered a foreign language, students are not getting adequate instruction. This results in an incomplete mastery of the language, evidenced by the frequency of language errors.


\(^\text{13}\) Germano Almeida, a renowned writer from Cape Verde, defends that the Portuguese language in Cape Verde should be taught in the same manner that other foreign languages are used. For more on the subject, see “Língua: Português deve ser ensinado em Cabo Verde como língua estrangeira, defende Germano de Almeida,” Expresso (Portugal), March 27, 2010. http://expresso.sapo.pt/lingua-portugues-deve-ser-ensinado-em-cabo-verde-como-lingua-estrangeira-defende-germano-de-almeida=f573370 (accessed on 5 December 2012).
Making language errors in public often results in ridicule. Those who commit language errors become often the center of attention. The error (or errors) becomes the focus for all comments, while the content of the message often receives little attention. Public ridicule based on language errors is proportional to the depth of those same errors: the more the deviation from the standard norms, the more jokes and anecdotes are derived from the experience. It should be noted that this language error-based culture of ridicule is extremely high in the realm of primary and secondary education. Not infrequently, primary and secondary school students are the target of derision by their peers because of speech errors, while addressing or responding a question posed by the teacher. This situation creates a withdrawal from active class participation, lest those speech errors may be translated in a public joke. Personal experiences in Cape Verde, combined with information gathered during several focus interviews, I have come to know many cases in which individuals are jokingly nicknamed for the mistakes (the speech errors) made.14

The politics of ridicule are particularly focused on the improper use of the Portuguese language. Not following the rules of the grammar, or pronouncing words with an accent that is perceived to be distant from standard continental Portuguese, invites mockery, derision and ridicule. Often the process of ridicule can include nicknaming. It is common for individuals who have made highly noticeable public mistakes in the Portuguese language to be nicknamed after the mistake itself.

14 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Brasil (Praia, Cape Verde), August 11, 2011.
The issue with the politics of ridicule is that the message is never made the focus of the conversation and/or statement by an individual. Rather, attention is focused on the form and the general mistakes, often at the expense of the message, even when this is socially significant or important. Mimicking of the mistakes becomes the topic of conversation among close friends and/or family members. Whenever the conversation is about the incident, the message is put aside—all focus on the individual and his/her attempt to speak the Portuguese language.

Because the politics of ridicule may lead to decline of individual self-esteem and self-confidence, people who are not proficient in the Portuguese language may think twice before engaging in public debate when the medium of the debate is a language that they poorly master. As a consequence, it is very likely that to these citizens politics happen in the realm of silence and head-nodding.

Members of the Cape Verdean society understand that mockery is a major cultural trait and that the society as whole is often looking for an individual to be the butt of its jokes, derision and ridicule. Whenever a case of mistaken language use, it instantly becomes a social joke, shared by almost all members of the society, regardless of social classes. A powerful vehicle for the transmission of these social jokes about language use is contemporary popular music. Examples abound of musical hits which are about these social jokes.

What was presented above is in no way something that is peculiar to Cape Verde. For instance, a study conducted in Mozambique notes that when non-educated attempt to
speak Portuguese, they often fall victim of mockery on the part the state agents. Moreover, this situation can be observable even in states and nations traditionally characterized as monolingual and ethno-linguistically homogenous. While in case of Cape Verde—and in sub-Saharan Africa, in general—the situation is in terms of the social diglossia, whereby the dominant language is an imported language, one also finds similar experiences within the same language, whereby one of the dialects is the prestigious one.

**The Politics of Inaudibility**

The mechanism of inaudibility is the other psychological constraint for the public political participation of the monolingual citizens. By the concept of inaudibility I mean the extent to which the voice of an individual engaged in public discourse is actually not taken in considerations by others. “Being heard” means more than the ears capturing the sounds uttered by the speaker—or the eyes reading the words written by the writer. Rather, it is a perception that what one says and writes is taken seriously by others. The mainstream language ideology, which sustains the notion that the high language is the language of science, modernity and logic, influences how the general audience accept or reject as serious a message by a given speaker. Monolingual citizens’ inaudibility is also constrained by their lack of access to the media, biased towards the high language

---

speakers. The mechanism of inaudibility often affects the perception of whether one is taken seriously or not. This leads to partial or total withdrawal from the public sphere.

A common problem of a diglossic language policy is that knowledge of the dominant language is often taken for technical knowledge. The high language, by the fact that it is acquired through formal education as it is the medium of schooling, becomes in itself a mark of intelligence and technical aptitude. To be proficient in the high-language is to be regarded as a well-educated person.

In post-colonial states, diglossic language policy reinforces and reproduces the old colonial mentality of intellectual paternalism. That is to say that the well-educated self-portrays as the “vanguard” of the people and, in their name, act politically. Contemporary politicians do not differ as much from the old guard of African anti-colonial nationalism of the 1950s and 1960s. For African nationalists of the 1950s and 1960s, politics was about guiding and speaking for the people. Politics was fundamentally about providing the ultimate solutions for the problems that the people face in their daily existence—without even bother to ask for co-participation in the devising of the solutions for the problem. Mobilization, and not autonomous political participation by the ordinary citizens, was the norm. African nationalists instrumentalized the masses as to challenge the colonial authorities through the means of power of number—and thus, forcing the latter into opening the channels of communication for a

\[16\] I am not making any claims that the subordinate language finds no space within the media. Rather, its presence in the media is not only relatively small vis-à-vis the dominant language but also its function is different. In this sense, the allocation of space in the media for the monoglot citizens in the media is often related to contentious politics (i.e., interview a monoglot citizen following an event of social and/or political crisis that directly affect his or her life).
possible self-government. Political participation of the African masses was restricted to presence at the rallies, demonstrations, protests, and so on. Party policies and activities were the result of the activities of the selected few African intelligentsia, who acted on behalf of the masses.

African Electoral democracy of the 1990s and 2000s might have opened the political arena, but this was basically limited to the elite. The fall of one-party states mean the opening of high politics, with social elite, previously barred from competing power, vying for the control of the state. For the most part, the masses are still blocked from active political participation. This is particularly visible in areas of policy making and implementation. The discourse of professionalism, meritocracy and development simply transform the majority into a “silent majority,” the passive reactors to the actions taken at the higher levels of state politics.

The gap between the state elite and the masses might have decreased when compared to the previous regimes of personal rule and/or one-party system. Old institutions, however, maintain the public realm as the sphere of the high language. Such a situation permits the attainment of two interrelated objectives: on the one hand, the masses who lack mastery in the high language are maintained outside the circle of high politics. Contemporary electoral democracy restricts people’s role to choosing who gets

---


to be ruling over them. On the other hand, the number of actual, direct actors in high politics is kept at a minimum. The exclusion of the masses from this domain, supposedly, makes politics a faster process of decision making. The logic is the following: the more actors involved in the process, the more arduous and troublesome the process of gathering support from a given policy line. Consensus building can be an easier and faster process if only a few people are involved in the course.

Being socialized in a society with two or more languages, a person internalizes from an early age the fact that one language is more equal than the others. Without being told explicitly, a person easily discerns that languages are used in different domains. Field research in Cape Verde demonstrated how the people in general have a clear idea about the linguistic divide that exists in the country. As one of my interviewees stated:

There are places that the Cape Verdean language can be spoken, places that only the Portuguese language can be spoken, and places where both can be spoken. The mother tongue is that language that we fell more at ease to express [ourselves]. It is the language that we are fluent in and often it has influence in the spaces where only the Portuguese language is to be spoken, for instance in the school. Sometimes when one talks, a word in the Cape Verdean languages comes out with force. Thus, Creole has too much weight in our speech pattern (linguagen). And it has too much interference even in the places that are to speak only the Portuguese language.¹⁹

As the Cape Verdean language is the language known from cradle to grave, the language of everyday use, one must be highly fluent in the Portuguese language in order to avoid mixing the two codes. It is relatively easier to mix the two codes for two main reasons: first, the fact that the Cape Verdean language is a Portuguese-based Creole. This

¹⁹ Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011.
means that the bulk of the lexicon in that language derives, in one way or another, from the Portuguese language. Even today, this latter language is the supplier of lexicon to the latter. As such, there is always a temptation to mix the two languages. Second, historically the two languages have a long history of sharing the same social space—though in two different domains. For the young citizens from the peripheral areas of the city where I conducted most of my interviews, their knowledge of Portuguese is quite rudimentary. While most of them have attended high school, they are aware that they are not fluent in the Portuguese language. Increasingly though, people understand that the Cape Verdean language is the language of social and political relations. Another youth told me about the social weight that the Cape Verdean language has in the society.

Creole has weight. It is rare one goes to the public administration and speaks Portuguese. And even if we are talked to in Portuguese, we often respond in Creole (...) Some MPs (deputadus) use the Cape Verdean language as to be properly understood. In the classroom, sometimes we may know something but we simply cannot explain it in Portuguese. We find ourselves saying to the teacher, “I know about the topic, but it is ‘under the tongue’ (baxu lingua).” It is not that it is “under the tongue;” it is about explaining it [in Portuguese]. Sometimes a down-to-earth teacher may allow us to explain the topic in the Cape Verdean language and a good explanation follows. If you say it in the Portuguese language it comes out totally different. Almost never what comes out as spoken word is what you think.²⁰

Language is, par excellence, the site of domination; communication more often than not reflects relations of power. Power relations are embedded in linguistic interchanges. It is through the use of language that the relations of power are made effective and efficient. Through different linguistic strategies and manipulations, the power of one social group

²⁰ Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011.
over the others is constructed and reconstructed. The power relation, thus, derives from
the internalization of the linguistic hierarchy accepted as given in the society.

In post-colonial societies, one learns about the linguistic hierarchy at an early age. The first few years of life are reserved for the mother tongue, as the individual’s social spaces are confined to the family and neighborhood. That is the realm of the mother tongue, the sphere of intimacy. The language of intimacy is the mother tongue as its acquisition results from the intimate contact with family and neighbors.

In time, the individual experiences a linguistic shock. By linguistic shock I mean the psychological problems as one becomes aware of other situations in which a language other than the mother tongue is the medium of communication. The child will notice that certain domains are mainly for the use of a language that is different from what he or she is used to. As the mass media, such as the radio and television, is made available in different areas of the post-colonial world, including in the rural areas, the individual will notice that a language other than the mother tongue is the one that is widely used in these media. Later on, when the individual reaches school age, the linguistic shock is furthered. He or she is made to believe that the mother tongue is to remain outside the perimeter of the school (or at least the classroom). The teacher, who is the first non-intimate figure of authority, speaks in the other-than-mother tongue language, a Europhone. The Europhone, in time, is linked to the informal, impersonal and cold authority—reinforced at the time that the individual enters, through school, into a relationship with the state.

One of the goals of colonial authorities was the people’s internalization of the linguistic hierarchy, in which the language of the colonizer was taken to represent the
highest stage of cultural and civilizational development. In other words, the colonial discourse posited that the Europhone and the native languages represented the two poles of the linguistic civilizational continuum: with the former at the higher level of development. Post-colonial language policies and practices are built on this notion.

The use of the Europhone may well be a tactic of silencing contestation. The elite, regardless of the political regime and/or historical conditions, seek to maintain their domination over the non-elite. The more citizens’ contestations the elite can avoid or duck, the more entrenched their domination.

It is precisely at the level of language that the elite seek to maintain their edge over the masses. Language policy becomes a tool at their disposal to manage how and when the subaltern, or the non-elite, speak. Distance from the centers of power (and this distance is both social and geographical) is at the same time a linguistic distance. The peripheral area is the domain in which linguistic power can be further exercised. In this regard, one of my interviewees presented her own interpretation of the linguistic situation in the peripheries:

Take for instance the case of towns and villages outside the city. People in those areas have less access to radio, newspapers, television and the like. Whenever a politician arrives (or even when broadcast on television) and begins his “lectures” in Portuguese, not much attention is aroused. For these people it is just the same old things. However, when a politician begins to speak Creole, attention is aroused among these people. Things communicated in Creole call people’s attention.  

---

21 Calvet, *Linguistique et colonialisme*.
22 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011 (emphasis added).
One cannot avoid asking why a bi-lingual politician would choose to communicate in the dominant language when he (or she) knows that the message passes faster and better if conveyed through the mother tongue. The use of the dominant language however, accomplishes two related goals. On the one hand, it justifies and reproduces the position of the social and political elite. There is a history of the Europhone as the dominant language that dates back from the colonial period, and the use of that language justifies the position of dominance. The dominant language becomes the identifier of social leadership and domination. Fear of being ridiculed demobilizes many from the political arena. Ridicule is essentially a product of a social situation or relation. It is perceived as any naïve deviation from the norms (that is, peer-like) of social behavior.

Language is a powerful tool. It can be used for either to open channels of communication and dialogue or to impose a monologue. More often than not, political actors make use of the dominant language precisely to block any attempts at critical questioning, especially when such questioning is direct and bottom-up.

The state official or representative may elect to speak in the dominant language—or in the variation that is closer to the dominant language or dialect. This, in itself, is a political statement. To use a certain variant of the Creole, as such, corresponds to a certain social discourse. The choice for the mesolect, mixed with a catalog of words that are traditionally not part of the Cape Verdean language, is an indication that the speaker, by virtue of being able to speak the dominant language, a highly educated and well trained individual. The utterer presents him or herself, via language, as someone who
need not be questioned by untrained minds. Even when the discourse is started off in the vernacular, the official often resorts to upward code switching (that is, changing from the vernacular to the dominant language) so as to dodge direct queries. Code-switching, the alternation of the linguistic code in in certain situations may constitute a powerful mechanism of avoiding responding to the demands of accountability.\footnote{An interesting example of code switching, from the low language to the higher language, is given by Donaldo Macedo, after an encounter with a high echelon state official from the Ministry of Education of Cape Verde. The meeting’s language was the Cape Verdean language, for most of the Cape Verdean Immigrants and Cape Verdean Americans do not understand Portuguese. Then, the official switched to the Portuguese language, arguing that, in a type of a philosophical debate he makes much more sense in Portuguese than in Creole, as he was educated in that language. It turns out, as noted by Macedo, that “as soon as he started to speak Portuguese, the dialogue ended.” “Donaldo Macedo: ‘A nossa língua é viável como instrumento pedagogic,’” \textit{A Semana}, December 10, 2005. http://www.asemana.publ.cv/spip.php?article14036&var_recherche=Procurar&ak=1 (accessed on May 12, 2013, italics added).}

Cape Verde, like other former Portuguese colonies, inherited a specific Lusitanian culture, which can be called the “culture of mister doctor.” The term culture of \textit{mister doctor} may be defined as the overuse of the title “doctor” by those who managed to finish college studies. Calling oneself a doctor has increasingly become more a social title than an academic title. An interesting argument often presented to distinguish between the “social doctor” and the “academic doctor” is at the level of writing. A college graduate is often referred to by the abbreviation of doctor (Dr.) while a person with an academic doctoral degree (Ph.D.) the title is fully spelled out (“doutor”). At the level of speech, there is no way of making a distinction between the two. To have a bachelor’s degree is to be a doctor—and to require others to call one doctor. Language, that is the Portuguese language, is the medium that reinforces such a culture. The more erudite, esoteric and impenetrable the language used, the more one boasts his “doctor-ness.” The use of the
dominant language in the public sphere is a means to reinforce the social hierarchy, thereby creating relations of power and authority. Put another way, social relations become relations of power insofar as one of the participants uses language as the symbol for his higher social, economic and political standing.

