

Article

A Dream of Dual Citizenship

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Abstract: Many problems exist for United States (U.S.) descendants of Cabo Verde (In 2015, the government of Cabo Verde asked in the United Nations that the official name be Cabo Verde in all documents, opposed to the colonial version, “Cape Verde”) Islands seeking dual citizenship. Much of this is due to multiple 20th century racial discriminatory practices by the U.S. in soliciting cheap labor from Cabo Verde Islands, including changing the birth names of Cabo Verdean immigrants when they entered the United States. Without knowing the true birth names of their ancestors, descendants such as myself have no access to proof of birth in the dual citizenship process. Years often pass by as Cabo Verdean Americans search for clues that may lead to proving their legal status through family stories, and track related names as well as birth and death records. For many, dual citizenship may never be granted from the Cabo Verdean government, despite having U.S. death certificates that state that the family member was born in Cabo Verde. This autobiographical case study explores why so many Cabo Verdean Americans seek dual citizenship with a strong desire to connect to their motherland. Moreover, issues related to language, class and colorism discrimination between Cabo Verdean-born immigrants and descendants in the U.S. are explored. In so doing, the researcher hopes to ameliorate the divisions between the current government policies and Cabo Verdean American descendants, as well as build greater intracultural connections between those born in the Cabo Verde Islands and those born in the U.S. and elsewhere.

Keywords: descendant; dual citizenship; Cabo Verde Islands; racism; colorism; storyteller narrative; kriolu language; culture; born vs. immigrant vs. non-citizen descendant

1. Introduction

This article was based on the challenges of gaining dual citizenship for individuals who are certain of their lineage and who are eligible to become a legal descendant citizen. It is particularly relevant to second-generation Cabo Verdeans, such as myself, who have a longing to unite their U.S. and Cabo Verdean heritages. The Cabo Verdean community in the U.S. predates the American Revolution. It is the oldest Cabo Verdean community in the world and the largest when both immigrants and their descendants are included (Jørgen Carling 2002). At the heart of this journey is a yearning for one’s motherland, to know one’s roots, to come to know oneself as one who can inhabit and negotiate two conflicting but integral cultures (Eng et al. 2005; Hammar 1985), which in this case study refers to the culture of Cabo Verde as well as that of Cabo Verdean American descendants. (Lopes and Lundy 2014) note that “the Cape Verdean diaspora is unique and observable” (p. 77), and those who emigrate often experience a strong wish to return (Brandão and Zoomers 2010; Carter and Aulette 2009; Drotbohm 2009; Esteves and Caldeira 2001). This “longing or homesickness toward the homeland” (Lopes and Lundy 2014, p. 77) that immigrants and descendants of those born in Cabo Verde experience

is referred to as *sodade* in Cabo Verdean Kriolu¹. For many Cabo Verdeans, this longing for home is not only located or symbolized in the motherland's welcoming home members of a community that was disrupted early on through the diaspora (either forced or necessary migration), but in the words of a Cabo Verdean immigrant, it is also "a dream—we are universal—going beyond our borders" (Personal communication, 26 December 2019).

The dream of being universal may in part reflect the deep desire to find an identity that can straddle divisions that political borders and the immigrant experience tend to perpetuate. The immigrant experience is filled with a number of political, social and economic tensions that shape collective identities founded on language, ethnicity and color, but which are "in reality contested and confounded by peoples' abilities to juggle multiple, often contradictory, identities" (Hill and Wilson 2003, pp. 3–4). For Cabo Verdeans, the experience of immigrating to the U.S. has included discrimination and this has in part shaped their collective identity, which has grown more complex with time. As migrant laborers working in New England cranberry bogs and crewing whaling vessels, Cabo Verdeans early on tended to identify as Portuguese (Lopes and Lundy 2014). However, although during the 1960s Civil Rights Movement they began to collectively identify as African American, they would later attempt to define themselves as distinct from the larger African American community (Carling and Batalha 2008; Clifford 1994; Halter 1993; Sánchez Gibau 2008; Thomas 2009). In my own case of having African American roots as well as Cabo Verdean lineage, I interacted from an early age with those Cabo Verdeans who may have been responding to this tendency to "define a cultural identity that set... them apart from other African Americans" (Lopes and Lundy 2014, p. 78), and this presented me with challenges in uniting these cultures internally along my journey, which I will describe more fully. The effort of the community to set themselves apart from an integral part of my own roots undoubtedly left a side of myself feeling alienated; however, feelings of alienation are not exclusive to Cabo Verdean descendants with African American roots when interacting with Cabo Verdean immigrants.

The contemporary divisions existing between the communities of Cabo Verdean-born immigrants and descendants as a result of the complex interplay of identity and political and cultural boundaries are part of my story of discovery in seeking dual citizenship, and this is part of the larger collective story as well. As an example, in a group of eight, consisting of mostly Cabo Verde-born academic scholars and community activists, with two Cabo Verdean Americans, we shared what we were hearing from our various Cabo Verdean communities for the purposes of finding ways to support our overall culture in becoming one and being recognized as a borderless cultural group. We spoke of some of the generalized views heard from our varying communities, which included that the Cabo Verdean Americans were smarter or they embodied differences based on economic discrepancies and that they think they are better. There is also an image that Cabo Verdeans who live abroad are doing better and are wealthy, when in reality many are working in factories. The group agreed that without a plan for living abroad, the path can be harder. Often, these perspectives bring about separations and are based on prejudices. For example, many Cabo Verdean Americans perceive that they use skills and talents to make money and that many of the Cabo Verde-born individuals living in the U.S. use the government for financial assistance. Other views illustrate the perceptions of the different behaviors displayed by Cabo Verdeans when they become assimilated. Cabo Verdean Americans who speak Kriolu seem to perceive themselves as better than their Cabo Verdean-born counterparts living in Cabo Verde. On the other hand, those born in Cabo Verde perceive that Cabo Verdean Americans who can speak Kriolu will not do so when visiting Cabo Verde in order to appear elite. Intracultural prejudice and racism were discussed because it has held back our complete unification. In addition, lessons we could learn from one another were discussed, such as that Cabo Verde-born individuals

