



CIEA7 #7:

MODERNIDADES, MARGINALIZAÇÃO E VIOLÊNCIA: ESTRATÉGIAS DE SOBREVIVÊNCIA E AFIRMAÇÃO DOS JOVENS EM CABO VERDE E GUINÉ-BISSAU.

Lorenzo I. Bordonaro[©]

lorenzo.bordonaro@iscte.pt

‘A tiger that wants to become a lion’:

Violent forms of agency among youth in Cape Verde

Cape Verdean prison population raised 100% in the last ten years: in this paper I offer an interpretation of this disturbing figure, addressing the issue of young offenders and children in conflict with the law, the perception of youth crime in Cape Verde, and how the government has recently dealt with these issues. Cape Verde currently deploys a repressive approach to the issue of youth crime: in this draconian context, I will follow the application of policies and laws targeting juvenile delinquents as well as the public and media discourse on the issue. At the same time, through interviews with younger inmates in prisons and institutions, I will relocate young offenders' behavior and activity within their wider social context, providing urgently needed data on the cultural and social dimensions of juvenile offending and violence.

Cape Verde, Youth, Urban Violence, Crime, Prisons.

[©] CRIA/ISCTE-IUL.

E. massages his wrists with a grimace as he sits in the tiny room where I was allowed to talk to him in November 2008. The room has no windows and two chairs and an old small table are the only furniture. The walls and the floor are stained and the mixed stench of disinfectant and dirt is appalling. 'They kept me handcuffed for the whole day – it is a torture, the metal of the handcuffs cuts your wrists and that hurts' he tells me looking behind him at the half open door, checking if guards are overhearing our conversation. E. is seventeen: he is one of the younger inmates of the largest adult prison in Cape Verde, San Martinho, a few kilometers north from Praia, the capital city. He was arrested when he was sixteen and is serving eight years and eleven months for homicide.

Before being arrested E. spent his days in Várzea neighborhood where he was born and had been raised by her aunt. His father died when he was four, while his mother migrated to Boston when he was three. 'I have no relationship with my mother' he claims coldly 'it was my aunt that raised me'. His aunt has five children and lives alone working as a housemaid. Her husband migrated to Portugal several years ago.

I used to smoke a lot, and use drugs. We used to rob people in the street, like, you know, to have some money. We were three. We had a knife, and a gun! I had bought a gun. It was a 6.35. It's easy to buy guns here; there are many weapons for sale... I paid eight *contos* for it [little more than seventy-two Euro]. I was the only one carrying a gun. We didn't even hide our face; it is the bravery that comes from the drug. We used to sniff cocaine. That's quite expensive. You pay some five hundreds *escudos* (four euro and fifty cents) for a small bag, enough for one line. In Várzea, where I lived, they used to sell cocaine, there were some Nigerians selling that. I started when I turned fifteen; before I used to smoke hash, but I've *never* smoked rock (crack). Cocaine puts you into a 'feeling', like you want to go to a club, dancing... we spent a lot on drugs, sure, but also on clothes. We dressed real cool. So one night we attacked a guy to rob him, he was making a lot of noise, so we stabbed him in a leg. We had no idea he could die of that! We just thought: "well, he will go to the hospital and back home". They brought him to the hospital, where he happened to die.

E., just alike many others of the inmates I interviewed, tells me of the brutality of the guards, shows me the marks on his back, his arms, his legs. 'At times the guards tie us hands and feet, they bring us to the prison's schoolroom, and they just beat us, they kick us, they hit us with sticks, even on the face. For nothing.' He looks nervously at his back again, checking for guards peeping into the room. 'There was a director of the prison for some times who was against all this, and we could talk to him. But they

managed to kick him off with false accusations, and now the sub-chief is managing the prison. And it's him who orders the guards to beat us. Who can we complain to?'

Cape Verdean prison population raised 100% in the last ten years: in this paper I offer an interpretation of this disturbing figure, addressing the issue of young offenders and children in conflict with the law, the perception of youth crime in Cape Verde, and how the government has recently dealt with these issues. Cape Verde currently deploys a repressive approach to the issue of youth crime: in this draconian context, I will follow the application of policies and laws targeting juvenile delinquents as well as the public and media discourse on the issue. At the same time, through interviews with younger inmates in prisons and institutions, I will relocate young offenders' behavior and activity within their wider social context, providing urgently needed data on the cultural and social dimensions of juvenile offending, critically reviewing the repressive approach to the prevention of youth crime that currently typifies government policy.

In doing this, my object is presenting young men like E. highlighting both the victimization that is operated on them by structural forces and local repressive policies and their attempts to deal with the forces that oppress them. Alike the characters of Bourgois' ethnographic masterpiece on crack dealers in New York's East Harlem (2003), the young men I met in Cape Verdean prisons and institutions have 'not passively accepted their structural victimization. On the contrary, by embroiling themselves in the underground economy and proudly embracing street culture, they are seeking an alternative to their social marginalization. In the process, on a daily level, they become the actual agents administering their own destruction and their community's suffering' (ibid.143).