The culture of “mister doctor” overlaps and is reinforced by the language ideology that considers Portuguese to be the only language capable of transmitting knowledge, science, logic, philosophy, and the like. The corollary of this ideology is that the vernacular, due to its inherent limitations, cannot, in any way, be used for transmitting complex and abstract messages.

In the communicative encounter between the state representative and the people, the former has two alternatives: a) either using the language or variety of language that is closer to the vernacular, and ipso facto, avoiding any static in the message to be passed to the audience; or b) using the dominant language/variation to play up his/her supposed academic and social superiority. Sometimes the use of the vernacular is a calculated strategy. Pierre Bourdieu talks about the strategy of condescension to demonstrate the instrumentalization of the vernacular in a diglossic community by the political leaders.24

The strategy of condescension refers to the fact that a political actor, from higher socio-economic and political class (in one word, the elite), takes up a language, speech or style that is often linked to the lower classes. The strategy, as such, implies the elite can temporarily accept and use a style or variation that is not part of their common linguistic

---

repertoire. Ultimately such a strategy is designed to conquer “the hearts and minds” of
the lower class, whereby the actor, who is engaging in such a strategy, presents
him/herself as “a man/woman of the people.” In other words, this strategy can brings
political advantage to the elite, by removing, at least temporarily, the conditions of
inequality and social hierarchy that exists.

The use of the high language, the Portuguese language in the case of Cape Verde,
is an invitation to passivity [on the part of the wider audience]. In spite of the fact that
these days more and more people come into contact with the Portuguese language, the
truth of the matter is that Portuguese is not the everyday language. Only a tiny minority
of the social and political elite are truly fluent in Portuguese (see chapter three). To most
of the people the language is a foreign language, learned in schools and its command is a
sign of upward mobility and education. Interviews with different people from different
sections of Cape Verdan society supported this view. A young male from one of the
peripheral areas of the capital city of Praia, tells me that sometimes that the role of the
audience is nothing more than to clap hands, as the message often is not understood. 25
This indicates a “disconnect” between the politician and the general population. Even
when the former makes use of the Cape Verdan language, he or she frequently mixes it
with the Portuguese language, which makes comprehension of the message a daunting
task, to say the least, for a person whose knowledge of Portuguese is rudimentary.

25 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Brasil (Praia, Cabo Verde),
August 11, 2011.
On a different occasion, a female informant elaborated further this situation. She noted that:

[There is the] question of peripheral areas [from the countryside, for instance]…People from these far regions, who have limited access to radio, newspapers and television, and the like. [When a] politician arrives, or even [when he or she is] on television, and he/she begins, with all his/her posture, reading in Portuguese, it simply does not bring any awakening in these people. For him, it is politics as usual.  

Her focus was obviously on the rural and peripheral areas where access to education is relatively difficult. In these areas, formal education is harder to come by. As a consequence, common citizens from the rural areas have trouble understanding statements made in the Portuguese language. This is also because their contact with the language is often limited. Modern technologies, such as radio, television and/or the internet, are not part of the daily life of a sizeable portion of the rural population (in spite of the fact that the country is very small).

For my informant, the use of Portuguese in public communication and in politics in general is rather alienating. Politics is (or, better, it is perceived to be) all about aggregation. The use of the dominant language results in keeping some portions of the population out of the circle of understanding. She further elaborated on this, stating that:

When a person listens to what is being said in his/her own language, he or she feels more integrated. He or she feels that whatever is being discussed is related to him/her. But when it is in Portuguese he or she may feel that the message has nothing to do with him/her—sometimes he/she does not even bother to listen.

26 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011 (emphasis added).  
27 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011.
Elections may be one of the few times that the political and social elite use the vernacular for public communication. Seeking to attract electoral followers and votes implies that the candidate—or the party or the political organization competing in the elections—portrays itself, both in the content and in the form of the message, as closely as possible to the common, ordinary citizen. Increasingly, the language of electioneering is the Cape Verdean language. Candidates are increasingly relying on the Cape Verdean language. From party slogans, billboards, election jingles, and other communicative electoral paraphernalia, the presence of the vernacular is visible. Yet, things change in periods during elections. The use of the Portuguese language is associated with technical and scientific thought. Using the Cape Verdean, or ‘plain’, language may, on the other hand, link the speaker with simplicity of ideas. A well educated person is one who can make poetic use of the Portuguese language to the point that the message is only understood by a few. The gross majority of the population is thus kept out of communication. In this regard, an informant from the peripheral area of the capital city said that

[There is the] question of which type of Portuguese to be used.—even among journalist who makes the interviews. They use very difficult vocabulary that most of the people are not familiar with and/or donot know.28

The use of the vernacular in public discussion is linked to citizenship and participation. In spite of the fact that there is a widespread belief that Portuguese is the language of modernity and prestige, in actuality it is the use of the Cape Verdean language that brings people into the debate. It is the language that they best understand,

28 Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Ponta d’Agu (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 13, 2011 (emphasis added).
for it is their mother tongue and the language of everyday use. Moreover, a public debate that is carried out in the vernacular allows citizens to naturally participate. The Cape Verdean language, as the mother tongue, is quite natural, flowing without constraints. In this regard, an informant tells me that “[when it is in Cape Verdean Creole, a person] feels even a better citizen, [capable of] ask[ing] questions.”\(^\text{29}\) As different languages are given different status and convey different sets of symbols, the choice of language by the person of authority (in this case, the politician) may determine whether hearers withdraw or adopt and integrative attitude.

In the past two sections, I presented two mechanisms (ridicule and inaudibility) through which common citizens’ political departicipation is realized. I mentioned how the dominant language policy and practices force common citizen to either shy away from speaking or not to be taken seriously through what I call the politics of ridicule.

**Silencing and Managing Citizens’ Political Participation**

As I demonstrate in this section, the extent that post-colonial diglossia may, in fact, be a strong hindrance to effective political participation by a number of citizens. In order to accomplish such a desideratum, it is important to first define the concept of diglossia. In spite of its etymology, diglossia, is not and should not be taken for bilingualism. To be a bilingual is to have the ability to speak two languages.\(^\text{30}\) A bilingual individual “travels” easily in two different linguistic communities: in his/her mother tongue and in the

\(^{29}\) Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Brasil (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 11, 2011.

domains of the second language, often acquired through formal education. Diglossia, on the other hand, is more at the level of society and it is related to a socially and politically imposed hierarchy of languages, whereby one of the languages assumes predominance and preponderance. This means that the language that is socially predominant is the medium in the official domains, as in the administration of justice, education, formal commerce and public administration.

As the dominant language is acquired through education, the distinction among the members of the society reflects the individual level of education. A person who is fluent in the dominant language is more likely to be part of the elite. Alternatively, the individual that can only communicate in the mother tongue is very likely to be cast outside the main circles of economic and social power.

In recent third-wave, electoral democracy, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, language policy is a powerful hindrance that restricts political participation to a sizeable portion of the population. With few exceptions, the language of the state is the language of the former colonizing power. The Portuguese, French and English languages, as such, are the official languages and the medium of other various socially important functions. As the official language is often other than the language of the population, this greatly impacts the people’s input in the process of designing and implementing state’s policies.

---

31 This explains why the international identity of African states is often given in terms of being Francophone, Anglophone or Lusophone. The official language and the colonial legacy constitute, thus, two powerful elements in the national elites’ imagination of supra-national communities in Africa.
Diglossic language policy defines and maintains language hierarchy in terms of their functions, roles and value in a given community.\textsuperscript{32} This type of language policy ultimately leads to a formation of two arenas of politics: one in which the official language of the state, the language inherited from colonialism is dominant—and sometimes is the only one—and the other arena, of the low, subordinated languages. To visualize the distinction one can think of the first arena as the main circles of power (the state institutions). This is the realm of what can be conveniently called “high politics”—in the sense that it happens above the people and the decisions emanated from it supposedly are authoritatively binding.

The arena of “low politics” is at the level of the ordinary citizens. In this arena, people share ideas and perceptions about the political situation, organize collective action to defend their community interests, engage in the local associational life. Politics, as such, takes place in the vernacular.\textsuperscript{33} The two-arena politics reinforces political marginalization of monoglossic citizens. Political marginalization has to do with the “establishment” of structural constraints that “lock” certain segments of the population in place. The structural constraints may be based on different social constructions such as class, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, language, among others. One’s lacking ability to perform comfortably in the dominant language is very likely to push him/her to the margins of politics.

\textsuperscript{32} Ferguson, “Diglossia.”

\textsuperscript{33} The phrase is borrowed from Will Kymlicka, \textit{Politics in the Vernacular Nationalism, Multiculturalism, and Citizenship} (Oxford, UK: University Press, 2001)
The post-colonial linguistic condition, as described above, impacts negatively on the monolingual citizens’ political participation. On the one hand, there are the linguistic structural factors that demarcate the domains that each language can/should be used. Path dependence, individual strategies and institutional legacies mark off the social and political arenas for the employment of a certain language. For instance, language and education policies determine which languages will be used in the formal school system or the language for the state bureaucracy. It follows that employability or upward mobility within the bureaucratic ranks is commensurate to one’s proficiency in the official language. The post-colonial state bourgeoisie, often through a calculated strategy but sometimes unconsciously, seeks to perpetuate this linguistic situation, forming itself also what David Laitin calls the “linguistic elite”\textsuperscript{34}

**Blocking Initiatory Political Participation**

Political participation constitutes all the social activity that ultimately results either in the composition of government—at the local or national levels—or about the outcomes, or policies, that emanate from the governing bodies. Political participation may be as simple and direct as voting or can be as complex and indirect as partaking in a mass movement for, or against policies or the government. In this section, I argue that what I call initiatory political participation is relative low in Cape Verde. By the concept of initiatory participation I mean the ability to engage in the public debate about the issues, policies,

rules and other governmental output. In spite of the legal and political system, which may be constructed as to guarantee free and open participation by all, the reality may be very different. Strong formal and informal institutions, chiefly language policy, are effective elements that ultimately hinder ordinary citizens’ free and direct partaking in the affairs of the community.

I have noted above that the actual sphere of politics is indeed limited. Elections may be one of the few channels of political participation for the general population. Participation in the general public debate, leading to either the formation of the government or to the creation and implementation of public policies, particularly at the national level, involves a very limited number of people. For one thing, there are infrastructural limits. In Cape Verde there is a deficit of political infrastructures and institutions that permits the free entry of people into the whole process of debating policies and their implementation. Political institutions such as public hearing, initiatives and referenda that can be effectively used as the channels for an active and engaging initiatory participation either are not present or exist only on paper. For instance, the current Cape Verdean Constitution (from 1992) makes reference to the institutions such as referendum and citizens’ legal initiative. Yet, over more than two decades after the constitution has been approved, there is yet a law regulating these processes—let alone the actual experience of referendum in the national or local politics. To engage in the question of the structures is to get into the very complex and rather difficult question of learning what the causes and what effects it has. Is it the active participation that leads to
the opening of these structures or, is it the opening of structures that causes people to participate in politics?

In any case, there is no incentive for the political elite to open another channel of debate. This is to say that the sphere of public debate is at best frozen—if not actually shrinking. Ordinary citizens are kept out of the circle. This state of affairs, in one way or another, has something to do with the language question—and the ideologies that underpin it. First, there is this idea shared by many that modern politics is very technical and complex. As such, the whole process of debating and discussing the forms and contents of it should be left in the hands of the professionals and technicians. The general public, therefore, is left only the option of choosing which “package”, already constructed, should be implemented. The idea is that by choosing one candidate or one party the citizens are automatically legitimizing all of the public policies implemented by them. Second, the political elite fear the entrance of competing forces from the general society. The opening of the public sphere produces its quantitative change—measured in terms of an increase in the number of participants. Subsequently, this quantitative change may ultimately lead a qualitative change of the public sphere as well as the form, content and manners in which the debate in carried out. Logically speaking, the power of persuasion would have to go through radical transformation with the increase in number of participants in the debate. If the debate is limited to the political elite, the participants would probably put out less effort to persuade the other participants to follow a certain line of action or thought. For once, being part of the same social group, and as such sharing the same cultural sub-system, the communicative process may be rather
superficial and needing not to provide explanation of small details, such as body language. Rather, there is emphasis on “thick description,” that is cultural understanding resulting from sharing the same culture, that the members of the group probably know and understand these un-communicated details. To enter in a debate with a member of the lower classes is to open a Pandora’s Box where everything would probably needed to be explained and clarified.

The entrance of the general citizens would alter this state of affairs. The Cape Verdean elite, like most of the African elite, find their legitimacy to rule in terms of their role as *intermediates* between the local and the international. The access to linguistic and cultural capital makes them capable of serving as the linking element between the general mass of citizens and the overall international market and politics. In fact, one of the key discourses legitimizing the sole reliance on the Portuguese language as the language of the State and education has to do with the notion that that language may constitute a bridge with the international world as well as to the scientific and technological development. I have noted in chapter four that even radical anti-colonial nationalists, such as Amilcar Cabral, did not see any contradiction in the use of the Portuguese language in the process of national liberation and post-colonial state building. As the country is heavily dependent on foreign aid and assistance, from the elite perspective ultimately the language question boils down to the capacity to link the country with the foreign donors. Yet, these outside-in notions of development tend not only to alienate

---

local population but also disregard all the local produced knowledge and social experiences as expendable.

It is important to understand the mental atmosphere in which politics takes place. One needs to learn about the general cultural context of politics, for culture shapes politics and at the same time is the arena within which politics is shaped. To investigate this cultural context, I gathered a group of five college-educated individuals (all male), all of whom are employed in the mid- to high-echelons of the public bureaucracy (some of these individuals also teach in institutions of secondary and higher education).³⁶ My goal was to learn about the characteristics of political leadership at the national level. There was a consensus among the interviewees that political leadership at both national and local levels should be reserved for the well-educated. A forty-three year old male participant, a college graduate who teaches history at one of the high schools in the city of Praia, argued that:

politics is too complicated a business. The modern state is very intricate and complex. Only those with the necessary academic tools should be in the positions of state leadership—such as, ministers and other elected officials, at the local and central government. Political leadership is technical leadership.³⁷

Behind this notion is the idea that the modern state is highly complex and difficult and that only those with higher education can effectively lead the state. The other side of the coin is that while an uneducated individual may not be fit for public office; he or she may

³⁶ Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Achada Santo António, Artica (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 12, 2011.
³⁷ Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Achada Santo António, Artica (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 12, 2011.
have the capacity to decide which policies are best for the community—but can’t come up with these ideas and/or implement them.

Following the discussion, another participant, also a college graduate, who works in the Ministry of Tourism and Energy, maintained that:

One cannot expect anybody to perform the jobs of a medical doctor or an engineer. These jobs require expertise that comes from years of sitting in the college bench, understanding the theories and approaches. In the same manner, one does not expect anybody to be in charge of the Ministry of Economy. One must be an economist to properly guide the Ministry. Without college education, I am afraid that you wouldn’t get the necessary tools to properly serve the government.\(^38\)

This notion is also shared by individuals with little or no formal education, particularly elderly citizens who may not have had the opportunity for schooling. In this regard, the sentence uttered by an elderly female citizen during a focus group interview in the neighborhood of Paiol is illustrative. She plainly noted that “I have no schooling [and, thus,] I need only to follow what they say.”\(^39\) This is a common attitude among those who lack formal education.

