

Imagining a Better Future: Anti-colonial Protest and Social Debates in Santo Antão, Cabo Verde, 1945–1975

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How did the populations of a remote Cape Verdean island—Santo Antão—construct and formulate their goals of emancipation and social reform in the late colonial period? This article revisits the experiences of anti-colonial mobilisation in the island in the late 1960s, bringing them together with other narratives of social needs formulated by Santo Antão’s populations. Those include the fears of being recruited for plantation labour in São Tomé e Príncipe, the objective of obtaining the improvement of social infrastructure, and the local struggles for water that became again more acute between 1945 and independence. The article shows that local experiences of Cape Verdean populations, of both the islands’ elite and local peasants, sharecroppers and fishermen, were much more complex than a simple, straightforward narrative of nationalist sympathies and activity. The internal conflicts outlined here also point to the numerous struggles that would shake Santo Antão’s society after independence.

Keywords: Cabo Verde, Santo Antão, decolonisation, repression (police), reform

Introduction

“*Cachupa ou Trabalho e não Polícia*” (Cachupa or work and not the police) was the slogan used by protesting road workers in the north of Santo Antão in early February 1969.¹ In later police reports, the authorities were sceptical about whether their informants had understood this slogan correctly. But the tone of the rallying cries heard during a moment of violence in an outlying zone of the archipelago illustrates the complexities of studying Cabo Verde’s history under the Portuguese late colonial state, as they will be addressed in this article.² Both in the vision of the colonial apparatus and in the (later) nationalist narrative, the 1969 riot was of decisive *political* significance. Even more than the administration in the archipelago, the Portuguese political police, the *Polícia Internacional e da*

Defesa do Estado—better known as PIDE—feared a full-fledged revolt on the island.³ A contingent of the PIDE was shuttled in, together with other police units; repression with some arrests initially seemed to be successful. However, in their interpretation, the PIDE connected these events with others in Cabo Verde's Sotavento, in the Tarrafal District of Santiago Island, where protesting road workers destroyed a store of the Brigada de Estudos de Construção de Estradas (BECE) in Pedra Badejo and, on 13 May 1969, attacked the local commissioner (the *regedor*) and burned his house down. The violence then died down, but seemed to confirm the PIDE officers' worst fears of coordinated subversive acts that connected various islands.⁴

The nationalist narrative confirms this interpretation. According to the activists of the liberation struggle in Guinea-Bissau, fighting for the Partido Africano da Independência de Guiné e Cabo Verde (PAIGC), which never organised a rebellion in the archipelago but successfully took over power by 1975, the moments of conflict and repression were linked to party activity. The chronicler of the Cape Verdean nation, José Vicente Lopes, adopted such a perspective and regarded the Santo Antão incidents as one of many such elements of a parallel (yet uneven) liberation struggle.⁵

I do not question here the dimensions of colonial discrimination and of violent repression. Although the older literature on Cape Verdean society in the twentieth century is very schematic and does practically not work through case studies of local experiences, it captures quite well the broader structures of colonial domination.⁶ At the same time, it is also a fact that, for the Cape Verdean members of the PAIGC, liberation of the archipelago was the second most important goal, subordinate only to victory against the Portuguese in Guinea.⁷ And it is also apparent that the PAIGC became the dominant political force in Cabo Verde in the second half of 1974—although the context of its rise to power itself represents a complex historical process.⁸

But what were the priorities of local individuals? This question has at times been asked with respect to other decolonisation processes in Africa, and some of the difficulties have been pointed to as well; these are especially at play whenever social improvements were the alternative to rapid political emancipation.⁹ In the case of the Portuguese colonies, their particular late colonial history has often been identified as repressive and “backward” and as fundamentally different from cases where political concessions were possible.¹⁰ It is clear that the Portuguese Empire differed from others by 1945 in having no options of political emancipation to offer and no democratic mechanisms for integrating African militants.¹¹ But the important recent trends of discussing Portuguese late colonialism and movements of resistance broke ground in two fields: the international entanglement of Portuguese colonial policies between 1945 and 1975, and the modalities of wider regional resistance in colonial territories such as (notably) Mozambique.¹² Such studies, and the more general observation that the experience of anti-colonial movements in the Portuguese colonies was particularly violent, either do not yet tell us anything about the perspective of the locals—both the administrative and social elites and the local peasants and tenant farmers—experiencing those processes, or they read the experience mainly as living through a phase of repression and resistance. My interpretation illustrates that, at least for the case of Santo Antão, the repression/resistance issue was only one element

of a group of experiences and demands, and this article thus offers a more nuanced picture of social history under the Portuguese late colonial state and into independence.

Recent literature has pointed to the group identification of former Cape Verdean administrators, who fled the archipelago after independence, as a group of “fascist” collaborators (together with some “white” landlords) who were basically separated from the more normal Cape Verdeans.¹³ While the members of this group were certainly an elite, it would be too simple to construct an antagonism between a “caste” of profiteers of the colonial condition—who are often discussed in racial terms—and a vast majority of nationalist and anti-colonial militants and their sympathisers. Motivations and affiliations need to be analysed; we cannot just buy into existing narratives. I have argued elsewhere that the Cape Verdean diaspora in other parts of the Portuguese colonial empire held complex attitudes towards anti-colonial warfare.¹⁴ To date, this argument has not been taken up by researchers in the field in recent years, although further empirical evidence shows that after decolonisation the left-wing liberation movement *Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola* (MPLA) reprimanded the Cape Verdean settlers in Angola as old (and odd) stalwarts of colonialism.¹⁵

For the islands’ society, an in-depth discussion of mobilisation and anti-colonial moods, of hesitations and ambivalences is still lacking, but my text aims to approach these issues. I hold that it would be difficult to examine the attitudes, visions, and goals regarding the future of the Cape Verdeans in the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s by conducting a new series of field interviews—but there are still some important testimonies to obtain.¹⁶ Moreover, the archives are far from being fully exploited. Little work has been published that draws on sources at the level of the National Archives, practically none of the records from regional archives have ever been evaluated, and the colonial and police archives in Portugal also hold a number of unmined documents. To take up the challenge and arrive at new insights, the racist and colonial biases must be filtered out of these documents—the best way to achieve this goal seems through concentration on one particular island, in this case Santo Antão. I will address the 1969 incidents as a social protest and as a possible anti-colonial activity, consider fears of coerced recruitment and migration, questions of social development and issues of land conflict, and review the demands and development projects initiated by the islanders (focusing on processes taking place between the 1950s and the 1970s). On this basis, I will reflect on the attitudes of various groups on the island with respect to social change.