URBAN POVERTY AND YOUTH

Since the 1990s, with the liberalization of the national economy and the IMF intervention in the managing of the country, Cape Verde has undergone dramatic economic and political transformations that have brought about growing social class distinction. Cape Verde is indeed a remarkable case in Africa of exceptional good economic performance coupled with the implementation of a working and unproblematic democratic political system. The recent interest in the country by the international tourism industry and the raise in foreign real estate investment, made the GDP rocket. Cape Verde annual growth rate is today comparable to and even higher

than most of the emergent countries in the world. In 2007, the UN graduated this tiny republic from the category of 'least developed countries' to that of 'developing country'.

The country demography showed in the last two decades a raise in the overall population, which passed from 340.000 in 1990 to 500.000 in 2009, due to several combined factors including the fall in child mortality rate, the raise in life expectancy and the fall of migration rates. The share of urban population also rose spectacularly. In 1990 55% of the total population lived in urban areas; in 2009 it raised to 61.5% and it is agreed that this share will increase to 68% by 2020. Mindelo, the second largest city, passed from ca. 51.000 inhabitants in 1990, to more than 74.000 in 2008, while the capital city Praia, passed from ca. 71.000 in 1990 to a stunning 130.000 in 2008 (INE 2008).

All national indicators point though to a growing income disparity and social class polarization: though middle class grew considerably in recent years, there is a certain stratum of population still living in condition of extreme poverty. 10% of the population absorbs 50% of the country consumption, while the poorest 20% accounts for the 3% of it. Recent studies confirm that the percentage of 'poor' and 'very poor' population increased since 1990. In the last decades the percentage of poor population raised from 30 to 37%; the 'very poor' from 14 to 20%. Even though 70% of the poor population lives in rural areas, it is in the urban areas that poverty is more severe (INE 2002) and has increased more (Sangreman 2005: 20).

The situation of youth in urban areas is particularly critical. Unemployment rates in the urban areas are appalling, reaching a share of 57% for males in the 15 to 24 age-range (INE 2007). This is also related to the declining rate of transnational migration (Carling 2004). Traditionally, migration has been in Cape Verde the main path to upward social mobility. In the last two decades however, the increasingly restrictive immigration policies of destination countries have prevented a whole generation to follow the steps of their fathers and grandfathers, making for most of them virtually impossible to improve their social and economic condition:

...there is little doubt that with the tightening of opportunities for emigration, the poor have been most critically affected. This has important implications for development in a country where a large proportion of households depend on remittances. In this situation, access to the transnational sphere becomes an important dimension of social stratification, intertwined with socio-economic status. Coming from a poor family reduces the chances of being able to emigrate, and when this is the same for close relatives, it also reduces the chances of receiving remittances. (Carling 2004: 120)

Especially in urban areas, young people of lower income strata in Cape Verde share the dire conditions of youth that have been underlined in several African contexts. The issue is that of the problematic insertion of large numbers of young people into the post-independence socio-economic and political order. While opportunities for young secondary school graduates to pursue higher studies decrease, the number of unemployed young people increases at an alarming rate. Even educated young people are today confronted with a lack of opportunities, blocked social mobility, and despair about the future. In urban areas throughout the country young people seem constrained to remain young (dependent, deficient, single, etc.) with no easy access to wages, marriage, or autonomous residence, in a condition that Henrik Vigh – referring to youth in Guinea Bissau - powerfully defined as a social moratorium (2006).

The two main towns' urban structures (Praia and Mindelo) reflect the increasing polarization of the Cape Verdean population. Middle and upper class families occupy the older zones of town and the recently built planned areas, while spontaneous neighborhoods spread without planning on the less valuable terrains. It is in these latter areas that most social issues associated with childhood and youth have become highly visible in the last decade. Ambiguously identified as 'at risk' or as 'a risk', children and youth in these neighborhoods are increasingly targeted by governmental policies and social welfare agencies as well as by the police and the penitentiary system.

CRIME AS AGENCY AND SELF-EMPOWERMENT

Have you ever held a gun in your hands? Can you recall its heaviness and perfect shape? Its glittering steel? Its power? Do you remember the way you felt like you were in a movie? We always crave to become what we think is cool. We want to be cool. Shooting with your gun, holding it sideways, like in a movie on the Brazilian favelas, like a rapper. Can you feel the power of identity stemming from this? Now try to imagine you are in jail. Try to picture yourself growing up in a slum. You are doomed and proud. Think of yourself as a character in a music video. Can you feel the power raising? Can you feel your power raising? There are stuffs you won't understand unless you sniffed cocaine, or hold a gun in your hand. (From my field-notes)

I left my bag and my belongings at the security check at the entrance, crossed the dusty football field escorted by a guard. I met N.B. in the library and classroom of São Vicente prison. The officer looked at me, and told me with a sardonic smile, that he would be waiting outside, for my safety – I could call him anytime if I needed. I explained to N.B. what kind of work I was doing there. He could decide whether to talk to me or not, without any consequence. N.B. was a flow of words, impossible to take notes, overabundant.

My father and my mother raised me. My father used to work at the harbor, and when he went to his workplace passed in front of the 'praia de yacht' [touristic harbor]. It was there where I first met the others street children, and it was them that convinced me to go to the street. It is always like this. You meet a colleague that tells you how's life in the street. In the street you feel free, you get the vice of money – you get to know money – you know many vices... I didn't want to get back home. And when they brought me by force, I didn't want to stay there, I run away again. They used to beat me. But my mother was very worried when I run away from home.