¹ According to Alfabeto Unificado para a Escrita do Caboverdiano (ALUPEC), which is the alphabet that was officially recognized by the Cabo Verdean government) Kriolu is the more acceptable way of spelling the Cabo Verdean language, also frequently spelled Creole. Kriolu will therefore be used throughout this manuscript unless when quoting authors who use other spellings.

live in a more collectivist way, whereas Cabo Verdean Americans live more in tune with the United States' individualism ethic, which can forestall our collective success. Overall, it was understood that our political socialization within the systems we live in have a great bearing on how we think about the borders we have created for our culture. One member in the group summarized the group's sentiments with, "We need to decolonize our minds; it is all to separate us" (Personal communication, 26 December 2019). Decolonization refers to the action or process of a state withdrawing from a former colony and leaving it independent. However, in this case, it refers to mentally becoming independent or free from the constraints of our prejudices.

It is possible that the quest for dual citizenship may be in part to heal these divisions within both a single community torn apart by a colonialist global system and in individuals, such as myself, descendants of Cabo Verde with African American roots, who psychologically inhabit two cultures, with these cultures at varying odds with regard to language, class and color. The literature on dual citizenship, especially pertaining to those of the African diaspora who want to become citizens of their mother country of Cabo Verde, is sparse, and much of the literature of dual citizenship focuses on its political implications. However, dual citizenship has important implications both to a kind of democratic belonging and a cultural one as well. Whereas dual citizenship was often objected to in the past "based on fundamental concepts of nation states, national identification and loyalty" (Hammar 1985, p. 448). Blatter (2011), who investigates the implications of "dual citizenship and multicultural democracy" suggests that "dual citizenship not only provides further mechanisms for helping discriminated groups but also stimulates expanded notions of multiculturalism" (p. 792). In this context, multiculturalism refers to a plurality of cultures and also to a strand of democratic theory in which "collective entities take centre stage" (p. 782). Blatter adds, "First and foremost, it [dual citizenship] is a symbol of recognition" (p. 792). Faist (2001) notes that there are two aspects to dual citizenship: one has to do with the responsibilities and the endowment of rights, and the other is collective identity. From what he refers to as a "transstate" perspective (crossing states), dual citizenship is the overlapping of ties. He gives the example of "small kinship groups with geographically mobile members, and transstate communities (cf. Portes 1996) [that] foster a life style which implies frequent and dense social and symbolic transactions across state borders" (p. 20). It is this broader community, a collective identity with overlapping ties, that dual citizenship can help to establish. Faist writes that "In contrast to national concepts, a transstate view grasps the integrative potentials of reciprocity and solidarity in border-crossing spaces for bounded political communities" (p. 3). Hammar (1985), who conducted an early exploration of the possible implications of dual citizenship for political integration, observed that with dual citizenship, "Identities are combined and they often add up to something more than one and perhaps not less than two. A bilingual and bicultural person can be competent and active in both languages and cultures" and "even loyalties can be combined" (p. 449). The multicultural approach to democracy introduces the idea that dual citizenship can embody "not so much the recognition of difference but the valuation of multiplicity" (Blatter 2011, p. 792). Moreover, "Dual citizenship opens up a line of thinking for the 'inclusion of the other' (Blatter 2011, p. 790). The recognition of multiplicity in identity and the importance of discourses between entities with overlapping community ties is important to Cabo Verdeans at home and abroad. In spite of its obvious benefits to Cabo Verdeans and their descendants in the U.S., of which there are untold numbers with many who may not even be aware of their Cabo Verdean heritage, the process of obtaining dual citizenship has been riddled with unique and seemingly impenetrable challenges.

The approach used to explore such challenges was autobiographical in nature. The aim was to present a personal story of genealogy in hopes of pointing to a broader social, personal and historical context that is relevant to many who seek dual citizenship. Methodologies such as a personal narrative are more acceptable in this day of ever-changing field work, along with cross-cultural research styles and culturally authentic contributions (Reed-Danahay 1997). For some, the process of acquiring dual citizenship is relatively unambiguous, but for others, such as Cabo Verdeans, it is anything but straightforward. Therefore, inquiring into the hardships of Cabo Verdean Americans in