Santo Antão: “Feudal” Structures and Hopes for Improvement

Perhaps even more than the other islands of the archipelago, Santo Antão has an impressive topography. The existence of humid valleys, small creeks and streams, and fertile mountain slopes explains an agricultural situation that partly withstood the frequent droughts that occurred in Cabo Verde.¹⁷ Yet, the island of Santo Antão remained—at first glance—a remote outpost of the Portuguese Empire, as well as of Cape Verdean society. It was only marginally involved in the short boom phase that neighbouring São Vicente with its Atlantic port of Mindelo, a principal coaling station, experienced during the nineteenth century.¹⁸ At slightly more than thirty thousand, the island’s

population was small; however, its social history is impressive. In some ways, historians can view the island as a vestige of the European “late feudal” organisation of arable land and as a context in which questions of racial discrimination and colonial domination intersected in specific ways to produce complex results.¹⁹ Social revolts and movements also had their frequent moments on the island throughout the nineteenth century—the 1880s were especially notorious in this regard, as has been shown by José Silva Évora.²⁰

Rural zones with a long history of social stratification as a direct impact of colonial rule, but located in remote regions, are an interesting field for studying early (or proto) nationalist behaviour and attitudes. Cabo Verde—and Santo Antão in particular—is especially interesting in this regard and within the larger group of colonies in sub-Saharan Africa, in that the impact of the colonial situation on land control was different than in the largest part of European-ruled territories on the mainland. Certainly, in some contexts of “indirect rule” on the African continent, the presence of a European administration helped local dignitaries to accumulate not only power but also possession of land.²¹ Agrarian capitalism and export agriculture were exploited by these rural elites.²² This was, of course, very different from white settler colonialism in some East and Central African contexts and especially in southern Africa, where rich European landowners profited from the mechanisms of colonial rule to monopolise control of the principal agricultural zones in the territories.²³ In the Cape Verdean context, the situation was different, because landlords, while partly corresponding to the stereotype of the “white owner” (although they were mainly fair-skinned Cape Verdeans who counted as “mixed-race” or “creole”), interacted in a complicated panorama of mutual dependences and sharecropping rights that had its roots in the early modern period.²⁴

In-depth analysis of the economically strongest social groups and their context is still needed for Cabo Verde in the twentieth century. Older research, and studies that are mainly interested in the nineteenth century, formulate the idea of a “white ruling class,” but the precise nature of this “class” is a subject that awaits further study. The notion of a “white ruling class” also contradicts the idea of an earlier “creole identity,” which “mixed” (or *mestiço*) Cape Verdean administrators and landowners shared.²⁵ Debate on these concepts has not always been useful, as it makes broad claims about cultural mixes without ever discussing the concrete cases of families and individuals.²⁶ For Santo Antão, this means that for the period between 1800 and 1950, we know very little about the key individuals and about persons who became installed as local administrators (*regedores* or wardens of boroughs, *freguesias*), who normally had a clear connection with the dignitaries on the island. The historiography to the current date has not provided any picture of such social hierarchies and relations, and does not study local cases in detail.²⁷ The same is true for the history of the two principal town centres of the island, Ribeira Grande, with its administrative centre in Vila Maria Pia (later known as Ponta do Sol), and Vila das Pombas as principal centre of the Paúl district. The port city of Porto Novo attained greater importance only after World War II.²⁸ In the first half of the twentieth century, Ribeira Grande, in particular, was the site of the (rather few) major administrative buildings and the opportunities for schooling that were available on the island.²⁹

The Nationalist Rebellion Narrative—And Its Complexities

The archipelago of Cabo Verde has often been marginal in discussions of anti-colonial revolt against the Portuguese, and of these islands, Santo Antão can be considered even more of a backwater. No PIDE post existed on the island when the 1968 arrests and the 1969 riots mentioned above occurred.³⁰ But the different police forces reacted massively to the prospect of possible resistance. Therefore, the debate about violence on the island is quite interesting, and it made a strong impression on the agents of the political police.³¹

According to PIDE agents, it was obvious that an “action group of the PAIGC” in Santo Antão had been exposed by the political police on 24 September 1968 and that alleged social conflict appeared in the same area a bit over a year later. This seemed to point to a revolutionary background of social demands—there had to be a connection, the agents argued.³² In spite of the rapid end of the agitation, police agents held that “we run the risk of a repetition of such events, only and exclusively motivated by some individuals who want to show that they are able to resist the administrator’s orders.”³³

In Ribeira Grande, the secondary school seemed to be a decisive site of subversion. Run by three elite Cape Verdeans, the school management was suspected of being responsible for much of the alleged anti-colonial mobilisation. In July 1969, police agents noted with relief that the dangers emanating from the school had abated considerably, since Joaquim Jaime Monteiro and António Joaquim de Oliveira Vera Cruz, teachers and activists, refused to continue to work with the school’s “authoritarian” director, António José de Oliveira Lima.³⁴ The arguments of the PIDE agents regarding “subversion” in the District of Paúl seemed to be more of a textbook nature;³⁵ they referred to “Communist ideas,” diffused via radio stations broadcasting from Conakry.³⁶ According to the agents, all earlier reports pointed in that direction:

The abovementioned elements from Paúl, who, according to the reports, held openly Communist ideas, tried to get the sympathy of the former administrator of that district, Mr. Manuel Caetano Lopes dos Santos, and they seem to have been successful, again following the reports, as they convened to listen together with this official to Radio Conakry and other Communist radio stations.³⁷

The idea that Cape Verdean elite administrators were indeed suspected of entertaining subversive ideas was quite remarkable but not uncommon.³⁸ Elsewhere, the most prominent such administrator, Júlio Miguel Monteiro Júnior, had stumbled, in spite of brilliant career prospects, including chances of becoming governor in other parts of the Portuguese Empire. He was accused of sympathising with rebels in northern Angola.³⁹ In a similar manner, Manuel Lopes dos Santos was also suspected either of conspiring with nationalists in Santo Antão or being manipulated by them:

9°. —After establishing this contact with the administrator and perhaps because those individuals had confirmed to him that the workers of the district had a good life and had no needs, Mr Lopes dos Santos, it is said, responded to whoever visited him to ask him for work by saying “go fuck yourself,” and to anyone who told him they were starving he responded, “eat shit,” and this is how all those who asked for work were enraged and to a certain extent revolted.⁴⁰

Moreover, the police argued that some better-known nationalist activists and PAIGC members were indeed active in Santo Antão. One example was Jorge Querido, who had his main operations in Praia and São Vicente—and managed over time to escape PIDE repression—and who appeared to have been in contact with Santo Antão’s anti-colonial activists. Querido had at least visited the island and agitated to mobilise opposition against the way land and water were being distributed. These observations seemed to be hard proof that the PAIGC was active in Santo Antão.⁴¹

10. °—It is also known that in the city of Ribeira Grande (Povoação) three or four months ago the engineer Jorge Ferreira Querido visited that city to meet with Lima, Monteiro and Vera Cruz in the hostel of a certain Armando, and that, commenting on some of the local problems, Jorge Querido said: “the people are currently exploited by half a dozen land-owners who are thieves and who deprive the people of the benefits.”⁴²

With regard to workers’ riots in the valley of Ribeira Grande, which started in Losnas, the PIDE agents held that the three main leaders of the anti-colonial movement had sent Sabino Delgado to the work sites to create a climate of revolt (and, eventually, to steal explosives during the troubles, which the PAIGC could use on the island).⁴³ The PIDE complained that Delgado, after being arrested, was held by the administration in the Ponta do Sol prison—a relatively comfortable place compared to some of the facilities of the political police⁴⁴—instead of being transported to the Chão Bom prison camp in Santiago.⁴⁵

The leaders of the movement were seen as being closely linked to Cape Verdean immigrants in Belgium and the Netherlands, who allegedly provided propaganda material for opposition activities. However, what kind of material was meant here is not revealed in the source documents.⁴⁶ The alleged leaders from the island who found themselves under arrest complained in March that there were powerful backers who were not targeted by the police—which led the latter to assume that this was indeed a wider conspiracy.⁴⁷

However, the Losnas incident allowed for different interpretations. For construction work on the Garça road, only forty of the two hundred fifty workers present on social labour lists were ultimately admitted, but by 3 February 1969 another five hundred asked for work opportunities. When their request for jobs was rejected, the men decided instead to march towards Ponta do Sol, to exert pressure on the district administrator, César Gil dos Reis. Five foremen who had lost their jobs due to the lack of available workers also participated in the protest. The march in itself seems to have been peaceful, and the leaders of the movement had no apparent intention of confronting the district administrator in an aggressive manner.⁴⁸

The foremen and workers finally descended to the square and explained to the crowd what they had been told, which dispersed with a vigorous “viva” and immediately set out to return home.

