

The Struggle for Independence in Guinea-Bissau: Contribution to Understanding the Contradictions of the Process of State Building.

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Abstract

The realization of the process of armed struggle for national liberation in the so called Portuguese Guinea and, consequent unilateral proclamation of the State of Guinea-Bissau in September 1973 was possible from outside the Guinean borders, through an important and strategic contribution made by the Republic of Guinea-Conakry which in 1958 had already achieved national independence. This article intends to observe the capital of the neighboring Republic of Guinea as a symbolic structuring space in the construction of ideological antagonisms based on the sociocultural and political dispute around "unity and against unity" within the African Party for Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC). The fundamental purpose is to understand the extent to which the environment generated in Conakry contributed to the cohesion or weakening of the recommended desiderates, but above all to the legacy of inherited conflicts that influenced the post-independence state building process in Guinea-Bissau. It is worth mentioning that the empirical framework is the PAIGC, the sociopolitical segments that make up its internal structure and other protagonists of the process.

Keywords: Conakry, PAIGC, Unity and Conflicts, Guinea-Bissau.



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HOW TO CITE:

Sangreman, C., & Semedo, R. (2022). The Struggle for Independence in Guinea-Bissau. *Journal Of Contemporary Sociological Issues*, 2(1), 59-75. doi:10.19184/csi.v2i1.27599

Submitted :October 26, 2021

Revised :November 3, 2021

Accepted :February 7, 2022

Publish :February 28, 2022

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I. INTRODUCTION

This *Paper* focuses on the period of mono partisanship in independent Guinea-Bissau between 1974 and 1990, from archives (although the PAIGC did not collaborate), newspapers and interviews with various actors, in a research methodology according to the canons of political sciences.

Wars and revolutionary periods are rarely seen in the same way by all actors, generally prevailing the version of the winners. In the case of Portugal the colonial war, liberation, overseas or independence (as it is referred to by different actors) have the version given by the official documents of the colonial regime, the version of the liberation movements (especially MPLA -Angola-, FRELIMO -Mozambique- and PAIGC -Guinea-Bissau), the books of some Portuguese military who, when changing their condition from "armed arm of the regime" to "those who had ended the regime" on April 25, 1974, wanted to leave their version of the conflict, and some Portuguese, French, English and American researchers as well as doctoral theses of authors of other nationalities who focused on the end of the Portuguese empire. For Guinea-Bissau are added the stories of the former combatants, especially those Portuguese or Guineans who write and edit photographs on the blog *Tabanca Grande de Luís Graça & Camaradas da Guiné* with highlight to Mário Beja Santos former militia officer in Guinea with several books written (<https://www.facebook.com/people/Tabanca-Grande-Lu%C3%ADs-Gra%C3%A7a/100001808348667>). The transition from colonial power to the revolutionary power of the PAIGC and the process of state building is also one of those moments in history.

The period in which the PAIGC had to organize a Public Administration and organs exercising political power led to a set of contradictions; first between Guineans and Cape Verdeans and, after 1980, among the Guineans themselves. The years 1973 and 1974 were rich in events determining the configuration of Guinea-Bissau as a nation with a state and a public administration:

January 20, 1973 – Amílcar Cabral (head and principal ideologue of the party) is assassinated; even today there is debate who were the leaders because the PAIGC shot all those involved and never released interrogation data.

March 25, 1973 – With the Soviet ground missiles–air *Strela*, the command Abel Djassi lead by Manecas Santos slaughters the first colonial plane in the Guileje area and ends the dominance of the air by the Portuguese making it clear to their military leaders, from the most operational officers to governor António Spínola (1968 – 1973), that the war is lost, despite U.S. and NATO aid.²

September 24, 1973 – the PAIGC proclaims independence during the war, leading some 80 countries to recognize the new state before Portugal did it a year later.

April 25, 1974 – The Portuguese military overthrows the regime that pushed them to military defeat and avoided blame and imprisonment as it had done in Goa,

² See José Matos and Matthew M. Hurley, 'The Weapon That Changed the War (A Arma Que Mudou a Guerra)', *Revista Militar (Military Magazine)*, 2014, <https://www.revistamilitar.pt/artigo/967>.

when India in 1961 retook the territory. Several authors consider that the beginning of the Armed Forces Movement (MFA) was in Guinea at the time of António Spínola as governor.

May 1974 – The Portuguese and Guinean military ceases fighting, annuls the regime's military governor (Bettencourt Rodrigues), organizes several meetings, talks between PAIGC delegates and the MFA military and soccer matches while waiting for national talks on independence. One of the best accounts of this period is the book by Jorge Sales Golias "The decolonization of Guinea-Bissau and the movement of captains", 2016, integrated in a collection "Memories of War and Revolution, Colibri editions, Lisbon.

If we add to these dates on November 14, 1980, when the Guinean military struck the first military coup in the country and ended the government of Luís Cabral, leading many Cabo Verdean civilians to leave the country, we have the factual ingredients for the evolution of Guinea-Bissau not to have lived up to the expectations that the war for independence and development (the smaller and the larger program of the PAIGC) promised.

PAIGC's ideology was a construction of its leadership in a period of war and mobilization of the populations to fight and support those who fought. It has had great difficulty in becoming a party building a state with a political system with a freely elected president and parliament, with independent courts and with the military outside the political space. In fact, it did not do so until after the USSR was disused in 1989/1991 and this change became a clear demand from European and US countries.