I went to many outreach facilities...the Nho Djunga, the ICM's, at the Aldeia SOS¹ in Praia. But I always run away from there. At night I stayed in the Praça Nova, to beg for money. I met Catita, Macoc e Cacot at the Nho Djunga (the Aldeia as we call it): we're almost a family.

We in the street we have our law. There are groups, the younger ones and the older ones. If you are young you have to hide the money from the grown ups. In the street, children learn everything very rapidly: everything you want to learn you learn it. At 7 I already knew my friend in the street. At 9 I started to live in the street.

Little by little I started to get into criminality. I started to smoke, cigarettes at the beginning, then hash. We all used to smoke. Then cocaine came in. You try it for curiosity. And you want to smoke again and again... They sell cocaine everywhere, Chã de Alecrim, Monte Sossêgo. I started to make some little theft. I don't know why I started with this life. I really have no reason for it. My family is a poor family. The Nho Djunga can offer many things, but can't fight against injustice.

¹ Three outreach facilities for children at risk. The Centro Juvenil Nho Djunga is the older state institution for children at risk in Cape Verde. Originally build in the late colonial period on the outskirts of Mindelo and called the Albergue de S. Vicente, it was headed by João Cleofas Martins 'Nho Djunga' (1901-1970), a photographer, writer and philanthropist. In 1988 it was moved to the city centre and renamed after this intellectual, and is today managed by the Ministry of Labour, Family and Solidarity. The ICM is the name of the Ministry of Labor, Family and Solidarity bureau for child protection (Instituto Caboverdiano de Menores - Cape Verdean Institute for Minors), which was renamed to ICCA (Insituto Caboverdiano da Criança e do Adolescente - Cape Verdean Institute for the Child and Adolescent) in 2006. Here N.B. refers to the Centro de Acolhimento Nocturno, a night-only outreach facility run by the ICM-ICCA. Aldeia SOS is an International NGO (SOS Children's Villages) who develops projects and provides support to children worldwide, which is active in Cape Verde since 1984.

There are different categories, when you grow up. First you are a *piratinha*, then a *pirata*, than a *ladron* and finally a *bandido*. The police started to know me. When I turned 16, the judiciary police was chasing after me. The first time I went to jail I was 17, serving 3 years. Dona Loti [a social worker of the Nho Djunga outreach facility] was consulted, and she agreed – she told the judge she had tried to reeducate me, but she couldn't make it. I got out when I was 20. In jail I learned more about criminality from those who were there ...when you are in jail people talk, you start to have friends, and you say 'when we get out we get together, make a gang, go with prostitutes, organize crimes....' You think you are the ruler of the world.

When I got out I had no support. I didn't know to do anything; I had no education or skill. There had been no support to formation. And so I got in the business of prostitution, of drugs, of cocaine. I was pimp. I mediated between prostitutes and their clients, I brought them to the tourists, and I had my tip. I also used to steal to smoke drug, to have women.

And then they caught me again. I am serving 5 years for burglary. Here the only way they have to apply justice is with jail. There is no other place: they could create something like forced labor, or penalty reduction...but nothing. They should do professional training, in order for people to get a job when they get out. But I have no support from the director of the prison. Many get out from here and get back immediately after. There should be some kind of program for social reintegration. Here they don't do anything of the kind. Just football. They should give some training; you should have the chance to get out from here with a diploma.

N.B.'s history is not unique. Most young men I interviewed in São Vicente and São Martinho prison (São Vicente and Praia prisons respectively) shared with me similar stories, where poverty, street culture, drug and crime overlap producing life trajectories that are remarkably similar.

They sentenced me for robbery. They caught me when I was 16, and sentenced me to 5 years for robbery and theft. I used to assault and rob people, together with some colleagues; at times we robbed people in their houses. When they caught me I was stealing in a store. Somebody saw me get into the building and called the police. When the cops arrived I was still there. I already had a criminal record, I had been taken to the police station twice, but I wasn't sixteen yet. I used to assault people on the street to rob them, but without any weapon. I needed money to buy clothes, to dress cool. And drug. I used to smoke stone (crack). An

average stone is about three hundreds escudos, but if you have money, you smoke a lot (he laughs), you can't limit yourself to one per day or so. When you smoke you feel... you get out of yourself. (Y., 18)

W. was nineteen, and was serving five years for robbery and burglary. He was arrested when he was sixteen:

When I was fifteen and attending the eighth year, I dropped out of school. I was fed up with the school. I got together with some colleagues of mine, and started to behave badly (*fasi cabeça ridju*). I was fifteen. I started looking for a job, but I was too young to get one. I started my criminal life. I began to steal, and to use drugs. I acted together with a group of mates, in the Achadinha² area. We burglarized houses and stores; we robbed people in the street. There were three of us: we used stones as weapons, or knives. We burglarized flats and houses in the Palmarejo area. Nobody ever caught us! We stole TV sets, DVDs, and we sold them. We bought clothes and accessories. And drugs. But I never smoked base (*pedra*). I smoked hash, and used to sniff cocaine. When you sniff... you are not in yourself any longer, you are in a state that is not normal. You get into crime with more... it takes your fear away. Because at times you are afraid; and with that craving for using it, you are not afraid anymore. I used to dress real cool. I had money. The police used to take me to the station house. They brought me there and beat me. At times if the police get to know you, then they arrest you without any reason, and take you to the station house.