obtaining descendant dual citizenship of the Cabo Verde Islands may prove useful for Cabo Verdean Americans and others who have similar predicaments. In this second decade of the 21st century there is still insufficient discourse in this area, and therefore personal autoethnographic methods helped to frame this paper (Reed-Danahay 1997). Keeping these goals in mind, I also highlight my frequent travels to Cabo Verde Islands in the pursuit of building relationships. Furthermore, I created and solicited informal family perspectives in the United States through the use of social media, engaged in informal single and focus group discussions, had countless communications with both the U.S. and Cabo Verde governmental agencies, and collected numerous documents pertaining to the rigorous application process to become an American/Cabo Verdean dual citizen. There is a paucity of Cabo Verdean autobiographical research case studies on the experiences of Cabo Verdean Americans seeking descendant citizenship, which is applied for in the U.S. and can result in United States and Cabo Verde Islands dual citizenship. Having had the opportunity to discuss this pervasive issue at length with the Cabo Verdean Consulate General's Offices in both Washington D.C. and Quincy, Massachusetts, I seek to share the process and challenges of Cabo Verdean Americans seeking dual citizenship. These autobiographical efforts are written in a narrative storyteller format for the purpose of enriching understanding through the creative lens of someone who is trying to live the dream of a dual citizen. The longing for dual citizenship in my case encompasses a family journey to discover these roots in multiple ways through multiple encounters with Cabo Verdeans here and abroad as I searched for records to help establish my lineage. This story also encompasses a journey through the U.S. and Cabo Verde history. My hope is that my family's story will shed some insight into the repercussions of family and cultural separation. When people feel torn away from their cultural roots, it can have a great impact on them and their future generations. In this article, I attempted to demonstrate the detrimental effects that systemic separation can have on cultural groups all over the world. In using my own family case study, it is hoped that the reader can relate to the harshness of systematic oppressive separation and the need to bridge and heal with openness and better cultural understanding. Thus, this article may be of special 'belonging' benefit to those with mixed heritage, as well as to the nation and world at large, as it seeks to learn of its peoples' contributions, achievements and challenges while living in an inequitable and insensitive America.

2. Background

2.1. *Térria Stimada (Beloved Homeland)*

The República de Cabo Verde declared its independence from Portugal on 5 July 1975. The Cabo Verde Islands nation consists of 10 islands that are approximately 370 miles off the coast of West Africa Costa [1975] (2011). Before the Portuguese and other European countries began colonizing the islands, a colonization that lasted for more than three centuries, West African cultures had already begun to migrate there. Beginning in the 15th century, the Portuguese and other European countries forcefully transported enslaved Africans to the islands to work the bidding of the colonizers (Costa [1975] 2011).

The central position of the Cabo Verde Islands, with its ideal winds and currents, made the islands suitable for the middle passage trade routes, and from the beginning of the 17th century the Cabo Verde Islands ports were used to accommodate the transatlantic slave trade. This Middle Passage triangle phenomenon traded enslaved Africans and other tangible goods, such as salt and handwoven cloth, from Africa throughout the African Diaspora and European countries (Old Dartmouth Historical Society-New Bedford Whaling Museum 2015). The islands began to represent a mixture of racial ethnicities, mainly consisting of Portuguese and West African cultures. Kriolu, the language of Cabo Verde, is a combination of Portuguese and African speech components (Almeida and Nyhan 1976).

Today, the Cabo Verde Islands nation is acknowledged as one of the 54 African countries of the African continent and is often called "little Africa," as it is a gateway for commerce to Africa and other transatlantic continents (Lopes 2019; Old Dartmouth Historical Society-New Bedford Whaling Museum 2015). The Cabo Verde Islands are divided into two island groups: the Barlavento (windward),

including the islands within the islands, of Santo Antão (Sintanton), São Vicente (Sonsente), Santa Luzia, São Nicolau (San Ninklau), Sal (Dja de Sal) and Boa Vista (Bubista), and the Sotavento (leeward) islands, which consist of the islands of Maio, Santiago, Fogo, and Brava (Costa [1975] 2011).

Cabo Verdeans began coming to America through forced slave migration around the 17th century and in later years were solicited by the U.S. to migrate to America as cheap laborers to work in agricultural fields, such as the cranberry bogs located in the New England region of the United States. In addition, Cabo Verdean whalers, known as Yankee Baleeiros (Portuguese for whalers), were among the first to arrive via the port of New Bedford, Massachusetts. More than 70% of all Cabo Verdean immigrants to the U.S. between 1800–1921 came through the New Bedford Port of Entry rather than Ellis Island (Old Dartmouth Historical Society-New Bedford Whaling Museum 2015). It is estimated today that there are about three million Cabo Verdean descendants, including recent immigrants from Azores and Brazil, which have similar colonized cultures, living in the United States. The overall Cabo Verde population in the Cabo Verde Islands is much less, with about half of this population living in the capital, Praia, on the Island of Santiago.

2.2. *Chasing the Dream*

I am a descendant of an African American father, two generations from U.S. slavery, which for my ancestors began with enslavement on U.S. Southern plantations, and a Cabo Verdean first-generation mother. I was born of both of these cultures of African descent, and both are mixed with the blood of European colonizers. I ethnically identify as a bi/mixed-cultural cis-gendered African and Cabo Verdean American woman, with dual Christian orientations. I was baptized Catholic and I attended Catholic Church and schools. This was the religion of my mother and of many Cabo Verdean Americans and Cabo Verde-born individuals. Additionally, I was also raised in the African Methodist and Baptist churches, which were heavily involved in the 60's Civil Rights Movement seeking equitable justice for African American people. My father was protestant and a civil rights activist, and I experienced a rich indoctrination of my Black cultural heritage and obligations to those who sacrificed before us. I was born and grew up in a majority Black community in Roxbury, Massachusetts, and spent summers on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, where I experienced Cabo Verdean American culture. I have had the opportunity to have this blended culture, which nurtured my interest in knowing as much as I can about both. As the Sankofa African symbol tells us to go back and get what you forgot, in this exploration I am striving to do just that for myself, my family, and others who have the same interest.