Several elements reported here illustrate well the repressive regime that the PAIGC has set up to overcome its inability to manage the state and the lack of political and technical frameworks that would prospect the construction of the State without resorting to persecution with torture in any form of civil and military opposition. The disputes over power assume for an external observer a functioning based on individualism in priority over the collective. In other words, the search for resources for individual/family well-being overlaps with the search for general evolution of the living conditions of populations, leading to a very slow evolution, with advances and retreats, and unsustainable.

The Guinean identity as a nation has been configured from ethnic societies (although it is known from census and other surveys of families that there is a huge ethnic mix in the family especially in urban centers), the colonial society of people with different races (especially in the urban space of Bissau), the ideology, practices and ethics practiced during the liberation struggle in the areas dominated by the PAIGC and the post-independent society of a single party omnipresent, public and private institutions until 1991. This configuration alters its evolution from that year on with the freedom of association and private activity established by constitutional revision allowing new alliances and interventions of actors so far repressed by the State (Art. IV of the Constitution). This post-independence evolution arises for external observers and certainly for many interns, as difficult to understand, always managing to surprise

(often negatively) the countries and organizations with whom it relates. It should be highlighted, however, that its evolution is not very different from the countries that make up the sub-region as can be seen in the publications of the Gorée Institute from Sénégal on the construction of democracy in West Africa in the transition from forms of authoritarian regime adopted in the process of independence to forms of democracy with national assembly, government, presidency, independent courts and universal elections.³

This investigation illustrates the period between independence and the decision to allow freedom of association including political parties that led to the PAIGC winning with less than half of the votes cast in the first multi-party elections (46.4%). It is an investigation that contributes to get to know better the party that still today, is the main social actor in the configuration of Guinean Bissau society.

II. THE CONTEXT

The takeover on 2 October 1958 of the Republic of Guinea-Conakry resulting from a popular consultation promoted to the populations of the former French sub-Saharan colonies by the government of President General Charles De Gaulle resulting in a "no" considered historic by leaders of the liberation movements and which brought to power President Ahmed Sekou Touré and the Guinean Democratic Party (PDG). This fact was observed as one of the most important of his time and contributed to open new perspectives in the geopolitics of the liberation movements of the Portuguese colonies and, particularly, for those of the then Portuguese Guinea. The movement to this neighboring territory of young people fleeing for colonial persecution and repression searching security preceded the period of installation of the African Party for Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) that would happen in 1960 and was marked with the fixation of residence of Amilcar Cabral that occurred on May 5.

According to Cabral, Luis⁴— half-brother of Amilcar Cabral —, the public announcement of this important political fact for sub-Saharan Africa provoked in his brother who was in Portugal along with him and his respective wives an immediate reaction that aroused a sense of security and assurance in the undertaking of claiming the right to self-determination of Guinea and Cape Verde. According to Cabral, Luis⁵, as soon as his brother followed the news through Radio France and the BBC London, reacted with this statement: " now I have *land*. *I can pack my things to return to Africa for good*." Certainly, this land to which Amilcar Cabral referred was not only a physical space independent of the moorings of the colonizer. His vision transcended the territory itself and metamorphosed into a broad strategic plan that aims at the conquest of freedom that, simultaneously, would lead the construction of identity to that of

³ Babaly Sall, *The state of democracy and human rights in the ECOWAS region, permanence, and breaks (L'état de la démocratie et des droits de l'homme dans l'espace CEDEAO, permanences et ruptures)* (Dakar, Senegal: Gorée Institute, 2019).

⁴ Luís Cabral, *Chronicle of Liberation (Crónica Da Libertação)* (Lisboa: Edições o Jornal, 1984), 59.

⁵ Cabral, 59.

national, inspired by the unit Guinea and Cape Verde. Objectively, perhaps it was a manifestation that show, *a priori*, the rupture with Portuguese citizenship marked the starting point for the foundations for Guinean and Cape Verdean citizenship.

The intention was further reinforced by the following facts: the events in 1959 in the port of Bissau, known as the “Pindjiguiti massacre” and the failed possibility of establishing dialogue with the colonial government by the PAIGC, contributed to the change of the initial approach of peaceful struggle to armed action. In relation to the events of Pindjiguiti, it generated in Bissau a climate of tension and persecution by the political police International Defense Police of the State-General Directorate of Security (PIDE-DGS) against the young people who were supposedly involved in the subversive claim. In fear of repression, days later began to record the first escapes of young people to Conakry which became a reception space for groups from Bissau, but with different sociocultural bases.⁶ They had a common feeling of dissatisfaction with the colonial regime, although, in some cases, their options for engagement in the revolution might not coincide, each was looking for a group with which he identified ideologically, but the PAIGC due to the prestige and influence of Amílcar Cabral was the movement that eventually imposed itself attracting the must part of the young. However, as Ignatiev⁷ in Conakry at that time pointed out, many Africans from Portuguese Guinea who had left or fled the country at different times and for various reasons lived.