The psychologist of the prison, Dr. Maria de Rosário, tells me the story of a young man she has been assisting in the last months:

Most of the boys are here for crimes related to drug consumption. There is this boy, who is now twenty-two, who was charged of homicide and sentenced to seventeen years when he was nineteen. He is a drug addict. He uses every kind of drug, stone (*crack*), and hash. (...) His dream is getting out of prison and being involved in drug trafficking. Drug use and trafficking. He says he didn't commit any crime, that he is innocent. He wants an easy life. He wants to go to Brazil. And if he will be killed, there is no problem. The greatest problem we have here in this prison is drug addiction. Drugs are sold quite freely in here. We already

² A neighborhood in Praia.

had cases of boys who fell back into addiction here, while in prison. There is a huge offer, all kinds of drugs.

According to sub-inspector Rui de Pina, of the judiciary police, males adolescents and young people, are mostly involved in pick pocketing and robbery, crimes that are connected to drug use: most younger criminals are actually drug addicts. While heroine was dominating the market in the 90s, today crack, marijuana, and a cocktail of both are the most spread substances. Cocaine however is by far the most widespread illegal drug among young offenders: seldom used pure, it is most commonly smoked in the form of crack (*pedra*). Locally produced by Nigerian traffickers who manage to import small quantity of pure cocaine from Brazil, the presence of crack in the Cape Verdean drug market has increased hugely in the last decade. These immigrants coming from the African continent, claimed the police officer, usually take Cape Verde and drug trafficking as a stepping stone to Europe: when they gather enough money they usually leave the Archipelago, heading to Europe. The heavy dependence and the altered psychological state crack produces in the consumer ('you feel out of yourself', 'like if you are not yourself anymore', 'it gives you a flash') is commonly the occasional cause for the majority of youth offences.

Commander João Santos of the Policia Nacional gave me a similar picture: young boys below 16 are mostly involved in stealing and robbery in cars and shops. What is stolen is immediately resold to buy drugs and alcohol. When they grow older, he claimed, young people are gradually involved in heavier crimes, bigger theft, burglary, stealing of TVs, CD and DVD players, jewelry. Drug consumption is commonly strictly related to these kinds of crime.

In the 90s heroine was widely used. Nowadays most young people use cocaine, cocktail (cocaine plus marijuana), or crack. There is a great offer, and the prices are low. The age of consumers also has lowered. Cocaine here is very cheap because traffickers mix the pure product with other substances that are even worse than the pure substance. But most people are unemployed, they don't have a fix job, and being heavily dependent on substances, they are involved in crimes. Aggressions and sexual violence are rare, and generally committed by former boyfriends against former girlfriends.

The majority of young men I interviewed in prisons in Cape Verde had been, and in some cases still were, users of illicit drugs. Even though most young offenders' crimes are related to drug consumption, it would be shortsighted however to claim that

the increase in drug consumption among Cape Verdean youth is the root cause of their problems. As Philippe Bourgois claimed in the case of New York crack dealers, 'drugs (...) are the epiphenomenal expression of deeper, structural dilemmas. (...) The problem of substance abuse in the US is worse in the 90s than in the recent past because of the polarization of the structural roots that generate self-destructive behavior and criminal activity' (Bourgois 2003: 319).

The life trajectories of the younger prison inmates in Cape Verde stem rather from a profoundly divided social scenery. In the slums of Mindelo and Praia the structural disjunctions of Cape Verdean society take for almost half of the young population in urban areas, the concrete and painful form of extreme urban poverty and chronic lack of opportunities. The interplay between drug consumption, the crave for symbolic conspicuous consumption and a dramatically limited array of opportunities for certain strata of the population by comparison to others (see Martins 2010), are the central reasons for the recent increase in crime in Cape Verdean cities.

It is within these structural limitations and evidence of social suffering that crime can be for young people an alternative strategy for *self-empowerment*. When options for empowerment and agency dramatically lack, crime and street life can be considered as attempts to self-empowerment: street culture offers an alternative forum for autonomous personal dignity (Bourgois 2003: 8). Young offenders in Cape Verde commonly don't commit their crimes or use drugs because they cannot afford their basic needs. They look in drugs and crime for that form of empowerment (personal, social, economic) they crave for and that it is practically impossible to attain in other ways. Crime in this sense belongs to that 'range of strategies that the urban poor devise to escape or circumvent the structures of segregation and marginalization that entrap them, including those strategies that result in self-inflicted suffering (Bourgois 2003: 18). Violence is for young men in Cape Verde a form of agency, a way of reorganizing reality (Riches 1986, Whitehead 2004) and changing one's fate. I see in acts labeled as 'crime' the throbbing pulse of constrained agency pushing to break through the structural conditions that oppress it. In the deeds of the young men I met in the slums and in the prisons of Cape Verde, I acknowledge the 'destructive magnetism of drugs, crime, and violence for those pursuing upward mobility' (Bourgois 2003: xxi). The prison and repression on crime sit at the interface between structural oppression and individual action.

