

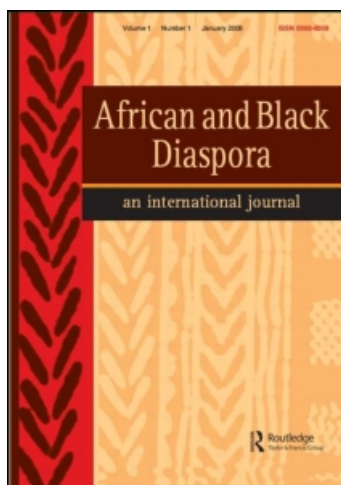
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### Migration and identity of Cape Verdeans and their descendants in Argentina

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## Migration and identity of Cape Verdeans and their descendants in Argentina

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The paper will focus on the Cape Verdean diaspora in Argentina since their arrival at the end of the nineteenth century; emphasizing their distinctive demographic characteristics, places of settlement, development of popular organizations as well as the specific identity strategy they devised in dealing with the invisibility and the “Argentinization” process imposed upon them. The paper also examines the construction of a diaspora conscience and the ways in which African cultural elements were incorporated by the second and third generations in the making of the Cape Verdean diaspora in Argentina.

**Keywords:** migration; identity; Cape Verdeans; Argentina

### Migration to Argentina

The documentary sources that make reference to this migration are practically non-existent, and that is why we had to rely almost exclusively on oral sources and carry out a population census<sup>1</sup> during the first stage of this research (Maffia 2008).

Our informers talk about the first Cape Verdean arrivals towards the end of the nineteenth century, linked to the whale hunting industry in the southern seas. ‘The first Cape Verdeans arrived at the end of the century, the other century [meaning the nineteenth century]. They came by whale ships; then those from Santo Antao started to come’ (José, 2004 a stowaway immigrant in 1947). Then, in the first decade of the twentieth century, they arrived as members of board crews, or as stowaways.

This migration gained relevance particularly from the 1920s, at the same time as one of the worst famines devastated Cape Verde (Carreira 1977). Most emigrated in small groups or individually from Sao Vicente, Santo Antao and Sao Nicolau islands and, to a lesser extent, from Fogo and Brava islands. Between roughly 1927 and 1933, we can trace a new flow that continued until the late 1930s; despite the great difficulties Argentina was going through, ‘...my mother came in 1930 [...]; afterwards, the migration practically stopped [...] until postwar in the 1940s, when we came’ (José).

There was a third flow immediately after the Second World War, more precisely in 1946 (between 1940 and 1946 there were other two large famines in the islands). Nearly all the leaders of Cape Verdean communities in Argentina belong to this generation (or to their children’s). Around the 1960s, the immigration flow decreased

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in intensity. In those years the migration flow of Cape Verdeans to some countries of Europe increased.

Considering Cape Verde's insular condition, linked to the sea or to a *water* environment – and recognized by the Cape Verdean themselves as part of their *idiosyncrasy* and as an important reference in the construction of their identity, they chose to settle down mainly in Ensenada, the neighborhoods of Dock Sud, La Boca and the city of Avellaneda.<sup>2</sup> Like other immigrants in Argentina, as those of Italian or Portuguese origin, the Cape Verdeans chose to settle down on the banks of La Plata river or in maritime zones, because of the proximity to their jobs, on board merchant navy ships or the National Navy, and to the factories, industries and shipyards in these zones.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding Ensenada, a former president of the Cape Verdean Union of Dock Sud says:

There (in Ensenada) the community is larger than ours (in Dock Sud). It was an earlier settlement due to the enrollment of many Cape Verdeans in the Argentine Navy as assistant crew, working in the engines, kitchen and chambers; and therefore, being near the Santiago River, they settled down in Ensenada of Barragán and founded the Association there in 1927.

We also recorded their presence in Mar del Plata associated with maritime activity. Cape Verdeans are also present in the city of Punta Alta, close to the important city-port of Bahía Blanca in the province of Buenos Aires.

The places where they settled, not only in Argentina but also in the United States and Portugal, could be characterized as *ethnic neighborhoods*, places where some aspects of the original social environment were restored constituting a starting point in becoming part of the diverse networks of the migration process (McGoldrick 1982).

