


## **The Portu-guise: Influences on the Portuguese National Identity Post-Carnation Revolution**

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Cabo da Roca, a cape in Portugal, is known for its beauty, historical significance, and geographical importance. The cape is at the western-most point of continental Europe and is known as a former gateway for Portuguese explorers embarking toward the West. It is a symbol of Portuguese strength, past and present. However, if people were to walk Cabo da Roca on April 24, 1974, they may stand closest to the West physically, yet furthest from western ideals of democracy and personal freedom. As a citizen standing in Portugal on that day, you would have been under one of the longest dictatorships in Western European history: a dictatorship marked by colonization and heavy restrictions on civil liberty. People could only hope of being in the West while standing there dreaming about the haven for democracy, freedom, and possibilities that lie across the Atlantic Ocean. As the sun set that day and rose the next, those dreams became a reality. On April 25, 1974, the Carnation Revolution – a military coup followed by a social revolution – freed Portugal from over forty years of authoritarian rule, under the Estado Novo regime, and gave the Portuguese people hope for democracy.

This shift toward democracy was not without struggle, including rising and competing political parties, decolonization policies, and new relations with Europe. This struggle shaped Portugal into the republic it is today. The Carnation Revolution bolstered ideologically driven groups, yet many people were left to question what it meant to be Portuguese. Multiple schools of thought exist regarding identity, but in this paper, I will focus on two. One bases national identity solely on



common ancestry or ethnicity, and the other as a “malleable term with no fixed properties” (Dahbour 1). National identity can be regarded as a “complex of common ideas, concepts or perception schemes of related emotional attitudes intersubjectively shared within a specific group of persons, all of which are internalized through ‘national’ socialization” (Ribeiro 4). In contrast to political ideologies, national identity is focused upon the unification of people with shared backgrounds rather than inspiring action for political issues. Identity can help one distinguish “them” from “us,” for better or worse. It can be used to justify persecution and aggression, or maintain a successful, modern political order (Fuyukama 1). The political left has focused less upon economic quality to determine identity and more toward promoting the interests of marginalized groups such as immigrants, women, and the LGBT community (1). The political right started moving to protect traditional senses of national identity, which is often connected to race, ethnicity, and religion (1). Analyzing national identity becomes a complex issue because of a multitude of factors that one could use to create the notion of “us” versus “them”: language, ethnicity, religion, and geography. Identity is best understood as the distinction between one’s true inner self and the outer world of social norms and rules that do not recognize the value of the self (1). Recognition is crucial to the validation of identity, without it, people feel as though their true self is denied in favor of the general population. The historical identity of the Portuguese wears a disguise, manipulated by political ideologies that aim to change the collective memory of the country (Silva 40). It is increasingly more difficult to recognize one’s true self in Portugal because of the numerous social norms and rules that serve to impede individual respect.

Following the Revolution, Portuguese identity was split between two schools, a more left and right interpretation of identity. To be Portuguese was either to live in Portugal and speak the language, a more traditional and conservative approach, or to embrace multiple cultures and histories, a more

progressive stance. In January of 2019, I was able to go to Portugal and learn about its history and culture. Every person I interacted with, especially taxi drivers, all shared different moments in the country's history that stuck out to them. Hearing their stories taught me how people are proud of Portugal and how this belief influences their daily lives. Analyzing the Portuguese national identity provides a deeper understanding of the ideologies and politics of the nation, as well as how their national identity affects Portuguese democracy. In this paper, I will review the factors that prompted and shaped the Carnation Revolution, discuss political changes after the revolution that bolstered political ideologies in Portugal, and analyze how these ideologies have broadened the Portuguese national identity. Ultimately, I hope to use the Portuguese national identity as a case study to examine why national identity is important for creating a diverse and enriching political discourse. The Portuguese national identity is still heavily influenced by the Carnation Revolution and that influence is predicated upon the division between respecting the humanity of the Portuguese people and remembering the history of both the Estado Novo regime and the Portuguese empire.