Several young boys I interviewed in prison, showed some pride for their criminal deeds. They talked about them looking straight into my eyes, with some pleasure in providing detailed accounts of what they did, even some fun. For young boys coming from poor areas of town, and being imprisoned, telling about their criminal actions was

a sort of declaration of existence, a way of asserting proudly that they managed to 'do something'. Their crimes were evidence of their agency, and like self-made men and young entrepreneurs they were proud of them. Their illegitimate acts were a proof that they did something in their life, attesting that they had been capable of molding somehow their fate. Within the prison, their narratives sounded like heroic claims of independence and autonomy in a place where all independence and autonomy was daily challenged and potentially denied.

CRIME PANIC AND ZERO TOLERANCE

Public concern with safety in Cape Verde has reached obsessive proportions in the last decade. Since 2000, criminality has become a key issue in the political and public debate in Cape Verde. As I claimed earlier, lack of opportunities, drug consumption, and widespread poverty and unemployment, pushed young men living in the outskirts of Mindelo and Praia to commit petty criminal acts. According to police data, in recent years there has been a major increase of petty crime, mostly pick-pocketing, burglary of homes or stores and muggings. A few cases of fatal attacks have rocked peaceful Cape Verdean society. The robbery to people known as *kaçubodi* (from the English cash or body) was popularized and triggered panic among the population and hot polemics against the government, especially when guns and artisanal guns started to be used in these acts.

The birth of small gangs on the outskirts of Praia, identifying with specific neighborhoods and involved in wars with gangs from rival areas, has been particularly shocking. The thugs, as the members of these small gangs are called in Cape Verde, have become the folk-devils of Cape Verdean society, contributing to the stigmatization and criminalization of youth in general and of the rise of the hip-hop culture on the outskirts of Praia.

No victimization study has been carried out this far in Cape Verde, and it is difficult therefore to assess the real figure of criminal offences. Police records contain information on crimes discovered by the police and crimes reported to the police. Due to a variety of recording practices, practical problems and political agenda, sometimes crime statistics just reflect the police performance in recording crimes. It is well known that many crimes are neither discovered by the police, nor reported by the citizens. This part of unknown criminality is usually called the "dark figure". Although a large component of the dark figure might be petty offences considered "not serious enough"

to be reported to the police, they can very much affect community perceptions and feelings of insecurity.

Even considering merely the data provided by the police in Cape Verde however, it is undeniable an increase in crimes both against property and against persons in the last decade. According to official police figures the reported criminal occurrences passed from 10.877 in 1996 to 21.967 in 2009. Of these, crimes against persons passed from 6.385 to 10.650, while those against property from 4.492 to 11.317³. The average voluntary homicide rate in the 2004-2009 period has been around 6 per 100.000, a figure relatively low in an international perspective⁴.

The mere comparison with the violent crime rates in other contexts however, cannot explain the widespread feeling of insecurity in the last decades in urban areas in Cape Verde. Rather than the actual numbers, it has been the sudden increase of the occurrences that motivated the panic on urban security.

This raise in criminality moreover, is the epitome of the societal challenges that the Cape Verdean society has been facing these years. At a time of rapid transformation and class polarization, youth crime turned into a symbolic issue, young offenders becoming the scapegoats for often unexpressed moral concerns for cultural and social transformation and for a growing generational gap.

In the perception of these phenomena in Cape Verde, the comparison with Brazil also had an important role. Brazilian cities play an international role as model of urban insecurity, drug trafficking, and youth crime. Cape Verdeans feel they have a special affinity with Brazilian society. The broadcasting since 2007 of *Record Internacional*, an international Brazilian TV channel, recently increased the influence of Brazil on local perception on criminality and on the peripheries of towns. 'Here we are in a little Brazil', people used to claim – or 'What is happening in the outskirts of Praia is exactly what happened a few decades ago in Rio de Janeiro'. Several Cape Verdeans lived and studies in Brazil, bringing back to their country models of social and psychological analysis.

The national press and TV have therefore played a central role in boosting moral panic and the feeling of insecurity. Since 2000, articles have mushroomed in the national press, sporting headlines proclaiming the increase in crime, the involvement of youth from the outskirts, and the inability of the police to deal with this new threat. Several areas in the towns of Mindelo and Praia are now considered dangerous. Banks, restaurants, public offices, companies and ministries have started to employ

³ www.policianacional.cv accessed on 27/07/2010.

⁴ www.policianacional.cv accessed on 27/07/2010. In 2004 the homicide rate per 100.000 was 5.6 throughout Europe and 21.6 in Western and Central Africa (Geneva Declaration Secretariat. 2008. *The Global Burden of Armed Violence*. Geneva: GD Secretariat. www.genevadeclaration.org accessed on 27/07/2010).

private guards, while walls, electric fences, barbed wire, CCTV cameras and secured buildings are springing up in middle and upper class areas of towns.

The Cape Verde government, responding to the accusations of incompetence from the opposition parties and the press, adopted a repressive approach to youth crime laying siege to public areas and the outskirts of both main towns. In 2005 the old POP - Polícia de Ordem Pública (Public Order Police) was restructured and renamed PN – Polícia Nacional (National Police), while the Judiciary Police doubled in the same year its officers. 2006 in particular was a turning point, when the Minister of the Interior, Júlio Correia, cried 'Charge!' against crime (A Semana, April 14th, 2006). Police forces were increased and reorganized; agreements on cooperation and partnership with European police were signed; and special police squads – the *piquete* - circulating and patrolling urban areas day and night were created to restore order and safety. The military police were called to intervene in Praia on two occasions, and in February 2010 the Prime Minister and the National Security Council promoted a new set of measures to 'the situation of violence' in the outskirts of Praia.