The notion of networks was revealed in studies on migrations as a very valuable instrument in studying social action, especially the so-called actor's *relational resources* through which emigrants gather information, choose a place to live, are inserted in the labor and marriage market, etc., and the determinants exerted on their behavior, particularly 'personal relationships, as regards transmission channels of information, which determine *who* will take *what* job' (Ramella 1995). In the case of Cape Verdeans, those personal relationships have generally been familial (particularly through women) in the first place, and between compatriots in the second place.

The informal networks were established along circulation axes or radii, which constituted a vast solidarity network with specific groups (families) where the new migrants moved around. These groups actually worked as true original *micro-contexts*, in charge of sheltering them, looking for a job, a wife, etc., a more effective involvement than that institutionalized, for instance, in the Consulate of Portugal (Maffia 1986). They were the origins of the *Societies or Associations*, undoubtedly like a mirror image of the phenomenon of mutual associative entrepreneurships of great immigrant communities settled in our country.

By the mid-1850s the first mutual aid associations, thoroughly studied by historians such as Devoto, Míguez, Fernández, among others, arose for the Italian and Spanish communities, in Buenos Aires. Devoto (2003) argues that these societies provided in many cases strong community links among their members at regional or

national scale. Many of them resorted to the entities only for a specific interest such as receiving medical, recreational or cultural services.

There were two Cape Verdean associations in Argentina, one founded in Ensenada in 1927 and the other in Dock Sud in 1932. They covered all Cape Verdeans without distinction whether they were from *aldeia*, *ribeira* or by island of origin, unlike other countries such as the United States, Portugal and Holland where Cape Verdean presence was much more numerous and paved the way for a broad diversity of associations.

We should not forget that these institutions were founded in the middle of an economic crisis, with high unemployment rates all over the world including Argentina, so the main needs they tried to satisfy were employment, housing, medical and burial services and, in second place, general recreational and cultural activities. Even though the associations were not organized by regions or islands, according to our informants, there was a significant majority of Cape Verdeans from Santo Antao settled in Ensenada and from San Vicente in Dock Sud, and this, undoubtedly, had to do with the established family and labor networks that led them to live in the same neighborhoods, due to material and emotional proximity.<sup>4</sup>

### Identity and invisibility in natives and descendants

According to Barth (1976), even though cultural differences are irrelevant outside the field of relationships where they are organized in dissimilar ethnic categories, they are not excluded from the analysis since it is 'exactly in the identification of certain *cultural features* as a label of a group's meaning that the sustaining of boundaries over which the social organization of ethnic groups lies' (Poutignat and Streiff-Fenart 1997, p. 132).

Ethnic identity can feed from different signs, accumulate many or retain only one of them, but it is clear that the characteristics of a group's distinctive label can become an object of transformation, substitution or reinterpretation.<sup>5</sup> As a first summary, we can state that unlike some Cape Verdean groups in other countries such as the United States and Portugal,<sup>6</sup> in Argentina they did not form closed groups. Natives speak Spanish perfectly well, they have not taught the *creole* to their children, who, at best, can understand it, but do not speak it; they do not eat Cape Verdean food regularly, just at some celebrations; they do not maintain traditional practices linked to the vital cycle; they interact with Cape Verdeans and non-Cape Verdeans, most of them are married outside the group and the descendants know little or nothing about their parents' place of origin, although this last situation has recently been (partially) reverting as shown below.

Just when the census was carried out we faced the following situation: a numerous group of Cape Verdeans, surrounded by non-Cape Verdean neighbors who do not want to maintain any contact with their compatriots, breaking their belonging bonds and directing their relationships mostly towards mixed groups, that is to say, groups from diverse origins (mainly Spanish, Italian, and their descendants).

Different reasons, not always explicit, were determined through the interviews. On the one hand, there were those whose memory of their place of origin was so traumatic that they preferred to eliminate any element that triggered it. Others

denied their African, black, Cape Verdean origin calling themselves Portuguese, to the point that they refused to be censused for not considering themselves Cape Verdeans. And finally, those who, having acquired better social conditions, did not want any contact with those of lower social positions.