**Conclusion**

The key objective of this chapter has been to note that the diglossic situation that characterizes Cape Verde fosters a situation of political withdrawal. Those citizens who are not proficient in the dominant language, the Portuguese language, have a psychological disincentive to active engagement and citizenship. For one, they cannot

\(^{38}\) Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Achada Santo António, Artica (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 12, 2011.

\(^{39}\) Focus Group Interview, Interview by Abel Djassi Amado, Neighborhood of Paiol (Praia, Cabo Verde), August 15, 2011.
make a valuable contribution to the public political debate, which is most often conducted through the medium of Portuguese. At the same time, given the language ideology and the long history (and story) that considers the native language not suitable for modern domains and tasks, mother tongue speakers find themselves not being taken seriously—at least not to the same extent that the dominant language speakers are.

I also noted that one of the main motivations for the self-removal from political participation is what I have defined as politics of ridicule. Those who are brave enough to speak up are all but forced to attempt to speak in the dominant language if they have any hope of being taken seriously. As they often lack the knowledge and/or experience of speaking the Portuguese language, their spoken language is far from following the norms of the Standard Portuguese. As a result, a wave of ridicule, mockery and jokes soon follow—directed, as we have seen, at the speaker.

Withdrawing from active political participation, particularly to partake in the public political debate, is the consequence of what I called inaudibility: speakers of some language, chiefly those who speak a non-prestigious language are not taken seriously. Their political complaints, suggestions or grudges often go unheard—and, as such, not acted upon. Speakers of the mother tongue in Cape Verde, particularly those who speak the basilect, the dialect that is far removed from the Portuguese language, find it difficult to engage in public debate. The (erroneous) idea that their language is not capable of translating complex thoughts is accepted as a given by many. Ultimately, ordinary citizen’s initiatory political participation is curtailed.
CHAPTER SIX: LANGUAGE POLICY AND THE QUALITY OF DEMOCRACY:
A COMPARISON OF CAPE VERDE, TANZANIA, AND SOUTH AFRICA

Resulting from the decades of colonialism and post-colonial authoritarianism, the linguistic landscape of the countries that made up the African continent was rather simple: the language of the former colonial power (English, French or Portuguese) maintained its status of the official language, the language of education, administration and high culture, whereas, the African languages, regardless of the size of their speakers or their linguistic development, was kept to the secondary status, sometimes out of the public sphere, to be used solely in the private realm. “Colonialism two publics” has turned into post-colonial two publics.\(^{40}\) Even now that many states have already celebrated their fiftieth anniversary of independence, indigenous languages have yet to reach the level of the language inherited from the colonial experience.

The 1990s brought a renewal of political hopes to sub-Saharan Africa, as a lively parade of electoral democratization spread throughout the region, from the West Africa to East Africa, from the horn of Africa to southern Africa. Endogenous and exogenous pressures had weakened one-party and military regimes, which dominated the political landscape at that point. One by one, and little by little, multi-party elections took place

around the continent, producing different political outcomes.\textsuperscript{41} In some cases, as in the cases of Zambia or Cape Verde, the incumbent from the party-state regime was electorally ousted by an opposition coalition.\textsuperscript{42} In other cases, as in the cases of Mozambique or Tanzania, the party of liberation was able to control the process and to keep itself in power following the founding elections—though they were forced to institutionalize reforms.\textsuperscript{43} In other cases, the process towards electoral democratization had led to political decay—as in the case of Angola or Rwanda during the 1990s.\textsuperscript{44}

This chapter delves into the impact of language policies and practices on the quality of democratic experiments in Cape Verde, Tanzania and South Africa. Put differently, I draw comparative cases to investigate the extent to which the continuous neglect of the indigenous languages constitutes a powerful obstacle to full political participation of the citizens in the above-mentioned countries.

Tanzania’s Political History and Language Policy

Like so many political entities in sub-African Africa, Tanzania is a product of colonialism. The agreements between Imperial Germany and the United Kingdom and Portugal led to the establishment of the Deutsch-Ost Afrika, a colonial possession that

included not only what is today the mainland Tanzania but also the two states of Rwanda and Burundi. Imposition of the colonial rule over the various ethnic groups was brutal. The terrible and inhumane response to the so-called Maji-Maji rebellion attests to the brutality of the German colonial enterprise.  

Colonial brutality notwithstanding, the Germans planted the first seeds in the language policy that was based on the African lingua franca, Swahili, a creole language resulting from the fusion of Arabic (acrolect) and Bantu languages (basilect). The language, first appeared in the coastal area of East Africa, from what is today Somalia down to Northern Mozambique. Arab traders and African porters that moved back and forth from the coastal areas to the interior of the continent led to the diffusion of that language to as far as the eastern territories of today’s Democratic Republic of Congo.

To facilitate colonial domination, while economizing the costs of the colonial state-building, the Swahili language was taken in by the German colonists as the language of administration, along with German, after years of being used for Christian proselytizing (both protestant and catholic). Like most colonial powers in Africa, an unholy alliance between the colonial state and the various missionary groups developed in German East Africa. In need of an intermediary, the colonial state funded mission schools and even created schools to train the much needed cadres for the bureaucracy. German extension of colonial domination was carried out through the employment of

---

native agents, the so-called *akidas*, Swahili-speaking Africans and Africans who were practically the middlemen between the European masters and the large body of native Africans. In spite of some reservations by some missionary groups, mainly Protestants who were advocating for the use of the indigenous languages, in time all accepted Swahili as the language of instruction. Concomitantly, a process of Latinization of the Swahili language took place, when the previously used Arabic script was put aside for the Latin one. The debacle of the armed resistance against colonial interference opened a new era in the history of the territory, the age of improvement. John Iliffe, a noted historian of colonial Tanzania, indicates that Swahili was employed by German authorities as the official language of district administration, “adopted for administrative convenience and subsequently defended against missionary enthusiasts for tribal languages and patriotic enthusiasts for German.”

German colonial language policy, in a way, resembled that of the British indirect rule policy and was in direct opposition to the French and Portuguese policy of assimilation. Instead of a typical glottophagic perspective typical of the assimilationists, Germans and British assumed that native language could be and were used in the matters of colonial administration.

Germany’s defeat in the First World War meant the disbandment of German East Africa and its split in three territories, Rwanda-Urundi, the so-called Kionga Triangle and Tanganyika, controlled by Belgium, Portugal and United Kingdom respectively. British rule in Tanganyika, supposedly a mandated territory under the legal precepts of the

---

League of the Nations, was in effect a colonial rule, not different from other colonies. In the first instances, this meant the crowding out of Swahili from the public and administrative spheres by the English language. Sir Donald Cameron, who assumed the post of Governor of Tanganyika Territory in the early 1920s, instituted the policy of indirect rule, guarantying again the prominent role of Swahili language in the public sphere and in the domains of colonial administration.

In 1961, following political independence, Julius Nyerere and anti-colonial nationalist his party, the Tanganyika African National Union, established Swahili as the national language of the country—“in opposition to English.”49 Like in other former British colonies in Africa, decolonization was mainly through constitutional reforms and multi-party elections. By the end of the 1950s, Tanganyika African National Union (TANU) was incontestably the only political game in town. The independence elections translated the transfer of power to TANU, under leadership of Julius Nyerere. As the other political parties had no actual electoral power, it was just a matter of time for the transformation of a de facto into de jure one-party state.

Politics of national liberation and independence in Tanganyika can be said to have circulated around two key poles: the politicization of Swahili that is making the language a strong and viable tool for political mobilization, recruitment and identity formation, and the swahilization of politics, the process of making political processes, action and communication through the medium of that language. The process of politicization of

Swahili, undertaken by TANU and its leader Julius Nyerere, was a multifaceted process. The language became a foundational and essential element in both horizontal and vertical national integration.\(^{50}\) Since pre-colonial and colonial times the Swahili language has enjoyed the role of lingua franca, linking individual and groups from different ethnic and regional background, this role was further reinforced with the coming of independence. At the same time, the Swahili language was the language of vertical integration insofar as it was supposed to close the gap between elite and the masses. Henry Bienen, writing in the late 1960s about the political history of TANU, noted that

> Swahili provided an ideal, ready-made vehicle through which TANU officials could communicate with the grass roots of society and operate even in unfamiliar localities. A knowledge of Swahili was therefore a prerequisite to the establishment of a permanent, paid TANU staff, whose members could be posted anywhere in the country.\(^{51}\)

Post-colonial Tanganyika, later Tanzania, was also engaged in swahilization of politics. Party politics, the recruitment and vertical ascendancy within TANU became intimately related to the Swahili language.\(^{52}\) Politics, both in its high and everyday approaches, became the process conducted through the medium of Swahili. Independence meant the language was promoted to an official language status, a unique case in Sub-Saharan Africa in the early 1960s. Moreover, against the backdrop of swahilization of politics, in 1965 it was decided that the language would have the role of the medium of education for

\(^{50}\) On the notion of horizontal and vertical national integration see James Smoot Coleman and Carl Gustav Rosberg, \textit{Political Parties and National Integration in Tropical Africa} (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1964), particularly the concluding chapter.


\(^{52}\) Ibid.
primary and secondary education. In few words, nation-building, the creation and imagination of “Tanganyikaness,” became intimately connected with kiswahili.\textsuperscript{53}

Post-colonial Tanzania, like several other states in the region, was an example of one-party state experimenting with African socialism, through the ideology and practices of \textit{Ujamaa}.\textsuperscript{54} By the 1970s, the politics and policy related to Ujamaa were all but successful. Neither socialism nor development were obtained. A crisis of legitimacy ensued and electoral democracy was envisioned (by foreign and local critics alike) to constitute a panacea against all the evils that the country faced. In 1995, the first multi-party legislative and presidential elections since the 1960s were conducted.\textsuperscript{55} Oda van Cranenburgh, following Samuel Huntington’s typology of democratization, has suggested that political transition in Tanzania is an example of “transformation,” that is, a process in which “the initiative and leadership in the transition process lay with the governing party.”\textsuperscript{56} Electoral democracy meant the transition from one-party state to a dominant-party state: Chama Cha Mapinduzi, the party in power (created in 1979 after the fusion of TANU and Afro-Shirazi Party of Zanzibar), maintains almost total control of the state.

It should be noted that by the time of political liberation of the 1990s Kiswahili has become truly a national language, spoken across the country and by people from different social and economic background. Nyerere’s linguistic nationalism had paid off

\textsuperscript{53} Anderson, \textit{Imagined Communities}. See also Bienen, \textit{Tanzania}, 43.


and the reliance on Kiswahili has solidified national identity among Tanzanians.\footnote{See, for instance, Edward Miguel, “Tribe or Nation?: Nation Building and Public Goods in Kenya Versus Tanzania,” World Politics : a Quarterly Journal of International Relations. 56, no. 3 (2004): 327-362; Crawford Young, Ethnicity and Politics in Africa (Boston, Mass: Boston University African Studies Center, 2002).}

Unsurprisingly the Kiswahili language became the key vehicle of democracy in the 1990s. Many political parties created and legalized in this period established their names in Kiswahili. This can interpreted not only as a strategy to link with the general population but also an attempt to build upon the symbolic value of the Swahili language as the language of the nation.

**South Africa: from Apartheid to a Multi-Lingual Electoral Democracy**

South Africa’s history of politics and language policy is a complex one, bringing together different peoples, cultures and languages from Europe and southern Africa. While the Portuguese might have been the first Europeans to have reached the shores of what is today South Africa in the late 1400s, actual European settlement began with the sending of Dutch colonizers to the Cape colony in the second half of seventeenth century—as to serve in the supply line for the Dutch East India Company. Dutch setters, unlike the British who moved in later, de-linked themselves from the European world. The linguistic consequence of this process was the eventual the social manufacturing of an original and distinct language: Afrikaans.\footnote{Sebastian Mallaby, After Apartheid: The Future of South Africa (New York: Times Books, 1992), 73.}

British penetration in the territory, in the late eighteenth century, was a calculated action to preempt French emperor, Napoleon, from conquering the area, and thus, casting
a big blow on the British global empire. The history of nineteenth century South Africa is the history of civilizational clash and forced migrations: the Mfecane among African ethnics groups, the Great Trek of the Afrikaner seeking to move away from the control of the British; the war between the British Empire and the Zulu Empire; the various armed conflicts and wars of conquest between the Africans and the Dutch settlers, and last, but not least, the so-called the Boer War of 1898-1901. By the mid-nineteenth century, and particularly in the later years of the century, the Afrikaner population (the descent of earlier Dutch settlers) were political antagonistic to the plans developed by the British—who, by the end of the century, began to advocate an imperial plan, linking Cape to Cairo and had political economic plans of controlling the gold-rich areas of South Africa.

Peace agreements between Europeans kept Africans out of the political game. In 1910, the political merger, the Union of South Africa, was formally created, combining the two territories formerly controlled by the Afrikaners (Transvaal and Orange Free State) and the two controlled by the British (Natal and Cape Colony). While the new political entity resulted from the unification of previously autonomous political units, the Union of South Africa was never a federal state. Its constitution mandated that English and Dutch were the official languages of the territory.59 British mainstream language ideology maintained that Afrikaans was a dialect of Dutch and, like other African

---

59 The 1909 Constitution so reads in its article137: “Both the English and Dutch languages shall be official languages of the Union, and shall be treated on a footing of equality, and possess and enjoy equal freedom, rights, and privileges; all records, journals, and proceedings of Parliament shall be kept in both languages, and all Bills, Acts, and notices of general public importance or interest issued by the Government of the Union shall be in both languages.” See “The Union of South Africa Act of 1909,” https://media.law.wisc.edu/s/c_8/jzhy2/cbsa1.pdf (accessed August 20, 2017)
languages, that it could not fulfill modern roles and functions, particularly those pertaining to the activities of the state.

After the end of the Boer conflict, the British attempts to Anglicize the white Afrikaner farmers backfired. It led not only to a more entrenched feeling towards the language by the Afrikaner, but also to the development of several nationalist Afrikaner organizations that advocated their cultural and linguistic uniqueness and individuality. Some of these organizations strived to delink South Africa from the British Commonwealth, guaranteed first by the Balfour Declaration of 1926 and subsequently by the Statute of Westminster of 1931. Afrikaner ethnic nationalism ensued. In time, these nationalist feelings and organizations would lead to a formation of a veritable ethnic coalition among the Afrikaans. It became important to devise a system of Volkskapitalisme, designed to trickle in the share of economic development to the white poor farmers.

Following Second World War, the National Party surged as a major political force, claiming the task of leadership to the Afrikaans nationalism. Once in power, radical Afrikaans nationalists began to erect a type of state that fit to their ideology. The foundation of this new state was the idea of separate development or Apartheid in the Afrikaner language. It should be noted that the whole idea of separate development was

---

60 The best example of these organizations was the case of Broederbond, an organization first created to promote Afrikaner culture and language. In time, the organization would become a major secret organizations with cells dispersed throughout the country and key organizations and institutions of the state. See J. D. Omer-Cooper, *A History of Southern Africa* (London: J. Currey, 1987), 173-74.
something that was borrowed from the British political and colonial thought. The institutional beginning of the Apartheid regime was the year of 1948, with the promulgation of a series of race laws turning the country into what George M. Fredrickson calls an overt racist regime. Little by little, more severe race laws were enacted. For instance, the Population Registration Act divided the population of the country into four “races,” white, black, Asian and colored.