There was no intervention by the police, neither by the PSP of Vila de Maria Pia nor by those from Ribeira Grande, and we know nothing about any other protests related to the issue on the same day. It is true that while the crowd was in front of the building of the district administration we heard some slogans of revolt but without any concrete action.⁴⁹

On 4 February, the mood amongst the workers from Losnas became increasingly aggressive, and during some heated moments both of the workers and women who had joined them threw stones at a foreman.⁵⁰ What seemed to be a quite dramatic climax gave way to a different and peaceful situation very quickly, with eight hundred persons recruited to work on the following day.⁵¹ Besides the PIDE agents, the PSP officer also referred to complete calm and even spoke of a false alarm, alleging that the protest was for the most part not political, although the political police had arrested nine individuals, including alleged leaders Sabino Emílio Delgado, a worker, and Manuel Brito Lima, a foreman.⁵² Subsequent police repression confirmed these results (although the officers involved would not openly admit that there was no real evidence of anti-colonial revolt): state prosecutor Norberto Miguel Gomes and administrator Gil dos Reis put five of the workers' leaders into prison, most of them for four months, but the attempt at establishing a link to the PAIGC failed utterly. The only aspects worth noting were that Delgado and Lima had had an earlier migration experience to Brazil and that both had been involved in evangelical churches, of which they remained active members.⁵³

Views on the riots in Ribeira Grande are thus exemplary for the complex interpretation of nationalist mobilisation. It seems obvious that certain individuals had sympathies for the PAIGC—Joaquim Jaime Monteiro, who would run for the Cape Verdean presidency in 2011 and 2016—repeatedly referred to his role as a veteran of the opposition movement on the island.⁵⁴ But the riots themselves are difficult to evaluate. The anger of local workers who feared being deprived of an opportunity to earn at least a basic wage was an important factor. And racist suspicions against Cape Verdean administrators and their complicity with anti-colonial conspiracies were part of the argument—but no real proof against Manuel Lopes dos Santos and other suspects was ever presented.

Forced Migration and Fright: From Drought Disaster and Coercion Experiences to Perspectives of Development

A part of the attitudes of Santo Antão's islanders with regard to colonial rule had to do with the changing patterns of migration needs—and forced migration—they had experienced in the 1940s and 1950s, in the wake of the most dramatic hunger crises. As in the other islands of the archipelago, the inhabitants of Ribeira Grande and Paúl had a certain tradition of long-distance migration as an escape option, but this had become less viable in the interwar period. Small tenants and sharecroppers attempted to stay on their land, but the economically weak inhabitants of the small town centres tried to get to Mindelo in São Vicente in order to find better-remunerated work in the principal city of the Barlavento group.⁵⁵ However, this option was increasingly barred, given the effect of the drought on São Vicente's economy—in 1947–48, at the peak of a crisis period, the administration in Mindelo expelled such migrants and sent them back to the port of Porto Novo in Santo Antão. Many of the expelled were in such a weak state that they were unable to make the journey back to the northern populated zones.⁵⁶

Migration to the plantations of São Tomé e Príncipe was the principal administrative answer by the Portuguese administration to counter the dramatic effects of drought and hunger in the archipelago. Under these circumstances, individuals from Santo Antão joined the wider labour migration to São Tomé, which became a major social experience for the island's residents.⁵⁷ The significance of the labour migration experience and its context has so far been discussed especially for the island of São Vicente on the basis of oral interviews.⁵⁸ The experience did not help to build anti-colonial solidarity: for Santo Antão, an impressive body of correspondence was intercepted by the colonial administration, and this correspondence, amongst other sources, demonstrates that relations between the migrants from the island and other African workers in the cocoa plantations of São Tomé e Príncipe were tense and that repatriated Cape Verdeans brought a number of reinforced negative stereotypes towards Angolans and Mozambicans with them, such as their alleged violence, their "primitive" culture, and their unfamiliar food habits.⁵⁹ The existing documentation therefore shows that Cape Verde's rural islanders were receptive to negative opinions about Angolans and Mozambicans and sceptical about the need to support their anti-colonial initiatives.

But the experience of recruitment itself left its scars. For those Cape Verdean officials who were strongly identified with the Portuguese imperial project, such as Emílio Firmino Benrós, for a good part of the 1940s and 1950s the District Administrator of Paúl, a strong recruitment performance in his district to secure the necessary labour force for an economic jewel of the empire was presented as a question of honour.⁶⁰ For those poor residents of Santo Antão who were targeted by recruitment measures for São Tomé e Príncipe's plantations, in contrast, such attempts at recruitment caused widespread panic.

In the early 1950s, the worries of Cape Verdean workers tended to reflect the experiences of the two preceding decades rather than the current trend in São Tomé's forms of social organisation of plantation labour. Conditions were improving, and by 1960 it is possible to describe the equatorial archipelago's world of plantations as fundamentally changed. This is even reflected in the narratives of Cape Verdean workers still living in São Tomé e Príncipe today (who tend to insist on the necessity of political liberation through a successful armed struggle in their narratives about the 1960s and 1970s and mention the Cape Verdean heroes fighting in Guinea-Bissau, and in particular Amílcar Cabral, much more than São Tomé e Príncipe's small opposition movement), where it becomes obvious that economic conditions reached an all-time high in this period and that workers profited from those conditions, which came together with a scaling down of brutality in their treatment.⁶¹ Even the position of Cape Verdean plantation workers during the 1953 violence—an alleged rebellion that led the Portuguese administration to commit a massacre against a local São Tomean elite—was ambiguous.⁶² In the 1960s and 1970s, social reformism had ever more visible effects.⁶³

But in local memory in Santo Antão, the fear of being forced to migrate to São Tomé remained a major factor.⁶⁴ In 1953, when Benrós and other Cape Verdean officials were nervous about recruitment effects in Santo Antão and demanded a successful drive, it became obvious that local residents were in panic about such coercion.⁶⁵ Benrós was

ready to use the police to exert pressure.⁶⁶ Individuals who had signed contracts under duress and then fled from their obligations were persecuted by the police forces.⁶⁷ All these processes, which were at least legally unsound, did not lead to better results; in 1953, the administration failed to find a single volunteer in any of the boroughs in which recruitment was attempted.⁶⁸ The *regedores*, the wardens of the boroughs, opined that the most horrible rumours were circulating about migration to São Tomé, partly thanks to letters sent home by Cape Verdean migrants who informed their relatives and friends about negative conditions.⁶⁹ And the experience of narrowly escaping recruitment and recollections of the fears through which individuals lived were very powerful memories.⁷⁰

While the Cape Verdean administrators of Ribeira Grande and Paúl had a less enthusiastic approach towards migration to São Tomé e Príncipe in the first half of the 1950s than what their colleagues in São Vicente argued, the former considered it to be at least as necessary for the prosperity of the empire. A great part of the islanders thus lived in fear regarding the chance that they might be sent against their will to the plantation colony close to the equator. This was a perspective that the literate families of Santo Antão also faced, and it motivated the search for alternatives in terms of economic improvement. Beyond the social protests and moments of resistance of the 1960s, activism to obtain change became an important element locally—and this was (at least in part) the effect of pressures for migration exerted by the agents of Portuguese colonialism, and notably during the peak of compulsory practices in the first half of the 1950s.

Improving the Situation: An Elite Debate?

To this day, the population of Santo Antão has a reputation for a long-standing desire for social improvement, a desire that goes well back into the first decades of the twentieth century and is said to be even stronger than on the other islands.⁷¹ However, such attitudes are difficult to capture in the present. Within written sources from the late colonial period, the expectancy of improved social conditions on the island does indeed appear but as a fragmented debate—and with a clear social bias, as well. The authors of petitions and comments are mainly part of the social elite, and even the less important individuals belong to the more prominent families on the village or town level. This situation changed after 1974, when, in the course of the initial turmoil of decolonisation, questions of water and land redistribution came to the fore, and other individuals of small peasant status entered the debate and reflected upon their own social goals.