### **The Policies of the Estado Novo Regime and the Causes of the Carnation Revolution**

From 1933 to 1974, the Estado Novo regime, officially known as the Second Republic of Portugal, held complete control over the Portuguese people. The head of this regime was Antonio de Oliveira Salazar, who served as President of the Council of Ministers (informally referred to as the Prime Minister) from 1932 to 1968. Salazar died in 1968, after suffering from a stroke. He was succeeded by Marcelo Caetano, who led the country until the Revolution in 1974. Salazar led the regime and was heavily influenced by conservative, Catholic, and corporatist ideologies (Lobo, "The Making and Remaking of Portuguese Democracy: An Overview" 3). At his core, Salazar focused on promoting nationalist values upon

the Portuguese population. This value “embodied the myth of a multiracial harmonious Portuguese Empire” (Ribeiro 6). The Portuguese Empire Salazar referred to dates to the sixteenth century, when Portugal had become a prominent world-power during the era of colonization. At the Empire’s peak, Portugal controlled around 7% of the world’s land mass, with colonies established across several islands, parts of Africa (Guinea, Angola, and Mozambique), and Brazil (“The Portuguese Empire”). The Empire made Portugal a hegemon for its spice trade, colonial expansion, and brute strength. By applying the goals and success of the past Empire to the present nation, the regime hoped to spark a deeper sense of nationalism. Salazar channeled the country’s past in order to redefine the future of Portugal.

Two goals of the regime are crucial for understanding the fall of Estado Novo: 1) Portuguese colonization in Africa and 2) restriction of civil liberties at home. Regarding the former, the regime assumed the “historical mission of colonizing and civilizing the native populations” and became the “mission and burden of the Portuguese people” (Ribeiro 7). With this mission, Salazar stressed maintaining control over Portuguese colonies, most importantly Angola and Mozambique. In 1951, a constitutional revision marked “colonies” as “overseas provinces,” though these provinces were treated as a part of the “colonial empire” (Jerónimo 14). This revision was an attempt to remove the negative connotation associated with the term “colonies,” while still treating them as such. Mozambique was home to coal deposits and Angola had oil, copper, and manganese deposits that fueled a Portuguese desire to control economic activity. Salazar imposed legal racial limitations on all societal levels, and the colonized people were not granted political or socioeconomic rights (15). Salazar’s vision was to have a hierarchy within the Portuguese identity, with colonized natives being labelled as Portuguese, but at the bottom of the societal hierarchy. By restricting the rights of the colonized native people and exploiting their natural resources, the regime followed in the

footsteps of the Portuguese Empire with the hope of reproducing their former hegemony.

During the 1960's, the regime's control slowly began to slip. Violent organized conflicts arose among the Portuguese provinces: Angola in 1961, Guinea-Bissau in 1963, and Mozambique in 1964 (Jerónimo 16). Conflicts abroad led to resentment in Portugal. Colonial wars significantly drained the national budget and demanded many young male recruits to squelch the conflict (Ribeiro 7). Additionally, the economic gains from the colonies decreased as conflict spread. Metropolitan Portuguese exports to Angola and Mozambique in 1968 were at 13.31% and 9.05% respectively, while in 1972, exports decreased to 6.50% and 5.40% (Graham 22). With respect to imports, in 1968 Metropolitan Portugal imported 9.35% of goods from Angola and 5.62% from Mozambique. These numbers decreased to 7.80% from Angola and 3.20% from Mozambique in 1972 (23). Meaning, Portugal was forced to decrease exports to their colonies and, subsequently, the colonies found other trade partners, infringing on Portugal's economic dominance over the region. In the years before the Carnation Revolution, the colonization platform the Estado Novo regime proudly stood upon began to crumble as the economic and social burden of maintaining control over provinces grew.

The tension between the Estado Novo regime and the Portuguese people was also sparked by domestic policies on civil liberty. Estado Novo is often referred to as fascist, or clerical fascist, due to Salazar's background from the Catholic Centre party and restriction of other religious practices (Feldman 1). In order to preserve the national identity, the regime became the "keepers of order" (Silva 28). The preservation of this identity was achieved by the existence of a single party, the National Union, and through political police that initiated violence against anyone who opposed the regime. The Portuguese people faced restrictions on expression, attacks against political opposition, violence from the political police, lack of labor movement autonomy from strict corporativism actions,

and an overwhelming lack of control over the political process (28). To be Portuguese under the Estado Novo regime meant hiding your own values and favoring the government's in fear of persecution.

In the time leading up to April 25, 1974, the domestic and colonial pressures on the Estado Novo turned Portugal into a "pressure cooker" ready to explode (Silva 30). The chronological events during the day of the revolution, as well as the years after, are not the focus of this paper, but two aspects of the revolution are important to understand. On April 25, the revolution began with a military coup by leftist military officers that sought to overthrow Caetano, Salazar's successor, and replace him with a committee of military officers ("Remembering Portugal's Carnation Revolution" 2). The coup then quickly evolved into a social revolution as thousands of Portuguese flooded the streets, calling for the end of the regime (30). One such street was the Lisbon flower market. The name Carnation Revolution stems from this place because people put carnations in the barrels of their guns as a display of resistance against the authoritarian regime. Within a day, one of the longest reigning dictatorships of the twentieth century came to an end. The Portuguese population was able to take part in the transition toward a fully institutionalized democracy. A new democracy was officially formed with the implementation of a new constitution in 1976 (30).