This turn of the screw on crime in Cape Verde is characterized by episodes of violence and abuse perpetrated by the police forces both during the operations and with people in custody. These violations of human rights have been highlighted in the 2009 US Department of State Human Rights report on the country that testified of 'instances in which elements of the police forces committed abuses against detainees' and cases of 'police abuse of detainees, police impunity, poor prison conditions, lengthy pretrial detention, excessive trial delays'.

The implementation of this strictly repressive approach to youth crime has led to a massive increase in the jail population that, according to my research in the prison archives, has almost doubled in the last 10 years, and has reached in 2009, according to the US Department of State Human Rights Report, the figure of 1.300 prisoners all over the country (around 255 inmates per 100.000, the highest rate among Western African countries [World Prison Population List, 2008]).

São Martinho prison in Praia, the largest in the country, was originally designed for 250 prisoners. In November 2008 it housed around 630 inmates in inhuman conditions. A new prison is being built, with a capacity for 600 inmates. The building was started in 2004 and was supposed to host all the inmates. However, that total number of inmates was already over 600 in 2008 and growing, making the new structure overcrowded even before being started to use. Prison conditions are generally poor, and facilities are severely overcrowded. The prison population is extremely young, also due to the low age of criminal responsibility (16) and to the fact that 50% of the overall Cape Verdean population is under 18. Nevertheless, juveniles

are held together with adults: in the same overcrowded cell 16 years old can spend years with people in their 30s or 40s. Sanitation and medical assistance are poor. Inmates recurrently complained about this in the interviews:

We are 22 in my cell. There are but 10 beds, the others have to sleep on the floor. But there are cells with even more people!

In the first month you stay in the isolation cell, to get accustomed. It is a long cell with 6 beds. But we used to be 20 in that cell when I was there.

... in a cell with 10 beds you find 30, 40 sleeping on the floor...

The older ones usually have a bed. But if you have money you can buy one.

According to the psychologist of the prison Dr. Maria do Rosário, psychological problems among prisoners are common, mostly due to drug abuse. As a matter of fact, confirms Dr Maria, drugs circulate quite freely in the prison: 'there is a huge offer, all kinds. We already had cases of inmates that fell *back* into drug addiction *in the prison*'. Rumors point to the collusion of several prison guards with the internal circulation of drugs.

Violations of human rights are frequent, never leading to any disciplinary action⁵. Guards abuse and severely beat the prisoners. These actions are covered up by a pervasive code of silence among staff and are carried out with the collusion and complicity of the superiors. Complaints for maltreatments are recurrent among inmates I interviewed:

At times the guards come by night, they handcuff you hands and feet. They bring you to the schoolroom and they beat you. In the cells there is no toilet. So when you have to go you have to ask, and wait until they let you go. If you insist and ask again, they handcuff you immediately, and leave you handcuffed for 6, 8 hours, hands and feet.

⁵ Violations of human rights of prison inmates in Cape Verde had already been denounced in 2000 in a report issued by the Cape-Verdean NGO Associação para a Solidariedade e Desenvolvimento Zé Moniz (Cruz and Cruz 2000), and have been confirmed recently by the 2009 US Department of State Human Rights report on the country.

I asked to go to the toilet. I knocked at the door. They handcuffed me hands and feet.

When I was still in the isolation cell, I had just arrived, they handcuffed me hand and feet and brought me to the classroom. They beat me, kicked me. Here you can't say anything. It is the sub-chief that gives the order to beat people.

I was talking to a colleague in the isolation cell, and you are not allowed to. They handcuffed me and then they beat me: slaps, kicks, fists... and then they left me there handcuffed the whole night. And when I tried to explain, they beat me again.

F., nineteen, was arrested when he was 17 and was serving five years for burglary in São Martinho prison. He was critical on the re-educative purpose of the prison for younger offenders:

Now, you stay with other people who have a lot more experience in crime (*banditascu*) than yourself. You learn. Here, you don't get any help. No judge came here to talk to the prisoners since I am here. Is this really helping? People come here and get out, and keep doing the same stuff. You don't get any help here. The cells are overcrowded. In a cell with ten beds, you see other thirty persons lying and sleeping on the floor. Is this helping anyone? No, it's not helping anyone. It just makes thing more complicated. Do they think that five or six years in prison will change anything? It won't. People talk, they influence each other. All this won't change anything.

The overall attitude behind the prison system in Cape Verde is entirely punitive. Little if any effort in 'rehabilitation', vocational training, and education is made: imprisonment is conceived as the deserved punishment for criminals. This makes difficult to appeal for the respect of human rights of inmates.

Coherently with the repressive trend, a decree-law (2/2006 of 27 November) was also passed encouraging the creation of special institutions for the internment of children aged between 12 and 16 breaking the law. The decree-law establishes the function, structure and organization of these institutions (called 'socio-educational centers' - *centros sócio-educativos*). The preamble to the text significantly condenses the remarkably repressive approach to youth crime:

We are forced to admit that we are in a time when crimes committed by minors of this age group [12-16] often do not have their origin in economic distress or family dysfunction, but rather in a strong will to break the law and with full knowledge of the harmful effects of such behavior, though they still do it.