From the census and the further survey carried out in 1998, we could detect that more than 50 percent of the population under study had moved from Ensenada to La Plata (the capital of Buenos Aires province) and from La Boca and Dock Sud towards the federal capital and other locations in Greater Buenos Aires. The reasons were: the desire to improve their socioeconomic situation and giving their children a better education.

Although some Cape Verdeans belonging to the older generation of immigrants continue living in the ethnic neighborhood, their children and grandchildren born in Argentina, particularly adolescents, deny traditional Cape Verdean values and they *Argentinize* themselves, this leading, in many cases, to intergenerational conflicts and deep mixed feelings regarding their ethnic identifications.

And this *Argentinization* (not only of descendants but also of Cape Verdeans themselves) is related to many issues. One of them is the *imperative* of the Argentinean state to *nationalize* and *civilize* immigrants (and their children), essentially through education and compulsory military service, that is to say, policies with the objective of assimilating immigrants. Other institutions such as the Church adhere too. 'Education was clearly the main weapon to fight against cosmopolitanism and impose certain vision of the world that would help legitimize a social order' (Devoto 2003, pp. 277–8).

According to some informants, there was the need to meet Argentinean requirements strictly. In order to understand this, we must take into account the *legislative context* of the country, laws such as Residence law No. 4144 dated 22 November 1902 (and its complementation with the Social Defense Law of 1910) that authorizes the Executive Power to expel from the country any foreigner 'who endangers national security or disturbs law and order', and at the same time, to ban the entrance to those immigrants whose background is not deemed satisfactory. According to historian Halperín Donghi (1976), this law appeared as a response on the part of the political elite to the political and urban union movement led by foreigners. 'A different image of the immigrant is discovered: the suspect, the undesirable' (Novick 2000, p. 94). In this way, according to Armus (1986, p. 437) 'at last xenophobia found a place in Argentinean legislation'.

Resuming Fernando Devoto's analysis over the *nationalizing will*, this historian does not consider it just a typical behavior of older Argentineans or traditional ruling elites:

The hostile voices against indiscriminate immigration and in favor of *nationalization* were not scarce among immigrants' children, who, in many cases, broke out with or forgot homeland bonds, lost the mother tongue and were rapidly *Argentinized*. Many observers pointed out that sometimes there was nothing more hostile to the migration group than their descendants. (Devoto 2003, p. 286)

Thus, the process that led to the group's invisibility and to a 'first generation without memory' (Woortmann 2000) is evident.

At this point, we can conceptualize invisibility as a strategy born partly from the historical experiences processed in Cape Verde, linked to African and black

denial. We should bear in mind that ‘in Cape Verde, the struggle for making the traits of an African heritage *invisible* became particular relevant in the so called Barlovento islands<sup>7</sup> (...) considered free zones of *African ethos* ...’ (Fernandes 2002, p. 90).

As it is clearly expressed by Alejandra, a Cape Verdean descendant:

First of all, Portuguese colonization was devastating ... that we are different, that we are more intelligent, that we are prettier, more educated, that we have nothing to do with the continental Africans, all this story is believed and repeated by all Cape Verdeans, even by the most ignorant of all. (Alejandra)

In a recent interview, a native Cape Verdean said: ‘Cape Verdean culture is different from African tribal culture, with no contempt at all ...’

To this fact, can be added the socio-historical experiences in the new contexts such as in Argentina where the presence of blacks has been denied in practice and discourse (Frigerio 2000; Picotti 2001), as expressed by Boaventura Leite (1996, p. 41) ‘it is not that the black person is not seen, but he is seen as non existent, a mechanism that is revealed as one of the principal ways in which racism is manifested’. ‘However, in Argentina the most everlasting of all prejudices is that derived from skin color’ (Devoto 2003, p. 430).

The old Cape Verdeans built an image of themselves (as Portuguese) distant from the other Africans, following the model developed by many generations in Cape Verde. The following statement was from one of the oldest informants who immigrated in the 1920s and it clearly depicts the process outcome, a self-image full of contradictions, built according to the behavior of relationships between dominant majorities and dominated minorities:<sup>8</sup>

... The Cape Verdean has a European type, a whole Portuguese mind, a white mind, white people’s mind, a distinct mind, but, of course, they were too much mixed ... (Rosa).