### **Changes in Political Ideologies after the Carnation Revolution**

Political ideologies present a pattern of complex political notions, like economic stances, and serve to incite action with the aim of achieving certain goals, such as running for public office or initiating grassroot movements (Skidmore). Ideologies are important to understand as they bring cohesion to society. In the case of Portugal, the Revolution and the formation of the

Third Republic of Portugal in 1976, drastically changed and strengthened political ideologies. The two years after the Revolution were filled with political unease as neither the far-left or far-right parties were able to attain power; instead, the country was run by the military officers who oversaw the coup. The fall of fascist ideology gave way to multiple ideologies that served as the catalyst for the formation of new groups that attempted to rally and promote political action with the aim of simplifying political dissention. No longer under the regime's influence, political groups like the Communists and Socialists no longer faced persecution and could participate in government and religious groups. Additionally, by 1975, all of Portugal's former colonies had declared independence, adding another layer of complexity to the political sphere. Radicalization became a fundamental division throughout Portuguese politics, meaning that individuals began to seek more extreme political views and reject things that were of the status quo (Lobo, "The Making and Remaking of Portuguese Democracy: An Overview" 7). The formation of these new groups initiated a strong division between the extreme left and extreme right, as both sides sought to gain control over the new democracy.

Out of the rising ideologies, communism played one of the most important roles. During the summer of 1975, during the so-called "Hot Summer of 1975," Portugal faced the possibility of the Communists and other far-left groups gaining power. Compared to the other political parties, the Communist party was the only group with significant local roots and a national political organization (Lobo, "The Making and Remaking of Portuguese Democracy: An Overview" 15). Fear of a "Marxist/ Communist/collectivist/totalitarian dictatorship worse than Salazar's" began to take over (Silva 31). Tensions between the Communists and other political groups ended on November 25, 1975, when the Communists launched a failed coup against the military committee with the aim of bringing Communist ideals and leaders to power. Those in the government who aligned themselves with these far-left views were ousted by a

coalition of moderate Socialists, right-wing parties, the Catholic Church, and groups of military officers (Loff 5). Twenty years later, the failure of the Communists is seen as an attempt to replace an authoritarian regime with a totalitarian one (2). Though they did not achieve governmental control in 1975, the Communist party is still highly active in Portugal today. Communist advertisements are prevalent throughout the country, especially in rural areas. The case of the Portuguese Communists is interesting because the regime before the revolution was on the extreme right of the political spectrum, and yet, the extreme left was unable to seize control during the fall and transition of Portugal's government.

The following year, parliamentary elections were held and the Socialists, a left leaning party, won. The Socialist party did not, however, gain enough seats to hold a parliamentary majority, so they entered a coalition government with the Democratic People's Party and the Democratic and Social Centre, two right-winged groups (Loff 3). This partnership was short lived during the next election cycle in 1979, when a right-leaning coalition took power, led by the Social Democratic party (formerly known as the Democratic People's Party). During the next sixteen years, the Social Democratic party stayed in power, only sharing control with the Socialists from 1983 to 1985 (3). With right-wing parties in control, those parties changed the focus of discussion to the negative legacy of the Carnation Revolution rather than remembering the fascist rule of the Estado Novo.

Conservative parties like the Social Democrats were able to avoid debate relating to the political police's actions, the repression of civil liberties and left-winged political groups, corporatism, and the colonial wars in Africa (Loff 3). In a contrast to Estado Novo, who sought to embrace Portugal's history, the conservative government focused on wiping away the negative memories, essentially forgetting the events in history that divided the Portuguese people, and turn national attention toward the future. Right-wing parties hindered legislation that



imposed open access to archives from the former dictatorship until 1996 (3). The government was able to devalue the memory of resistance to Estado Novo through “sheer whitewashing” (Silva 38). The public was denied access to political information while former Estado Novo political police members received pensions for their services. This control of political discourse molded the Portuguese people’s political ideologies in favor of right-winged groups and against the Carnation Revolution.