As early as the interwar period, Ribeira Grande had harboured a vital and vocal movement of “creole” dignitaries represented within the Town Hall Committee, who insisted on necessary investments to break a “vicious cycle” of insufficient resources presented as characteristic for Santo Antão.⁷² Faced with a colonial regime that, after the authoritarian coup d’état of 1926 in Portugal, tended towards more rigid measures in terms of taxation and labour organisation within the majority of its colonies, this was certainly a counter-current to the new watchword of austerity.⁷³ The members of the committee insisted that

Ribeira Grande needed a dispensary and a hospital, especially given the increasing number of villagers coming to the town to seek medical help; the discussants proposed a loan to finance the construction of the hospital.⁷⁴

These remarkable initiatives were unsuccessful in the context of massive socio-economic difficulties that hit the archipelago in the 1930s and 1940s. While the 1930s were especially dominated by the trend towards increasing austerity in the public sector, including that of the colonial towns, the hunger crisis of the 1940s brought public labour projects as one remedy, but without any more sustainable projects for constructing buildings.⁷⁵ At least, given the fear of “encouragement” to migrate, public labour was gladly taken as an alternative.

In 1957, João Coelho Pereira Serra, a member of the Cape Verdean elite of Ribeira Grande, again raised the question of social improvement. Serra was a representative of a leading local family, which had already been connected to construction projects and attempts to expand the social sector.⁷⁶ The results of these efforts were ambivalent, as many of these projects had been slowed down after 1926; consequently, disappointment was widespread within the Serra family. Serra held that any improvement of the material situation in the district was risky; workers would just leave the good, moral path:

If we want to speak of the worker in the district (and I believe that the same holds for the other districts in the province), it is apparent that wage increases bring little or no improvement to the workers’ level of welfare, as such rises in the majority of cases are used for the consumption of more and more alcohol or to acquire an ever bigger number of mistresses [*amantes*]. This observation is not new. His Excellency, the ex-Governor, Commander João de Figueiredo, has already described this phenomenon in the same manner. Apparently, there is no doubt about the necessity of disciplining the labourers in this province.⁷⁷

Serra’s view included the negative appreciation of “idlers” and young men who were allegedly too lazy to do honest labour.⁷⁸ For this group in particular, immense care seemed to be necessary to keep them working. And what was also perceived as necessary was the introduction, through the back door, of forms of coerced labour that were untypical for Cabo Verde. Serra’s argument is worth quoting at some length:

The execution of this important measure includes some details for which solutions are difficult to find, especially concerning the definition of wage levels, which necessarily have to be based on the profitability of each district and must also take into account the adaptation of the worker to a certain kind of discipline—given that, so far, the workers have lived in discretionary freedom, a factor which suggests that the new regime should be limited to the adolescent population, including bringing those who are idlers into manual labour schools, which will admit voluntary pupils as well as those who are forced to attend, obliging the parents to act accordingly. This measure will necessarily oblige the state to take responsibility for the financial costs up to a certain level, given that, to ensure immediate results, the number of teaching employees should not be small; to calculate the annual sum needed per person, we would refer to the amount needed for a native soldier.⁷⁹

In spite of his assiduous and extremely unfriendly criticism regarding the attitudes of the more “humble” islanders, the administrator acknowledged in principle the satisfaction

that locals showed regarding the more successful advances in social improvement: a regional health post, the first real sewer system, and important repair work on the coastal road between Ribeira Grande and Paúl.⁸⁰

But, Serra insisted, education was the key to promoting contentment amongst the more critical local populations. A school allowing for good careers in rural professions would therefore already constitute an important step forward:

The state's properties in this island at the site of Mesa would be ideal for this project, and it would be natural to gain income from them through agricultural activity, which would reduce the overall expense; the rest of the funds could be obtained from private contributions, collected as a small additional charge added to import and export fees in each district. We would then have an official school for professional training in agriculture and fishery, two specialisations that are missing within the province.⁸¹

In the valley of João Afonso, members of the local elite managed to organise a committee to protest against the lack of school facilities for children in the region. Education was discussed as a principal need, and one to which the colonial administration had only responded in rudimentary ways. According to these representatives, the situation was scandalous:

This valley of João Afonso has more than a hundred small farms. There are only two teachers, one in Chã de Pedras and the other in Coculi, to be precise; thanks to the good intentions of those teachers, one or the other is always at one of the posts, and during the short days of the year from December to March, the school children who attend the second shift of classes arrive at their homes after nightfall. The extreme distances between home and schools that result from the lack of another school post, together with the excessive number of children, mean that we cannot fight illiteracy, which is very intense in these areas.⁸²

Given the harsh repression of elite protest in other parts of the Portuguese Empire, this initiative certainly was a risky undertaking. It was mitigated in a way by a rhetoric that praised the positive effects of empire. However, the demand for a better performance in educational policy remained an issue:

More than ten years ago, we had a school post in this valley that was transferred elsewhere, because of a lack of pupils using it, but these school children are the children of parents that have already passed away, as they were victims of the food crisis that led to the deaths of many people, as can be shown in the documents of state subsidies received through public work and social assistance.

Presently, the parents are very interested in having their children educated and instructed; for that reason, they hope to receive help, at this moment, in which the men of government work ardently to combat illiteracy within the great Portuguese nation.⁸³

School inspector Arcádio Henrique Fernandes admitted the existence of the problem—the Portuguese late colonial administration in Praia had promised to create adequate school conditions in any settlement with more than twenty children. Yet, Fernandes argued, this had remained a dead letter:

Unfortunately, the capacities of the province have not made it possible to address this desideratum in a manner that would allow us to resolve this huge problem in what can be considered to be more or less the near future.

We have, in the province, localities where dozens—indeed, hundreds—of children live, many of school age, but the benefits of education do not arrive there early enough, certainly because we have a lack of units of teachers and of school buildings, as they remain at a considerable distance from o[f]her population centres where other educational facilities function.

Therefore, according to Fernandes, mobilisation by local committees was fully justified.⁸⁴

The administrator, Serra, expressed his worries about the observation that “there are lots of children of school age who do not appear in the census, and I want to profit from this opportunity to make clear that illiteracy is spreading enormously in this district but also on the whole island.” This not only led to chaotic moments during voters’ registration (a less important issue within the authoritarian Estado Novo) but also during recruitment for the Portuguese army and for plantation work in São Tomé e Príncipe. For a group of more “modern” and “civilised” workers, officials would have preferred literate candidates, but these were increasingly difficult to find in Santo Antão.⁸⁵

Therefore, in the late 1950s, inhabitants of the island formulated a whole catalogue of social needs and attempted to exert pressure on colonial officials to become more committed to such programmes. The fact that some of the Cape Verdean administrators were indeed members of Santo Antão’s leading families helped to bring the expectations of these critics into the administrative debate. The repressive institutions of the Portuguese Empire, namely the political police, were not at all aware of this potential for social demands and possible protests. PIDE agents during the 1960s were so focused on the idea of subversive political activity that there was little space for any reflection on hopes for social improvement in the islands. The 1969 riots—the culmination of mobilisation in Ribeira Grande region—were clearly situated within the context of such demands, which found their generalised expression as part of the protests of workers seeking emergency labour in a situation of social needs. Therefore, calls for social improvement were not only a factor for the small elite of the island but became a widespread phenomenon in the decade following 1957. With the end of colonialism in 1974, such demands were revised and island residents compared the immediate results with the hopes that had developed during the late colonial period.