My quest began with pledging to my mother that I would trace our family roots in the Cabo Verde Islands. I can remember my mother saying, "Karen, you go to all of these different countries working with so many different cultures; how come you haven't tried to explore more of our culture and trace our family roots back to Cabo Verde?" She wanted our family to seek descendant citizenship because she felt that she and her siblings had paid a heavy price because of their culture and that her descendants deserve to be embraced by their original homeland.

My mother was first generation Cabo Verdean American and went through many hardships due to the U.S. systems that did not respect the Cabo Verdean culture. For example, she and her siblings were placed into foster care due to my grandmother being institutionalized in a sanitarium and my grandfather's challenges with caring for eight children. There was much debate among my mother and her siblings about why my grandmother was permanently hospitalized. Some said she was suffering from postpartum depression after eight childbirths, the last one occurring in the sanitarium. Others said she was simply afflicted with mental illness. They talked about my grandfather's alcoholism and abuse and in the same breath talked about his dedicated work ethic as a Cabo Verdean man and his courage to immigrate to the United States. Over the years, I have heard from many Cabo Verdean Americans that alcoholism was often an outlet for those within our communities living in oppressive conditions, yet I did not hear enough of what they specifically had to endure as immigrants to the United States. Despite the prideful common perspective of the Cabo Verdean dedicated work ethic,

my youngest aunt, and the only living sibling, still resents her father for not being there for his family and desires to someday write a book titled, *Ward of the State*.

As wards of the state, my mother and her siblings were all separated. My mother was 10 years old and was brought with her youngest sister to Boston, Massachusetts. They were forced to end their connection with their culture, as well as to refrain from speaking the Cabo Verdean Kriolu language. Additionally, they were separated from their older siblings, who remained in areas of Cape Cod, Massachusetts, where the Cabo Verdean culture was more prevalent. Stories from my aunts and uncles and other family members provided me with insights into what happens to the children when the state is racist and does not care for the wellbeing of its children of color. Additionally, there was the shame of family abuse and depression, as I would discover later. Many of my cousins could relate to this family history as well. However, as a young woman, my mother had only one thing in mind: to reconnect with her lost family.

With steadfast determination, my mother spent a number of years locating all of her siblings, as well as her mother and father, and I as a young girl was to reap her efforts. Each summer, I visited my aunts and uncles in Cape Cod, and they and other family members would visit us in Boston. We also found other members of our Cabo Verdean family, my mother's first cousins in Boston, and saw them often. I began to know my Cabo Verdean American heritage quite well, yet I was hesitant to fulfill the request of my mother to seek dual citizenship because being of mixed cultures had not always been easy for me. For instance, colorism was always an issue in both of my cultures. I was too light-skinned to be Black and had too many "wool-like" curls to be Cabo Verdean. I remember incidents that occurred as a young teenager as I spent my usual summers on Cape Cod. While swimming with some other teens from the Cape, I was called the "N" word² because my hair texture had changed from being straightened by a hot iron comb to its naturally curly state after going into the water and I was told to go back to the ghetto in Boston.

Whereas these experiences with teens from the Cabo Verdean culture may have been alienating, I was strongly groomed to explore both of my cultural identities. I joined in civil rights' actions with my father in the 60s, attending protest marches, sit-ins and so forth from the age of seven. During this same time period, as I was beginning to spend summers with my Cabo Verdean relatives in Cape Cod, working in the cranberry bogs and attending Cabo Verdean dances and family celebrations, so I became enculturated into Cabo Verdean American culture. During those years, I found I had to frequently code switch from one cultural norm of communicating to the other. For instance, when I was in the company of Cabo Verdeans, I used Cabo Verdean colloquialisms. When I was in the company of African Americans, I spoke AAL (African American language). Although I had some reprieve from having to code switch when attending a Catholic school that some bicultural Cabo Verdean American and African American students also attended, I was not totally free to be the blend I am until I moved, after my father's death, to a housing development, a third of which was populated with Cabo Verdean (often blended) families. There we were, the Delgados, Thimas/Gonsalves, Amados, Nichols, Yancys, and us, the Cardoza kids, to name a few. We were pretty large families, and all around the same age. Colorism was apparent there as well. Being Cabo Verdean mixed, we were often told by our families that we were better than others because of our lighter skin and straighter hair texture. From the Black point of view, we Cabo Verdeans were considered a lost people of African descent who were often referred to as Geechee, which was meant to be an ethnic slur stemming from Cabo Verdeans often describing themselves as Porta-gees (a mixed, but Portuguese-based ethnicity). This was actually a U.S. Southern term for the Gullah African culture, but on the east coast, Geechee meant *Kriole*. However, colorism was always trumped by all of us being in a low-income housing development and that we had only us to depend upon in many situations. Therefore, we all lived as one and so many of us stay in contact today through social media and beyond.

² In this context, "N" is the first letter of an epithet for African Americans that is so taboo that it is never used in public.

I spoke a blended AAL and Cabo Verdean vernacular, which only those of the same mixed heritage seemed to understand. Generally, I was always teased about my physical European-looking appearance and strange dialect, depending on which of my cultural groups I was around. Cultural identity struggles followed me for much of my life. Nonetheless, these experiences led me to become fascinated with other cultures. Growing up in Roxbury, a predominately Black and densely populated urban neighborhood (before gentrification), at the lower end of the socioeconomic spectrum, of Boston, Massachusetts, amidst a variety of religious and ethnic cultures, such as Irish Catholic, Jewish, Black Muslim and the increasing influx of Cabo Verdean Catholics, I was intrigued as I sought out answers to how we could be racially prejudiced toward one another and at the same time be linked by our Bostonian and New England experiences. I enjoyed exploring such intergroup dynamics but not necessarily reliving the challenges of being bicultural in a city that did not recognize the beauty of mixed cultures.

