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From gangs to street organizations: armed youth groups and the building of a culture of resistance

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| Cape Verde |

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abstract

In the years 2000, with the emergence of a new type of urban conflict in Cabo Verde, the thugs, identified as "peripheral" youth associated with delinquent behavior, were considered the party most responsible for the country's high crime rates, especially in the capital city of Praia. With this article, based on an ethnographic research of armed youth groups in Praia, I attempt to reflect on the need to recover the legacy of W.E.B Du Bois in the study of street gangs, which, in the Cape Verdean case, obliges us to mobilize the concepts of racial identity, gender and resistance as a theoretical alternative to better understand the appropriation of the word thug by youth in situations of marginality. On the other hand, through the discussion of the adaptation of the theory of social movements in the study of gangs, I attempt to escape the conservative and moralistic sociological interpretations that are usually reproduced in studies on juvenile delinquency in Cape Verde in order to perceive to what extent the politicized aesthetics of gangsta rap disseminated by Tupac provided these young people with a meaning and historical consciousness that served as an element of reconstruction of their social and political identity.

The transformation of the archipelago into a hub of international cocaine trafficking (Saviano, 2014) through the so-called Freeway 10 (Pérez, 2014), as well as the increased deportations of young Cape Verdeans associated with street gangs in the United States and the emergence of a new social figure, the *thugs,*[1] *The name for Praia's street gangs.* coincided with the emergence of a new type of urban conflict in the country with greater intensity in its capital, Praia, from the first half of the year 2000. The thugs, identified as "peripheral" youth, were first seduced by the American street gang lifestyle, and second, by the expressions of violence of the Brazilian drug factions, were immediately understood by the general population and social technicians as popular demons with young deportees from the United States as their main mentors.

My first foray into the world of crime in Praia between 2008 and 2012 as part of an independent ethnographic research has raised a series of theoretical and methodological questions about the motivations, connections, functioning and ideologies of these youth groupings. In concrete terms, it allowed me to note that the question of social inequalities (especially their symbolic dimension) that manifests itself in the segregation of youth opportunities may be the basis for the violent collective reaction of these young people (Lima, 2010, 2012a, 2012b) present in recent works on urban collective crime (Zoettl, 2015, 2014), hip-hop culture (Lima, 2012c) and "peripheral" youth (Martins, 2013), held in the cities of Praia and Mindelo.

As I gained greater freedom of movement in the terrain of the armed youth groups of Praia and gained access to more relevant groups and actors in the crime underworld of the city, I found that the sociological explanations based on delinquency,[2]The existence of pathologies at the level of the personality, an orientation by certain types of values and ideals alternative or opposed to the dominant moral constellation, an anomalic deficit occurred in the processes of socialization in relation to the dominant values and norms. influenced by

the sociological and criminological perspectives of the Chicago School, fell far from providing me with an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon. Because I was epistemologically trained in the European scientific culture, researching groups of young armed people in the African context forced me to undertake an intense work of self-analysis (Bourdieu, 2005), since the analytical tools initially used did not square with the discourses and experiences of the subjects with whom I was talking.

This has led me to question the type of approach appropriate to address the phenomenon of crime in Cape Verde, which has led me to the vast literature of alternative criminology that addresses the phenomenon of street gangs (Hagedorn, 2008, 2007a, 2007b, 2006, 2005, 1994; Venkatesh, 2008, 2003, 2000, 1997; Brotherton, 2008, 2007; Barrios, 2007; Brotherton & Barrios, 2004) which allowed me to open new analytical paths of research, insofar as the arguments presented in the studies presented by these authors coincided with much empirical evidence observed in Praia.

Ela (2013 [1994]) considers that the African researcher is expected to seek other epistemological horizons in order to avoid a crisis of perspective and to construct an appropriate approach to the current situation of African societies if they does not want to continue reproducing the discourse that considers the African continent a kind of museum of European antiquities. The author (Ela, 2014 [1989]) argues that refusing to reproduce institutional discourses, which normally carry colonial marks, is a good strategy to avoid such a situation, as it frees the researcher from the epistemological blocks mirrored in the logic of consulting firms financed by Development Assistance Agencies, which transform the African continent into an immense laboratory of European experimentation (Ela, 2015b [2007]) and research guinea pigs for industrialized countries (Ela, 2016 [2007]). This epistemological exercise refers to the use of an anarchist epistemology that de-emphasizes the artifices of the history of science and questions the hidden dogmatism with a view to renewing the debate on reason, so as to pave the way for the emergence of a plural approach to science (Ela, 2015a [2007]).