Social Needs at the Moment of Independence: Land and Water

The Portuguese Estado Novo fell in April 1974 and in August 1974, PAIGC supporters brought the main centres of the archipelago, Praia and São Vicente, under their control. In Santo Antão, party militants initially encountered some difficulties, comparable to the rural parts of Santiago or Fogo, but they quickly enlarged their support base and installed their own administration. New party cells were erected on the island and became, together with new *delegados* (representatives) of the island’s internal administration

reporting to Praia, important levers which the independent government of Aristides Pereira would use to control the various regions of the archipelago. The reactions of Santo Antão's inhabitants to these new conditions have practically never been studied. It would seem plausible that research focusing on the concerns of the colonial regime's most engaged agents, and especially of the PIDE officials, would reveal that, after 1974, many persons on the island took part in celebrating the new, independent society and denouncing repression under the earlier colonial regime. The local representatives of the island's administration and the municipal authorities were contacted by local residents concerning a number of issues that had to do with the process of transition. These petitions reveal discussions (and the ways in which old and new tensions were addressed by legal means) that highlight key preoccupations in the postcolonial phase. The interpretation of such correspondence is the third important element of my discussion.

Environmental disasters that occurred in the archipelago in the 1940s and subsequent decades, and had significant impact on life there, are a decisive focus of discussions in this context. The inhabitants of Santo Antão had repeatedly been victims of drought.⁸⁶ Even in the relatively fertile, wetter, areas of the island's northern and northeastern valleys, difficult years brought a degradation of arable land, although this problem was more dramatic in other parts of the archipelago.⁸⁷ This meant that the island's land and water regime became a particularly critical issue. So-called "traditional" water rights, on which a number of sharecropping farmers depended, were decisive in determining who profited from rainfall. Large landowners controlled the water streams in principle, but *levadeiros*, a specific type of administrators, organised the distribution of water, often through complex systems of channelling the small streams. And in spite of the late colonial state's attempts to address water distribution by implementing infrastructural improvement, uneven access to water remained a pressing problem in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s.⁸⁸

The potential for changes in land control after the takeover of power by the PAIGC was regarded, at least in theory, as highly beneficial for small landholders and sharecroppers. These individuals were now freed, according to the local rhetoric, from the yoke of "white" exploitation. Amongst those richer landowners who fled in 1974–75 were a number of *brancos da terra* (fair-skinned Cape Verdeans) with family connections in Portugal. Some of these landholders attempted to reclaim rights over this land during the first months after independence and to sell their possessions in a regular transaction. They hoped that the PAIGC would seek peaceful settlements in such cases, and that they would receive some form of compensation. The new administration in Santo Antão, and especially the Delegate (*Delegado*) of Internal Administration on the island, refused to even consider negotiations with such "fascist" owners and expected that this rigid position would enhance the new regime's standing with the poorer peasants.⁸⁹

However, several local conflicts were not directly related to the interests of the richer landowners; they rather consisted in antagonisms between local families, some of which had land and water property rights, while others did not. The vacuum of power that existed between the end of colonial rule and the emergence of a new administrative system motivated some individuals to take the question of water distribution into their own hands. The proprietors of water rights (usually landowners with larger holdings) wanted

to maintain their control over the small streams. Many of the sharecroppers and peasants with smaller holdings hoped to benefit from the situation in 1974–75 to improve their own access to water,⁹⁰ in part by building small dams and redirecting streams, measures that might affect a number of other peasants, some of whom were owners of land, while others were not. In the settlement of Figueiras in the Coculi region of the parish of Santo Crucifixo, landowner Maria Gloria Monteiro brought in workers to redirect a small local stream, leaving the lands of her neighbour, Manuel Nicolau Mártir, without any access to irrigation water. The conflicts growing out of this situation led directly to violence: Mártir was injured during the altercations and went to the town hall in Ribeira Grande to strongly protest.⁹¹

The new inspector of irrigation systems in the Chã Pedras region, Adalberto Chantre Oliveira, faced the highly complex task of resolving all the water conflicts that emerged under the conditions of change between 1974 and early 1976. These included intense and sometimes very violent conflicts between larger and smaller landholders, of which the former shared in the privileges of the older, “feudal” landlords (including rights to water), while the latter had been sharecroppers or de facto tenants and were thus dependent, even in the final decades of colonial rule, on the former’s water distribution practices. Santo Crucifixo was one area of particularly conflict-ridden relations. The *levadeiro* Sabino António Ramos, who controlled an irrigation canal in the Agriões region, was the target of a complaint by a local peasant, Guilherme Ramos Oliveira. Ramos had promised Oliveira sufficient irrigation water for a new maize field. Investigation of the case by the inspectorate revealed that the water had in fact been redirected by another peasant in the area, Adolfo Bordeus Andrade, who had seized the opportunity in this transitional period to obtain access to this source of water.⁹² This was a typical conflict.

In August 1975, another principal landholder of the Coculi region, Gualdino Cardeal Monteiro, expressed his anger about modifications of the irrigation canal in the Ribeira de Pico valley. Some of the peasants in the zone in question, whose fields were below the mountain hill Lomba das Furnas, blocked access to water for the landholders in the regions above that point. This internal redistribution of water sparked fierce protest. Cardeal Monteiro reacted by railing against changes that disrupted what he perceived as the good and “traditional” local economic order; this was scandalous, he maintained, as

these rights, which have existed from time immemorial, are to be respected, which means that irrigation for the entire stream of the Levada do Concelho should continue in the same manner as it always has been done, giving to each zone what is due, but not permitting in any case that the new irrigation zones take away from the old ones their acquired rights, which were already granted in the dark ages long ago, and it is obvious that irrigation for less than thirty days is anything but irrigation; unfortunately, this is currently happening on the whole island, where the springs, due to lack of rainfall, are becoming more and more rare, so that, with every passing year, the new irrigation zones are extended considerably, as is happening with the Levada do Concelho in question in the lower zone, where, against reason, as in other places where there is less water, new irrigation lands are created, causing great damage, however, to the ancient ones with vested rights.⁹³

Monteiro also expressed his disappointment with the lack of respect shown for “tradition” by the new institutions, a respect, he claimed, that peasants had expected from the agents of liberation after the end of colonialism. With groups of peasants from fields on the upper and lower parts of the Lomba threatening to resort to the use of force, violence became a very real possibility. Such a situation was, in Monteiro’s view, an outrage for the independent state:

As, whatever the case, traditions need to be respected and cannot be eradicated, or at least not so completely, and this is even more so as this is another case that is ultimately of overriding significance, and it is perhaps even unnecessary, in order not to appear immodest, to add that popular wisdom already says that law is created through the use of ancient customs and that natural reason is more valuable than violence. In this sense, the Committee of Public Waters, which has replaced the inspector of public waters in this area of jurisdiction, does not have that much power, and its area of competence is indeed limited, lacking the power for such undertakings and for such unprecedented arbitrariness, so that they can only, for the moment, become great dangers for humanity—bad government and impositions [. . .].⁹⁴

Part of the criticism was thus directed against the new commissions of the postcolonial state, in particular against those accused of seeking easy solutions in favour of the few well-connected landholders. Compensations were often paid—and often refused, as those landowners and sharecroppers who regarded themselves as victims of uncontrolled change were unwilling to accept small sums. This was also the reaction of tenant farmer Bernardino Nicolau Sousa, who expressed his indignation about the dealings of big landowners like Dr. Daniel Tavares. Sousa insisted that instead of payments in money the sharecropping farmers continued to expect payment in agricultural products, as had been the “good practice.” By 1974, these same peasants had hoped for immense improvements of the rural situation. But in 1975, they expressed their frustration, “taking into account that the tenant is no slave, given that slavery died with Salazar.”⁹⁵