J. D. Omer-Cooper considers that the Apartheid regime in South Africa can be best understood if divided into three major phases. The first stage, which ran from 1948 to 1961, constitutes the phase of the baaskap, or white supremacy, a “period in which the National Party put its original ideas into legislative form.” The period of separate development, from about 1961, the year that South Africa became a republic (that is, it broke away from the British Commonwealth, turning itself into a veritable autonomous Afrikaans republic), to about 1974-75, the year of southern Africa liberation. From the mid-1970s, a phase of multi-racial co-option developed. A new phase can be added to the history of the apartheid regime in South Africa, that of its dismissal. By the mid-1980s, following the two inter-related domestic and international pressures (particularly the “make the townships ungovernable” campaign and the international movement towards

---

65 Ibid., 193.
divestment in South Africa) political leadership in South Africa had to open the regime to the African masses.  

The history of the Apartheid regime, its origins and development, is fundamentally a history of the promotion of the Afrikaans and the culture related to that language. At the beginning of modern South Africa, following the Boers War, Afrikaans was essentially an oral language, lacking an organized and systematic orthography. In fact, for the dominant English speakers Afrikaans was no different to the many indigenous languages that made up the human landscape of the country. In 1906, for instance, an article in the English-newspaper *The Cape Times* read that, “Afrikaans is the confused utterance of half-articulated patois.” Moreover, post-war British policy was fundamentally directed towards Anglicization of the country, by making the English the language of education while promoting immigration of the English population into the territory. The sentiment of defeat, coupled with the hegemonic policies of the British, basically led to development of linguistic nationalism among the Afrikaners.

The first two decades of the twentieth century were crucial for the development and modernization of Afrikaans. Poets, writers, literary and language associations sprung

---

66 This includes change at the discourse level with the abandonment of the expression ‘apartheid’ in official documents. In this regard, Timothy G. Reagan, writing in the late 1980s, has noted that “The term “apartheid” is no longer used officially; indeed, the government maintains that "apartheid" has been or is being eliminated. In its place one finds terms and concepts such as “multinational development” and the like.” Reagan, however, claims that nothing fundamentally had changed as “the fundamental presuppositions of apartheid remain intact.” See Timothy G. Reagan, “The Politics of Linguistic Apartheid: Language Policies in Black Education in South Africa,” *The Journal of Negro Education*, 56, no. 3 (1987): 300 (footnote 4).

67 K. K. Prah, *Challenges to the promotion of indigenous languages in South Africa (Cape Town: CASAS 2007)*, 6, http://www.casas.co.za (accessed November 13 2013). The fact that the British did not take the Afrikaans language as a serious language can be seen in the fact that in the Constitution of the Union, of 1910, Dutch, the lexifier language of Afrikaans, was given legal parity with English.

68 Ibid.
up, promoting and demanding the recognition of the language in parity with the dominant language (English). For the Afrikaner cultural and social elite, the promotion of the language was essentially a movement towards rising up the Afrikaner nation as a whole. Equipped with the organic perspective of nation, according to which language is the soul of the nation, as defended by German Romantic writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, they maintained, in the words of its most ardent leader, D. F. Malan, that “[to] raise the Afrikaans language to a written language, [is to] let it become the vehicle of our culture, our history, our national ideals, and you will also raise the people who speak it.” By the end of the 1920s, Afrikaans was a recognized official language of the country as well as a language of education.

Under the Apartheid regime (1948-1994), the country’s official language policy was fundamentally bilingual, sustained on the principle of legal and constitutional equality between the English and the Afrikaans languages. African languages, such as Xhosa, Zulu, Swazi, Tsonga, among others, were considered as the official languages of the then-called black homelands (Bantustans) and self-governing regions. Apartheid’s education language policy, however, was a bit more complex and it was based fundamentally on the two interrelated foundational principles, namely that of the idea of the apartheid itself and the notion of mother tongue education. This means that the creation of sovereign political units that reflects (or are expected to reflect) the language communities of South Africa. This explains the creation of the black homelands as

---

69 D. F. Malan cited in Prah, Challenges to the promotion of indigenous languages in South Africa, 8.
independent political units, where an autochthonous language was to be elevated to the status of official language.

Apartheid education policy was fundamentally sustained by the notion that children should be taught in their own mother language. For the majority of black population this policy meant that early education was to be carried out through the medium of Zulu, Tsonga, Xhosa, among others, depending on the “tribal” classification imposed upon them. Secondary education, according to the policy, was conducted essentially through the medium of the English language. This policy suffered a major shift in the mid-1970s.

In 1974, with the passing of the Afrikaans Medium Decree, the regime imposed that the Afrikaans language was to be the mandatory medium of secondary education along with English. Given the fact that Afrikaans was perceived as the language of the regime (and ipso facto, the language of oppression), such a measure resulted in an obstinate resistance on the part of the black population. Ultimately black resistance against this rule resulted in one of the most brutal repressions under apartheid, namely that of the Soweto Uprising of June 16, 1976. In the end, the apartheid regime, propped up by radical Afrikaners, resulted in the identification of Afrikaans as the language of oppression—while, at the same time, English was perceived as the language, medium, and instrument of liberation.\(^{71}\)

---

\(^{71}\) Ibid., 305. See also Victor N. Webb, Language in South Africa. The Role of Language in National Transformation, Reconstruction and Development (Philadelphia: J. Benjamins, 2002), 141.
By the end of the 1980s, the one-party state in Tanzania and the racist and discriminatory regime in South Africa were all politically bankrupt—albeit for different reasons. The opening of the political system, however controlled, became a key strategy in all of the cases, in order to safeguard the dominant position of the hegemonic party or to maintain the overall political order in the country. With different paces and approaches the regimes in Tanzania and South Africa were liberalized and opened to full electoral competition by the mid-1990s.

Since the mid-1960s, Tanzania was a de facto and de jure one-party state. Chama Cha Mapinduzi, the political party that originated from the fusion of the TANU and the Afro-Shirazi party, assumed the political monopoly since its inception in 1977. The situation in South Africa was a bit different. It can be argued that up to the end of the apartheid in 1994, politics in South Africa was bifurcated, with “white” and “black” politics. The white political realm, blocked from the non-whites population (namely the indigenous Africans, the colored and the Asian minority), can be characterized as an electoral democracy, insofar as several political parties (white-only parties) competed freely for power. Yet, white South Africa was a clear example of a dominant party system as the Afrikaans-dominated National Party clearly dominated electoral politics. Black politics, on the other, resumed to anti-Apartheid protests and rebellion, as the regime did not provide any space for formal political participation to Africans—who, in
the later period of Apartheid, were considered as non-citizens immigrants coming from the so-called Bantustans.\textsuperscript{72}

Democratic transition in Tanzania took about five years, from the time that the regime began to liberalize politically (1990) and the founding elections (1995). Goran Hyden, a student of Tanzanian politics, considers the case of democratization in Tanzania as “creeping,” given the number of years that the whole process took.\textsuperscript{73} In 1990, following the recommendations of Julius Nyerere, who had voluntarily relinquished power in 1985, President Mwinyi established a special commission tasked with legal and constitutional reforms as the precondition for the reintroduction of multi-party electoral democracy—which was decided to take place in 1995, thus following the already in place electoral terms.\textsuperscript{74} Democratization in Tanzania, unlike many of the cases of West Africa (Benin, for instance) was not the result of popular pressures.\textsuperscript{75}

The founding elections of 1995 clearly tilted in favor of the incumbent party. CCM won both the presidential and legislative elections.\textsuperscript{76} Democratization or the opening of political competition in Tanzania was one-sided, resulting from the absolute control by the government and the party in power (CCM). Political opponents, whether organized or not, simply did not have as much influence in the whole process of designing post-transition electoral laws and/or other key legislations.

\textsuperscript{72} Tom Lodge, \textit{Black Politics in South Africa since 1945} (London: Longman, 1983).
\textsuperscript{73} Hyden, “Top-Down Democratization in Tanzania.”
\textsuperscript{74} Ibid., 145.
\textsuperscript{75} A. M. Tripp, “Political Reform in Tanzania: The Struggle for Associational Autonomy,” \textit{Comparative Politics} 32, 2 (2000), 197. For the West African cases and the impact of popular protests and protests see Bratton and Van de Walle, \textit{Democratic Experiments in Africa}.
South African democratization was a more complex business, insofar as democratization meant the nationalization of politics—hitherto reserved to a minority. The 1980s had been a terrible decade for the apartheid regime, facing increasing opposition from the domestic and international spheres. In the international arena, campaigns for disinvestment in South Africa, reinforced by investors’ fears of a “coming anarchy,” resulting from the “making the country ungovernable” campaign, had provoked capital flight from the country—badly harming the national economy. In the domestic sphere, the internal opposition, mainly the ANC, campaigned to make the country “ungovernable”—again severely damaging the regime, by making the country an investment risk. Early attempts to change and open the system were taken in the 1980s, when the colored and the Asians were guaranteed seats in the parliament. For the black majority, continuous pressure was the only way ahead.

Democratic transition followed the model used throughout Francophone Africa. Among most of the former colonies of France in Africa, the transition towards liberal, electoral democracy of the early 1990s was the outcome of what became known as the national conference. The model, first applied in Benin in 1990 quickly spread to most of the Francophone African states, though with different outcomes. In South Africa the national conference happened under the aegis of the Convention for a Democratic South

---

77 The National Conference model, as the name clearly indicates, is an informal assembly of key social and political forces, designed to debate and to produce an institutional architecture of a newer political regime. The key idea behind it is to bring in different political stakeholders and to provide a venue where all different interests, desires and objectives are placed on the table of negotiation. For the study of the model, see, Pearl T. Robinson, “The National Conference Phenomenon in Francophone Africa,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 36, 3(1994): 575-610.
Africa (CODESA). CODESA was a major assembly of the National Party, the opposition ANC and a myriad of other small to medium political organizations. This major national conference took place in two different episodes: first in December 1991 and the second in May 1992. Ultimately, CODESA reached a Record of Understanding on September 26, 1992. This document provides the norms and the rules for a number of political and social issues to be dealt with during the transition from Apartheid to a more inclusive state. A year later, a new type of national conference was also constituted, namely the Multiparty Negotiation Forum. This forum produced not only an interim Constitution of the country but it also established a transitional executive council, which was to lead the country until the first multi-racial elections of 1994.

The democratization process, that is, the process of negotiation and political design of the institutions to follow the status quo, was essentially carried out through the means of the high language in the case of South Africa. The negotiation and the revision of the pact were entirely in the English language. The exclusive use of the high language in the process of political liberation—particularly in the horizontal communications between the regime and the political opponents—was linked to the idea of political paternalism, whereby the political elite, old and new, discuss the fate for the general masses—who, would be presented, after all things were done, in a language that is perceptible to them. Thus, it can be argued that the use of the dominant language in the process of opening the political arena was, in itself, a mechanism of political control.

---

through drastically reducing the number of possible and potential intervenient in the process. Fluency of the dominant language, in the last instance, became the subtle, yet strong, factor in deciding who gets to speak up and provide suggestions for the new political order under formation.

**Contemporary Linguistic Landscape in Tanzania and South Africa**

In order to better understand the current linguistic situation in Tanzania and South Africa, the succinct examination that follows is limited to two main areas, namely, the official language policy and education language policy. In terms of linguistic policies and practices, Tanzania and South Africa, represent two different streams of linguistic traditions in the African continent.

South Africa and Tanzania are multi-linguistic states, with dozens of linguistic communities found within their respective borders. As I have noted above, Tanzania has had the advantage of developing an indigenous language, Kiswahili, which has been used for education and public administration, along with English. Unlike a number of sub-Saharan African states, post-colonial Tanzania has followed an overt policy of Swahilization of the country, where the language became the symbol of the nation under construction—though it seems that this policy is being reversed, as I shall note below. This has resulted in a greater and deeper application of the Swahili language in all different realms and domains of public and private lives. Yet, this should not be taken to mean that a situation of complete bilingualism does exist in the country. In fact, in spite of the post-colonial investment in the indigenous language, English still dominates the
linguistic landscape. The prestige of the English language results mostly from the fact of it being an international and global language.

Sociolinguists who study current de jure language policy and politics in Tanzania talk about “ambiguity” or “confusion.”

Though the first post-colonial constitution established that both English and Swahili as the official languages of Tanzania, the state’s present political constitution makes no reference to language policy. After more than two dozen constitutional reforms, the constitution has long erased the issue of language. In spite of the fact that a constitutional language policy is lacking, politics in Tanzania, at the state and society levels, are in Swahili. Public discussions and debate, within the various branches of the government, particularly in the legislative assemblies, as well as major government outputs (policies) are in Swahili.

The dismantling of the Apartheid state was to be more than a simple regime change. Given the centrality of the language question in the former regime, post-Apartheid policy makers—and the social and political leaders as a whole—accepted the need to reformulate and to redesign the country’s language legal architecture. The post-apartheid constitution of 1996 focuses on the principle of “parity of esteem” among South African languages. This means that, supposedly, equal treatment was to be provided, by the state, to all different language communities that make up the country.

---


80 Ibid.

81 This principle is further enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution, which concedes the notion of language rights, by making it clear that “everyone has the right to use the language and to participate in the cultural life of their choice […].” It should be noted that this legal principle finds its roots in the famous Freedom Charter of 1955, where it reads, “All people should have equal right to use their own languages,
In spite of the legal and constitutional recognition of the country’s multilingualism, the truth to the matter was that South Africa had fallen victim to English cultural imperialism. Neville Alexander, a student of the language question in South Africa, noted about a decade ago, that the country’s main organized political forces have, in essence, pursued an “English-only” or an “English-mainly” policy.\(^\text{82}\) Social and political public communication, including most of the written processes and procedures of state action, are carried almost always through the medium of English—at the expense of other languages. The social practice of English monolingualism enters in “tension” with the constitutional principles of multilingualism.\(^\text{83}\) One questions about the extent that the constitutional language policy may be simply “declaratory.”\(^\text{84}\)

Several factors militated for the hegemonic position of the English language in South Africa. First, English is recognized as a global language, linking the country to the international systems of trade, politics and culture. It constitutes a language of wider communication, making possible the linkage of the country’s elite way beyond the limits of territorial boundaries. International communication and business are maintained as a cause for this state of affairs. The second reason has to do with the fact that the English language had a traditional role, among black South Africans and non-white South Africans, as the lingua franca of political resistance against the apartheid regime. Lastly,

---


\(^\text{83}\) Ibid, 144.

\(^\text{84}\) Bokamba, “Ukolonia,” 147.
in the post-apartheid context, English is the lingua franca of the elite, making possible the linking and communication across the various ethno-linguistic communities and groups that make up the country.

South Africa’s new post-Apartheid constitution broke new grounds of the official language policy in the continent by declaring eleven official languages, of which nine are indigenous African languages (along with the two former official languages, English and Afrikaans). The post-Apartheid regime constitution talks about “parity of esteem” among all the eleven languages. The idea behind this concept is that the speakers of these official languages should enjoy linguistic rights to speak their languages in whatever situation they may face. This situation potentially would result in the diminution—if not the complete breakdown—of anxieties and lack of confidence resulting from the use of a language that has less social status and prestige.

Table 10. The Constitution and the Language Policy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Constitutional Principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td>While there was a provision in the earlier versions of the Constitution about the language policy, it has been removed in most recent versions of the Constitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>“Parity of esteem:” 11 official languages (two from the Apartheid period and 9 new indigenous African languages), Section 6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Tanzania (1997, with various amendments), and South Africa (1994).