Until fairly recently, I have celebrated my mixed culture with my primary family, but I did not necessarily seek to dig deeper into my Cabo Verdean heritage. I have always been involved with Cabo Verdean American associations, such as the Cabo Verdean House of Boston, where I worked as an after-school educator for newly immigrated Cabo Verdean youth. My various involvements always made me feel I was being true to my Cabo Verdean culture. However, for me, I felt more rejection and shame from this culture than I did from my Black culture, due my awareness of various family abuses, lack of speaking the language and perceptions of Cabo Verdeans' superior prejudicial attitudes toward African Americans. For these reasons, I hesitated to do as my mother asked. Not until she asked me again when she became terminally ill and later died, did I begin to take her request seriously. Around 2015, I started trying to put the puzzle pieces together to understand where exactly our Cabo Verdean grandparents came from and why. I started talking with cousins, because most of our first-generation parents and relatives had passed away. To make sense of it all, I began to collect documentation, such as my mother's birth and death certificates and her parents' U.S. death certificates. The more I became involved with this effort, the more I grew interested in knowing the parts of me from the motherland of Cabo Verde Islands. I also learned that many Cabo Verdean Americans seek dual citizenship in hopes of having the opportunity to give back to Cabo Verde, by bringing their various areas of professional expertise to help build up the economy and sustainability there, to come settle in Cabo Verde to get closer to their original culture, and to learn the motherland's cultural traditions, as well as help sustain Cabo Verdean culture in the midst of many European and Asian countries buying up the land for purposes not necessarily for the advantage of the nation and its people.

2.3. *In "Root" to Cabo Verde by Way of My Grandparents*

Both of my maternal grandparents were of Cabo Verdean heritage. My grandmother, Jennie Roderques Cardoza, was first generation Cabo Verdean American and born in Rhodes Island, U.S. in 1901. In 1967, at the age of 66, She died of Parkinson disease, cerebral damage and hyper congestive heart disease (death certificate, received and filed 15 May 1969). On her death certificate, there is a correction of the spelling of her maiden name. Additionally, I have seen my grandmother's maiden name spelled differently on other documents. I point this out to acknowledge that there were always different spellings of names during that time period. I have yet to locate her birth certificate; therefore, her birth records remain a mystery. The family always said that she was a mixture of Italian, Portuguese and Cabo Verdean, but I have no concrete evidence of that currently. It states on my grandmother's death certificate that her parents were born in Brava, Cabo Verde Islands. I did have the opportunity to know my grandmother, as I was brought to visit her in the hospital several times before her death. However, she was unable to communicate due to her illnesses.

My grandfather was born in Fogo, Cabo Verde Islands. Unable to locate his birth certificate, I used his death certificate to calculate his birth year and place of birth. On his death certificate, his name is registered as Jack Cardoza and that he was born in Fogo, Cabo Verde islands. He died on 26 August 1956 in Fall River, Massachusetts at the age of 58 (death certificate received 26 September 1956).

I therefore determined that he was born in 1898. His death certificate also stated that his parents were born in Fogo. The spelling of my grandmother's name on his death certificate as his spouse is Jennie Rodericks. This same spelling is on my mother's birth certificate. Again, on her death certificate, her maiden name was spelled Roderques.

I also had an opportunity to meet my grandfather; however, I was only two years old when he died. I remember hearing one of my relatives say that my grandfather came to the United States and took a job in the fishing industry in Gloucester, Massachusetts. However, my eldest uncle told his children that my grandfather came to the United States and worked on agricultural farms as a young man. In my communications with other second-generation Cabo Verdean Americans, many of us have to rely on putting the pieces of our family stories together to actually learn our family histories. However, my grandfather's death certificate states that he was a caretaker on a private estate close to the time of his death. He died of carcinoma of the neck with extensive regional metastasis. At one point, I thought he came to the United States with his parents, because their names are on my uncle Eugenio's death certificate, as Charles and Mary (Mendes) Cardoza. There is another important aspect to note. In a leaflet population document, the surname Cardoza is a locational name meaning "of Cardoso" (Forebears 2020³).

Because their surnames were listed as Cardoza, I deduced they must have come together and that his parents changed their surname upon entering the United States. However, a cousin said that it was more likely he came on his own with his two brothers as cheap laborers. I was able to find a death certificate of one of his brothers, Eugenio Cardoza, but not the other brother, whose name was said to be Louie. I did quite a search for Eugenio's family, but like my family, the first-generation children have all passed on, and not much is known about him. I was told that they were brothers but had a falling out and stopped talking long before they passed away.

At present, the Cabo Verde Ministry of Foreign Affairs' position remains that Cardoza is not a Cabo Verdean name, and therefore the consideration of a name change from Cardoso to Cardoza is not valid without solid proof. However, Selectman Raymond Cardoza was the first Cabo Verdean American to serve as an elected official lived in Wareham, Massachusetts, where my mother was born to Jack and Jenny Cardoza. Raymond Cardoza is a noted figure because he held the highest political position that any Cabo Verdean has held in the history of the United States (Costa [1975] 2011).