With this article, based on an ethnographic survey of armed youth groups in Praia, I try to reflect on the need to recover the legacy of W.E.B Du Bois in the study of street gangs, which, in the case of Cape Verde, obliges us to mobilize concepts of racial identity, gender

and resistance as a theoretical alternative to better understand the appropriation of the word thug by youth in situations of marginality. On the other hand, through the discussion of the adaptation of the theory of social movements in the study of gangs, we try to escape the conservative and moralistic sociological interpretations that are usually reproduced in studies on juvenile delinquency in Cape Verde, in order to realize the extent to which the politicized aesthetics of the *gangsta rap*[3] *A subgenre of rap that has as a characteristic the description of the violent day-to-day of the young blacks in the ghettos of the great American cities.* spread by Tupac gave these young people a sense and a historical consciousness that served as an element of reconstruction of their social and political identity.

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From gangs to street organizations

Gangs are now both institutionalized and interstitial, as in many situations and contexts they resemble organized crime groups, just as they may resemble political parties religions, terrorist cells, or revolutionary organizations (Hagedorn, 2007b). Therefore, in order to have a conceptual model that covers all the characteristics around the globe where armed groups of young people are present, Hagedorn proposes the following definition:

"*Gangs are excluded social organizations. They usually begin as unsupervised adolescent peer groups, but many others become institutionalized in neighborhoods, slums, ghettos, and prisons. Many of these institutionalized gangs transform into commercial enterprises within the informal economy, and some establish links to international cartels. Most gangs share racialized or ethnic identities and oppositional cultures spread by the media. Gangs have varying links with conventional institutions and, under certain conditions, assume social, economic, political, cultural, religious or military roles (Hagedorn, 2007b: 309).*"

The author notes that since the 1960s, in large cities in the United States, armed youth groups have defined themselves as organizations rather than as gangs. This ensures that

this reality is now also visible in smaller cities. These groups tend to be governed by a constitution that grants them a formal structure and assigns them an economic, social and political agenda (Hagedorn, 2015). Similar situations are noted in gangs in Latin America (Hagedorn, 2008), Central America (Griffin & Persad, 2013, Leslie, 2010, Townsend, 2009, Rodgers & Jensen, 2008 and Schroeder 1996) and in Africa (Hagedorn, 2008; Jensen, 2008; Rodgers & Jensen, 2008), which can be explained by the relationships analyzed between gangs, social movements and political parties throughout history (Dickie, 2016a, 2016b, Cacho, 2015, Hagedorn, 2008, 2007b). Yet the specialized literature continues to ignore them as political entities, centering the analysis of their relationship with politics only in contexts of electoral competition, notwithstanding the activities of conscientious political militancy in the 1960s, (Hagedorn, 2008, Brotherton & Barrios, 2004) or in political protests and peace processes in the 1990s (Hayden, 2006; Martinez, 2003). For Jankowski (1991), this absence is explained, on the one hand, by the disappearance or loss of influence of the old political machines of the cities, as a result of the politics of war on crime and, on the other, by the fact that gang studies tend to centralize their focus on working class adolescents with no relation to politics.

According to Venkatesh (1997), with the exception of some cases, gang research tends not to examine the involvement of street gangs with the neighborhood in which they are inserted beyond the scope of violence production. She points out that these involvements include how they interact with other social groups and institutions (including participation in community public forums), how residents deal with some phenomena associated with them and their patterns of change and continuity over time. The author's criticism is related to the non-incorporation of the social and contextual dimension of the actions of street gangs in the traditional theoretical frameworks of criminology.

By incorporating theories of organizational behavior into the analysis of the phenomenon, Jankowski (1991) shows the organizational complexity of gangs, by accounting for the internal relations established by their members and the impact of their organizational structure, both in the neighborhoods where they are integrated and in the structure of the city itself. Jankowski’s work opened a new field of possibilities in the understanding of the dynamics and culture of the gangs, diverting focus from those merely criminological studies, that tend to look at them exclusively from official crime sources or to define them using

criminal-legal categories (Katz & Jackson-Jacobs, 2004).