These contrasting identities such as European/Portuguese/White vs African/Cape Verdean/black work using the image and words proposed by Cardoso de Oliveira as *ideological condensers*, storing the energy of the ethnical and social class contradictions given at the interethnic system and class structure (Cardoso de Oliveira 1992).

In Argentina<sup>9</sup> they tried to become part, at least nominally, of the Portuguese segment of the population, but in fact few of them were accepted in their social environment, in general they coincided with the *elite* group whose relatives had good relationships with the colonizers in Cape Verde.

According to Barth and his followers, the actors can manipulate ethnic boundaries to some extent. However, the structural conditions, without being determining, set the limits between the possible and the impossible. The concepts of *boundary elasticity*, *identity choices*, and *alternative identities*, usually used by numerous anthropologists, allow a better interpretation of the interaction between Cape Verdeans and the *others* and of the adjustment of their ethnic identity.

Before independence, in Argentina, Cape Verdeans interacted with Portuguese who identified them as pertaining to the colony of Cape Verde in Africa and called them Cape Verdeans. In that relationship Cape Verdeans defined themselves as Cape Verdeans. However, they recognize themselves and are recognized as Portuguese

when interacting with other Europeans such as Italians, Spanish, among others, though it is also clear that the Portuguese Consulate did not accept them as first class Portuguese.

In places such as neighborhoods, work, ethnic clubs in some sites like Ensenada, Dock Sud, La Boca they were recognized as Portuguese: ‘...most of them didn’t call themselves Cape Verdeans, they said they were Portuguese and were treated as Portuguese’ (José). The rest of the population did not recognize them (not even today) either as Portuguese or as Argentinean: ‘There are no black people in Argentina’ and were even less recognized as Cape Verdeans: they are ‘from Brazil’, ‘Central America’, ‘Cape Verde?’ Where is that? Southern Africa? Ethnic labels and stereotypes activated and became relevant in face-to-face social interactions.<sup>10</sup>

In terms of what Greenfield (1976)<sup>11</sup> calls ‘adaptive strategies’, we could label them: *Cape Verdean Portuguese* and *Cape Verdean Argentinean*, strategies that, in those early days, finally resulted in the group’s invisibility, with the conscious or unconscious objective of achieving their insertion and social reproduction with the least possible conflict, although with scarce social mobility. We shall remember that most of them arrived clandestinely staying (for a while) aside the social structure without an effective presence, they were mainly invisible for the state. On the other hand, there has been a marked negative political participation (so far) of the associations, especially that participation that could be linked to ideologies considered (by specific groups) to be *subversive* to social order and that could lead them to be negatively visible for the state and the rest of society.

Today, some members of the community (mostly young people of the second and third generations) have begun recognizing themselves as Argentineans of African descent, rethinking invisibility in terms of discrimination and of political struggle, in an effort to achieve vindication together with other minorities.

### **The construction of a diasporic identity and the visibleness process of the Cape Verdean community settled in Argentina**

According to Clifford (1999), the consciousness of diaspora is constituted both positively and negatively: negatively, through the discrimination and exclusion experiences that could lead to new coalitions such as, for example, the diaspora consciousness that binds together Algerians, Moroccans, and Tunisians living in France where a common experience of colonial and neocolonial exploitation contributes to the shaping of new solidarities. And the case of Great Britain during the 1970s, where the excluding term *black* was useful in forming anti-racist alliances among immigrants from Southeast Asia, Afro-Caribbeans and Africans. Both are examples of the negative structuring of diaspora networks.

As an antecedent, it is worth mentioning that in Argentina in the 1950s, a Regional Committee was constituted in Buenos Aires. This was a consequence of the independence movements that had been taking place in African territory and especially in Cape Verde, where the African party for independence of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde (PAIGC) was founded in 1956 by Amílcar Cabral. This committee was led by Cape Verdean José dos Santos (first honorary Consul of the Republic). It is he who, along with some compatriots, promoted political consciousness about the Independence War through various means. This struggle was strongly refused by

Cape Verdeans who were against political participation or the cutting of ties with Portugal, considering this tie convenient. This situation started to revert slowly after the Declaration of Independence on 5 July 1975, but showed the difficulties faced by the group in building a unified collective social identity.