2.4. The Journey: Pursuing Dual Citizenship Has Not Been Easy

The Cabo Verde Islands consulate offices in the United States have stated that many Cabo Verdean Americans applying for descendant citizenship are denied because of insufficient evidence, such as birth certificates of their parents or grandparents born in the Cabo Verde Islands. The United States offices are very much aware of how names were changed upon entering the United States and that most often there is no doubt that the applicants are of Cabo Verdean descent. However, with any country, physical evidence must be the determining factor. So, what do we do in these cases where we know our relatives were born in Cabo Verde but do not find the birth certificate or baptismal records? Thus far, my answer is that we keep searching for records and clues to find that information. However, when it appears that all possibilities of finding such documents have been exhausted, should we just give up and accept that our descendancy will not be accepted in the motherland?

My dual citizenship journey officially began in October 2016, when I visited the Cabo Verde Islands for the first time since 1979. During this trip, I visited the House of Citizenship, Building of Records and the local police station in Mindelo, São Vicente, Cabo Verde, where I was staying on vacation. None of these agencies could find any information on my grandfather, and it did not help that I could not communicate much in Kriolu. Therefore, I decided to apply for citizenship from home

³ Forebears, Inc.: Names & Genealogy Resources.

in the United States; I thought perhaps they could better respond since my grandfather had become a U.S. citizen, or did he?

In 2017, I received the application for descendant citizenship from the Embassy of Cabo Verde in Washington, D.C. The form stated that, "Any Cabo Verdean citizen bearing proof of Cabo Verdean nationality from birth; born outside Cabo Verde, can acquire Cabo Verdean Citizenship from Cabo Verdean parents or grandparents born in Cabo Verde." I was excited to receive this information, and I began to gather documents of proof. Since I could not find my grandfather's birth certificate information while in Cabo Verde, I started with my grandfather's death certificate, my mother's birth and death certificates, my birth certificate, all of which demonstrated that I was the granddaughter of a Cabo Verdean-born immigrant. I had also found my grand uncle's death certificate, and on his death certificate it said he was born in Santa Catarina do Fogo, Cabo Verde Islands.

Before returning back to Cabo Verde in 2017, I had the opportunity to visit one of the world's largest international genealogy archive centers, the Family Search Center in Utah. I was not able to find information on my grandfather because their systems indicated that there was a report that "record destruction" happened in Fogo from 1895 to 1902. They said that it was probably some type of natural disaster such as an earthquake and/or volcanic eruption. At this time, I emailed the Embassy of Cabo Verde in Washington, D.C. about the disaster that took place in Fogo during that time, and whether it was possible that his records were destroyed; however, I could only find out that answer by visiting the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office in Praia, Santiago, Cabo Verde, which is the headquarters at which Cabo Verdean citizenship is approved. Therefore, I went to the Ministry in Praia, and since I did not have the birth certificate of my grandfather, they suggested that I go to the Center of National Archives in Praia and look through the various record books containing ship manifests, dates of birth and baptismal records.

There are many record books dating back to the 1800s in the Cabo Verdean National Archives. I have now visited the Cabo Verde Islands' National Archives in search of records on my grandfather five times, spending hours upon hours each time I have visited Praia. The National Archives did write a notarized letter on my behalf to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office, stating that they believed my grandfather's original name was Joaquim Cardoso (the Cabo Verdean version of Jack Cardoza) and explained the possibility of his records being destroyed in a natural disaster on the island of Fogo.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs agreed to start my application; not only did I have the death certificates of my grandfather, his brother and my mother, but I also had my mother's birth certificate and my birth certificate. I had the notarized letter from the National Archives, and three associate witness testaments of Cabo Verdeans, who testified that they knew me and were certain of my Cabo Verdean heritage. There was other paperwork that needed to be notarized and processed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including my official statement of my circumstances, and all documents had to be transcribed into Cabo Verdean language (mainly in Portuguese) to be accepted for the file to be reviewed. Getting to this point took three years and involved over 200 email communications between myself and the Embassy of Cabo Verde in Washington, D.C., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs office in Praia, the Arquivo Nacional de Cabo Verde (National Archives of Cabo Verde) and other contacts who were instrumental in completing the process. This correspondence occurred from 2016 to 2020.

In June 2019, I visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for the sixth time and I was told that I would be able to receive my dual citizenship passport at the Cabo Verdean Consulate's office in Quincy, Massachusetts, when I returned to the states. Therefore, in July 2019, I went to the Quincy, Office in Massachusetts. Although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' staff worked very hard to get my approval, the final approval rested with their law offices. When I got to the Quincy office, my dual citizenship had not yet been approved. It was then that I began to work with the Quincy office to contact the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding the approval dispatch needed to complete my process. After some time, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' legal offices responded to the Quincy office that I had been denied citizenship because the American name and Cabo Verdean name of my grandfather did not

match. The notification I received from the Quincy office stated that the decision from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs regarding my file indicated that there were not sufficient documents to show that Joaquim Cardoso is the same person as Jack Cardoza (August 2019).

I had submitted every document that had been requested except for the birth certificate, but it was not enough. The Quincy office understood my dilemma and asked me to write a letter of explanation to the Quincy Consulate General, which I did. In an email to the Quincy Consulate General in September 9, 2019, I wrote in part:

My file is quite full with documents helping to connect my grandfather's Cabo Verdean name to his U.S. name, such as the letter from the Nacional Archives in Praia. The unfortunate thing is we were not able to locate his birth certificate. However, his death certificate states that he was born in Fogo, CV. My issue was getting the Praia office to understand that the surname Cardoso was changed to Cardoza once he arrived in the U.S. If your office recognizes there is a pattern for these name changes, it may help the Praia office to understand better and to reconsider their decision. (Personal communication, 9 September 2019)

The Quincy staff shared my entire letter with the Consulate General. The Consulate General followed with an appeal for my reconsideration and we were quite hopeful this letter would help pave the way for an approval. However, my last inquiry with the Quincy office was encouraging their careful lobbying on my behalf. Nonetheless, they suggested not to pressure the final decision makers so as not to reaffirm the last decision (Personal communication, 15 October 2019).