Roughly speaking, at the end of the 1950s and the threshold of the 1960s onwards are a period of great political and social effervescence in the neighboring Republic of Guinea, marked essentially by the affirmation of the power established that tried to resist to the impact of the economic and financial weaknesses inherited and, at the same time, also tried to respond to the appeal of Pan-Africanism. To this end, it was an interesting dispute between movements, particularly from the then Guinea-Portuguese that fought for the official recognition of the regime of Sekou Touré.

The environment in Conakry constituted an amalgam of dispute for unity, identity legitimacy and the power to lead the process. Clash of interests and/or struggle for revolutionary protagonist have always been manifestations that accompanied the experience among leaders. In the early years the dispute was between the PAIGC and opposing movements and, later, as the only movement that eventually imposed itself in Conakry as representative of Guinea and Cape Verde, the PAIGC began to face a fierce social and personal dispute that contributed to the destroying of what the party considered as fundamental principle of its binational identity – unit Guinea and Cape Verde.

⁶ Oleg Ignatiev, *Three P.I.D.E. shots: who, why and how, killed Amílcar Cabral (Três tiros da P.I.D.E.: quem, porquê e como, mataram Amílcar Cabral)* (Lisboa: Prelo, 1975), 118.

⁷ Ignatiev, 118.

III. POLITICAL MOVEMENTS SEEKING OFFICIAL RECOGNITION IN CONAKRY

Considered a reference of sub-Saharan anticolonial resistance, Conakry was a space unconditionally willing to support the decolonization of Portuguese colonies in Africa, especially then Portuguese Guinea, but provided there is unity between the movements that were fighting to lead the process. It was obvious and known to all that the official recognition of one of the movements by the political power of Conakry-Guinea would be an important political-diplomatic guarantee to increase the possibility of garnering more international support and have more structures to face colonial power politically and militarily.

Everything unfolded in an environment of tension and dispute for legitimacy and protagonist to lead the process. And perhaps this situation was the first test of fierce dispute that Cabral and his PAIGC comrades had to dominate other movements, namely the group of Luís da Silva (Tchalumbé) who presented himself according to Ignatiev⁸ as leader of the "movement for the liberation of all Portuguese territories". He had important links with other movements, especially in Dakar, namely the Liberation Movement of Guinea (MLG), National Liberation Front of Guinea (FLING), in addition to influence and proximity to some influential leaders of the PDG. During the clash, as Luis Cabral⁹ explained, the action of Amilcar proved important to impose the PAIGC as the only nationalist force of Guinea and Cape Verde in Conakry was harsh because there was work between Conakry's compatriots with those of Dakar to make it impossible to officially recognize the PAIGC.

It was during this dispute that the legitimacy of Amilcar Cabral began to be questioned to direct the struggle aimed at decolonizing Portuguese Guinea. According to Luis Cabral¹⁰, some compatriots resorted to say that Amilcar was Cape Verdean and opposed the formation of true Guineans, accused him of belonging to a small bourgeoisie and has nothing in common with the interests of the people of then Portuguese-Guinea.

However, the situation of coexistence between political movements was home to the exchange of defamations of both parties, the contents of their messages were not at all the concern of the political leaders of the PDG government that had other priorities Ignatiev¹¹:

(...) the Republic of Guinea was struggling with many structural problems that required attention and its leaders did not have the possibility to thoroughly ascertain which of the emigrants were right and which were the culprits, who really represented the people of "Portuguese Guinea" and the islands of Cape Verde and who only defended their personal interests.

⁸ Ignatiev, 118.

⁹ Cabral, *Chronicle of Liberation (Crónica Da Libertação)*, 93.

¹⁰ Cabral, 93.

¹¹ Oleg Ignatiev, *Amilcar Cabral, Son of Africa: Biographical Narration (Amilcar Cabral, Filho de África: Narração Biográfica)*, trans. H. C. Lacerda (Lisboa: Prelo, 1975), 123.

The 6th PDG congress emerges as a crucial moment for defining the situation. When the movements lived the moment of great importance for the official recognition of one of the groups. And in an attempt not to get involved or take sides in the dispute, the congress organization decided not to address any of the movements but authorized them to attend the event. A strategy that in Ignatiev's observation¹² would exclude Amílcar Cabral who perpetually refused to appear in the room along with the leaders of another movement, contrary to the position of the organizers of the congress who thought they should appear together, because for the PDG there should only be a single movement. The imposition of the leaders of the PDG was circumvented by the resistance and political articulation of Amílcar Cabral who got not only the support of Saifoulay Diallo¹³, which supposedly influenced the intervention of President Sekou Touré in the definition of the official guest of the PDG in the 6th Congress and the request for the withdrawal of elements of the movement directed by Luís da Silva staying only the PAIGC represented by Amílcar Cabral and his comrades. At the event, PAIGC's participation was not symbolic, that is, a mere presence and gained political notoriety with the ascent to the podium of Amílcar Cabral who delivered a speech announcing the beginning of an institutional relationship with PDG.