Manuel Loff, a professor at the University of Porto who has written extensively on Portuguese identity, reviewed survey data from 1984 and 1994 from the Portuguese magazine *Visão*. Participants in the survey were asked a series of questions regarding how the Revolution has affected their lives on a cultural, economic, and political level. It is important to analyze public opinion during 1984 and 1994; in 1984, Portugal was experiencing the worst economic crisis since the dictatorship and, in 1994, was at the near end of the conservative party reign of government (Loff 3). Though Professor Loff did not provide the specific sample size and demographics of these surveys, the data he analyzed suggests how public opinion can be influenced by political leaders. A third of respondents stated that the revolution improved their personal fulfillment in 1984, this number doubled to 67.3% in 1994 (3). Additionally, in 1984, 20% experienced positive improvement on economic situation, 22.5% had a positive impact on social stability, 24.5% answered yes to improvement on youth prospects, and 33.4% felt the revolution improved access to education (3). Ten years later, these numbers rose to 56.2%, 73.6%, 65.1%, 55.3%, and 66.8% respectively. Ten years after the Revolution people felt less empowered, economically stagnant, and had a negative view of Portugal, while twenty-years after the revolution these feelings reversed. Opportunities for members of society, especially among the youth, became brighter as the conservative party lost power and the economic situation in Portugal improved. Furthermore, 35.2% believed the revolution had a positive effect on political independence, 15.4% showed posi-

tive support toward economic independence, 82.5% answered “yes” on the revolution having a positive effect on freedom of speech, 54.8% believed there has been a positive effect on youth freedom, and 49.2% thought the revolution has had a beneficial impact on Portugal’s image in the world in 1984 (3). In 1994, these numbers rose to 62.7%, 55%, 88.4%, 71.8%, and 82.2% respectively (3). It is important to note the drastic rise in people supporting the notion that the revolution helped their economic independence and Portugal’s image in the world, showing that overtime the Portuguese were able to be better off financially and have a stronger sense of national pride. Not every opinion of the revolution improved, however, with public morality decreasing from 49.7% to 45.9%, 66.4% of people believing that revolution expanded crime in 1984 while 76.4% believed said idea in 1994, and 73.4% thinking that revolution caused stronger drug influence on society in 1984 and 84% sharing that belief in 1994 (3). This shows that the revolution did not completely fix the lives of the Portuguese, yet overall, they believed it helped them.

Why do opinions of the Carnation Revolution change drastically between 1984 and 1994? That change is because the government in 1984 manipulated the views of the general public. The government blamed the “irresponsible hazards” of the Revolution for the economic troubles the country was going through (Loff 5). Recession, decolonization, and structural problems of the economy brought daily challenges to the Portuguese’s lives. When faced with these problems, the government used the Revolution as a scapegoat to shift the blame to political change, instead of counterproductive policies (5). At the end of the Social Democrats being in power, views of the Revolution became highly positive in terms of personal fulfillment, quality of life, and Portugal’s stance in the world. Since the Carnation Revolution, political ideologies in Portugal strengthened as more political groups became active in the political sphere. Yet, with more ideologies attempting to simplify complex political issues, especially post-revolution,

individual choice and thought became clouded in Portugal, causing these changes in historical memory.

### **Influences on Portuguese National Identity Post-Revolution**

Portugal's national identity is centered on the division between respecting humanity and remembering history, as the only thing that unites the Portuguese is Portugal itself (Almeida). The Revolution brought this division to light as the people could express their personal values under the new democratic regime without backlash from the government. Identity became a recurrent theme in discourse. In my research, I focus on three aspects of Portuguese culture when discussing Portugal's national identity. These include: 1) interpretation of the Carnation Revolution, 2) immigration and European integration, and 3) the legacy of the Portuguese Empire. In the two decades following the Carnation Revolution, interpretations of its legacy varied with the political power in charge. The Revolution is still a source of political inspiration, but the effect on the citizens varies.

In January of 2014, GfK Metris, a data analysis company, interviewed 1,256 residents of Portugal (ages 15 or over) and asked them to answer "of the following phrases, please choose all those that correspond to your opinions on the intentions of those who carried out the 25 April revolution" (Lobo 168). The respondents were chosen out of a representative sample and were selected through randomized quota methods that utilize a matrix to cross sex, age (seven groups), education (two groups), occupation (two groups), region (seven groups), and settlement size (five groups) (169). The results were weighted based on data provided by the National Statistics Institute and compared to a similar study conducted in 2004 that had a respondent sample size of 1,216. The study found that approximately 79% of respondents felt proud of the Carnation Revolution (169). The focus of the data gathered by GfK Metris was

to compare opinions of the intentions of the Revolution from 2004 and 2004. In 2004, 50% answered that the goal of the Revolution was to establish a democratic regime, 45% said it was to end the colonial wars, 39% answered that it was to modernize and develop the country, 36% said it was to promote social justice in Portugal, 26% answered that it was to improve their own (referring to the instigators of the revolution), and 11% said it was to establish a Communist regime (170). Ten years later these opinions changed to 55%, 38%, 38%, 29%, 22%, 5% respectively (170).