Although the decree-law was passed as emergency legislation to face a widespread, exaggerated public feeling of impunity, it actually never worked. In 2007, after its publication, one socio-educational centre was actually opened. However the Centro Orlando Pantera, as it was baptized, never received any children and by November 2008 was almost abandoned. The strategy for dealing with children in conflict with the law remains to these days basically informal. Minors are commonly brought to the police station, to be interrogated (more or less brutally) and identified – and later released. Despite the law, few cases are brought to the Public Ministry and to tribunal, and no measure is taken until youth are 16. The police, though, keep a criminal record of the young men: when they reach the age of criminal responsibility, youth are sent to tribunal and commonly condemned to serve several years in the adults' prison.

The state is not alone in providing to its anxious citizens theatrical deployments of force tackling crime and 'urban insecurity'. As Ilda Lindell claimed, practices of governance also occur beyond state institutions and involve a range of non-state actors. These may include private sector enterprises, which appear to play an increasing role in many places, in the context of models of governance that advocate the privatization of basic services (2008: 1883). In Cape Verde, the public concern for the raise of criminality and the new demand for urban security led also to the increase of the private security sector. Created in 1994, the private security sector counts today 13 firms and 2500 guards (one per 200 people) serving the security needs of banks, restaurants, public offices, firms, ministries and firms, throughout the country.

MARKETING SECURITY

This raise in public and political interest for youth criminal and 'antisocial' behavior, is linked, in my interpretation, to a local widespread perception of decline and moral degeneration of the Cape Verdean society, whose recent economic growth and increase in mass consumption is producing widespread social and cultural changes. At a time of rapid transformation and class polarization, youth crime has turned into a symbolic issue in Cape Verde, young offenders becoming the folk-devils and

scapegoats for moral concerns about cultural and social transformation and for a growing generation gap.

Younger men from lower income strata are the 'suitable enemies' in this politics of nostalgia that portrays Cape Verde as an idyllic society whose quietness, peacefulness and mutual solidarity the advance of modernity seems to jeopardize irremediably. Panic and fear about a generation 'out of control' have been therefore the alibis for highly repressive intervention while wider social questions severely affecting Cape Verdean urban youth have been sidestepped and reduced to issues of individual behavior and morality. In a situation of increasing class polarization, security policies target mostly the poorer strata of the population while few effective preventive and social measures are taken to promote a better integration of new generations into the Cape Verdean society. An analysis of recent politics in Cape Verde points to a shift from a 'welfare-state' to a 'penal-state': economic liberalism, deterioration of the social state, and improvement and glorification of the penal state. It is a scenario that seems to make pertinent Loïc Wacquant's claims about the global criminalization of poverty (1999).

The responsabilization of the individual implicit in zero tolerance policies and repressive approaches to crime, turn into individual and moral matters political and economic processes that are the root causes of social suffering for the poor in Cape Verde. Journalist Fonseca, of the Cape Verdean national radio, expressed a similar opinion in an interview in June 2007:

São Vicente is after all a tranquil place. A kind of panic has been created, and the politicians tend to exploit the situation. Increasing control, police... But the causes are other, are social causes. There is a growing differentiation within the Cape Verdean society, with the poorer becoming always more poor. And there is a lack of social policies; this is the real problem.

The anxiety for the issues of security is also linked to the interest of Cape Verdean government in attracting foreign investors. The real estate and tourist sectors in particular have become leading ones in the national economy, and the Cape Verdean government has therefore a huge interest in maintaining an international reputation of tranquil and peaceful country (Baker 2009). Internal security has become in other words valuable merchandise for the government on the international marketplace. A manager of private security firm SEPRICAV declared to me in an interview in 2007:

We are passing from the 'least developed country' category to that of 'medium development country' (Human Development Index). The sector of security has to get along. The market is going to ask more from security firms. There are going to be more foreign investments. Without security there is no development, without security there are no investments. Investors have to be certain that they are going to find a safe place. Even more so at a time when Cape Verde is betting so much on tourism.

If indeed the perception of local transformations, the moral panic triggered by the media and the interest in attracting international investments are key aspects to understand why the Cape Verde government reacted so firmly to the raise in youth crime, I would also like to pinpoint the articulation between local politics against crime and the influence of an international agenda that increasingly prioritizes the areas of security, criminality and drug trafficking. Security policies in Cape Verde over the last ten years have been molded by country-specific social developments but also by the increasing international policy making in the area.

As Mark Duffield (2001) suggested, the features of the new global governance tend to blur issues of development and security. Cape Verde is in this sense an example of what Bachmann and Honke (2010: 100) called 'securitization of development', a process that altered the way resources are allocated by Western donors, consequently transforming African politics in relevant ways (*ibid.* 102).