These conflicts between generations due to political and ideological differences are clearly expressed before independence in some of the official documents of one of the associations:

Regarding the 5<sup>th</sup> July commemorative act, the PAIGC will be invited to participate in the acts commemorating Independence Day where Mr. Joaquin J. Dos Santos will read some words which *will be controlled* by the Board of Directors [...] Mr. X clearly states that there will be no more acts commemorating the mentioned event than those of 5<sup>th</sup> July. (Official document, 16 May 1975, Cape Verdean Union of Dock Sud)

We must highlight that these events were happening under the government of Isabel Martínez de Perón when paramilitary forces such as the so-called Triple A functioned actively controlling, investigating and repressing activities of any individual or group suspect of 'subverting the established order'.<sup>12</sup> Nevertheless, Cape Verdean institutions never ceased functioning.

We must remember that historically, except for very short periods of time, Argentina has neglected relationships with most African countries. As pointed out by Argentinean Foreign Affairs expert Gladys Lechini, 'the little interest shown throughout our diplomatic relations by military as well as democratic governments can be explained by the strong vertical links with Europe and the United States which constituted important determinants for that situation' (Lechini 2003, p. 20). It was not until 1983 with the advent of democracy under Alfonsín's presidency that links with some African countries improved or at least were taken into account in the foreign affairs agenda. Due to this fact, in 1987 Cape Verdean president Aristides Pereira visited the country along with a group of state ministers and secretaries. On 29 April 1987 they signed a Scientific and Technical Agreement of Cooperation by which some Cape Verdean students and professionals traveled to Argentina to improve their skills. Since the 1990s, contacts and visits of Cape Verdean political authorities have increased. They travel in order to meet the community, generally, in the Association head offices encouraging contributions of all types to the Archipelago.

In 1991 Honorary Consul dos Santos died. Many years later, the government of Cape Verde suggested a list of possible replacements for the vacant post. As a consequence, a new series of conflicts arose inside the community, giving rise to at least three groups, each of them with their own candidates. Finally, after the visit of Cape Verdean Minister of International Trade, the Cape Verde government put an end to the disputes with the appointment of a new Consul, a lawyer, son of Cape Verdeans, in 1994.

As before mentioned, during this decade the new generations started to take different positions regarding their identity<sup>13</sup> and to communicate them through the media, especially a sector 'of Cape Verdean activists linked to Afro-Argentinean organizations and their intellectuals, who maintain links with *black* movements in America and politically regard themselves as *black Capeverdians born in Argentina* considering their culture as Cape Verdean with African influence' (Correa 2000, pp. 90–1). This would identify at least one small segment of the group with another



diaspora, the *African*, where phenomena of affirmation, denial, conflict and ambivalence take place inside the heart of the community.

As expressed by Kim Butler (2001), the diaspora construct is an alternative collective identity that solves negotiations of social power. Many of the activists are women; some of them have acquired their *militant capital*,<sup>14</sup> from long-term friendships and family ties with Cape Verdean activists and from *school competitions* that enabled or encouraged this behavior. One of those women was Miriam Gómes, literature professor, former president of the Cape Verdean Union of Dock Sud between 1993 and 1995 and present vice-president. She critically points out that, 'Cape Verdean community in Argentina has not integrated with the rest of the Afro-Argentinean community, remaining as a separate group. As a black minority the former has suffered the same conditioning factors as the latter' (Gómes 2001, p. 408).

During the 1990s single individuals or small groups of Africans from Senegal, Mauritania, Cameroon, Liberia, Sierra Leona, Nigeria, and Mali started to migrate constituting three associations of African, Nigerian, and Mali residents with whom Miriam Gómes started to establish contacts,<sup>15</sup> as a form of *linkage*. But only in 2000, we observed a more outstanding and sustained participation of the Cape Verdean community always represented by the same person, along with other African communities in Latin America and the Caribbean. This began due to preliminary meetings of the III World Conference against racism that took place in Durban, South Africa, in September 2001. Nowadays, the group, as part of the post-Durban agenda, is planning along with the National Institute of Statistics and Census and an international funding organization, the incorporation of a question in the Argentine National Census in order to get a more accurately qualitative and quantitative vision of the natives and African descendants in Argentina. Due to the difficulties arising from the elaboration and implementation of such question, a pilot test was agreed for this first stage (to be held in April 2005) in various zones of the Republic, which would consist of questions and a series of issues that would enable to evaluate its efficacy.<sup>16</sup>