Debates that took place during the last month under Portuguese colonial rule and the first weeks and months after independence thus offer opportunities for reconstructing some of the expectations and the bitter disappointment regarding an improvement of the broader social situation. The tense situation with regard to water distribution during the drought periods in the last three and a half decades of the colonial state had spawned hopes for immediate change that would come with independence. Change indeed came immediately, but many of the debates and protests and much of the violence that emerged after independence revealed that numerous individuals were enraged about the nature of this change, which further complicated the social relations in mountain agriculture. In complex ways, this early experience created (or aggravated) widespread distrust in the island with the agricultural reform policies of the independent state; therefore, when the pendulum swung towards an agrarian reform removing the status of sharecropper and making of those sharecroppers landowners of full legal rights, in many areas the peasants did not believe in any positive elements of the reform. The subsequent tensions culminated in the Boca de Figueiral massacre in the Ribeira Grande district in August 1981 and the failure of land reform in Santo Antão altogether.⁹⁶

Conclusion

Colonial subjects rarely behave in straightforward ways. Even when faced with a colonial regime that maintained its principal pillars of racial discrimination into the 1960s and 1970s, protecting a group of landowners and members of the elite whose position was partly expressed in racial and racist terms and refusing to give local populations any say in politics, the attitudes and opinions, the reactions and wishes for change expressed by inhabitants of the Cape Verdean islands proved to be complex and contradictory. This is especially the case whenever one needs to take into account various overlapping social contexts and relationships. They include, first, those between landowners and tenants/sharecroppers, especially with regard to access to water. A second context is that of local peasants whose livelihood was threatened and who were seeking employment (and often so-called emergency labour, during phases of drought) in public road construction to supplement for a time their meagre income; they met with a municipal administration trying to distribute such labour in what they viewed as an orderly fashion. A third element of context is that of local elite families, and of family heads in general, demanding further improvement of the socioeconomic infrastructure. Finally, as fourth element, Santo Antão knew the engagement of some locals in anti-colonial mobilisation and the attempt of the local police forces and of the political police brought in from elsewhere to stifle such engagement.

Cabo Verde has in the past all too often been described as a kind of “creole microcosm,” in which such conflicts and relationships were said to have a particular note. Although it is true that the entanglement of a group of Cape Verdean migrants of various types with the social and political life of the other Portuguese colonies makes their experience even more complex, many of these complications are also important for other colonial contexts. As historians interested in the social history of decolonisation, we have to accept such complexities instead of seeking straightforward explanations or interpreting everything according to a nationalist narrative. Certainly, the shadow of repression was in the Portuguese case even stronger than elsewhere in sub-Saharan Africa; it is obvious that with a war going on in the mainland colonies of Guinea-Bissau, Angola, and Mozambique, police action was rash and brutal and very probably sufficient to deter local individuals from any further interest in political engagement. But the effects of repression were not everything, and life under the late colonial state was not exclusively about fighting colonial rule or enduring repressive mechanisms. Santo Antão, as a region where overlapping social contexts were important as part of the panorama outlined above, is therefore one very attractive case to study.

The sources interpreted here may have their limits. One key constraint is the fact that the periods they cover are very uneven: interest in issues related to Santo Antão and problems on the island peaked during particular moments. The greatest number of political and police reports available today are from the period around the 1968 and 1969 incidents. Much of the (elite) debate on necessary improvements in the island’s infrastructure and social facilities comes from the second half of the 1950s. Reflections on the changes in water regimes and on hopes and disappointments related to independence are

especially numerous in sources from 1975. However, while the interpretations presented here stem from different phases within a longer period, they help to build a coherent picture. These results can be complemented by oral history projects, which also close some of the lacunae in written sources from the 1960s. But one should be aware that the last fifty years in Santo Antão have been exceedingly turbulent, especially with respect to the much-contested issue of land reform and the fact that the island was a difficult territory for the independent, non-democratic regime in Cabo Verde between 1975 and 1991. For the moment, any interpretation of social demands in Santo Antão indeed represents a step forward.

Anti-colonial mobilisation existed in Santo Antão, and the teachers of the secondary school in Ribeira Grande had a leading role in it, although their anti-regime activities were hampered by internal conflict. In the rural areas, especially the poorer tenant farmers and sharecroppers hoped for changes in the water regime, which would have broken the control of landowners over these resources. Independence, if unexpected, was certainly welcomed by these smaller landholders and tenants, raising hopes of social reform (which in many cases did not come with the transfer of power, or came in ways that allowed some persons to lay their hands on water resources, while harming the interests of many others). Apart from the real activists, the island thus had a potential for rural discontent that was not, however, really played out.

The existing means of repression through the PIDE and the PSP are one explanation for the relative absence of more vocal protest. Other factors have to do with the priorities of both the island's elite and a part of the rural population. The colonial state offered employment to those whose livelihood was threatened, and its agents were willing to expand such measures to provide more than 3 percent of the island's population with a secure source of basic income. Some of the demands for social improvement were indeed satisfied when the provision of school and health facilities increased during the late 1950s and 1960s. It should not be overlooked that the inhabitants of Santo Antão (like those in other areas in the Portuguese colonies that benefitted from social reforms, such as the notorious plantations of São Tomé e Príncipe or some regions of social improvement in Angola or Mozambique) experienced improved social services that somewhat mollified anti-colonial feelings. Finally, what might have been called a "class bias" in the past—the attitudes of the Cape Verdean elite, but also of some of the landowners and urban residents—played itself out: many of those who criticised the colonial state and held that it did not deliver on its promises were also very sceptical about the capacities of the "humble" islanders to actually take part in such social projects. Therefore, in an outlying island like Santo Antão, mobilisation against the colonial regime was possible in the last twenty years of colonialism—but it was much influenced and modified by social cleavages and an impressive experience of change towards modernisation.

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The recorded interviews, conducted by the author, are part of an oral history project of the district and can be consulted at the Town Hall of Paúl, depending on the continued consent by the interviewees.

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Eduardo Manuel Silva, Janela, 26 January 2018.

José Manuel Pires Ferreira, Vila das Pombas (Paúl), 27 January 2018.

São Tomé e Príncipe

The interview reference is based on field notes; the interview had to be anonymized following the wishes of the interviewee.

Former plantation worker from the 1960s and 1970s, Cape Verde-born, plantation of small size in the northern interior of São Tomé e Príncipe, March 2018.

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Notes

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 - 3 For a vision of PIDE officials on the defence of the empire, see Mateus, *A PIDE/DGS na Guerra Colonial*, 416–7.
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 - 9 Cooper, *Decolonization and African society*.
 - 10 Chabal, “Emergencies and Nationalist Wars,” 235–49.
 - 11 However, we do find cases of co-option of the classic type, i.e., through military hierarchies and integration into administrative functions, see Oliveira, “Saved by the Civil War,” 128–30; Coelho, “African Troops,” 129–50.
 - 12 For the first trend, see Bandeira Jerónimo and Monteiro, “Colonial Labour Internationalized?”; the second is exemplified by Kagan Guthrie, *Bound for Work*.
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 - 17 Moran, “Evolution of Cape Verde,” 66–72.
 - 18 Prata, “Porto Grande of S. Vicente,” 49–69.
 - 19 For general reflections on social structure and “racial” discrimination in Cabo Verde, see Brooks, “Gulag of the South Atlantic,” 108–12; an older debate is Carreira, *Cabo Verde: Formação*.
 - 20 Évora, *Santo Antão no limiar do século XIX*.
 - 21 A Ghanaian example is Sackeyfio, “Politics,” 315–19.
 - 22 For the Belgian Congo, see Peemans, “Land Grabbing,” 14–7.
 - 23 An interesting overview has been provided by Lützel Schwab, “Settler Colonialism in Africa,” 141–67.
 - 24 See the classic Carreira, *Cabo Verde (Aspectos Sociais)*, 145–56.