In the study of the *Almighty Latin King and Queen Nation (ALKQN),* a super-gang from Chicago that predominantly includes members of Latin origin, Brotherton & Barrios (2004), draw close to Jankowski's (1991) approach affirming that the new structural conditions brought about by deindustrialization, globalization and gentrification would be the basis of the emergence of a new type of gang situated between the traditional street gang and social movement. For Martínez (2003), the vast social science literature on street gangs, by focusing almost exclusively on their criminological aspect, takes the relation of gangs to delinquency as a central thesis (Brotherton & Barrios, 2004) and thus contributes to the analysis of the phenomenon being framed both in dimensions of norm and value (Kontos & Brotherton, 2008) and in the dimensions of law and order (Hagedorn, 2008). This centrality, according to Brotherton and Barrios (2004), ignores the political possibilities and capacities of gangs to transform their environment and to change themselves, making invisible aspects such as: 1) spirituality in gang culture; 2) the redefinition of resistant subcultures over time; 3) the role of capitalist education in the reproduction of their identities; 4) their struggles for spatial and social autonomy. In order to overcome this analytical failure, they propose a model of analysis of gangs that takes into account social movement theory.

Through the combination of the concepts used in gang research and the literature of social movements, Brotherton and Barrios constructed a conceptual model of street organization taking into account the following principles: 1) *subculture traditions*, which refers to the history of the group and combines radical aspects of political and street subculture; 2) *level of organization,* referring to the complexity of gang operations and political projects; 3) *association*, referring to the fact that the members of the group belong, for the most part, to the working class; 4) *identity*, which refers to the group's system of ideological beliefs and process by which the group defines itself as an actor of a movement, therefore escaping the pejorative label imposed by society; 5) *objectives and actions,* which refers, on the one hand, to the social and political agenda of the group and the practical measures of its accomplishment and, on the other, to all of its actions, regardless of whether or not they fulfill proposed objectives;[4] In this aspect, the authors consider that for the group to be defined as a social organization with properties of social movements, its political and opposition actions must overcome significantly its deviant and criminal actions. 6) *identified*

adversaries, which refers to common enemies that give the group a political focus. From these principles, they advanced to an alternative definition of gangs using the expression street organization:

"*A group formed by young people and adults belonging to marginalized social classes, which provides its members the construction of an identity of resistance, an opportunity for individual and social empowerment, a voice of challenge to the dominant culture, a refuge from the tensions and pressures of daily life of the neighborhood or ghetto, as well as a spiritual enclave where sacred rituals can be generated and exercised (Brotherton & Barrios, 2004: 23)*".

This definition has allowed some types of gangs to be taken along with their members as possible agents of change, as they are perceived as adaptive social groups in a universe marked by unequal power relations, that although endowed with an active repository of knowledge of sociocultural resistance, sometimes function and, in a contradictory way, as reproductive agents of the system of dominant cultural values. In other words, this conceptual proposal named them as a collective enterprise capable of establishing a new order of life, creating possibilities for its members to transform their groups into social movements with the street as a base if they wish to escape their oppressed condition (Brotherton, 2007).

The notion of spirituality of liberation is presented by Barrios (2007) as one of the strategies used by this type of organization in the preservation of group identity, and also as a form of empowerment that allows the group to continue its liberation struggle against social and racial domination who believe they are victims. Illustrating the case of the ALKQN, the author points out as source of this spirituality what they designate *nuestra realidade.* With this expression they seek to emphasize that the human reality manifests itself in a specific time and space and never in an emptiness and, therefore, according to the author, when they speak of their reality, they are highlighting the social, political and economic reality to which they are submitted, the meaning of being Latinos and Latinas in a racist society, which makes possible the construction of a political identity.

The question of "race" and the construction of a policy of resistance

The issue of "race" and racism arise in the context of these groups as an important element of mobilization. Hagedorn (2008) notes that many criminologists argue that the variable racism is insufficient to explain why some young people join gangs. As an argument, these researchers argue that racism has declined in recent years, unlike the gang problem, which has increased. Hagedorn acknowledges the good intention of these researchers in disregarding violence, gangs and crime as characteristics of a specific social group. However, he believes that this perspective leads us to assume that race is not an important variable in the analysis of gangs, since these researchers argue that if the black population's participation in the labor market is controlled for, and family structures and education levels improve, the racial issue disappears.