Although the conscience of diaspora starts with rootlessness and loss, it is also positive, according to Clifford, through the identification with world historic forces of a cultural/political character, acting at the same time in order to sustain the community, preserving and selectively recovering traditions, adapting them and producing versions that lead to innovative, hybrid and often antagonistic situations. The continuity with the past is always established through creative processes, as Hobsbawm and Ranger (1983/1997) state in reference to 'the invention of traditions'.

Although these manifestations have been present during many years in Argentina, it was in the 1990s when these initiatives increased both at group and individual levels.<sup>17</sup> Some young people built a Cape Verdean/African identity ascribed to the black as Petra Schaeber (1999) notes in her study on 'black mestizos' in Salvador, Bahía in Brazil, regarding diverse esthetic elements (the use of plaits instead of straight hair, African clothing, etc.), in addition to bringing the past and their African heritage to music and positioning themselves politically close to pan-African liberation movements.

Both Cape Verdean Associations, in Ensenada and Dock Sud, organize cultural events, with the participation of groups of dancers, choirs, music bands, art exhibitions, handicraft and videos made by Cape Verdean descendants on topics related to the islands. In the area of communication and diffusion of cultural

manifestations, they have been present through their own radio programs (in Avellaneda and Ensenada).<sup>18</sup>

Regarding the relationships between Cape Verdeans (natives and descendants) and their homeland in recent decades, they were noticeably boosted by two facts. First, the arrival of Russian airline *Aeroflot* in Buenos Aires which had non-stop flights to Sal (Cape Verde) at very low prices, and second, the 1 peso/1 dollar exchange rate. Therefore, many Cape Verdean natives and descendants could travel to the islands. Furthermore, many Cape Verdeans, especially young descendants who did not even know their ancestors' homeland thought about the possibility of returning in search of new opportunities. This was due to the increasing lack of employment in Argentina and the encouraging news about the improvement of conditions in Cape Verde. Those who returned to the islands found a changed country but with few chances of insertion in the labor market. Official sources, among them the present Honorary Consul in Argentina, told us that almost all Cape Verdeans who left Argentina have already returned without having fulfilled their expectations.

In the 1990s, telephone communications also increased thanks to privatization in Argentina and Cape Verde. This enabled a large number of people from both countries on both sides of the Atlantic to get telephone lines and then access to internet. This situation (travel and telephone communication) declined again when the economic scenario in Argentina changed. *Aeroflot* withdrew on 20 October 1998, telephone tariffs were too high due to the currency devaluation in 2002, leaving internet as the most accessible communication alternative. It enabled keeping fluent contact though in an impersonal way. These internet communications are significant as they favored the interrelationships between segments of the diaspora, which, as Butler points out, constitute a critical dimension of the diaspora experience. These contacts, independent of contacts with the homeland, are vital in providing diaspora conscience, networks between individuals and institutions and the 'emergence of these relationships is the seminal moment in the transformation of migration groups in the diaspora' (Butler 2001, p. 207).

### Final reflections

Although some Cape Verdeans who settled in Argentina kept their ties with Cape Verde through mail and small remittances, others cut those ties, buried their memories and forgot, giving rise to that generation without memory and invisible to the eyes of a society that did not want to *see* them either. But, if we consider, according to Marc Augé (1998), 'forgetting' as 'the vivid force of memory', we will understand the recreation of a memory between some descendants, through memories that are not theirs, but that they have assumed as their own, a memory that legitimizes them as Cape Verdeans in the present, recovering and *reinventing* traditions.

'Without forgetting that that group of immigrants, who struggled for an African rooted Cape Verdean identity, paved the way for the younger generations that today struggle in different social status to recover their visibility, constructing new identities creatively and freely, not limited by traditional forms of alternation' (Segato 1999, p. 188), creating and participating, along with other Africans and

African descendants, in new organizations, able to resist, and building pathways to have access to an unknown visibility so far.