As noted above, English dominates in South Africa. This language has been perceived as a unitary language since the times of resisting the apartheid regime. As the

85 The official languages of South Africa are: Afrikaans, English, Ndebele, Pedi, Sotho, Swazi, Tsonga, Tswana, Venda, Xhosa, and Zulu.
language of liberation—for the struggle against the racial state was carried out almost exclusively through the medium of English—has come to mean that the majority of South Africans, particularly of their social and political elite, tend to perceive that language as a neutral and capable of healing the wounds from the past. Contemporary national politics, from electoral to parliamentary politics, takes place almost exclusively in the English language.

The social and political status of a language—and of its speakers—is directly related to the use that the language may (or may not) have in the realm of education. Public education has been a powerful tool for language spreading at the hands of the modern state. The continuation of the colonial language-in-education policy has come to mean that the post-colonial African state has been an effective instrument of furthering European languages (mainly English, French and Portuguese), often at the expense of the indigenous, local languages.

The social and political status of a language—and of its speakers—is directly related to the use that the language may (or may not) have in the realm of education. Public education has been a powerful tool for language spreading at the hands of the modern state. The continuation of the colonial language-in-education policy has come to mean that the post-colonial African state has been an effective instrument of furthering

---


88 Ibid.
European languages (mainly English, French and Portuguese), often at the expense of the indigenous, local languages.

There is a common social perception that modernity, social status, education and proficiency in the European language inherited from the colonial experience, are intimately related. The fluency in Portuguese, French or English often dictates one’s own social standing and/or employment opportunities. This social perception is furthered by a language-in-education policy that places greater emphasis on the European language, as the medium of instruction. In most of sub-Saharan Africa, the legacy that education, the process of transmission and building knowledge about social and natural reality, can only be effective and efficient if constructed through the means of a modern language (that is, Portuguese, English or French) still endures.

Education language policy—that is, the state-mandated choice of language of instruction—in Tanzania since the introduction of electoral democracy has two different and divergent stages. In 1995 the government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, issued a white paper that outlined the policy. The government, as such, adopted the model of the model of transitional bilingual education, according to which, the mother tongue is used in the early stages of education while the high language is taught as a second language and, in time, the former is replaced by the latter. According to this policy, Swahili and English are to be considered as the two main media of schooling, though used differently at different stages of academic development. Thus, the first years

of education (pre-primary and primary education), Swahili was to be the main medium. In the secondary and post-secondary education, English was the language of instruction. For the government of Tanzania, post-primary education was to rely exclusively on the English language “because of its tremendous power and prestige in the global market.”

More recently a major change in the education language policy has been proposed by the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training. According to this new policy, English is to be language of instruction from the nursery school to the tertiary education. The predominance of the English language is guaranteed in the education system of the country. Such a move has been criticized on the grounds that it is “in fact a continuation of the colonial linguistic inheritance.” Immersion into English seems to be favored over the old model of transitional bilingual education.

Current South Africa’s education language policy dates back to the early years of the post-apartheid state. In 1996, two years after the instauration of multi-racial electoral democracy, The National Education Policy Act was passed that granted extensive powers to the government, through the Ministry of Education, in terms of a policy for language in education. The Language-in-Education Policy, adopted in 1997, laid the foundations of the policy. Clearly influenced by the constitutional principle of “parity of esteem” among South African languages, the policy is centered itself on the notion of

---

93 Ibid., 39.
multilingualism. This means that African languages—of which nine are considered as official languages of the country—can be used as the language of instruction.

The principle of multilingualism, while enshrined in the constitution, is yet to be fully practiced, particularly in the realms of education. Scholars who study the linguistic landscape post-apartheid in South Africa have noted about English predominance. The situation is no different in school setting, where the hegemonic position of the English language has been upheld. The option to use English—often at the expense of the indigenous African language—was the option taken by most of schools in the country. Against this backdrop, the government of South Africa has put in place new policies with the goal of redressing the current linguistic state of affairs. The first of these policies was the 2012 Use of the Official Languages Act. Among other political objective, this policy seeks to “regulate and monitor the use of official languages for government purposes by national government [and] to promote parity of esteem and equitable treatment of official languages of the Republic.”

The second policy—which is no more than the application of the first into the realms of education—is the Incremental Introduction of African Languages. This policy

---

97 This bill was proposed by PanSALB (Pan South African Language Board), Annual Report 2012-2013, 9 http://www.pansalb.org.za/Annual%20Report.pdf (accessed on February 18, 2015).
was first advocated by Basic Education Minister Angie Motshekga, in 2013. Put into effect as a pilot project in 2014, the program is supposed to be fully extensive in 2015.99

**Political Participation and Effective Democracy in Cape Verde, South Africa, and Tanzania**

Electoral democracy has become part of social reality throughout the African continent. Since the early 1990s, periodic competitive elections, characterized by universal adult franchise, have become part of the political routine in countries like Cape Verde, South Africa and Tanzania. At least four cycles of multi-party elections have taken place in these countries, producing, however, different results. In general, the levels of electoral turnout are quite satisfactory (see table 11). While in Cape Verde, the government has changed two times, in the cases of South Africa and Tanzania, multi-party electoral democracy seems to have created a system of dominant party system. As defined by R. Suttner, dominant party system is “a category of parties/political organizations that have successively won election victories and whose future defeat cannot be envisaged or is unlikely for the foreseeable future.”100 The cases of the CCM in Tanzania and ANC in South Africa represent this subcategory.

---


Table 11. Turnout in Legislative Elections in Cape Verde, South Africa and Tanzania

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1st Elections</th>
<th>2nd Elections</th>
<th>3rd Elections</th>
<th>4th Elections</th>
<th>5th Elections</th>
<th>Average Turnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cape Verde</strong></td>
<td>1991 75.27%</td>
<td>1996 76.52%</td>
<td>2001 54%</td>
<td>2006 54.17%</td>
<td>2011 76.01%</td>
<td>67.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(National Assembly)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>South Africa</strong></td>
<td>1994 86.9%</td>
<td>1999 89%</td>
<td>2004 76.73%</td>
<td>2009 77.3%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>82.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em><em>(National Assembly</em>)</em>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tanzania</strong></td>
<td>1995 76.5%</td>
<td>2000 73.8%</td>
<td>2005 72.52%</td>
<td>2010 39.71%</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>65.43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>(Bunge)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The Parliament in South Africa bi-cameral. The data used here are those from the elections to the lower chamber.
Source: Inter-Parliamentary Union (www.iup.org)

Table 12. Regime type and Party System in Cape Verde, Tanzania and South Africa

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cape Verde</th>
<th>South Africa</th>
<th>Tanzania</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Electoral Cycles</strong></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Party System</strong></td>
<td>Bi-party to Dominant</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
<td>Dominant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Founding Elections</strong></td>
<td>1991</td>
<td>1995</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Regime Type</strong></td>
<td>Parliamentary</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
<td>Presidential</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: compiled by the author.

The assessment provided by international ranking organizations, such as the Freedom House, provided a totally different image. With a score of 1 and 1.5 respectively, Cape Verde and South Africa are characterized as free, while Tanzania, with a 3.5 score is partially free (see figure 7). While the Freedom House assessment may provide an idea of the political condition of the country, it does not give a full picture. The Freedom Index lacks a focus on the structural elements, such as language practices and policies that impair citizen’s active and engaging participation in the political affairs.
This dissertation takes a rather different approach. By focusing on the language practices and policies—that includes obviously language ideologies—the objective is to discern the extent that the quality of democratic experience may be hindered when there is a linguistic gap between the hoi polloi and the state and state elites. In Cape Verde, South Africa, and to a lesser extent Tanzania, the dominant language is a language that is foreign to a great majority. Portuguese or English are fully mastered by only a small percentage of the population—while the vast majority, particularly in the urban peripheries and rural areas cannot engaged in serious and profound communicative activity in the official language.

The dominant position of the English language in South Africa, while it has promoted horizontal integration among the various elites, originating from the various language communities, has meant, at the end of the day, the maintenance—to say the least—of the shrinking sphere of public participation. Writing two years following the
inauguration of post-Apartheid South Africa, Victor Webb has noted that “the present *de facto* language set up does not really allow for satisfactory citizen participation in the political life of the country.”\(^{101}\) He presents five major reasons to back up his claim. First, as the English language is the only—or perhaps—the main language of political debate, a language in which the overwhelming percentage of the population, particularly the rural population, lacks understanding or fluency. As a consequence, a large section of citizens are left out of the public discussion and deliberation circles. Second, there is a widening linguistic gap between the average citizen and the state administration, which is based either in English or Afrikaans. This ultimately means that citizens simply have troubles in “reading” the state—making the latter rather difficult to supervise and control.

Political scientists and other social scientists in general have long postulated that “enlightened understanding” of the political processes and procedures cause people to further probe and partake in the political affairs of the community, be it at the local or the national level. In this regard, Michael Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter’s study of the American citizens is quite illustrative. They note that the political systems works “more democratically as the range and depth of information held by citizens increases and as the distribution of knowledge becomes more equitable.”\(^{102}\) At the same time, the authors suggest that “all things being equal, the more informed people are, the better able they are to perform as citizens.”\(^{103}\) William A. Galston opines about the importance and centrality


\(^{103}\) Ibid., 219.
of political knowledge, by noting that “[t]he more knowledge we have, the better we can understand the impact of public policies on our interests, and the more effectively we can promote our interests in the political process.”

In politics, to know is (almost always) to act upon. That is to say, learning about political processes is politically consequential. Political knowledge brings about political action. Once citizens have an understanding of the political processes and procedures they will act upon it. Family members, friends and neighbors are the primary candidate to be used for the promotion of their own views and interests, for they are the ones that are more accessible and social contacts are numerous and constant. Unfortunately, the reverse still applies. Lacking or having little political knowledge translates into less willingness to discuss and persuade the ones that one is often in touch with.

The numbers of the table 12 on 274 indicate that voter turnout in Cape Verde, South Africa and Tanzania are relatively high. The average for Tanzania, which was in the low 70 percent drops considerably with the elections of 2010, when less than 40% of the registered voters made to the polls. Fear of a Kenya-like election massacre, many voters worrying for their safety preferred not to make it to the voting station.

One of the key arguments of this dissertation is that electoral participation is not a good indication of engaging political participation. In other words, high voter turnout is not necessarily related to participative citizenship. Voters may be attracted to the polls for reasons other than the pursuing of the collective good. This situation is particularly

significant in many states in sub-Saharan Africa. Studies across the African continent have stressed that elections, in themselves, are no indication of the quality of democracy. The record of African elections seems to indicate that old Big Man politics of patronage, clientelism and neo-patrimonialism are adapting to the new realities. Staffan Lindberg’s account of Ghanaian post-democratization electoral politics, for instance, concludes that it reinforces, rather than slashes, neo-patrimonial politics.\(^{106}\) For his part, the study of elections in Benin by Leonard Wantchekon suggests that “clientelist appeals and accessibility of clientelist goods greatly influence voting behavior.”\(^{107}\) As such, the fact that voter turnout is relatively high in most of elections should not be taken at face value or to means that there are high levels of participation among African citizens.

One should focus on the less visible—and often neglected—forms of political participation, ranging from political discussion and contacting a state official or representative, at the local or national levels. From the perspective of the ordinary citizens, the above-mentioned forms of political participation, unlike voting, guarantee more control and influence. For one, these forms of participation are direct and personal. To write a letter to a state official is to expect an answer. Similarly, to engage in a political discussion is to reasonably assume that questions will be answered. However, in the case of voting, things are not as clear. Depending on the electoral system, voting may be neither direct nor personal. For instance, in closed-list proportional representation, as in the case of Cape Verde, citizens vote for the political parties and not for the individual

---

candidates. The latter electability is dictated more by the party “selectorate” than by the voting population. Moreover, voting process is highly regulated that only those fitting certain legally-prescribed requirements (for instance, age, and nationality) may be allowed to take part. Other forms of participation are more inclusive, as they form a venue of civic engagement that under-age citizens or non-citizen residents could take part in the various aspects of the political process.

Political discussion is an important element of participation in politics for it not only permits the circulation of political ideas and ideals among the discussant but it also constitutes a rehearsal of oratory and discussing and debating skills. Put in other words, there is a close relationship between political knowledge and discussion. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to delve onto the causality between these two variables. What is important to retain is that the two reinforce each other, as more knowledge about politics pushes people to enter in political dialogue—which leads to a qualitative increase in knowledge of the political processes and procedures.

At the same time, the practice of contacting a state official or representative is an important element of participation in the political affairs of the polity. For once, as it is a direct link between the official/representative and the citizen, it reduces the role and significance of the intermediary organizations such as political parties. In order words, it reduces the communicative and the real gap that may exist between the two. This exercise is of considerable importance for it establishes the practice whereby the agent

---

(the politician) responds directly to the principal (citizen). An increase of this exercise, at the individual and collective levels, inevitably creates a tradition of responsiveness and accountability.

Table 13. Citizens’ contact with local and national representatives and state officials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Round 3</th>
<th></th>
<th>Round 4</th>
<th></th>
<th>Round 5</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>L</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S.O.</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>S.O.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cape Verde</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasion.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few times</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasion.</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few times</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tanzania</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>never</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasion.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Few times</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>often</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Numbers are in percentile
L: Local Government Representative/Official
N: National Government Representative
S.O.: Central State Official
Source: Afrobarometer (various)

In South Africa and Cape Verde, the levels of citizens’ contact with local and national representative is particularly low—with the number of contacts increasing when the contacted official is part of the national bureaucracy or of the national legislative body. A major reason explaining this state of affairs has to do with what I have named institutional linguicism, that is, the sum of language ideologies and practices underpinning the daily bureaucratic operations, whereby one or a few number of languages (the socially dominant ones) can be taken as the acceptable medium for formal
communication. In this situation, to engage the state is to drop the mother tongue and use the high language. Social and political practices dictate that the use of the high language is correlated with faster and more efficient response and service. Needless to say that this option is something that most people in South Africa (and in Cape Verde) simply cannot use, as their knowledge of the high language is rudimentary at best.

There are, obviously, many reasons that explain this situation, ranging from a political culture that it is not based on the constant and continuous contact between state officials and representatives and the citizens to the material and economic costs of the contact itself. Yet, language policy cannot be put aside as it is a variable that help us understand these very low levels of citizens’ contacts with the state officials.

The process of contacting national officials is often a formal one. Due to their busy schedules, the written word (letter or email in these days) is the main medium for communication. In South Africa, in spite of the fact that the Constitution provides for the eleven official languages, English maintains itself as de facto official language.

According to The Economist,

Today, 16 years after the advent of black-majority rule, *English reigns supreme*. Not only is it the medium of business, finance, science and the internet, but also of government, education, broadcasting, the press, advertising, street signs, consumer products and the music industry. For such things Afrikaans is also occasionally used, especially in the Western Cape province, but almost never an African tongue. The country’s Zulu-speaking president, Jacob Zuma, makes all his speeches in English. Parliamentary debates are in English. Even the instructions on bottles of prescription drugs come only in English or Afrikaans.109

The continuous hegemony of the English language in South Africa has created a situation that can be comparable to a de facto “linguistic neo-corporatism.” That is to say, the elite of the various language communities that make up the country use the English language as the linking element among the various communities in national politics. Put it differently, the groups’ elite, those who have mastered English, are presented—and self-presented—as the mouthpieces for their respective groups, insofar as they dominate the political lingua franca. This is based on the notions of representation, descriptive and substantial. Yet, this situation contradicts the principle of active and engaging citizenship: the elite of these communities are to be taken as the only available and potential voice for their respective groups. This simply forces the average citizen to rely on the representation provided by the elite.