This act was considered by Amílcar Cabral apud Ignatiev¹⁴ as one of the greatest victories of the PAIGC in the process because it allowed him not only to control the obstacles raised by the opposing movements in Conakry but allowed to officially establish an institutional relationship with the political power of the Republic of Guinea-Conakry that officially begins to recognize the legitimacy of PAIGC as representative of the peoples of Guinea and Cape Verde. However, it is necessary to point out that the unfolding of the dispute reveals that the recognition of the PAIGC in Conakry was not peaceful, because in addition to the opponents, at the level of the PDG itself although no one dared at the time to question the authority of President Sekou Touré, the dissatisfaction of some influential members in this party was subjectively manifest. Moreover, this reality was confirmed by Luis Cabral¹⁵, explaining that before the period of the 6th Congress of the PDG his opponents of Conakry, in addition to acting in coordination with those of Dakar, benefited from support from those responsible for this country. One example is the radio program that both PAIGC and other movements had on guinea's official broadcaster Conakry to talk about the projects and mobilization work they were doing. In fact, Tomás¹⁶ observed that the unity between Guineans and Cape Verdeans, which would later become the great

¹² Ignatiev, *Three P.I.D.E. shots: who, why and how, killed Amílcar Cabral (Três tiros da P.I.D.E.: quem, porquê e como, mataram Amílcar Cabral)*, 10.

¹³ He was one of president Sekou Touré's trusted men, having held important positions such as President of the National People's Assembly from 1958 to 1963.

¹⁴ Ignatiev, *Three P.I.D.E. shots: who, why and how, killed Amílcar Cabral (Três tiros da P.I.D.E.: quem, porquê e como, mataram Amílcar Cabral)*, 161.

¹⁵ Cabral, *Chronicle of Liberation (Crónica Da Libertação)*, 118.

¹⁶ António Tomás, *The maker of utopias: a biography of Amílcar Cabral (O fazedor de utopias: uma biografia de Amílcar Cabral)* (Praia: Spleen, 2007), 129 and 130.

"Achilles' heel" of the party, was at this time of dispute in Conakry one of the greatest advantages of the PAIGC in relation to the other nationalist groups.

However, it is worth mentioning that the pressure and opposition to the PAIGC was not felt only in Conakry. In Dakar the movements also created difficulties to the PAIGC men, especially in the southern part of Senegal, Casamance region that borders the north of then Portuguese-Guinea. And to deal with the situation, in 1961 the PAIGC was forced to participate in a conference with the movements of Conakry and Dakar. The meeting took place in the town of Ziguinchor and was intended to create a United Front for the Liberation of Guinea and Cape Verde islands (FUL), but according to Ignatiev¹⁷ FUL never managed to articulate its objectives to advance the liberation dynamics. According to him, the goal of other movements that were part of FUL was to divide and destroy the PAIGC, so it was an unsuccessful initiative, which only lasted just under two months.

IV. MISTRUST IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PDG AND PAIGC

Some African countries already independent in the 1950s and 1960s, including Guinea-Conakry, Ghana, Morocco, Algeria, and Senegal, played a key role in structuring the political-diplomatic offensives and obtained PAIGC's administrative and logistical equipment. It is true that it makes no sense to be hierarchizing the role they both played in the process, however it is important to point out that the contribution of the two border countries of the then Portuguese-Guinea are visibly disproportionate, and objectively has to do with the political choices taken that dictated their decolonization. However, Guinea Conakry's contribution was of exceptional relevance in the architectural projection of the national liberation struggle building, not only for its role as a precursor in the support and official recognition of the PAIGC, but, above all, for the engagement with the ideals of Pan-Africanism and inherent risks, making part of its territory available to serve as PAIGC headquarters. All this has made this country an undisputed ally in the conquest of the independence of Guinea and Cape Verde.

Although from an early age the central government of Conakry under the tutelage of the PDG collaborated and allowed the PAIGC to develop its political activity in its territory, this opening was not total and restricted the exercise of military activity. Initially not everything was allowed, and on the part of power existed, of course, by the nature of the military regime and inherent fragility, the fear that the PAIGC will have access to arms from its territory, because its mismanagement could contribute to the use of it by the opponents of President Sekou Touré against his regime. According to Pereira¹⁸, in February 1961 the PAIGC on a mission carried out by him and Amílcar to Czechoslovakia requested the support of armaments to the government of that country and whose responsibility to deal with the dossier was

¹⁷ Ignatiev, *Three P.I.D.E. shots: who, why and how, killed Amílcar Cabral (Três tiros da P.I.D.E.: quem, porquê e como, mataram Amílcar Cabral)*, 154.

¹⁸ José Vicente Lopes, *Aristides Pereira: my life, our history (Aristides Pereira : minha vida, nossa história)* (Praia: Spleen, 2012), 97.

placed on the minister of the interior, Rudolf Barák, who responded positively, but provided that the guinea-Conakry authorities agreed. And, after informing the Guinean authorities and despite the yes given by the Ministry of Defense of Guinea-Conakry with the express guidance of President Sekou Touré, according to Pereira¹⁹ the PAIGC never received such weaponry:

(...) The minister of defense was never available. We were going to look for him and we couldn't find him, "he's in a meeting," "he's not here, he's just left," etc. We were in this all year 1961, then 62 came, nothing.