Though nearly 80% of the country is proud of the transition, just over half of the population believes the point of the revolution was to create a democratic regime. The Revolution has become a watershed moment in Portuguese history; a symbol of the country's history and an instruction for movement forward. People still disagree on the true goal of the transition. These disagreements create an interesting clash with respect to historical interpretations of Portugal's current regime. The alternative goals, such as establishing a Communist regime, are similar to the ideological changes that occurred in the 1970s. Events such as the Hot Summer of 1975, and the decolonization of Portugal's colonies, still influence identity politics today.

Briefly referring to the sixteenth century, the Empire spread its language, culture, and claimed colonies in its name. After these colonies became independent, however, people returned to Portugal and identified themselves as Portuguese, regardless of their national origin. The blending of native Portuguese and colonized Portuguese is a point of tension in terms of the formation of a national identity. To be proud of Portugal's past also means acknowledging the dark parts of the nation's history. When I travelled to Portugal, I was able to tour the Portuguese Parliamentary building. One ceremony room's walls hold murals of colonization, slave trade, and expansion. These murals, I was told, became highly controversial and groups advocated to have them painted over. My tour guide said the government decided to not paint over them, to not erase the

past, and instead declared all people to be “free.” This was an important decision because the government decided that they would not cherry pick parts of their history; they would accept the good and bad as it occurred. Declaring people as “free,” however, does not ignore the differences in racial background among the Portuguese population that subtly influences national identity today. My experience in the Parliament building was an excellent example of this division between respecting humanity and remembering history.

Following the decolonization of Portugal’s colonies in 1975, Portugal opened its borders to new and diverse groups of people. Half a million former African settlers returned home, almost two-hundred-thousand people immigrated from France and Germany, and one-hundred-thousand servicemen stationed in former colonies were relieved of duty (Loff 5). Additionally, there was mass migration from rural to urban areas and migrant-laborers arrived from Brazil and Eastern Europe (Ribeiro 12). These numbers increased the Portuguese population by around 5% and served as a drastic change from the Estado Novo regime’s idea of a racially and ethnically homogenous Portugal (12). With the large diversity of people and backgrounds living in Portugal, it has become harder to identify what is a “typical” Portuguese person. Integration of people from all over the world into Portuguese culture produced another layer of complexity regarding identity. Portugal is proud of its Empire’s history. They were a world hegemon and controlled 7% of the planet’s landmass. Furthermore, in 1986, Portugal joined the European Union, increasing the globalization and integration of their economy, and leading to new discussions of surrounding Portugal’s national identity (13). Becoming a part of the European Union led to a struggle between joining a unified Europe and maintaining a national Portuguese identity.

## Conclusion

The events on April 25, 1974, not only led to a revolution that brought-down the Estado Novo regime, the Carnation Revolution brought about a change of ideologies and identity politics within Portugal. The end of forty years of fascism fueled by colonialism and restriction of civil liberties created the opportunity for new political groups, primarily Communists and Socialists, to become active in a democratic government. However, the bolstering of political ideologies has obfuscated the Portuguese national identity. What it means to be Portuguese has never been harder to answer, making Portu-guise a more appropriate label to use. From my experience in Portugal, national pride is a central characteristic of their national identity. Pride seems to be the only common feeling brought by the legacy of revolution, immigration and European interaction, and the significance of the Portuguese Empire. Amid challenges within the European Union today as well as recent economic struggles in Portugal, ideologies are being tested. If these issues persist, the differences in national identity will come to a head, and the people of Portugal will be forced to unmask the guise that covers more than forty years of political events and molded the current confusion of identity. It comes as no surprise that the people of Portugal are proud of their nation, yet as they recognize different aspects of their culture and the events of their nation's history, having a serious and open discussion of identity will become a greater challenge. Often the Portuguese people reflect on their history of discovery to look toward the future. If people were to stand on Cabo da Roca in 2019, they would not only be the closest to the West physically, but also ideologically. The Carnation Revolution created a new democracy and returned political freedoms to the people, yet at what cost? They would be the furthest from their own Portuguese identity; they unknowingly question the history of that beautiful cape and country, their culture, and their political ideology, forming the Portu-guise.

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