- 25 Meintel, *Race, Culture, and Portuguese Colonialism*; Rego, *The Dialogic Nation*, 27–33.
- 26 Rodrigues, “Islands of Sexuality,” 83–103.
- 27 This is regrettably in contrast with the considerable number of studies discussing the socioeconomic organisation of Cabo Verde before 1800—an explanation being that this work falls within colonial history of the Portuguese Atlantic during the early modern period, which has been more popular as a field than Cabo Verde in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; see, as an example, Teixeira, *A Ilha de São Nicolau de Cabo Verde*, 111–26. See two recent works at BA level on the history of Ribeira Grande in Coutinho, “O Município da Ribeira Grande”; and Reis, “O Concelho da Ribeira Grande.”
- 28 See Dias, “Evolução histórica do Concelho do Porto Novo,” 21–2.
- 29 For a first introduction, see also Pereira, “Recortes da história.”
- 30 ANTT, José Vasco Meireles, Director of the Subdelegation of the PIDE in Praia, to Director-General of the PIDE, “Incidentes com os trabalhadores da estrada da Garça—Stº. Antão, em 3 e 4 de Fevereiro p.p.—CONTINUAÇÃO—.” (nº 46/S.R.), 1st April 1969, 4, PIDE/DGS, Del. CV Praia, 124/SR, NP 5409.
- 31 See the sensibilities of political police agents with apparent signs of support for Amílcar Cabral in the early 1970s, e.g., in ANTT, PIDE/DGS, Del. CV, NT 5381, Proc. 22, Luciano Marques Vieira, Commander of Post of the Directorate-General of Security (DGS, ex-PIDE) to Commander of DGS Delegation in Praia, *Nacional Albino Ferreira Fortes* (nº 10/973-GAB), 22 November 1973.
- 32 ANTT, Sub-inspector of the PIDE in Praia to Inspector of PIDE Delegation in Cabo Verde, “Agitação de trabalhadores no concelho da Ribeira Grande—Santo Antão,” (nº 8/I-S.R.), 11 February 1969, 1–4, PIDE/DGS, Del. CV Praia, 124/SR, NP 5409.
- 33 ANTT, Costa, “Relatório Extraordinário,” 9 February 1969 (same report as note 1).
- 34 ANTT, José Vasco Meireles, Director of Subdelegation of the PIDE at Praia, to Director-General of the PIDE (nº 86/S.R.), 23 July 1969, PIDE/DGS, Del. CV Praia, 124/SR, NP 5409.
- 35 Evidence for access to radio programmes from Conakry can also be found in interviews with Cape Verdean officials working under the colonial state, although this seems to have been more clearly the case for officials based in Praia and the central services; see interview with José Manuel Pires Ferreira, former Director of Harbours, 27 January 2018.
- 36 The idea of “Conakry” as centre of enemy activity is discussed in Mateus, *PIDE/DGS*, 166–67; see also MacDonald, “Guinea’s Political Prisoners.”
- 37 ANTT, José Vasco Meireles, to Director-General of the PIDE, “Averiguações em Santo Antão relacionadas com a agitação dos trabalhadores em Fevereiro último,” (nº 64/S.R.), 22 May 1969, PIDE/DGS, Del. CV Praia, 124/SR, NP 5409.
- 38 Interview with João Augusto Sousa, former public works agent in Paúl, Cabeça de Figueiral, 25 January 2018; Interview with Eduardo Manuel Silva, Fisherman in Janela, 26 January 2018.
- 39 See Keese, “Bloqueios no sistema,” 223–49.
- 40 ANTT, Meireles to Director-General of the PIDE, “Averiguações,” 22 May 1969 (same report as note 37).
- 41 On Querido’s role, see the autobiographic account in Querido, *Cabo Verde*; and the context given in Pereira, *O PAIGC*, 129.
- 42 ANTT, Meireles to Director-General of the PIDE, “Averiguações,” 22 May 1969 (same report as note 37).
- 43 ANTT, Meireles to Director-General of the PIDE, “Averiguações em Santo Antão relacionadas com a agitação dos Trabalhadores,” (nº 21/S.R.), 15 May 1969, 4, PIDE/DGS, Del. CV Praia, 124/SR, NP 5409.
- 44 ACMRG-CV, Alípio Clarence Lopes dos Santos, Delegate of the State Prosecutor, Subdelegation of the State Prosecution

- of the Judicial District of Barlavento, Municipal Court of 1st Degree of Santo Antão, to President of Administrative Commission of Ribeira Grande (n° 7/75), 7 May 1975, Correspondência recebida –1975.
- 45 ANTT, José Vasco Meireles, Director of Subdelegation of the PIDE in Praia, to Director-General of the PIDE (n° 445-CI(2)), 22 May 1969, 4, PIDE/DGS, Del. CV Praia, 124/SR, NP 5409.
- 46 ANTT, Meireles to Director-General of the PIDE, “Incidentes com os trabalhadores da estrada da Garça—St°. Antão, em 3 e 4 de Fevereiro p.p. —CONTINUAÇÃO—,” (n° 256/CI(2)), 13 March 1969, 1, PIDE/DGS, Del. CV Praia, 124/SR, NP 5409.
- 47 ANTT, Manuel Francisco Ganhão Palma, Major CEM, General Headquarters, Second Division, Mindelo, to Director of Subdelegation of the PIDE, “Informação” (n° 749/01), 7 August 1969, PIDE/DGS, Del. CV Praia, 124/SR, NP 5409.
- 48 Sub-inspector (PIDE Praia) to Inspector of the Delegation in Cabo Verde, “Agitação de trabalhadores,” 11 February 1969, 1–4.
- 49 *Ibid.*, 4.
- 50 *Ibid.*, 5–6.
- 51 *Ibid.*, 8.
- 52 ANTT, Costa, “Relatório Extraordinário,” 9 February 1969, 2 (same report as note 1).
- 53 ANTT, José Vasco Meireles to Director-General of the PIDE, “Incidentes com os trabalhadores da estrada da Garça—St°. Antão, em 3 e 4 de Fevereiro p.p. —CONTINUAÇÃO—,” (n° 46/S.R.), 1st April 1969, PIDE/DGS, Del. CV Praia, 124/SR, NP 5409.
- 54 Dos Santos and da Silva, interview with Monteiro, “Eleições em Cabo Verde.”
- 55 ANCV, Administrator of District of São Vicente to Administrator of District of Paúl (n° 397/78.1.45), 14 November 1945, Fundo Paúl, ACP, cx. 188, 2.
- 56 ANCV, Armando do Figueiredo, Commander of Post of Porto Novo, to Administrador of District of Paúl (n° 944/71/47), 2 October 1947, Fundo Paúl, ACP, cx. 188.
- 57 AHU, Júlio Miguel Monteiro Júnior, Administrator of District of São Vicente, to Director of Central Division of Services of Civil Administration (n° 42/53, appears within the dossier as n° 14), 4 August 1953, MU/ISAU, A2.050.03/020.00128.
- 58 Nascimento, *Vidas de S. Tomé*.
- 59 AHSTP, Manuel de Abreu Ferreira de Martins to Sarmento Rodrigues, Portuguese Overseas Minister (no number), 27 June 1953, Vários, Secretaria Geral do Governo (Série D), 026 (cota 1.1.3.3.).
- 60 ANCV, Administrator of District of Paúl to Wardens (*regedores*) of Boroughs (*freguesias*) of São João Batista and Santo André (n° 450/53., Proc. 77/5), 19 July 1953, Fundo Paúl, ACP, cx. 188.
- 61 Interview with former plantation worker from the 1960s and 1970s (anonymised), Cape Verde-born, plantation of small size in the northern interior of São Tomé e Príncipe, March 2018.
- 62 Keese, “Forced Labour,” 103–24, 116.
- 63 These developments can be now be followed for individual plantations. For the Roça (plantation) Margão, where the labour inspectors interviewed workers to seek their opinion, see AHSTP, Joaquim dos Santos Domingues, Inspector of the Provincial Department of Labour and Welfare Services of São Tomé e Príncipe, Relatório: Roça Margão (n° 66/966/D), 30 March 1966, Curadoria Geral dos Serviçais e Indígenas, 930 (cota 3.19.2.12); AHSTP, A. Mendes Serra, Inspector of the Provincial Department of Labour and Welfare Services of São Tomé e Príncipe, to Administrador of the Roça Margão (n° 1357), 5 July 1960, Curadoria Geral dos Serviçais e Indígenas, 930 (cota 3.19.2.12).
- 64 This is different from Nascimento’s results from São Vicente and my own work on Santiago in the 1950s. It needs to be asked if those earlier results on