It should be noted that the process of gang de-racialization began with the work of the early Chicago School theoreticians, which Hagedorn (2007b) contextualizes with the fight against racism in the first decades of the twentieth century, which forced them to flee the ethnic and racial issue in the analysis of juvenile delinquency as a way of avoiding the reproduction of stereotyped interpretations of the black population on the one hand and the humanization of immigrants against the hostilities of the white native population on the other. However, Booker T. Washington's notorious influence on Robert Park at the Tuskegee Institute[5] A leading university targeting the black population during the years of racial segregation in the United States. This private institution was led by Booker T. Washington, who tutored Robert Park from 1905 to 1914, hired as Public Relations Director of the Institution, before becoming a prominent sociologist at the University of Chicago. appears in the work of several authors' (Morris, 2015, Rabbid, 2010, Gabbidon, 2007, Hagedorn, 2006; Katz & Sugrue, 2001) background to explain this process.[6] Park closely watched the theoretical, political and ideological confrontation between Booker T. Washington and W.E.B. Du Bois and, according to Morris (2015), established an important alliance with Washington in order to neutralize Du Bois' scientific work academically. Adopting Washington's vision, Park believed that sooner or later the black population would gradually integrate into white

American society, just as immigrants of European nationality had (Morris, 2015, Hagedorn, 2006). This belief, according to Morris, was reinforced by the character of social Darwinism present in Park's sociological perspective, which led him to view evolution as a product of social interaction. In other words, like Washington, Park saw blacks as primitive in comparison to the civilization inherited from Europe by white Americans. Thus, the social integration of blacks into American society would depend on their capacity to assimilate white civilizational culture, since they perceived "the social problem not as an administrative or political problem, but fundamentally of a human and cultural nature" (Morris, 2015: 103).

For Hagedorn (2008), the de-racialization of gangs was one of the most blatant mistakes of Western criminology. The fact that the Chicago School minimized the variable "race," replacing it with the variables class and space, contributed to the fact that the gang theory developed by this school demonstrated weaknesses that could have been avoided had Park and his colleagues not ignored the work of W.E.B. Du Bois,[7] In recent years a number of publications have emerged challenging the pioneering work of American sociology, the study of the city and the Chicago School gangs, accusing them of epistemologically segregating the work of W.E.B. Du Bois, developed two decades earlier. On these charges see Morris, A.D. (2015). The scholar denied: W.E.B. Du Bois and the birth of modern sociology; Rabaka, R. (2010). Against epistemic apartheid: W.E.B. Du Bois and the disciplinary decadence of sociology; Shaun L. Gabbidon, S.L. (2007). W.E.B. Du Bois on crime and justice: laying the foundations of sociological criminology; Katz, M.B.; Sugrue, T.J. (2001). "The context of the black philadelphia: the city, the settlement house movement, and the rise of the social sciences". the only voice in the sociology of the time who had made the connection between race and the gang phenomenon (Hagedorn, 2006).

Du Bois' study (1967 [1899]) examined, in the first place, the socio-historical and economic situation of European ethnic groups immigrated to the United States, such as Jews and Italians, in order to show that the distinctive condition between them and the situation of blacks was the Afro-American status carried by the latter group, which created a set of constraints in the process of social interaction in an environment marked by racism. With the concept of social disorganization, developed two decades before its reconceptualization by the Chicago School, he sought to emphasize how social disorder influenced crime, taking