3. Discussion

Where Do I Go from Here?

All my life I have lived as a person with Cabo Verdean descent. I have worked in many ways to give back to my culture both in the United States and in the Cabo Verde Islands. In continuing to try to find solutions to this pervasive problem for Cabo Verdean Americans, I have asked the Consulate General of Cabo Verde in Quincy if a merit system exists for descendants of Cabo Verdeans that have had difficulty with obtaining documentation. For instance, my grandfather was born in 1898. Not only was that a long time ago, but according to the Family Search Center (Salt Lake, Utah), many documents at that time were destroyed due to natural disasters on the island. I realize there is not much more I can do on my own regarding the obtaining of documents. As with many Cabo Verdean Americans pursuing recognition and dual citizenship, I am disappointed over the difficulty of having my heritage acknowledged by the Cabo Verdean government. In the interim of hoping for the best, I continue to develop my linkages with Cabo Verde Islands and our culture in general.

Despite the rejection, the feeling of not being granted legal citizenship as of yet, I have gained a better sense of belonging through my many encounters with others on the subject of Cabo Verdean dual citizenship and the relationships I have made among Cabo Verdean immigrants, Cabo Verdean Americans, and those who were Cabo Verde born. The discussions in Cabo Verde, as well as family inquiries, have been enlightening. The responses have helped me to put things in greater perspective. For example, I learned a lot from the family responses to my questions that covered the following areas: our degree of willingness to acknowledge our grandfather's original name, how we choose to identify, whether we speak the language, whether we know Cabo Verde-born people, whether we have ever been to the islands, whether we know of any famous Cabo Verdean Americans, and whether we belong to any Cabo Verdean organizations.

There is a strong interest among my siblings, children, grandchildren, and many cousins to know and experience our Cabo Verdean heritage. All of the family members who completed my questions on social media, stated that they identified with the culture, desired to visit the Cabo Verde Islands and wanted to become dual citizens if the opportunity arose. Most of the family know how to prepare Cabo Verdean dishes and do Cabo Verdean dances, but they cannot speak the Kriolu language well.

Most did not want to officially change the family name from Cardoza to Cardoso, but they agreed to acknowledge Cardoso as our original surname. Many family members perceived that Cabo Verde-born U.S. immigrants demonstrated prejudice toward American-born Cabo Verdean descendants for various reasons, such as not speaking the language and/or not being “authentic” Cabo Verdeans.

Although it has been a long time since we have had a Cabo Verdean family reunion, we are now talking about having one. Everyone wants to know more of who we are and we feel that together we can continue to put the pieces of the puzzle together. I am seeing this with a number of Cabo Verdean American families, such as the families from my childhood housing development. We live in disparate parts of the country, yet we have done fairly well in staying in touch with each other. However, since our first generation is all but gone, we sometimes feel lost regarding how to navigate within a society that does not know much about Cabo Verdean Americans.

Why do so few U.S. citizens know that we exist? We are part of the backbone of making this American nation. We have been strong contributors in both past and present. We have had superstars, like Lena Horne, Horace Silver (Jazz Musician), Amber Rose (actress, model), Bishop Charles Manuel “Sweet Daddy Grace”, Tony Gonzalez (football star), the Tavares brothers (singing group), which most United States Americans do not know have Cabo Verdean heritage. Additionally, people from around the world participate in Kizomba dance classes and competitions (Cabo Verdean contemporary dance style originating from Angola). We have a proud heritage, and we have contributed and achieved much in the U.S. society regardless of economic hardship and racial discrimination. Cabo Verdean people are known for their hard work ethic and overall joy that stems from the cultural traditions we practice. These characteristics were agreed upon by those who participated in my family inquiry and among those in the blended Cabo Verdean focus group as well (Personal communication, 24 January 2020).

When I go to Cabo Verde, I meet people of different social classes and various levels of cultural awareness. I have visited communities of all types, presented at schools and attended many cultural events. Over these past few years, I have developed close relationships with a number of Cabo Verdean-born citizens. In a focus group discussion with varied friends, my belief that there are many misconceptions between the Cabo Verde-born, Cabo Verdean immigrants and Cabo Verdean Americans, were affirmed. However, we agreed about the importance of connecting the variations of our culture, and that by doing so, it would benefit our entire cultural group around the world. (Lopes and Lundy 2014) stated, the “Cape Verdean diaspora in general shares a colonial past, a collective idea of predestined mobility, and assertions of a distinct creole identity” (p. 73). The sense of belonging to a beloved homeland that all Cabo Verdeans share, *sodade*, a longing to return and the importance of the Kriolu language, “help create a bounded diaspora” and a sense of coming home when they find themselves amidst the “crossing [of] borders into new territories and cultural domains” (Lopes and Lundy 2014, p. 73). This sense was created when we shared our experiences and points of views with respect to one another. The journey and the quest for dual citizenship for me has served as a signifier of the value of multiplicity (Blatter 2011), while reminding me of the need to recognize and appreciate the differences within. I also echo the sentiments of a Netherlands-born Cabo Verdean descendent who said, “We need to decolonize our minds; it is all to separate us” (Personal communication, 26 December 2019).