This deliberate attitude on the part of the PDG leaders may have other answers that belong to a subjective plan, but it immediately confirms their fear of allowing access to weapons by the PAIGC whose base was in the capital city that is the center of power. The difficulty encountered in convincing Guinea Conakry's leaders about the need for support in the reception of armaments forced the PAIGC to opt for an illegal weapons trafficking action as an alternative to make the armaments reach their guerrillas in a clandestine manner within the then Guinea-Portuguese. But the precariousness of this activity led the Guinean authorities to eventually discover the camouflage that constitutes a serious violation of the internal security of that country. The flagrant violation resulted in the arrest of some members of the party's leadership who were later released due to the talks that Amilcar held with President Sekou Touré. Following, according to Ignatiev²⁰ the positive evolution of the situation allowed the PAIGC to talks to have legal authorization to transport weapons to the then Guinea-Portuguese that immediately followed the beginning of the armed struggle on January 23, 1963, in the southern region in the village of Tite.

Although there was the consent of the PDG officials for the PAIGC to receive and transport weapons, the trust was not much, and everything was controlled to the details. Cabral, Luis²¹ The relationship between these two parties gained more confidence after an aggression perpetrated by African Portuguese commandos on the night of November 21 to 22, 1970 in the city of Conakry that had three basic objectives: to change the political situation with the overthrow of President Sekou Touré, arrest or assassinate Amilcar Cabral and free the imprisoned Portuguese soldiers.²² The actions of the PAIGC guerrillas along with those of President Sékou Touré's forces were relevant to defend the city and avoid the fall of the regime. Luis Cabral²³ portrayed the reaction of the after the act in this way:

¹⁹ Lopes, 97.

²⁰ Ignatiev, *Amilcar Cabral, Son of Africa: Biographical Narration (Amilcar Cabral, Filho de África: Narração Biográfica)*, 161.

²¹ Cabral, *Chronicle of Liberation (Crónica Da Libertação)*.

²² José Matos and Mário Matos e Lemos, *Assault on Conakry - History of a Failed Coup (Ataque a Conakry - História de um Golpe Falhado)* (Porto, Portugal: Fronteira do Caos, 2020).

²³ Cabral, *Chronicle of Liberation (Crónica Da Libertação)*, 361.

The Guinean authorities and President Sekou Touré himself made complimentary references to the actions of our combatants who, with courage and decision, were the first to deal with the criminal aggression against Conakry and later against Koundara. (...) Our enemies of the Guinean dome shrank in the face of the wave of sympathy that was expressed to us throughout the country and, especially, in the face of the positions of the Guinean president on the role of our Party in the defense of the Guinean revolution.

In essence, this event contributed to strengthening and strengthening the commitment of both sides to defend the ideals of the revolution, but above all the positioning of the PAIGC guerrillas confirmed the party's willingness to ensure the stability of the Regime of Sekou Touré.

V. CONAKRY'S DILEMMA: SPACE FOR BUILDING UNITY AND CONFLICT

As pointed out, the neighboring Republic of Guinea-Conakry was a strategic space in the success achieved by the PAIGC during the national liberation struggle in all its political, diplomatic, and military fields. However, although with necessary caution, it is no less important to also consider it an arena of power struggle and, perhaps, concomitantly a space of articulation and incitement of conflicts. It was, above all, a space for the distribution of collective and selective incentives according to the premise of Panebianco²⁴, in addition to political intrigue, irregular promotions, betrayals and dissatisfactions that were present in the daily lives of the militants. Settling in Conakry or getting off the front to go on a mission in this city clearly meant an opportunity for moments of nocturnal adventures, drinking, access to material goods and more. In fact, Tomás²⁵ in his biographical study on Amílcar Cabral considered that Conakry was not at all a peaceful space, but also promiscuity was visible.

However, Conakry's added value was mainly in the administrative and fight management model implemented by PAIGC in the area of training and ideological framing of the combatants as they arrive, coming from Bissau and elsewhere in the country and the world. According to Ignatiev²⁶ and Luis Cabral²⁷, Amílcar spent much of the day in the "Home"²⁸ and was personally engaged in training and all the boys sent from Bissau to Conakry, mandatorily, took an intensive course in general preparation. It was from this initiative to train the engaged militant that gradually the ideals of the unity project were passed as a priority of principles for obtaining independence and

²⁴ Angelo Panebianco, *Party Models: Organization and Power in Political Parties (Modelos de Partido: Organização e Poder Nos Partidos Políticos)*, trans. Denise Agostinetti, First edition (São Paulo, Brasil: Martins Fontes - selo Martins, 2005).

²⁵ Tomás, *The maker of utopias: a biography of Amílcar Cabral (O fazedor de utopias: uma biografia de Amílcar Cabral)*.

²⁶ Ignatiev, *Amílcar Cabral, Son of Africa: Biographical Narration (Amílcar Cabral, Filho de África: Narração Biográfica)*, 125.

²⁷ Cabral, *Chronicle of Liberation (Crónica Da Libertação)*, 107.

²⁸ Home or Pilot School functioned as a host house, but also as a training center with similar regime of military discipline. The residents religiously got up at five in the morning to do gymnastics, organize the space and attend classes of political training, geography, and history.

building national identity. What is certain is that the construction of unity Guinea and Cape Verde was a challenge with opponents positioned on both sides, outside and within the PAIGC, based on the dynamics of the colonial process that hierarchized the social relationship not only between the two peoples with strong historical ties, but also within each people although differently. And Amílcar Cabral was in the middle of all this, seen as the main target of the discords and the evil that engendered the unity. The reading that can be made today is that within the PAIGC unity was conceived more in a material and static perspective of "union makes strength" in which upstream there was the recognition of necessity to overcome colonialism, but not as an ideological commitment to structuring contents to ensure the common development of the two countries in the post-war period. This is a different conception from Amílcar Cabral's²⁹ to which he conceived unity in the dynamic sense, that is, something in constant movement, however, for him one of the fundamental principles of the need for unity in the PAIGC is the differences, but in his point of view it was not necessary to make unity with equal people. That is, this definition recognizes that the struggle was being made by people with different origins, competencies, status, and political resources that Amílcar Cabral implicitly or explicitly recognized in the complementarity of competencies and multiculturalism as primary factors for achieving the objectives outlined.