this as a consequence of the migration of blacks from the old plantations of the South to the great cities of the North, where they experienced new situations of marginalization and racial segregation.[8] Wacquant points out four "special devices" that in the last four centuries have produced the ethnoracial order in the United States, constituting a color line through the confinement and control of the black population: 1) slavery (1619-1865) based on the plantation system, presented as the original matrix of racial division from the colonial period to the civil war; 2) a legal system of discrimination and racial segregation known as the Jim Crow system (1865-1965) that replaces slavery in the South; 3) the ghetto (1915-1968), a form of containing the descendants of the slaves in the industrial North metropolis from the South in the great African-American migrations of 1914 / 30-1960; 4) a prison-hyperghetto (from 1968), a new institutional complex composed of vestiges of the black ghetto and the prison apparatus, in which both are bound by a close relationship of structural symbiosis and functional replacement. On this subject see Wacquant, L. (2001). "Symbiose fatale. Quand ghetto et prison resemblent et s'assemblent ". Actes de la Recherche in Social Sciences, vol. 139, n. 1. http://www.persee.fr/doc/arss_0335-5322_2001_num_139_1_3353, p. 31-52. Therefore, he understood crime not as a social pathology, but as a manifestation of frustration and revolt[9] This perspective was recovered in the 1950s and 1960s by the delinquent subculture theorists, mostly focused on white, working-class young people and therefore without any reference to the racial question on the part of the black population, who saw their post-emancipation dreams defrauded (Morris, 2010, Gabbidon 2007, Katz & Sugrue, 2001).

In recovering the legacy of Du Bois' sociology, Hagedorn (2006) places the racial question at the center of the discussion on the gang phenomenon, as he argues that today such groups should not be contemplated without a historical analysis of ethnic, racial, and religious oppression and resistance (Hagedorn, 2008). The revision of the history suggested by the author allowed the grouping of three conceptual ideas that, according to Hagedorn, have not been taken into account in the theoretical construction of the explanatory model of gangs, that when associated, provide a better explanation for how people in situations of oppression are able to organize themselves in a group in order to give meaning to their existence in a globalized world marked by uncertainties and inequalities. These are: 1) demoralization; 2) the identity of resistance; 3) the permanence of racism.

Hagedorn argues that the idea of demoralization is not new in sociology, since it arises in the classic works of the discipline in relation to the concern of the loss of traditional values with the advent of the industrial age and, consequently, urbanization. The current recovery of the notion is only intended to describe the process of demoralization of the black population in the years following 1960, marked by the rebirth of an ideological optimism regarding the improvement of the quality of life of the oppressed populations of the world, in which heroic figures demanded that capitalism achieve its promises and renounce power.

Both Fanon (2015 [1961]) and the Black Panthers Party (Hagedorn, 2007b) saw in the lumpenproletariat (including street gangs) a potential force for revolution and a means of effective struggle to achieve the goals of the liberation movements in Africa and civil rights in the United States. Hagedorn (2008) points out that despite the triumphant discourse of the social movements of the 1960s, in practice, they failed to achieve what disadvantaged populations expected. In the African context, social movements upon reaching power, according to Fanon (2015 [1961]) and Mbembe (2014a, 2014b, 2013), betrayed the hopes of revolution, given that they replaced colonial power with national oligarchic power. In the United States, these movements were repressed in such a way that the vacuum of leadership left by the murder and mass incarceration of their top leaders incited a widespread sense of cynicism among the black population in regards to the ideas of democracy and freedom. However, some black intellectuals (West, 1994 cit, in Hagedorn, 2008) consider that this black nihilism has a secular origin, due to the psychological scar caused by the history of slavery and centuries of institutional racism.

According to Hagedorn (2007b), for a large part of the black population of the United States, as for many Latinos and inhabitants of the South of the planet, the demoralization meant that the notion of survival and identity were disassociated from the political objectives of the state and abstract notions of democracy or hope in socialism. "In the global age, these intense feelings of demoralization become the occasion for socially excluded young people to resist the myths of modernity and create new forms of identity between themselves and their gangs" (Hagedorn, 2008: 59). The identity of resistance, once anchored in the political projects of these social movements, resurfaces as a nihilistic identity, characterized by a culture of urgency (Castells, 2003). It is a culture in which the perspective of the end of one's existence is a constant, although it is not a culture of denial

but of celebration of life. Thus, everything has to be experienced, felt, lived, conquered, before it is too late, because there is no tomorrow (Castells, 2003: 78).

This identity is forged by actors who, standing in subordinate positions, devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, shape counter-hegemonic identities and build trenches of defense and resistance in relation to dominant institutions. Closed in their neighborhoods, they construct territorial identities that give them spatial meaning and the gang emerges as a racialized social organization.