In the case of Tanzania, as the table 13 indicates, more and more people are contacting the representatives and state officials. In the last round of survey conducted by Afrobarometer (2012) one-third of Tanzanian respondents contact their representative at the local level—though the percentage of those who do so regularly is relatively smaller (8%). The number is relatively smaller when it is about contact with the officials from the central government (22%). Given the colonial and post-colonial history of swahilization, the state and society share the common language. While the English language has far more social value and worth among Tanzanians, Swahili nonetheless is widely used in politics. For instance, parliamentary proceedings are almost entirely in Swahili—in spite
of the fact that English is also the official language of the country. The fact that the general population and the state agents regularly use the same linguistic platform (Swahili) can be said to facilitate any contacts that should arise between the two.

Language policy in South Africa, Tanzania and Cape Verde also has an impact on the level of political discussions among the people. Politics and, particularly, democracy (however defined) is essentially about discussion, debate and consensus-finding. Real and effective democracy must be inclusive in its discussions and debate. Citizens, regardless of their socio-economic or educational background, should find no obstacles in their access to the public circles of discussion and debate.

The central argument of this dissertation is that the linguistic gap between the state and society, a characteristic that most sub-Saharan African polities share, negatively impacts on the overall citizens’ active and engaging participation in politics. Lacking understanding of the dominant language implies, at the end of the day, that one cannot keep track of the political processes and procedures of the public power. In Cape Verde, in spite of the national language, the Cape Verdean language, being a true lingua franca, it is not the medium that intermediates the operations of power. In South Africa, as noted earlier, English is the dominant language and the operations and procedures of the South African state are almost exclusively in that language. South Africa and Cape Verde, therefore, suffer from the syndrome of institutional linguicism, the idea that only a certain

---

110 Charles Bwenge, *The Tongue between: Swahili & English in Tanzanian Parliamentary Discourse* (München: Lincom Europa, 2010). It should be noted that Bwenge calls attention to the fact of existence of two different Swahili languages. He calls them standard Swahili and Elite Swahili. The latter is a mixed form combining Swahili and English. Needless to say that this may well corresponds to code-mixing as a political strategy of elite domination.
language (or a small number of languages) can effectively and efficiently be used as the medium for operations and procedures of power.

Tanzania is in a different situation. As result of the post-colonial policy of promoting the Swahili language, which includes corpus modernization and status planning, that language has been an important and essential language of political debate. From debates in the national parliament to the record of the official meetings, the presence of Swahili is visible. This is not to say that English is not perceived as the dominant language in Tanzania. In spite of the advances of the Swahili language, English is perceived as the language of modernity and status among Tanzanians.

One way to look at the way that language impacts political participation is to delve in the question of language and micro-level and macro-level public discussion. In fact, a major point of this dissertation is that the measure of actual and effective democracy is to be found in the quantity and quality of political discussion, debate and deliberation—for exchange of ideas and ideals precede, naturally, actions.

Political debate in the countries under study is relatively restricted, both in terms of the number of participants and the depth of the topics under discussion. The surveys conducted by the Afrobarometer are quite illustrative in this regard (see table 14). In Cape Verde, 33% of the respondents maintained that they never discuss politics with their family members or friends. The Cape Verdean language is the idiom that is employed in the intimate dialogue and talk among family members and within a circle of friends. In any case, it is only 23% of the respondents who frequently discuss politics (while the number has been growing in the past few years, from 17% in the first round, the overall
number is very low). In South Africa, for round five of the surveys, only 20% of the respondents claimed to discuss political issues frequently. Yet, the percentage of those who claimed to have never discussed politics is a little below to what is registered in Cape Verde (29% and 33% in South Africa and Cape Verde, respectively). The case of Tanzania is a bit different. Not only is the percentage of those who said they never discuss political matters with friends and family members relatively low (22%) but also more than a third of the respondents consider that they frequently discuss politics.

| Table 14. Citizens’ discussion of political affairs |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
|                                   | Round 3 | Round 4 | Round 5 |
| Cape Verde                        |       |       |       |
| Never                             | 46    | 39    | 33    |
| Occasionally                      | 35    | 42    | 44    |
| Frequently                        | 17    | 18    | 23    |
| Don’t Know                        | 2     | 1     | 0     |
| South Africa                      |       |       |       |
| Never                             | 42    | 30    | 29    |
| Occasionally                      | 42    | 49    | 51    |
| Frequently                        | 15    | 20    | 20    |
| Don’t Know                        | 1     | 1     | 1     |
| Tanzania                          |       |       |       |
| Never                             | 24    | 21    | 22    |
| Occasionally                      | 36    | 46    | 42    |
| Frequently                        | 38    | 32    | 35    |
| Don’t Know                        | 3     | 0     | 0     |

Numbers are in percentile
Source: Afrobarometer (various)

The question that one cannot avoid asking is whether language policy has anything to do with these results? To put it differently, to what extent the official language policy, which dictates the languages of public education and to be used by the state for the conducting of the public business, coupled with the actual language choices by the social and political elite impact on the general population understanding of
political matters and the subsequent exchange of formed political ideas? As shown above, the situation in Cape Verde is that the Portuguese language is the de jure and de facto official language of the state and the political and social elite. In spite of the long history of contact with the Portuguese people and language, a great number of the population does not possess adequate linguistic skills to fully grasp the message, when passed in Portuguese. In South Africa, the situation is not any different. While the constitution considers that eleven languages (including nine indigenous languages) are the official language of the state, in actuality the English language, understood by no more than 10% of the population, is the only language of the state. Tanzania is a starkly different case. Due to its strong post-colonial policy of Swahilization of the country, by making the Swahili language, an indigenous language, a truly national lingua franca, they have opened the gates for the general population to understand the processes and operations of power—when made public, that is. For instance, at the level of the parliamentary debates, they happened almost exclusively in Swahili—though the bill is often introduced in the Bunge (the National Parliament) in English.\footnote{Birgit Brock-Utne, “The Language Question in Africa in the Light of Globalisation, Social Justice and Democracy,” \textit{International Journal of Peace Studies}, 8, 2 (Autumn/Winter 2003): 67-88.}

The point that I want to stress is that not possessing knowledge about the high language of the polity is politically significant. For once, it limits the amount of information that works towards the construction of the individual's political knowledge. That is to say that the understanding of the language of the state leads to state literacy.
Alternatively, not possessing the necessary linguistic skills is very likely to result in a powerful crack in the building of political knowledge.

Lacking political knowledge, the understanding of the processes and procedures of the state and power, ultimately results in an enduring withdrawal from politics—particularly from the types of political activities that appear to require a large amount of resources (material or educational) or that can be tedious. To contact, either in the oral or written format, a state official or representative implies a collection of resources, from the most basic ones such as the knowledge of the written word to the expenditures in paper, ink and stamps of the letter to be sent. At the same time, private life with all its amusements, enjoyments and pleasures, often works against the engaging participation in the public life. Even in the most remote areas of South Africa, Tanzania or Cape Verde, folks do have access to a radio or other medium of mass communication, which is perceived as a source of entertainment.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has compared language policy in Tanzania and South Africa with the politics in Cape Verde. In all of these cases, the language of a former colonial power (Portuguese for Cape Verde and English for Tanzania and South Africa) is socially dominant, accepted as the language of power, prestige and social status—more in the cases of Cape Verde and South Africa than in Tanzania. I have shown that politics and the public debate in Cape Verde and South Africa is almost an exclusive realm of the Europhone. The ordinary citizen, who may have some rudimentary knowledge of the
dominant language—if any at all—may find him/herself “silenced” from the public debate. The situation is slightly different in Tanzania; in part resulting from the long historical tradition, since the colonial times and later further developed by the anti- and post-colonial nationalists, to make use of the Swahili language as language of education, public administration and intellectual development. Political documents, parliamentary debates and many other elements of the realm of officialdom are carried out through the medium of the national language.

The linguistic situation in Tanzania is politically consequential. As politics take place in the vernacular, more and more people become familiar with the topics. Discussion of politics and contacts with the local and national government officials and representatives are far more significant in Tanzania than in the cases of Cape Verde and South Africa. In Cape Verde, for instance, more than three quarters of the respondents of the Afrobarometer 2012 survey, have indicated that they never or only occasionally discuss politics with families, friends or neighbors. This number can be compared to the case of South Africa (80%) and Tanzania (66%). Therefore, it can be seen that discussion of political affairs, an important element that props up and pushes for more political participation, is something that is constantly conducted by one third of the Tanzanian respondents. My argument for this state of affairs has to do with the linguistic situation of the countries. The Tanzanian citizen is far more likely to understand what is going in the political arena as politics and political commentaries and analysis are increasingly performed through the medium of a language that is familiar to most.
The fact that Swahili is a national language used by almost all citizens and at different aspects of social and political life has come to mean that the political distance between the ordinary citizen and the state officials and/or representatives is relatively small. Contacts with the local and central government officials and representatives are relatively high—in African context. More than one out 10 respondents of the Afrobarometer survey of 2012 regularly communicates with the officials.

In linguistic terms, the situation in Cape Verde resembles much of Tanzania: the Cape Verdean Creole is a language used by all, mainly for private business and within the private sphere. Unlike the case of Tanzania, the Cape Verdean language is scantly used in the realms of officialdom. As I have previously shown, the Cape Verdean language is not the media’s language for political commentaries and analyzes. Mainstream language ideology reserves that domain exclusively to the Portuguese language. This, in part, leads to the broadening of the political gap between the state and society. More than 9 out of 10 respondents have never contacted a local government official or a high-echelon state bureaucrat—relatively to the national representatives the number is 8.8. This situation exists in spite of the fact that the Cape Verdean language is a language understood and spoken by members of the political and social elite and ordinary citizens.
CONCLUSION

This dissertation brings language policy considerations in the discussion of the quality of democracy. Recent developments on the literature that focus on democracy, language policy and human rights must be briefly detailed here. Linguistic human rights, a topic that is beyond the scope of this dissertation, is a subject that is drawing attention from the scholarly community. Human Rights are those universally valid rights that are inherent to any human, regardless of time and space. Democracy is often hailed as the best regime that can protect and even strengthen the catalog of human rights. Current scholarship points to the fact that one of the pillars of these human rights, the linguistic ones, often goes unprotected. Linguistic human rights are defined as “the right to learn the mother tongue, including at least basic education through the medium of the mother tongue and the rights to use in many of the (official) context.”¹ The keyword of the definition is “mother tongue,” that is, the language that one acquires without going through the process of formal education. These rights are highlighted in order to significantly impact the process of changing the current language policy, by calling attention to some languages that, while they serve as the primary communicative means to many, are not part of the set of languages used in formal and official functions and roles. Lacking linguistic human rights may negatively affect the overall quality of democracy.

Deprivation in linguistic human rights ultimately results in the considerable reduction in

enjoyment of other human rights, such as fair trial, fair political representation, among others.²

There is also another way of looking at the paths through which diglossic language policy may negatively impact the quality of democracy. The point that this dissertation makes is that diglossic language policy creates an artificial linguistic hierarchy, in which the mother tongues are placed at the bottom. This means that the mother tongues, in spite of being the main linguistic devices for everyday use for the ordinary citizens, are almost never used in formal and official roles and functions. Among post-colonial thinkers and critics, the impact of the post-colonial language policy upon citizens’ psychology is very damaging, leading toward their increasing de-politicization. As mentioned above, radical thinkers such as Franz Fanon, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, and others, were very critical about the post-colonial reliance on the language of the former colonial power.³ To these writers decolonization without its linguistic component invites neo-colonialism, a novel form of external domination. Moreover, continuous reliance on a foreign language reinforces the alien culture as the main reference and standard, against which all must be compared. Indigenous political institutions lose political and social value, for they are constructed and disseminated in the local languages. A language policy that maintains and even emphasizes the continuous and sole reliance of a foreign language, such as English, French or Portuguese, is tantamount to a Trojan horse within the post-colonial society. This state of

² Ibid.
affairs, as such, perpetuates the condition of exploitation and domination through cultural neo-colonial links. Following the insights of these radical thinkers, Donaldo Macedo writes that, in relation to Cape Verde, the use of the Portuguese language as the only medium of education in the post-colonial era brings the “danger of creating a distorted consciousness.”

Politics can be best exercised when in the vernacular, for the psychological costs are kept at a minimum level.

This dissertation focuses on the impact of diglossic language policy on overall political participation. Contemporary democratic institutions nurture its representative component, often at the expense of the participatory elements. Political representation, the mechanism through which the many supposedly finds a voice in a few, may ultimately work against the many. In fact, some political theorists have long called attention to the inherent flaws of representation. While it is not the focus of this conclusion to provide an exhaustive listing of scholars and thinkers who maintain that representation crowds out participation, there is cause, nonetheless, to point a couple of them. Jean Jacques Rousseau, for instance, writing centuries ago, claimed that sovereignty, popular in nature, cannot be delegated. Two centuries later, Robert Michaels contends that according to the “iron law of oligarchy” the representatives tend to promote their own interests at the expense of the represented. Contemporary scholars like Nadia Urbinati and Mark E. Warren consider political representation in modern

---

democracies to have been clouded by the “growing complexity of issues, which increasingly strains the power of representative agents, and thus their capacity to stand for and act on the interests of those they represent.” Given the new social and political reality, the value and ability of political representation has fallen drastically. I have noted in the introduction of this dissertation that ordinary citizens have increasing feelings of distrust towards their representatives. Representative democracy is failing in its most basic, essential and fundamental feature: representation.

Present-day democratic institutions over-emphasize representation. Representative democracy in Cape Verde focuses on voting. Every four years citizens are called to choose who gets to form the government. In between elections, the voter is to leave the political representatives alone. The representatives know the best for the citizens. Thus, in the process of public policy making and implementation, the citizens are not to interfere, for they have already delegated power. Because of this citizens are made into passive rectors of policy. They do not effectively take part in the policy debate.

One of the main arguments that this dissertation has developed is that diglossic language policy fundamentally sustains the system of representative democracy, while at the same time limits the extension of participatory elements. Diglossic language policy, as noted throughout this dissertation, creates a linguistic hierarchy between a dominant language and other languages. In case of Cape Verde, the case study of this thesis, such a language policy has effectively maintained the predominance of the Portuguese language at the expense of the local language, the Cape Verdean language—in spite of the fact that

---

this language is widely used by the population. Diglossic language policy fundamentally limits two main forms of political participation: initiatory and surveillatory.

The state, inherited from the colonial experience, was founded and developed through the medium of the colonial power’s own language, and not on the mother tongue of the subject population. This means that the state, colonial and its post-colonial offspring, is fundamentally encrypted: the language of political communication used within and by the state is not entirely grasped by the ordinary citizens. Such a state of affairs provides competitive advantage to the post-colonial elite, who have become the linguistic decoder of the state. Language policy, as noted above, has become a means to “elite closure.”