Due to its urban characteristic, Conakry, much more than in the bush of the liberated areas where a larger number of guerrillas concentrated, it was a space of tacit competition in which the differences were more visible and intense. Despite the difficulties that country at the time faced resulting from the sovereign political preference of its citizens in view of the model of decolonization, it presented itself to the militants and guerrillas of the PAIGC as a space of interesting sociocultural confluence, of learning and exchange of experiences, but also the game of interests and perhaps, the feeling of revolt either by misunderstanding of the current dynamics or by the injustice that the process itself produces and reproduces, and that accompanied the bureaucratic and administrative growth of the PAIGC.

As pointed out, its condition as an urban space provided a set of services and options that are important attractions for a group that was made up mostly of young people. An important fact that illustrates this feeling was when Amílcar Cabral himself went to receive Aristides Pereira and Luís Cabral for the first time at Conakry airport. As soon as he received them, he made a point of mentioning according to Luis Cabral³⁰ two images worth seeing in this city: that of President Sekou Touré who represented all that was noblest and highest of African political life of that time and that of Guinean women whose beauty can seduce *any man*. To these elements we can add nightlife, alcohol and a set of dynamics that are attractive to the adventures of the youth class and that, many times, can contribute to provoke antagonisms and/or divert from focus.

²⁹ Amílcar Cabral, *P.A.I.G.C.: Unity and Struggle (P.A.I.G.C.: Unidade e Luta)* (Lisboa: Nova Aurora, 1974), 70.

³⁰ Cabral, *Chronicle of Liberation (Crónica Da Libertação)*, 107.

According to Luis Cabral³¹, most discontents in the process were responsible or militants who do not comply with their duty, who have made or make mistakes in the party, those who do not see satisfied their ambitions, their appetites or their vices. Although conflicts of interest have always been part of the political interaction in Conakry, the disorder gained notoriety with the prolongation of the duration of the war and which, without doubt, contributed to cause enormous weariness in the combatants, and some tired of life in the bush had abandon the front of the fight, while others opted for *complots* that translated into violent actions to express their dissatisfactions. But the most serious was the erosion caused in what many analysts consider the "Achille's heel" of PAIGC which is the unity of Guinea and Cape Verde. The question of unity since the beginning of the creation of the movement has always been a great problem, both by the direction of PAIGC, and by Amilcar Cabral himself who in various circumstances sought to approach the situation pedagogically, appealing to internal cohesion. According to Ignatiev³² Amilcar Cabral in a message addressed before the start of the armed struggle in 1961, at a meeting of the Political Committee, drew the following attention:

The colonialists know very well that they can do nothing against us if we are united, well organized and well directed. That's why colonialists do everything they can to try to divide us. Thus, they try to separate the balantas from the mandingas, the roles of the fulas, the manjacos of the mancanhas. They seek to separate civilized calls from so-called indigenous peoples. Even within each people they seek to divide our people. They also do everything to separate guineans from cape verdeans. For this, they mind, intrigue, buy some Africans, offer zinc to cover houses, give motorcycles, promise good jobs and scholarships, etc. The colonialists want our disunity and are afraid of our union, of the union of all the patriotic forces of our land.

This effort to raise awareness about the need for unity was not consensual and was relegated to the detriment of interests and/or objectives defined by contrary groups that did not recognize the legitimacy of Amilcar Cabral as the leader as guineans, but only a Cape Verdean. The dialogue presented by Ignatiev³³ in a manifestation of insubordination between Mamadú Indjai and Bassir Turé regarding the guidelines that the secretary-general of the party, Amilcar Cabral, had given to Mamadú confirms the fact:

*(...) Mamadú Indjai after checking that the door was closed, approached the window as chance, made sure no one listened, and only then sat down.
- Listen, Bassir, the Cape Verdean categorically forbade me to go to Ziguinchor.
Why is that?*

³¹ Cabral, 428.

³² Ignatiev, *Amilcar Cabral, Son of Africa: Biographical Narration (Amilcar Cabral, Filho de África: Narração Biográfica)*, 132 and 133.

³³ Ignatiev, *Three P.I.D.E. shots: who, why and how, killed Amilcar Cabral (Três tiros da P.I.D.E.: quem, porquê e como, mataram Amilcar Cabral)*, 144.