Gilroy (2002) points out that throughout history, identity has been invoked and manipulated countless times. In the postcolonial era, both in Europe and the United States, in response to the diversity introduced by multiculturalism, some social actors have renewed the quest for ethnic certainty (Woodward, 2002), allowing the vigorous reaffirmation of a supposed origin identity. Thus, for Hagedorn (2007b), a postcolonial epistemological approach in the study of gangs becomes useful insofar as these groups have claimed victimized identities (Gilroy, 2002), which provide their members with a black or Latin identity, consolidated from the traumatic perspective of the history of slavery and exploitation. This process leads to the construction of a diffuse identity, considered by Castells as an identity of closure within what is known against the unpredictability of the unknown and the uncontrollable. Thus, in this new global context, the identity of gangs can be considered equally based in a culture of communal hyperindividualism.

Individualism because in the culture of immediate reward only the individual can be the standard of measure. Communalism because, in order for this hyperindividualism to become an identity-that is, for it to be socialized as a value and not only as a way of consuming itself absolutely meaningless-it needs an environment of valorization and mutual support: a commune (Castells, 2003: 78). In order to understand how demoralization and the identity of resistance apply in the study of gangs, according to Hagedorn (2007b), it is necessary to explore the question of the permanence of racism in the United States in particular and in the Western world in general. The author considers that the conditions of despair that populations are subjected to in neighborhoods, ghettos or favelas all over the world have produced groups of culturally alienated and armed youth, united in the common feeling of revolt against those who believe they are responsible for their situation. These groups are

essentially identities and Hagedorn names racial identity as a crucial element in understanding the motivations of gangs in all existing ethnic contexts.

Identity politics and resistance culture. A brief (in)conclusive look at the case of Praia

In addition to the studies initially mentioned, several others have been carried out with the purpose of providing explanations that serve as a basis for the construction of criminal and security policies in Cape Verde, in order to eradicate the violence of thugs. Of these studies I highlight two (Sousa, 2013; Fernandes & Delgado, 2008), which fit into the logic of consulting studies. Although I do not intend to lecture exhaustively on the various epistemological inconsistencies and, above all, empirical inconsistencies of both, an exercise that will be done in another space -- i.e. the fact that they are based on a kind of coercive and portable sociology (Bourdieu et al., 2002 [1968]) of a Eurocentric and patriarchal character, with no subject, and address crime without an adequate explanation. This situation is mainly due to the fact that, instead of constructing theoretical formulations based on solid empirical research, locally located, these studies were based on the importation of concepts that do not fit the social context studied.

The work of Fernandes and Delgado (2008), the first published study on juvenile delinquency in Cape Verde, whose objective was to provide a loyal reading of the situation that could serve as a guideline for criminal policies, was based on a functional-positivist sociological model that perceives family disintegration as a major cause of the phenomenon. The regime of the union is in fact presented in the study as an extension of this disintegration, an idea that clashes with the population data presented by INE (2010) and its subsequent reading from a gender perspective (2014), as well as the study of the historical aspect on the influence of the Catholic Church on the reproduction of male domination in Cape Verde (Semedo, 2009). Far from properly subsidizing correct policymaking, this reductionist view of criminality and family ends up pardoning the state of its responsibility, ignoring the inability and/or willingness to provide care services to the most vulnerable population. They ignore the fact that families, especially women, in their obligation to participate in the capitalist game to sustain their dependent members, end up

leaving them, especially the children and adolescents, in the care of the street (Anjos et al., 2016), favoring opportunities for direct or indirect involvement with armed groups of the neighborhood. They also consider the existence of a supposed subculture of violence among young people, perceived as a consequence of this disorganization and, therefore, a trigger for the waves of juvenile crime.

Bordonaro (2012b), in an ethnographic work on young people in the Brazilian neighborhood of Achada Santo António involved in the activities of armed groups, speaks in cultural continuities of violence as a hyper-expression of the hegemonic masculine identities in Cape Verde, rejecting, at least in that space, the idea of the existence of a subculture of violence. Along the same lines, Stefani (2014), based on an ethnographic work in the neighborhoods of Achada Grande Frente and Lém Ferreira, in the bosom of former members of armed groups and young activists, comes to this same conclusion. The thugs are presented by these authors as "the hyperexpression of a masculine identity that is based on the notion of respect, and that imposes the conquest and maintenance of the same in the public space through the confrontation with other men" (Bordonaro, 2012b: 122 -123). It is, therefore, this field of culture that allows the emergence and flourishing, in specific situations, of thugs. The mobilization of subculture theory as an explanation therefore has no foundation -- such culture is not even a characteristic exclusive to "popular" classes or a certain age groups.