Diglossic language policy curtails citizens’ surveillatory participation. This form of political participation, as described in chapter six, is fundamentally about supervision and demands of accountability to the state and its agents. The state literacy, that is, the process of actually understanding how the state should act and actually act, is a major precondition for active involvement in the process of surveillance of the state, its institutions and its personnel. This should not be taken as if those without knowledge of the state do not participate in politics. One of the key points of this dissertation is that certain forms of political participation may be actually difficult to be experienced by a section of the population, given their lack of state literacy. Political participation is multi-dimensional. The focus of the thesis is on non-contentious forms of political participation. These include participation in the public debate, whether in person or in

---

8 Myers-Scotton, “Elite Closure.”
writing, contacting the political and state officials, at the local and central levels, with the goal of resolving a political problem, and demanding accountability from the actions (and lack thereof) by those who in the positions of authority.

Political debate, within the elite as well as among these and the general population, is an important pillar of a democratic regime. After all, political debate is directly correlated to one of the most basic right and principle of democracy, that of freedom of speech and rule by consensus. Through public debate it is possible to reach a policy consensus that serves the interests of all those interested. Deliberation, discussion, debate, and argumentation are the fundamental mechanisms through which consensus is manufactured and actions are taken. In this aspect, Jürgen Habermas talks about communicative action to describe how political actions may be the outcome of the communicative process of the interested.⁹

The elite use a number of linguistic strategies to avoid, control, manipulate or even terminate a political debate with the general populations. Strategies may include upward code switching (from Cape Verdean language to Portuguese) as well as employment of esoteric language and metaphors. Opinion articles written in the local newspapers are self-referential and crafted for a limited audience, the cultural and socio-political elite. This form of political communication is less about conveying an idea that can be easily grasped by a high number of readers—fostering further debate on the subject—but rather an opportunity for the author to show his mastery of esoteric Portuguese. There is a fixation of less common vocabulary (“difficult words,” as put by

⁹ Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*. 
one of my informants), as the evaluation by the peers is often on the form rather on the content of the message.

One way to limit the number of participants in the public debate is to start and maintain the whole public debate in the high language, a medium that most citizens lack full competence. This situation results from two main reasons: first, to keep some from even attempting to enter the debate as they do not possess the necessary linguistic skills that can make them able to understand the content of the debate. Others, while they may be able to understand, some or even most of the content of the debate, may find it rather intimidating to freely participate against those perceived to totally master the dominant language. There is, as such, a psychological mechanism of withdrawal.

Public political debate is limited through the application of a strategy of code-switching. Code-switching refers to alteration of the linguistic medium used, by a given agent. Code-switching may be downward, that is, from the dominant language to a subaltern language. I mentioned earlier that the political elite may, in some instance, engage in this type of strategy as to emphasize their purportedly belonging to the masses. As mentioned earlier, this refers to the Bourdieu’s concept of strategy of condescension, the use of the vernacular as a populist tool by the political elite.10

The other side of the code-switching strategy, which has far more political consequences, is the upward switching, that is, from the low language to the dominant languages. This strategy is a powerful weapon employed by the elite to silencing the general masses, for it creates and sustains a linguistic fortress whose entrance is limited

10 Bourdieu, Language and Symbolic Power, 68.
to those who are proficient in the superstrate language. Upward code-switching is essentially about conveying political symbolism, namely that of social authority. By switching to a language of prestige and authority, the dominant social position of the speaker is emphasize—for the high language is, in itself, a mark of social distinction and status. The emphasis on social authority may be an invitation to silence the audience or the other debating party, who may not be proficient in the high language. Public political debate, when in the dominant language, is not extensive to a large section of the population, who are in fact alienated and silenced.

Social practices, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors (language practices and ideology) inform and often determine who gets to speak. Legitimacy to utterance—and to be heard—is often linked to the language that is used as the means. The use of the low language, as a means to participate in politics, may result in the speaker being inaudible—not in the sense that the audience may not discern the words coming out his/her mouth, but in the sense that the audience may not find the message pertinent for the carrier is socially perceived as irrelevant. The subaltern thus can’t speak. His/her voice is not heard either in the official domains or in the sphere of the mass media—unless for very short periods.

The post-colonial state in Cape Verde (as in sub-Saharan Africa in general), like its colonial counterparts, has focused on establishment of authority. Language policy—and linguistic practices carried out by the elite—constitutes viable mechanisms of authority enforcement. For this reason, one can extend Bourdieu’s argument that post-
revolutionary France’s policy of linguistic unification was fundamentally about imposition of authority and less about communication to the case of Cape Verde.\footnote{Bourdieu, \textit{Language and Symbolic Power}, 45-49.}

I have chosen Cape Verde as the case study for my analysis of quality of democracy exactly because of the amount of praise that the country gets in international media, policy circles and foreign diplomats and politicians. I have indicated in earlier chapters that, according to the scores provided by the index developed by the Freedom House, or even according to European and North American policy makers, the country is doing extremely well in terms of the quality of democracy. A profound and deep analysis of the political institutions and modes of political behavior—with a clear focus on active and engaging political participation beyond voting—indicates that things are not as rosy as they seem. Effective and real democracy is all about citizens’ participation in all aspects of the political life, from selecting the officials to taking part in the making and implementation of policies. A political regime that limits—or even hinders—its citizens’ ability and willingness to participate in the political debate and/or properly supervises the actions taken on their behalf is far from being a participating democracy. It may be the case that the institutions are democratic in the sense that it exist strong mechanisms of check and balances. Yet, these institutions on their own are not a guarantee of a participating democracy—for the general population, in effect, may not be participating in the process of surveillance of the state—which, is done from within, horizontally from other institutions.
Ordinary Cape Verdeans do not fully exercise initiatory and surveillatory participation. In spite of the inroads of the Cape Verdean language in public sphere, the Portuguese language still enjoys the predominant status. Political—and fundamentally public policy—life is far from being in the vernacular. The numbers of several rounds of Afrobarometer surveys clearly indicate such a trend. Political contacts between the ordinary citizens and the state officials, whether these are nominated or elected, are almost non-existent. The contact between the two is limited to two main events: mass meetings during electoral periods and inaugurating ceremonials of a public work. In these two cases, communication is one-sided, from the officials to the citizens. This form of engagement does not call for questioning by the part of the ordinary citizen.

At the same time, the surveys of Afrobarometer indicate that a sizeable portion of the society, chiefly in the rural areas, are not interested in politics nor engaged in debates or discussion within their circles of friends, family or neighbors. Information about the state and its agents are disseminated mostly through written vehicles and in Portuguese. Robert Dahl argues that enlightened understanding of politics is a major precondition to effective and engaging citizenship is correct. Not having sufficient knowledge about operations, procedures and processes of power limits the willingness or the content of public debate and discussion.

The last point that I want to emphasize and criticize is the direct correlation between size and democracy. Several thinkers and scholars have argued that small states tend to be democratic, or, at least, experience more democracy than large states. This argument can be found in writings of classical and modern thinkers ranging from
Aristotle, Plato, Montesquieu and Rousseau, and among contemporary empirical social
scientists such as Larry Diamond or Dag Anckar.\textsuperscript{12} Diamond’s 1999 study found that
small states are more likely to democratic than larger countries. According to this line of
argument, small states foster democratic practices because smallness

\textit{enhanced the opportunities for participation in and control of the
government...} made it possible for every citizen to know every other, to estimate
his qualities, to understand his problems, to developed friendly feelings towards
him, \textit{to analyze and discuss with comprehension the problems facing the polity}.\textsuperscript{13}

These scholars and thinkers have neglected a powerful variable namely language policy.
Classical and modern thinkers did not need to bother with the question of language policy
as they were focusing on small territories, ethnically and linguistically homogenous.

Contemporary empirical scholars. Contemporary empirical scholars, whose studies tend
to follow the large-N comparative approach, frequently neglect the fact that many of the
micro-states are post-colonial states, where a linguistic hierarchy has been fostered since
the colonial times. Where geography works toward approximation and shortening of
distance between social and political actors, linguistic landscape effectively create a
social divide that hinders full and engaging political participation by the speakers of the
socially devalued languages. In terms of political participation, size may not be as
significant as the language policy that is implemented, either de facto or de jure, in a

\textsuperscript{12} For the position of ancient and classical thinkers see Robert Dahl and Edward Tufte, \textit{Size and Democracy}
(Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1973), 4-8. See also Larry Diamond, \textit{Developing
Democracy. Toward Consolidation} (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999),
chapter 4; Dag Anckar, “Why are Small Island States Democracies?” \textit{Round Table} 365 (2002), 375-390;

(italics added).
given state. The case of Cape Verde, as analyzed throughout this dissertation, indicates
that in spite of its smallness, a linguistic wall divides the elite and the ordinary citizens,
leading to an increase de-politicization of the latter. Effective, real and participatory
democracy can become a fact when politics, in its all different phases, is in the
vernacular.

Towards Effective Democracy

There is an analytical and real value of thinking about a democratic continuum. The
notion that states and polities in general could be classified in two major camps, in
democratic and non-democratic, is problematic as this type of classification tend to
overlook subtle and understated processes that minimize and curtail ordinary citizens’
political participation. Moreover, methodologically speaking such a classification would
eventually result in the problem of “conceptual stretching,” as noted by Sartori.¹⁴

Democracy is better thought in terms of “gradation.”¹⁵ The democratic continuum
implies the use of a referential against which empirical cases are to be compared and
contrasted.¹⁶ The democratic referential does need to not be an actual and existing
regime. Rather it is a mental construction, an ideal type in the Weberian sense, whose
main characteristics is the full application of the etymology of the word: the unlimited
and unconstrained rule of the people, in all aspects. The closer the regime approximates
to this democratic referential the higher its quality (see figure 8).

¹⁴ Sartori, “Concept Misformation in Comparative Politics.” Also see Collier and Levitsky, “Research Note:
Democracy with Adjectives.”
¹⁵ Elkins, “Gradations of Democracy?”
¹⁶ Dahl, Polyarchy.
The Schumpeterian model of democracy, while it permits and encourages great political effervescence at the top, dictates departicipation during non-electoral periods.\footnote{Schumpeter, \textit{Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy}; Huntington \textit{The Third Wave of Democratization}; Przeworski et al., \textit{Democracy and Development}.} This model of democracy is problematic for the following reasons. First, it creates what can be called “policy paternalism.” This means that citizens are only to choose indirectly the policies to be made and implemented. The choice is made through the elections of those who would form the government. Accordingly, a vote for a candidate A or for the party A is a vote for the candidate policy proposals. This political model may ultimately create a the-political-elite-know-better culture, nurtured by the elites and the general population alike.

Second, there is an internal contradiction in the Schumpeterian model. The ordinary citizens’ are not to participate in the supposedly complex and difficult process of policy making and implementation and yet are called to discern among several policy packages which one best serves the needs of the polity. How can they judge about
policies and yet be kept out of the loop during the process of its making and implementation?

There is another issue with Schumpeterian democracy in the sense that the conditions of the electoral period may not be constant. The party of candidate may bring forth a package of policy in light of their analysis of the socio-political conditions. The policy package that is “voted” by the people may be put aside, radically or minimally changed and transformed, in time, as a consequence of new conditions. Given the fact that these changes take place in between electoral periods, citizens are simply not asked to intervene nor to provide feedback regarding the changes.

Effective democracy is the one that ordinary citizens are truly engaged in all different aspect of political business. Linguistic democratization is the start point towards effective democracy. The minimization—if not the total elimination—of influence, power and authority attached to one language, often at the expense of others, a process that can be termed linguistic democratization, facilitates political participation. For one, it does no matter in what language political participation is carried out.

The leap from a Schumpeterian democracy into a more participatory democracy must include not only institutional reforms but also a great transformation in the linguistic field. Diglossia, at the level of the state and society, must be expunged if the goal to be attained is generalized autonomous political participation. The reform of political institutions on its own may not necessarily lead to greater political participation.

---

18 This point was somehow developed by Ali A. Mazrui and Michael Tidy who argued that diglossic language policy in post-colonial African states ultimately resulted in political marginalization of the general citizens. For more on this see Ali Al'Amin Mazrui and Michael Tidy, *Nationalism and New States in Africa from About 1935 to the Present* (Nairobi: Heinemann, 1984), 299 ff.
For instance, the introduction of mechanisms of direct democracy such as public hearing or town hall meetings would not stir participation in the debates if those reforms were not accompanied by a new way of thinking and acting upon the languages that are used in the community. One can only imagine how the nonspeakers of the high language would feel in a public discussion, in which the main vehicle is that high language.

A quality democracy implies that the state-citizen relation be a direct one. This relationship in order to be truly direct must eliminate obstacles that invite the intervention of a third party. A diglossic language policy, which creates a linguistic hiatus between the political and social domains, is an example of an obstacle that I refer above. Legibility of the state means the state’s political and bureaucratic communication should be in a language that the common man and woman easily understand.

The idea of making the state legible—that is, to foster the understanding of its policies, operations, procedures and processes—is gaining wide acceptance among policy makers and intellectual community. It is important to note two examples. Legal scholars across the globe have created an international non-governmental organization (Clarity International), whose main objective is the replacement of legalese with “plain language.”\(^\text{19}\) On October 13, 2010, President Obama signed into law the Plain Writing Act of 2010. The main objective of this law is to make the state and its agencies easily readable to its citizens. The law requires that federal agencies use “clear Government

communication that the public can understand and use.”

To be a state literate—that is, capable of minimally understanding its procedures, processes and operations—is an invitation to participate in its supervision.

There is a political value in fostering ordinary citizens’ political participation. Tom Lodge points out four main advantages of a participatory democracy over other types of political regimes. First, he notes that it brings more efficient government; then, he notes that more participation by the citizens is translated into a law-abiding citizenry, for there is a stronger inclination to respect the decisions that one has somehow taken part in its making; third, more participation, as it brings more knowledge about the system, brings in a far more “sophisticated and knowledgeable decisions.” Lastly, political participation has a psychological value insofar as it increases one’s own self-esteem and the perception of political worthiness. Citizens’ active and engaging participation in politics brings in double developments, at the individual and societal levels. From the point of view of the individual, more participation can be translated in an accumulated knowledge and practice of partaking in the community political affairs. The more the individual knows about the operations and procedures of political agents and institutions the more he or she is inclined to use different mechanisms of political participation. More
participation, therefore, breeds further participation. A case can be made that the more the individual autonomously partakes in the polity’s political affairs, the more he or she will be inclined to use and to take advantage of other mechanisms and instruments of political participation.

To conclude, the heart of democracy is the ordinary citizens’ political participation, in its different aspects and levels. Their “occupation” of the public sphere and political institutions ultimately makes the regime more efficient and more responsive to their demands and of higher quality. Given the fact that politics rarely is a silent activity, it follows that language, in general, is the core of political participation. Social and political importance given to one language eventually has an impact on its speakers.

**Which Language Policy for Cape Verde?**

In this sub-section I will propose a language policy for Cape Verde. Given the historical difficulties and the heated debate throughout the twentieth century regarding the roles and functions of the two main languages that are found in the archipelago, it is imperative to come up with a formula that can best create a harmonious relationship with the two, capable of bringing a veritable “equality of esteem.”

Before explaining the model to be proposed it is important to note that the Cape Verdean linguistic landscape has drastically changed in the past twenty five years or so. Political opening of the 1990s has brought in economic opening with the international world. Tourism, internal and external migration, globalization, diasporization and de-diasporization have changed, quantitatively and qualitatively, the languages in Cape
Verde. For once, the Cape Verdean and Portuguese languages are no longer the only languages to be heard in the country. Immigrants from other parts of Africa (mainly from Senegal, Guinea and Guinea-Bissau) have brought with them a number of West African languages, which, as in the past, may penetrate the realm of the native language, leading to a process of re-creolization.\footnote{On the notions of diasporization and de-diasporization see Michel S. Laguerre, Diaspora, Politics, and Globalization (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).} There is also a vibrant Chinese community, engaged mostly in petty trade. These immigrants, as they are blending in with the local community, are invariably influencing the phonetics and the lexicon of the Cape Verdean language. At the same time, Cape Verde has become a tourist destination, catering to European middle class—mostly Portuguese, British, Italian and Germans. As an example, in the islands of Sal and Boavista the Italian language has become the informal lingua franca of tourism.