Since Cape Verde turned into one of the transit points for cocaine trafficking and illegal emigration from West Africa, issues of internal security have overlapped with issues of international security, challenging our common understanding of state powers and interests. According to my data, international (and mostly Europeans) donors largely supported the internal 'war on crime' in Cape Verde. In 2004 for example to 'strengthen the fight against terrorism', the Cape Verdean government signed an agreement with United Nations Office on Drug and Crime to implement a program to improve the fight against drug and crime. According to the agreement, the Cape Verdean government received eight million dollars. Special partnerships with European border and anti-drug police also allowed for the training of officers, the introduction of advanced technologies for the fight against drug trafficking, and the acquisition of new resources for police forces in general. In March 2010 the US State Department has tagged Cape Verde an 'important country of transit' for drug trafficking to Europe; consequently, Cape Verde will receive from the US more than US\$ 397,000 for the

fight against international drug trafficking and organized crime (Praia - Pana 09/03/2010).

For Cape Verde, the political return of this close cooperation in the area of security can hardly be exaggerated. Júlio Correia (the Minister of the Interior that launched the 'war on crime' in 2006) explicitly declared in an interview to the local newspaper *A Semana* that:

Everybody knows that one of the elements that can strengthen the special relationship between Cape Verde and the European Union is the area of security ... We are not asking ... for more means to fight criminality here in Cape Verde. What we are proposing are means and policies that can turn this zone of the Atlantic into a safe space. ... We are proposing this vision of securitization of this zone of the Atlantic, convincing Europe that it is in her own interest that this zone should be safe, be it through the amount of illegal immigration that arrives to Europe, be it the trafficking of drugs that passes through Cape Verde. This however won't stop us from prioritizing the internal measures. ... Cape Verde is asking for the creation of conditions of safety in this zone because this will contribute enormously to the security of Europe herself. (A Semana 14/04/2006: 11)

We have to point to the articulation between an international agenda and funding schemes that prioritize security, trafficking and irregular mobility, the political and economic interest in marketing good governance (Baker 2009) and the local implementation of repressive approaches to crime in Cape Verde.

The definition of social problems and the consequent formulation of social policies increasingly happen in an international social marketplace marked by unbalanced power relationships. National social and security priorities, the identification of at-risk populations and hazardous behaviors, as well as the implementations of programs, respond to a global agenda which is defined by international agencies and powerful nations and later marketed worldwide through media campaigns, target-directed funding for development, help, social work or scientific research (Best 2001). Social problems are accordingly searched for and socially created in local contexts, eventually fulfilling narrower national political interests. Processes and modes of policy-making are indeed a new subject of anthropological inquiry: we need however to start reflecting critically on the considerable influence of financial and political resources on the definition of policy (and research) priorities and on programs implementation. The analysis of the policing of crime in Cape Verde cannot be confined

within national borders and focusing exclusively on national sovereignty. The 'war on crime' in Cape Verde should rather be conceived as the product of a transnational system of governance and funding which is forming a new style of politics and perhaps a new regime on the international scene, making a case for the pertinence of notions of governmentality in a transnational setting.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bachmann, Jan, and Jana Honke. 2010. 'Peace and Security' as Counterterrorism? The Political Effects of Liberal Interventions in Kenya. *African Affairs* 109 (434): 97-114.
- Baker, Bruce. 2009. Cape Verde: Marketing Good Governance. *Africa Spectrum* 44 (2): 135.
- Best, Joel. 2001. *How Claims Spread: Cross-National Diffusion of Social Problems*. Social problems and social issues. New York: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Bourgois, Philippe. 2003. *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* 2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Carling, Jørgen. 2004. Emigration, return and development in Cape Verde: the impact of closing borders. *Population, Space and Place* 10 (2): 113-132.
- Cruz, Conceição and Ilídio Cruz. 2000. *Direitos Humanos nas prisões de Cabo Verde*. Associação para a Solidariedade e Desenvolvimento Zé Moniz: Praia.
- Duffield, Mark. 2001. *Global governance and the new wars: The merging of development and security*. London: Zed.
- INE Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas. 2002. *Inquérito às Despesas e Receitas familiares (IDRF)*. Praia: Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas
- INE Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas. 2008. *Resultados da revisão das projecções demográficas- Cabo Verde 2000-2020*. Praia: Instituto Nacional de Estatísticas
- Lindell, Ilda. 2008. The Multiple Sites of Urban Governance: Insights from an African City. *Urban Studies* 45(9): 1879-1901.
- Martins, Filipe. 2010. O Paradoxo das Oportunidades. Jovens, relações geracionais e transformações sociais – notas sobre Cabo Verde. *Working Paper CRIA 4*, Lisboa.
- Riches, David. 1986. The Phenomenon of Violence. In David Riches (Ed.), *The Anthropology of Violence*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1- 27.
- Sangreman, Carlos. 2005. *A Exclusão Social Em Cabo Verde. Uma Abordagem Preliminar* Lisboa e Praia: ACEP – Associação para a Cooperação Entre os Povos (Portugal) and Plataforma de ONGs (Cabo Verde).
- Vigh, Henrik. 2006. *Navigating Terrains of War: Youth and Soldiering in Guinea-Bissau*. Methodology and history in anthropology v. 13. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Wacquant, Loïc. 1999. *Les prisons de la misère*. Paris: Raisons d'agir.
- Whitehead, Neil L. 2004. On the Poetics of Violence. In Neil L. Whitehead (Ed.), *Violence*, Oxford: James Currey, 55- 77.