On the other hand, Sousa's work involves itself in a suspicious and superficial critical analysis: it seems he ignored publications (Lima, 2012a, 2012b; Bordonaro, 2012a, 2012b, 2010; Roque & Cardoso, 2012, 2010) by the very authors that he seeks to critique (Lima, 2010; Roque & Cardoso, 2008), which, had he read them, would have placed his conclusions in jeopardy. By assuming in some moments the vision of Fernandes e Delgado (2008) as a way of legitimizing his arguments, he seems to signal that he has accepted as factual the ultraconservative view of these authors. Based on two works commissioned by the Ministries of Youth and the Internal Administration, respectively, and using a type of academic practice named by Bourdieu et. al. (2002 [1968]) as “semi-plagiarizing parasitism” of the work of others, their analysis of young people and crime ends up inserted into a type of sociology that tends to emphasize the representations of common sense that prevail over the notion of youth.

Like Fernandes and Delgado (2008), Sousa's work engages much more in an extension of a governmentality[10] Iolanda Évora uses the term governmentality model when referring to the study of Cape Verdean migration carried out by national researchers. model of juvenile crime, "that of the circulation of ideas, concepts or works of the academic world" (Évora, 2015: 119). In other words, because they are not based on a fieldwork in the meaning of the word, their works end up acting as sound-boards for governmental discourse, when they do not contribute to the construction of amputated knowledge, where institutional actors provide information (qualitative and quantitative) to the researcher who, on this basis, produces scientific reports and articles that are again cited by the same institutional and political actors as empirical evidence and used as sources of knowledge[11]On this form of scientific work see Lorenzo Bordonaro and Filipa Alvim, "Trafficking in women in Portugal: the construction of a social problem" In: Pedro Gabriel Silva; Octávio Machado; José Portela (Coords.), Ethnography and social intervention for a reflexive praxis, Lisbon, Colibri Editions, 2011, p. 61-83. and intervention.

When, in addition to ignoring the empirical field on which one wishes to lecture, much less the specialized literature on the dynamics and culture of street gangs, since scientific work is articulated between theory and practice, what naturally goes ignored is the variable of identity, an important element in understanding the phenomenon, since gangs result from social identity processes (Goldman, Giles & Hogg, 2014). As Woodward (2002) points out, identity is by itself a relational concept, since it is distinguished by difference, its construction being both symbolic and social. Bordonaro (2010) draws attention to this issue in the Cape Verdean case when he states that in the problematization of the phenomenon it should be taken into account that violence and crime also appear as mechanisms for youth trapped in a context marked by structures of segregation of opportunities to increase their power with reference groups that allow them to strengthen their social position in an unequal social structure and, with this, aggressively proclaim their identity through semantic and stylistic elements, seeking to make secondary the economic elements that are still presen

Additionally, when the reality of a part of Cape Verdean youth is unknown, either because the youth are treated as a homogeneous group, or due to ignorance of the historical process

in the analysis of social phenomena, one simply tends to consider the word *thug*[12] *Being a thug does not mean being a delinquent properly, but a lifestyle perceived by the majority of the population as misaligned, confrontational, and exotic. Several groups have been observed that may be designated as delinquents, but who do not identify themselves and are not identified with thug aesthetics, like several other groups of young people who do not have any type of delinquent behavior but who identify themselves with this aesthetic. On this subject see Redy Wilson Lima, "Thugs: Tribal Urban Violence" In: Martin Lienhard (Coord.), Violencia urbana, los jóvenes y la droga: América Latina/África. Colecciones nexos y diferencias. Estudios de la cultura de América, n. 43. Madrid/Frankfurt: Iberoamericana/Vervuert, 2015, p. 143-155.* as a scientific invention and a false sociological question (Sousa, 2013). On the one hand, the *thug* phenomenon calls for a deeper reflection on the formation of the Cape Verdean nation - simultaneously a plantation society and a morgadio and chapel society - and simultaneously represents an indication of the global domain of American iconography and a deeper manifestation originating in the slave trade.