Moreover, given the increasing movement of Cape Verdeans from the homeland to abroad (diasporization) and from the hostland to the homeland (de-diasporization), linguistic influences can be identified as part of the whole process of social remittance.\footnote{The concept of social remittances is borrowed from Peggy Levitt, “Social Remittances: Migration Driven Local-Level Forms of Cultural Diffusion,” The International Migration Review. 32, 4 (1998): 926-48.} Given the soft power of American culture, the hostland to a relatively large and historically important Cape Verdean community, symbols of American English are increasingly entering into the Cape Verdean language.

As the linguistic landscape has become extremely complex, with a web of relationship and influences among several languages—though the Portuguese language and Cape Verde language still occupy central position within the state and society—it
becomes a necessity to devise a language policy that not only will maintain the social importance of these two languages but also would forcefully define the linguistic boundaries capable of safeguarding the uniqueness and coherence of these languages. I should note, however, that what is proposed is no way along the purist lines that can be found, for instance, in the cases of language policy in France or in the Canadian Province of Quebec. In these two cases, a rigid system of defending the boundaries of the French language against a supposed “interference” of other languages, mainly English, has been enforced. While it is important to defend the linguistic boundaries one must never neglect the fact that languages are dynamic and interpenetrative. Therefore, it is normal that “interference” from other languages be found—chiefly at the level of the lexicon. What should be aimed is to control these interferences.

A proposed language policy for Cape Verde should have three major pillars: first, it should bring up the status of the Cape Verdean language relatively to the Portuguese language. Second, Portuguese and the Cape Verdean language should maintain the position of primus inter pares within the linguistic concert of contemporary Cape Verde. Third, given the increased globalization, Cape Verdean youth should also acquire a global language, namely the English language, that can allow them to be fully incorporated in the global world. Let me develop these three pillars.

The first pillar, concerned with elevating the social and political status of the Cape Verdean language as such, is mostly concerned with the interrelated status planning and corpus planning of the Cape Verdean language. For Gibson Ferguson, status planning “addresses the functions of language(s) in society, and typically involves the allocation of
languages to official roles in different domains – government and education, for instance. As such, status planning is fundamentally political. Corpus planning, on the contrary, is the field of the technical expertise. It “addresses language form, the code itself, and seeks to engineer changes in that code, central among which, as summarised by [Charles A.] Ferguson, are graphization (the development of writing systems), standardization and modernization.”

Corpus planning of the Cape Verdean language has gone a long way. Since the mid-1990s that an alphabet has been proposed and, in spite of the critics who insist in not using it, the model is being increasingly used by experts and lay people alike. At the same time, in the past thirty years or so, foreign and national scholars have devoted a large amount of efforts in codifying the grammar and/or publishing a dictionary of the language.

For the case of Cape Verdean language, status planning refers to the attainment of de jure recognition as an official language of the state, administration, education and in the media. Such recognition must be enshrined not only in particular legislations but also in the supreme law of the country, namely the constitution. While recent changes in the Constitution of Cape Verde have included a clause of protection and promotion of the Cape Verdean language, the language is yet to be fully recognized as an official language.

---

25 Ibid., 21.
The formal and legal recognition of the Cape Verdean language as an official language is to be taken beyond its political symbolism. Many people argue about no need to take that extra step—as the Cape Verdean language has penetrated several domains that before independence were reserved for Portuguese only. The legal recognition of the Cape Verdean language is fundamentally about “equality of esteem.” The concept of equality of esteem was developed by J.R. Pole. Pole’s study of American political thought, particularly in reference to the idea of equality, is very insightful. He considers that there are basically three major types of equality: equality before the law, equality of opportunity, and equality of esteem. In regards to the first type it is implied that it all be at the same (underneath) position vis-à-vis the law. The last type proposed by Pole is equality of esteem, a concept that is related to the principle of recognition and worth. As such the principle of equality of esteem between the Portuguese and Cape Verdean languages is fundamentally about providing a psychological environment in which one’s worth is not linked to the language that he or she speaks—which is the present situation.

As such, the process of turning the Cape Verdean language into an official language of the state—along with the Portuguese language—has social psychological implications. While these may not be seen right away, once the language is promoted to a level of official domains it brings esteem and self-respect for those who can only speak this language. At the same time, it also has legal implication. This means that by making

---

the Cape Verdean language the official language is to open the gates of linguistic rights
to the common citizen, who could rightfully challenge the state to present all of its
actions, procedures and operations in this language as well.

The process of lifting up the status of the vernacular may have social and political
consequences if accompanied by serious allocation of resources that go beyond
declaratory policies. For instance, the employment of the vernacular as a language of
education in the first years of schooling may result in a more positive attitude vis-à-vis
the mother tongue. Children’s understanding of the worthiness of the mother tongue
would grow. At the same time, when the mother tongue is the language of instruction, the
process of grasping academic subjects becomes relatively less difficulty.

The second pillar of a language policy for Cape Verde is about guaranteeing a
solid position for the two historical languages, Portuguese and the Cape Verdean Creole.
While the history of Portuguese language in Cape Verde is the history of imposition and
violence, it has nonetheless become part of the Cape Verdean psyche. In fact, Portuguese
has been used as the medium to define, imagine, construct and invent the nation more
than the Cape Verdean language ever was. Literature in Cape Verde is a literature in the
Portuguese language. That is to say, the philosophical and ontological imagination of the
nation and its culture has almost always been through the medium of Portuguese. At the
same time, there is a sociological inclination in accepting Portuguese as part of the
national patrimony. Intellectuals and political activists, ranging from Amilcar Cabral to
contemporary writers such as Germano Almeida or Manuel Veiga, recognize that the
Portuguese language is here to stay.
Within Cape Verdean and among Cape Verdeans residing abroad, the two languages, Portuguese and Cape Verdean language, are to be given a special treatment by the public authorities. The state should promote the use of these two languages, particularly within the context of Cape Verde. Foreigners, residing or sojourning in Cape Verde, are to become a target of language diffusion policy.

As noted above, the linguistic landscape of Cape Verde has drastically changed with a number of other languages found in the islands—either via a community of immigrants, tourists and/or influence from the global diffusion of the English language. The linguistic landscape of contemporary Cape Verde can be simplified as following: along with the two historical languages, one finds a set of superstrate and substrate languages (see table 4.2). The classification of the languages in terms of their superstrate or substrate status results from the actual and perceived importance and status of the language by the local community. While European languages, such as English or Italian, are highly valued, West African languages such as Wolof, brought in by the Senegalese community, are not as valued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position of the Languages</th>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Modes of Penetration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Superstrate Language</strong></td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Global Media; Diaspora</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>French</td>
<td>Tourism; Immigrants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cape Verdean Language</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Substrate Languages</strong></td>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>International Migration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wolof</td>
<td>International Migration</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This means that multidimensional language contacts have developed between Cape Verdean language or Portuguese, on the one hand, and other foreign languages. Yet, interferences in the Cape Verdean or Portuguese languages do not derive from all the languages that are found in the country. Rather on the contrary, some languages simply have not had any impact in recent linguistic developments of either Portuguese or the Cape Verdean language. The same cannot be said in relation to the case of the English language. In popular, scholarly and political discourse, English lexica have become conspicuous. Lexical borrowings, either into Cape Verdean language or Portuguese, derive mainly from the superstrate languages—particularly from the English language. A sample of recent policy concepts from the government reveals such a state of affairs. Concepts such as Cluster do Mar, workshop, Business Incubator Center, offshore, meeting, chip, and the like.29

As such, political and policy languages have become increasingly a sphere of interference of the English language. A policy proposal that brings in an English concept represents modernity and incorporation in the globalized world. More often than not the concepts that are brought in already have a corresponding term in Portuguese and/or in Cape Verdean language. Even if the concept have no correspondence in the two languages, there are other creative ways of linguistic borrowing instead of the simply inclusion of an English concept in the political and policy communication.

Table 16. Major Foreign Communities in Cape Verde

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Total (percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guinea-Bissau</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The goal of this proposal is to create an environment that is propitious for the establishment of a veritable bilingualism, sprinkled with doses of international languages such as English or French. This means that the language policy to be advanced should provide resources that make most of the people comfortable in speaking the two languages. This situation may be related, for instance, with the cases of Scandinavian states, where, through a calculated policy, bilingualism has become a way of life: besides the national language, English has increasingly become the other language of the country.

However, Cape Verde, historically a nation of emigrants and now a touristic destination cannot stop at these two languages. As a *Global Nation* and historically the “crossroads of the Atlantic,” Cape Verde should not limit itself with the two languages. Efforts should be made to turn a number of its citizens fluent in international languages such as English and/or French. Given that there is a sizeable number of Cape Verdeans residing in Anglophone and Francophone states (across the Atlantic world) the task is practicable and relatively inexpensive.  

---

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

i. Newspapers

A Semana (1992-2012)

Expresso das Ilhas (1996-2012)

Noticias de Cabo Verde (1933-1945)

Novo Jornal Cabo Verde (1974-1975)


O Arquipelago (1963-1974)

Voz de Povo (1975-1991)

ii. Official Government Documents


Boletim Oficial (Cabo Verde)

Diario da Republica (Portugal)

Anuário Estatistico do Ultramar (Portugal)


iii. **Party Documents**

*Unpublished party documents*

UCID—pamphlet and party literature (author’s archives)

UPIC—pamphlet and party literature (author’s archives)

UDC—diverse pamphlet and party literature (author’s archives)

iv. **Published party documents**


**Secondary Literature**


___________. “Qu'est-ce que le luso tropicalismo?” *Présence africaine* 4 (1955): 1-12.


Lindberg, Staffan I. “‘It's Our Time to ‘Chop’: Do Elections in Africa Feed Neo-Patrimonialism Rather Than Counter-Act It?’” *Democratization* 10, no. 2 (2003): 121-140.


CURRICULUM VITAE

Abel Djassi Amado
41 Jones Avenue, Boston, MA 02124
adamado1975@gmail.com

EDUCATION

2012-Present, PhD Candidate, Boston University Department of Political Science

2011, M.A. Political Science, Boston University Department of Political Science

2000-2001, B.A. Political Science (Summa cum Laude), University of Massachusetts at Boston

1993-1998, B.A. International Relations, ISCSP (Technical University of Lisbon, Portugal)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Spring 2014, Lecturer
Boston College: Sub-Saharan African Politics
Politics of Race and Ethnicity

Summer 2012, Lecturer and Co-Director
University of Rhode Island Summer Abroad Program in Cape Verde: Politics of Fisheries in Cape Verde: Comparative Perspectives

Spring 2012, Lecturer
University of Rhode Island (Providence, RI): Themes in Cape Veredian History and Politics

Fall 2011, Lecturer
Clark University (Worcester, MA): Government of Sub-Saharan Africa
Boston University (Boston, MA): Politics of Race and Ethnicity

Summer 2011, Lecturer and Co-Director
University of Rhode Island Summer Abroad Program in Cape Verde: National Liberation Wars and Independence in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Cape Verde

Spring 2011, Lecturer
Boston University African Studies Center (Boston, MA): Africa Today
University of Rhode Island (Providence, RI): African International Politics

Fall 2010, Lecturer
Clark University (Worcester, MA): Government of Sub-Saharan Africa
Summer 2010, Lecturer
University of Rhode Island Summer Abroad Program in Cape Verde: Democracy and Democratization in sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Cape Verde

Summer 2007, Instructor
Boston University (Boston, MA): International Conflict and Cooperation

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE
September 2012-January 2014, Country Expert
Quality of Democracy Project, led by Prof. John Gerring, Michael Coppedge, and Steffan Lindberg

July 2013-November 2013, Field Interviewer
Fresh Air Project, New England Research Institutes, Inc. (Watertown, MA)

September 2008-May 2011, Research Assistant
Project on Colonialism, led by Prof. John Gerring (Boston University)

Fall 2006-Spring 2011, Research Assistant to Prof. Allison Blakely
Boston University African-American Studies (Boston University)

Spring 2007, Research Assistant to Prof. John Gerring
Boston University Department of Political Science (Boston University)

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE
September 2008-Spring 2012, Project Coordinator
West African Research Association (WARA) – African Studies Center (Boston University)

July 2010-January 2013, Project Coordinator
West African Research Association/Peace Initiative in West Africa

AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS
Boston University Short Term Graduate Fellowship, Summer 2011


Boston University - Foreign Language and Area Studies Fellowship (FLAS), 2006/2007; 2007/2008
Merit Scholarship awarded by the Portuguese Institute of Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Portugal (1993-1998)

**PUBLICATION**


“Lingua, Modernidade e Libertacao: A Political Linguistica de Amílcar Cabral.” *Desafios*. No 1. 2013 (UNICV, Praia, Cabo Verde)


**CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS**

“Critical Assessment of Política e Cultura: Revoltas”, Consulate General of Cape Verde (Boston)/Cape Verdean-American Community Development (Pawtucket, RI), 2, 3 August 2014.


“Pedagogy of Activism: Re-linking Africana to Cape Verdean Studies,” University of Rhode Island Diversity Center, Week, October 2011 (invited speaker)

“Quem Guarda os Guardas” [Who shall oversee the overseers?],” Young Researchers Association of Universidade de Cabo Verde, Cape Verde, July 2010
“Political Hope in Post-Colonial Lusophone Africa,” African Students Association of Higher Institute of Political and Social Sciences (Lisbon, Portugal), May 2010 (invited speaker)

“Cape Verdeans in New England,” Fulbright Summer Program (Boston University), June 2009 (invited speaker)

“China’s re-Penetration in Lusophone Africa,” North Eastern Workshop on Southern Africa (NEWSA), October 2008


“Ujamaa against Modernization Theory”, Boston University—African Studies Center Graduate Conference, March 2006

FIELDS OF INTERESTS
Sub-Saharan African Politics; Portuguese Speaking Africa political development; Diaspora Politics; Cape Verdean and Lusophone Diaspora; Foreign Policy of the Portuguese Speaking African Country; Ideology and Development in Africa; International Cooperation.

ACTIVITIES
Political Analyst to the Community Radio Station, Voz di Jovem
Board Member of National Association of Cape Verdean Organizations (NAVCO), Boston, MA
Founding member and member of the board of the directors of Nos di Tchada i Amigos, Inc.
Co-organizer of the Boston University African Studies Center 15th Graduate Students Conference
Occasional opinion writer to A Nação, Forcv.com and Liberal Online (Cape Verde-based newspaper).
Consultant to some Cape Verdean Associations in New England Area (mainly in Boston area and in the state of Rhode Island)
Coordinator and lead discussant of the African Film Night, at the Boston University African Studies Center

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
American Political Science Association;
African Studies Association;
West African Research Association

LANGUAGES
Cape Verdean Creole, Portuguese, Spanish, and English (fluent spoken and written)
French (good reading knowledge, fair speaking ability)
Italian (good reading knowledge)
Swahili and Bambara (beginner’s knowledge)

COMPUTER SKILLS