4. Conclusions

Sodade (a Longing for the Motherland)

A song by Cesaria Evora, captures Cabo Verdeans’ *sodade*: “Si bo escreve’ m um ta escreve’ b, si bo esquece’ m um ta esquece’ b, ate dia ki bo volta,” meaning “If you write to me, I will write to you, if you forget me, I will forget you, until the day that you return” (Drotbohm 2009, p. 132). The singer writes about someone who left the homeland under unstable environmental conditions and duress and has no surety that the absent loved one will remember the writer or return. (Drotbohm 2009) points

out that this line also conveys “the idea of reciprocity: whoever writes, will be written to, whoever forgets, will be forgotten, whereas an eventual return can revoke this forgetting” (p. 132).

I am left wondering, should I give up on my mother’s request? If so, will I miss out on feeling that Cabo Verde is also my homeland? This request has become a global endeavor that I hope will add to the literature regarding the challenges for minoritized cultures such as mine. Will other Cabo Verdean Americans also continue to miss out on the motherland’s connection? If more Cabo Verdean Americans were allowed to have citizenship supported by merit when not all documents can be found, could we in fact become that universal culture we spoke of during the focus group interview? We mentioned the impact of racial prejudice between us, and I remembered the story I read about a Cabo Verde immigrant who was racist against Blacks, until a cross was burned on her lawn by a White supremacist group and she realized she was perceived as Black because she has African heritage. Cabo Verdeans are a mixture of African and European heritages, but many have been colonized by the group to believe they are not Black and are better than others. Moreover, I wonder, can our DNA tests be used to prove our identity? For instance, my DNA makes perfect sense when I think about my Cabo Verdean heritage. I am 51% West African (17% Senegalese, which is the closest African country to the Cabo Verde island, and 6–27% Iberian Peninsula (Portugal, colonizers of Cabo Verde; Ancestry.com: Ethnicity estimate for Karen Dade, 2014). I believe this could be a form of evidence of my Cabo Verdean heritage.

Why is dual citizenship so important to me and to others like me? It is as one of my cousins stated, “I feel the blood running through my veins; of course, I want to know more about our culture.” I personally seek to have dual citizenship to honor my Cabo Verdean identity on the legitimate ground of its motherland. Before leaving Cabo Verde in December, 2019, I had an opportunity to meet Olavo de Pina Monteiro Cardoso, born in São Filipe, Fogo in 1947. Mr. Cardoso’s son, Olavo Bilac Cardoso (Universidade de Cabo Verde, Professor of Social Science, Humanity and the Arts) helped to translate our conversation. Mr. Cardoso was the first person with our family name from Fogo that I have met thus far in Cabo Verde, although I had been searching for some time. He shared his family history about his family members that had moved abroad to Massachusetts and painted a beautiful picture of my grandfather’s birthplace, Fogo. He also shared family pictures, and some of the people in the pictures reminded me of pictures of my grandfather. There may or may not be a connection there, and I will continue to pursue contacting his family members in the states, as well as visit Fogo, now that I have a name connection. However, I am not convinced at this point that something will connect to my grandfather, because he was born such a long time ago, but who knows?

In finalizing this article, connections continue to arise. For example, my friend and colleague, Dr. Carlos Almeida, shared a new contact: his friend and co-author of the Cabo Verdean language book, Dr. Ines (Nezi) Brito. She may possibly be related to me, since she is the granddaughter of Pedro Monteiro Cardoso, born in Fogo (in 1883 and died in Praia in 1942). Pedro Monteiro Cardoso was a writer, a journalist and a poet. Surprisingly, both names were given to me during my visit with Olavo de Pina Monteiro Cardoso and his son, Dr. Olavo Bilac Cardoso. Dr. Cardoso has recently begun to write a manuscript about his great grandfather, Pedro Montero Cardoso. These are exciting times, as I have now formed relationships with a number of Cabo Verdean scholars and writers. Perhaps we will rekindle a 21st century version of “Claridade” (Portuguese for “light”). Claridade was a literary review inaugurated in 1936 in the city of Mindelo on the island of São Vicente, Cape Verde. It was part of a movement of cultural, social, and political emancipations of the Cape Verdean society (Lopes 2019).

It is my hope that by sharing my journey and dream of dual citizenship others may be encouraged to seek to know their cultural histories, challenges and contributions for the purpose of feeling more complete and inspired. One aspect of the journey may be learning to have patience as well, because for most of us, the journey will be an arduous one. Another hope is that my own, and my family’s story, may demonstrate to some degree how important culture and justice are for many human beings around the globe; that we all share an impetus for gaining respect from each other, for thinking of our world as one without borders, with an obligation to treat each other with dignity. For those of us separated from our descendant families and countries, it is an opportunity to find home once again beyond just

the heart. So, I wait with patience, and share this case study, with the idea that it may somehow make a difference in how we grant approval for those of us seeking dual descendant citizenship.

In the meantime, I am coming to know Cabo Verdean culture from the point of view of the motherland. In addition, when I visit Cabo Verde, so many associates continue to encourage me to learn to speak Kriolu. Therefore, I have committed to learning the Kriolu language (Almeida 2019). Despite what happens regarding legal citizenship approval, I look forward to continuing my growing relationship with Cabo Verde Islands and its people; my people. I am forever appreciative to family members, Cabo Verdean friends and associates, and governmental agencies and staff that have been so helpful in this journey, and I am grateful to the motherland. I am also eternally grateful to my parents, grandparents, and ancestors.

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