- recruitment need to be questioned in the light of the Santo Antão experience. See Nascimento, *Vidas*: 79–86; Nascimento argues that especially the prison-like transit camps of São Vicente were interpreted as repressive by migrants from Santo Antão, but I would argue that this was certainly not the start of a negative appreciation.
- 65 ANCV, Eurico Lopes Vieira, Commander of the Administrative Post of Porto Novo, to Administrator of District of Paúl (n° 202/77/5/53), 28 May 1953, Fundo Paúl, ACP, cx. 188.
 - 66 ANCV, Júlio Firmino Benrós, Administrator of District of Paúl, to Director of Central Department of Services of Civil Administration of Cabo Verde (n° 451/53, Proc. 77/5), 29 July 1953, Fundo Paúl, ACP, cx. 188.
 - 67 ANCV, Eurico Lopes Vieira to Administrator of District of Paúl (n° 3/9/77/Rol. Gm. -), 23 June 1953, Fundo Paúl, ACP, cx. 188.
 - 68 ANCV, Eurico Lopes Vieira to Administrator of District of Paúl (n° 281/77/5/53), 25 July 1953, Fundo Paúl, ACP, cx. 188.
 - 69 ANCV, Eurico Lopes Vieira to Administrator of District of Paúl (n° 282/77/5/53), 25 July 1953, Fundo Paúl, ACP, cx. 188.
 - 70 Interview with João Augusto Sousa, Cabeça de Figueiral, 25 January 2018.
 - 71 Conversation with Maria de Jesus Rodrigues, history teacher at Liceu de Ribeira Grande, 9 February 2017.
 - 72 ANCV, Júlio d'Andrade Neves, João Baptista Alves, Manuel Lopes da Silva (as secretary), “Acta da sessão do dia vinte e oito de Março do mil novecentos e trinta,” 1, RPSAC, SC: A\SR: N\SSR: N1\Cx111 (1102).
 - 73 See as a recent contribution for the Mozambican case, Alexopoulou and Juif, “Colonial State Formation,” 227.
 - 74 ANCV, Neves, Alves, and Silva, “Acta” (same as note 72).
 - 75 AHU, António de Almeida, Inspector-General of Colonial Administration, “No Arquipélago da Séde et da Fome: Inspecção de 1948 a Cabo Verde,” (no number), May 1949, 12, MU/ISAU, A2.49.003/48.00350.
 - 76 And Serra is also a well-known figure for his early comments on the historical development of agriculture in Santo Antão, including production of sugar cane, see Évora, “A Produção da Aguardente,” 25.
 - 77 ANCV, João Coelho Pereira Serra, Administrator of District of Ribeira Grande, “Relatório da Administração do Concelho da Ribeira Grande—Ano de 1957,” (no date), RPSAC, SC: A\SR: N\SSR: N1\Cx111.
 - 78 For a comparative case in Mozambique, see Zamparoni, *De escravo a cozinheiro*, 115–8.
 - 79 ANCV, Serra, “Relatório,” [1957] (same as note 77).
 - 80 ANCV, João Coelho Pereira Serra to Director of Provincial Division of Services of Civil Administration of Cabo Verde (n° 743/53. /Adm./J.B.), 19 December 1957, RPSAC, SC: A\SR: N\SSR: N1\Cx111.
 - 81 AHNCV, Serra, “Relatório,” [1957] (same as note 77).
 - 82 ANCV, João Francisco Pires, Domingos António dos Santos and António João Fonseca, “Comissão em Santo Antão,” to Governor of Cabo Verde (no number), 9 August 1957, 1–2, RPSAC, SC: A\SR: N\SSR: N1\Cx111.
 - 83 *Ibid.*, 2.
 - 84 ANCV, Arcádio Henrique Fernandes, Acting School Inspector, “Informação” (no number), 11 September 1957, RPSAC, SC: A\SR: N\SSR: N1\Cx111.
 - 85 ANCV, João Coelho Pereira Serra to Director of Provincial Division of Services of Civil Administration of Cabo Verde (n° 657/39. /Adm. /J.B.), 8 November 1957, 3, RPSAC, SC: A\SR: N\SSR: N1\Cx111.
 - 86 See Rodrigues, “From Silence to Silence,” 353–6; and, for the relationship between Cape Verdean elites and the famine experience, Keese, “Managing the Prospect of Famine,” 48–69.

- 87 Lindskog and Delaite, “Degrading Land,” 271–90.
- 88 Haagsma, “Traditional Water Management,” 42–3, 48.
- 89 ACMRG-CV, 1976—Correspondência expedida DE n° 1 a 77, Maurino de Camões Brito Delgado, *Delegado* of Internal Administration, to João Tomás Leocárdio (n° 144/20.01/76), 15 March 1976.
- 90 ACMRG-CV, António Abade Monteiro, Roberto da Silva Gama, João Maria Medina, Francisco Borja Monteiro, Alfredo António Pires, Miguel Francisco Delgado, João de Deus da Graça, Gualdino Cardeal Monteiro, Manuel João Dias, João Santos Medina, Joaquim José de Moraes, Manuel António Moraes, Epifânio Lopes Ferreira, João Brito Soares, Onildo da Ressurreição Ferreira, Teodoro C. Monteiro, and Domingos António dos Santos, to President of Câmara Municipal of District of Ribeira Grande, Vila Maria Pia (no number), 15 February 1975, Correspondência recebida –1975 –.
- 91 ACMRG-CV, Manuel Nicolau Mártir, from Coculi, complainant (*queixoso*), to President of the Administrative Committee of the Câmara Municipal da Ribeira Grande (no number), 28 May 1975, Correspondência recebida – 1975 –.
- 92 ACMRG-CV, Adalberto Chantre Oliveira, Fiscal das águas de irrigação of Chã de Pedras, to President of Administrative Committee of Câmara Municipal da Ribeira Grande (no number), 16 June 1975, 1, Correspondência recebida –1975 –.
- 93 ACMRG-CV, Gualdino Cardeal Monteiro, from Coculi, to President of Administrative Committee of the District of Ribeira Grande (copy, by chief secretary, José Benvindo Leston, on 11 September 1975), 26 August 1975, 1, Correspondência recebida –1975 –.
- 94 *Ibid.*, 2.
- 95 ACMRG-CV, Albino Ferreira Fortes, Inspector, to President of Câmara Municipal of District of Ribeira Grande (no number), 20 February 1975, Correspondência recebida –1975.
- 96 See the useful and analytic, if journalistic, account in Montezinho, “Marcas do 31 de Agosto.”