## Notes

1. Statistical data on the Cape Verdean population do not appear either in the Memories of the National Migration Directory or in the census due to the fact that, first, they entered (those who did it legally) as Portuguese and second, because a great number (hard to determine) entered clandestinely. There had not been investigations on that group either until we began our research, therefore during the beginnings of our work in 1979, we had no choice but to try and census at least one part of the population, with the assistance of the by then Honorary Consul Joaquim dos Santos and members of the collective. By that time the population was of approximately 4,000 native Cape Verdeans and descendants. For results of the census, see Lahitte and Maffia (1981).
2. Cities located on La Plata riverbank. We also find them in Mar del Plata, Punta Alta, Campana, Rosario, Puerto Madryn, cities with marine or fluvial ports but in smaller numbers
3. A similar situation is observed in the United States, particularly in New England where most of them worked in maritime activities (Greenfield 1976).
4. A few years ago a new Association of Cape Verdean descendants was formed in the city of Mar del Plata under the presidency of Pedro Ribeiro and previously, the Friendship Association of the Cape Verde Islands located in Avellaneda was presided over by Cape Verdean Marcelino Santos, both in the province of Buenos Aires.
5. 'The *differentiating traits* were formed in the course of a common history that the collective memory never stopped transmitting, in a selective way; interpreting and transforming certain facts and legendary characters, through the social belief, in significant symbols of ethnic identity' (Lapierre 1997, p. 13).
6. See Greenfield (1976) and França (1992).
7. The majority of Cape Verdeans living in Argentina belong to these islands.
8. 'The underlying interethnic system, marked by subjection-domination relationships, gives rise to that ethnic ideology that covers up all the articulated identities in the cognitive map ...' (Cardoso de Oliveira 1992, p. 121).
9. According to Sydney Greenfield similar group behavior was observed in the United States as well.
10. Today, the few natives still alive generally define themselves as Cape Verdeans and most descendants invoke their Argentinean, Argentinean-Cape Verdean quality and a minority defines itself as Cape Verdean-African, African-Cape Verdean, though these definitions are not unanimous, redefining their memberships according to the context and subjects of the interaction.
11. Greenfield (1976) states that Cape Verdeans in the United States adopted four main strategies to achieve a better-suited insertion in the chosen society. One of them is what he calls 'Cape Verdean-Portuguese'; second, 'Cape Verdean-Black'; third, 'Cape Verdean-African'; and, fourth, 'Cape Verdean-American'.
12. The research on the activities of Cape Verdean institutions during the military dictatorship is still under way.
13. Some of them could travel to the islands during events such as the Immigrants Week organized by the government in the islands.
14. A provisional expression coined by Matonti and Poupeau (2004) but of great analytical usefulness,

capital born out of authority recognized by the group and in this sense *unstable*: incorporated under the form of techniques, dispositions to act, intervene, or simply obey, it covers a set of techniques and mobilizing knowledge during collective actions, interparty or intraparty struggles but also exportable, convertible into other universes, and therefore, susceptible of enabling certain *reconversion* [...] The acquired militant capital and the conquered position constitute an opportunity of

recognition for individuals who are classless due to a phase shift between the aspirations linked to prolonged schooling and the reality of the social and professional occupied position.

15. According to data provided by Miriam Gómes, in the last couple of years the general situation has changed: only a group of people from Senegal, those from Casamance, meet regularly; the majority of Africans from Mauritania and Liberia returned to their countries, the rest does not belong to any group; Nigerians have constituted the Nigerian Association in the River Plate, the population from Sierra Leone has grown in number and has a cultural bar where they gather on a regular basis and finally, those from Mali gather in Dock Sud though they lack a formalized organization.
16. For this topic see Laura López (2006).
17. According to Greenfield (1990), starting from the 1970s there is a valorization of the ethnical cultural heritage in the United States sparked by the civil rights movements, 'today many Cape Verdeans located in Avellaneda are rescuing their creole language, their culture and traditions, what was unacceptable until recently'.
18. We must note that the list of cultural, sportive, political events and activities organized by or where Cape Verdeans participate is much more extensive, but for reasons of space it was not possible to include them all in this paper.

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