*Why, why? We are the ones to blame for the delay in transferring the school.
- We are not the ones to blame - cut Bassir with a furious air - but only you. You bragged,
buck, "I take this to the fore and I don't execute the Cape Verdean's orders. (...)*

Here it is possible to verify not only disobedience in the fulfillment of a mission, but this denial leaves a clear element that in addition to not recognizing the legitimacy of Cabral, in the background is visualized indications of some subversive movement. The term "Cape Verdean" used by two interlocutors, expresses manifestly the resistance to the project, but above all was a current opinion between the "opponents or disaffected" a denial later assumed as observed by Barros³⁴, when he said that "*no one fought to replace Portuguese with Cape Verdean*". That is, the understanding of the intricacies of the liberating process and, above all, the "*modus vivendi and fazendi*" inherited particularly by the PAIGC and, in general, by Guinean political actors, to a large extent, can be understood from the manifestations engendered during the liberating process, especially from the dynamics of power struggle established in Conakry and which has been snowballed, adjusting according to the context and political circumstances in Guinea-Bissau.

In fact, Sousa³⁵ made an interesting presentation of the telegram content of the diplomatic representation of Denmark in Lisbon, based on the readings that the newspapers of this city make about the murder of Amílcar Cabral and his personality that is considered by Momo Turé to be hostile. And also in a note from Mário de Andrade on criticisms made by Momo Turé to which Sousa³⁶ had access was invoked the following:

(...) "they lived in oppression, they had an apartheid regime because of the domination of the Cape Verdean elements that joined the struggle after the PAIGC obtained important financial and material means, but when the struggle entered the difficult phase they were no longer interested", but assumed the hierarchical order of the party, being the main responsible. (...) Among other reasons Momo criticizes the marked social differentiation and material privileges between Guineans and Cape Verdeans; masked political opportunism; ethnicity (and even racism) taken to the extreme ...(...).

Everything leads to believe that the last few years have been of great tension, either for the triggering of political-diplomatic offensives with a view to convincing the international community about the condition in which the country was and which required the immediate taking of independence, which in the interpretation of Amílcar had part of its territory occupied by colonial forces, or to try to control the attacks of the colonial regime that came to target Conakry as the main target of action of PIDE-DGS that had its agents infiltrated in the structure of the PAIGC in Conakry

³⁴ Filinto de Barros, *A Testimony (Testemunho)* (Bissau: Inacep, 2011), 5.

³⁵ Julião Soares Sousa, *Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973) Life and Death of an African Revolutionary (Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973) Vida e Morte de Um Revolucionário Africano)* (Coimbra, Portugal: Edição do Autor, 2016), 527.

³⁶ Sousa, 527.

Castanheira.³⁷ But it is above all this second situation that caused greater emotional distress to Amílcar Cabral as Luis Cabral³⁸ explained in the last meeting that the two brothers had at Yoff Airport:

I was on the northern border when I received a message from Amílcar, asking for my immediate trip to Dakar to meet him at the airport during the stopover. It was December 1972. As soon as I saw him in the transit room at Yoff Airport, I realized I was very worried; we hugged and after greeting the other comrades of the delegation, we walked away to talk. His concerns about the situation in Conakry were high. There was something that was not right there, and that led him to believe in the existence of problems, and serious problems that had not yet manifested itself. (...) When I met Amílcar, we always had a lot of things to say to each other. I told him a lot about my work, about the comrades of the North, our problems on that front and in Senegal. But on that day in Dakar, it was not possible to divert his attention from the issues that worried him.

Conakry was the center of power, strategically a space that allowed a rapid progression of struggle, but it also constituted a dark front line, in a more unpleasant, hostile, tense place that was contributing to rewind the achievements achieved. Amílcar's expressions of displeasure in what was his last meeting with his half-brother Luís Cabral lead us to these readings: first, as head of war and profound aware of the political-social and cultural reality of his comrades (Guineans and Cape Verdeans) felt something that told him that his political project of unity Guinea and Cape Verde was near of failure; second, at the end of the 1960s the PAIGC already claimed to be controlling a considerable part of the national territory, such 2/3, and perhaps it was no longer possible to keep the excessive state of justice and military in Conakry. That is, it was necessary to transfer some party structures to the interior of then-Portuguese Guinea, a fact that could apparently help balance animosities and probably control rebellions. Because the moment came when it was recognized that there were too many people in Conakry doing nothing³⁹; and, third, several studies such as Ignatiev⁴⁰, Castanheira⁴¹, Carvalho⁴², Tomás⁴³, Santos⁴⁴ and Sousa⁴⁵, indicate that Amílcar had been

³⁷ José Pedro Castanheira, *Who ordered the killing of Amílcar Cabral? (Quem mandou matar Amílcar Cabral?)* (Lisboa: Relógio D'Agua Editores, 1999).

³⁸ Cabral, *Chronicle of Liberation (Crónica Da Libertação)*, 433 and 434.

³⁹ Cabral, *Chronicle of Liberation (Crónica Da Libertação)*.

⁴⁰ Ignatiev, *Amílcar Cabral, Son of Africa: Biographical Narration (Amílcar Cabral, Filho de África: Narração Biográfica)*.

⁴¹ Castanheira, *Who ordered the killing of Amílcar Cabral? (Quem mandou matar Amílcar Cabral?)*.

⁴² Norberto Tavares de Carvalho, *From Field to Field: From Football Stadiums to the National Liberation Struggle of the Peoples of Guinea and Cape Verde (De Campo Em Campo: Dos Estádios de Futebol à Luta de Libertação Nacional Dos Povos Da Guiné e de Cabo-Verde)* (Lisboa: Edição do Autor, 2011).