The historical literature on the social resistance of the non-white peoples during the period of European expansion and colonization points out similarities between the *tuggees* and the *badios* (Cabral, 2015; Shabaka, 2013; Varela, 2010; Wagner, 2007; Marques, 2006; Silva, 2001, 1996; Carreira, 2000 [1971]; Vieira, 1993, 1986), a fact that a careful study of historical processes in the Cape Verdean context and its consequences in the world today can confirm. On the other hand, with the emergence of gangsta rap, the thug role is seen as a manifestation of "aggressive insubordination" and in the universe of hip-hop it is represented as a kind of black masculinity (Jeffries, 2011; Jackson II, 2006). According to Prestholdt (2009), this depiction of black hypermasculinity and glamor that Tupac exudes in his narratives has led many young people outside the United States to embrace it as a model of masculinity. The work of Bordonaro (2010) and Stefani (2014) unequivocally demonstrate that in the Praia context, this model found equivalence in the mode of local masculinity, since it reproduces the ideas of personal strength, courage and the challenging of social restrictions.

Tupac's reflection through music about the multiple dimensions of urban violence in the United States - from the perspective of both victims and agents - coincided with the life story of many young people worldwide and in Cape Verde in particular. Rap music has been

responsible for making urban malaise visible in US post-industrial societies (Rose, 1994, cit. In Mugabane, 2006), and found in the urban context of West African countries (Mbaye, 2011), particularly in Cape Verde (Lima, 2012c), an ideal political, cultural and economic context to become an emerging musical expression and new form of youth awareness (Lima, 2015).

Hagedorn (2008) harshly criticises traditional criminology for ignoring in the analysis of gang violence the *hip-hop* factor, more concretely *gangsta rap* (*corporate hip-hop*) and its antithesis "conscious" rap (*black Atlantic hip-hop*). One of the important advances in my research in gang territory is to have recognized in rappers something like an organic intellectualism and in their musical narratives an analytical tool with status equal to any other source of research in social sciences,[13]As, for example, the case of the use of the literary texts by the social scientists in the works on the question of the Cape Verdean identity. thus enabling a critical reading of the existing contradictions in Cape Verdean society.

It was through this methodological exercise that I was able to verify that the appropriation of the politicized aesthetics of Tupac's gangsta rap was responsible for, from the first half of the year 2000 on, the racial question becoming an important element of the reconstruction of the identities of many young people from Praia, especially those involved in the dynamics of armed youth groups. It became evident that a secular analysis of the violence in Cape Verde, especially in the Santiago context, complemented by an intense ethnographic work, allows for relations to be established between the process of dehumanization of the black man exiled in the islands in the period of the slave trade and its later construction in popular demons after the creation of the figure of the *badio* (fugitive slave), today (re) lived in the urban context by the thug figure as an identity-emblem of resistance, reconfigured from the narratives of Tupac.

Woodward (2002) would say that when a given variable (in this case "race") enables the construction of identities based on the hostile opposition between us and them, it becomes an important element of the classification system. In this sense, although it may seem a forced exercise, as we look at the process of domination historically reproduced in Cape

Verde through the work of some national historians (Cabral, 2015; Shabaka, 2013; Cohen, 2007; Silva, 2001, 1996; Carreira, 2000 [1971]) and the process of symbolic revolution by some young people against their reproduction (Lima, 2012a), we perceive that the variable "race" used by these young people is legitimate and must be taken into account in any study of the phenomenon. Similarly, the variables class and space should not be neglected in the process of producing their identities, since, as Varela (2010) lets us understand, both variables overlap.

Likewise, it is also appropriate to take into account the approach given by Roque and Cardoso (2012), when drawing attention to the tendency of studies on violence, in general, to ignore the political component through the substitution of the notion of violence politics for social violence at a time when inequality and social marginalization have been at the roots of numerous urban riots worldwide. They maintain, therefore, that the greatest current challenge in the study of violence is to face its progressive depoliticization and consequent delegitimation and criminalization. This analytical proposal is in line with the approach advocated by alternative criminology, I used in designating street gangs in Praia as informal community youth associations (Lima, 2010), also verified by Stefani (2016) in his ethnographic study, in which he found in the model of the Korrenti Ativizta, integrated in the Pelourinho Association, the reproduction of the *thug* model.

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