⁴³ Tomás, *The maker of utopias: a biography of Amílcar Cabral (O fazedor de utopias: uma biografia de Amílcar Cabral)*.

⁴⁴ Daniel dos Santos, *Amílcar Cabral Another look (Amílcar Cabral Um outro olhar)* (Lisboa: Chiado Editora, 2014).

⁴⁵ Sousa, *Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973) Life and Death of an African Revolutionary (Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973) Vida e Morte de Um Revolucionário Africano)*.

informed of a possible attack on his physical integrity and did not take the proper precautions in terms of security as head of war and, worse still, at the time of his murder was totally unprotected, only accompanied by his wife, Ana Maria Cabral.

Roughly speaking, the escalation of conflict within the PAIGC in Conakry ended with an act of violence, which was expressed not merely in the murder, but the action of execution was much more than that and left traces of hatred and revenge. Why? Every day there are versions that seek to explain the political and social interaction between different actors in Conakry, perhaps one day we will be able to approach the reality lived.

VI. THE STRUGGLE FOR POWER WAS NOT ONLY SOCIOCULTURAL

The situation of power struggle in Conakry was not manifested only in the social aspect between Guineans and Cape Verdeans, or between the former in relation to Cuban fighters who received particular attention from Amílcar Cabral, but had a personal component and the leaders sought positions to fit the superior structure of the party.

According to Santossa⁴⁶, even among the Cabral brothers (Amílcar and Luís) there were situations of struggle for power and that resulted in the sending of the youngest to Ziguinchor to take up the position of political head of the northern zone. He also mentioned that according to PIDE information, this friction resulted in the existence of two trends in the PAIGC led by two brothers. In fact, according to Santos⁴⁷, *it was said that "most of the elements of the PAIGC did not sympathize with Amílcar Cabral and supported Luís Cabral, because they believed that the secretary general did nothing but walk at the expense of the party and did not look at the sacrifice of those who walk through the bush.*

To this situation were added several others that evidence internal tension such as the case that involved a letter of correspondence between Nino Vieira and Rafael Barbosa, who through Momo Touré in his role as double agent, came to the knowledge of Amílcar. Resulting according to Santos⁴⁸ in the arrest of Nino Vieira and about 40 of his men for the purpose of investigations.

And certainly, observing the scenario of power struggle established in the party, blows and countercoups, in these circumstances are mechanisms within reach of the protagonists. Based on the climate of mistrust Santos⁴⁹ states that:

(...) Lourenço Gomes would have gone to Dakar to see Osvaldo Vieira, "because he had suffered an armed robbery perpetrated by Marcelo de Almeida at the order of Amílcar Cabral, because he was convinced that Osvaldo Vieira and Lourenço Gomes intended to overthrow him as head of PAIGC".

⁴⁶ Santos, *Amílcar Cabral Another look (Amílcar Cabral Um outro olhar)*.n

⁴⁷ Santos, 213.

⁴⁸ Santos, 209.

⁴⁹ Santos, 207.

In other words, there were several manifestations of this kind with various motivations, sometimes in response to situations of supposed injustices or even in order to be able to feed individual claims and also as an attempt to seek affirmation contributed to fragment the project of unity. It is interesting to note that the situation of conflict between Guineans and Cape Verdeans within the PAIGC in Conakry cannot be reduced, however, the understanding of disputes between party leaders for the control of power can also be an indispensable and decisive element for the understanding of the political-military today environment.

VII. CONCLUSION

As Castanheira⁵⁰ the creation of PAIGC based on the Guinea and Cape Verde unit was the most original strategic finding and, simultaneously the greatest source of tensions, shocks and conflicts, which cyclically translated into many other dramas, disasters and, at the limit, catastrophes.

The armed struggle lasted eleven years, but the relationship of PAIGC with Conakry took fourteen years (1960-1974) and, negative and positive experiences were accumulated that were the basis of political formation of a generation that very young decided to embrace the challenge of building what today is our identity. And Conakry was a clear example of the attention Cabral drew to his followers: "let's hope for the best but prepare for the worst".

The great contradiction that occurred throughout the journey of mobilization to the struggle itself, was the difficulty that the followers presented in understanding the unity in the conception of Amílcar Cabral. If for him unity is dynamic and must be based exactly between different ones based on a notion of complementarity, his Guinean and Cape Verdean followers who intellectually were very far from their concept, conceived unity in their static sense of "unity makes strength". Hence, for example, the mistake made by Sousa⁵¹ when he states that:

It is neither feasible nor prudent to unite, in one body, two different cultural units even though they may have a historical affinity. Amílcar Cabral had an obligation to know when he thought of the problem of unity.

In fact, this conceptual misunderstanding was a powerful weapon that generated conflicts, betrayals and revolts that contributed to facilitate the penetration of PIDE-DGS agents into the internal structure of PAIGC and on January 20, 1973, all this reached its main target, Amílcar Lopes Cabral.

⁵⁰ Castanheira, *Who ordered the killing of Amílcar Cabral? (Quem mandou matar Amílcar Cabral?)*, 163.

⁵¹ Sousa, *Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973) Life and Death of an African Revolutionary (Amílcar Cabral (1924-1973) Vida e Morte de Um Revolucionário Africano)*, 483.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

None

FUNDING

None

CONFLICTING INTEREST

None

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