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Kola San Jon De Cova Da Moura: An Instrumental Case of Intangible Cultural Heritage Safeguarding in the African Diaspora in Portugal

By Tchida Afrikanu

Abstract- This essay approaches the trajectory of a Cabo Verdean traditional popular festivity, and its implications in the contemporary urban scape of Lisbon, when figured out as a transnational phenomenon that has become one of the greatest challenges in the field of Contemporary Anthropology in current Portuguese society. The Kola San Jon de Cova da Moura is construed as one of the several outcomes of an immigrant associative phenomenon which occurred in the metropolitan area of Lisbon since the 1990s, and whose mobilization has generated a diversity of strategies of struggle, among these, the political and pedagogic use of traditional cultural practices kin to the African immigrants. Throughout an ethnographic immersion, for a period of seven years, the author has apprehended a complex mesh of individual and collective trajectories, experience and individual narratives from persons and social actors committed to the decolonial principle of annulment of prejudice by means of social conviviality, music, and dance, as well as, through the construction of place.

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Opening note

Lisbon city, June 3rd, 2017.

Saturday: 17h00.

Early in 2016, the expectations on travelling to Europe had been frustrated. The Entry Visa request had been denied (...). After ordinary procedures at Lisbon airport, we got a taxi. The driver was a man at his 40s, and I was not surprised when I learnt that the music in the car's audio player was Kuduro (an electronic music and dance gender from Angola, influenced by other music styles like sungura and rap). As soon as I told the driver the destiny's address, he readily opposed to the idea of driving into Cova da Moura's neighbourhood, in Buraca. According to him: "that is a violent favela" (slum). I could not believe it. I strongly insisted so that he would give in and accept driving us, at least until the Polidesportivo de Damaia, which is on the 7th of July Street, one of the neighbourhood's southern accesses. On the ride, during which we were enjoying the urban landscape and the typical

buildings of Lisbon city, when approaching our destination, but still in the neighbourhood of 6 de Maio, we noticed the rubbish of what appeared to be private houses' demolition. It was all about the program of demolition of "illegal neighbourhoods" carried out by the Municipality of Amadora, said the taxi driver. In his opinion, Lisbon was going through a major restructuring phase, ending with the "bairros de lata" and the "illegal communities" (referring to the self-built poor neighbourhoods, equivalent to slums in Brazil or the bidonvilles built in the outskirts of Paris by Portuguese migrants in the 1960s). I was aware of the ongoing situation. I had been taking notes, surfing social medias, reading papers, journals, and gathering information through whatever means necessary. I was aware of the precarious housing situation by a considerable part of the African immigrant communities in Portugal. But, at that specific moment, listening to the opinions of the Portuguese man behind the taxi's wheel, I noticed a certain strangeness regarding the way in which the image of these "communities" had been constructed in the imagination of people who, fearfully, were compelled to deal with this situation (research field notes, June 2017).

I. INTRODUCTION

This excerpt from research fieldwork notes carries a powerful symbolic value and narrates a situation that played an important role in the decision making, and the consequent reconfiguration and hierarchy of the objectives of the PhD research, concluded in 2020. Once we were in Lisbon, although the process of arrival and entry into the country was fine, the case of the taxi driver's attitude reported above is quite significant and raises serious critical questions around Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) issues in Portugal. One must question whether that was an isolated event, but it will be something I feel compelled to disagree with. That was not an isolated fact, and other examples can be pointed out as well. However, after the chat with the taxi driver, during which he kept reaffirming the idea of the neighbourhood as a "no go zone", illustrating ghastly scenes, using negative examples (reinforcing: "exactly as it happens in the favelas in Brazil"), we arrived at the place where, according to him: "from now on, I don't cross. It's dangerous." We paid the fare and got out of the taxi. He helped with the luggage, said goodbye, and left. We stand in front of the *Águas Livres* Sports Centre, commonly called *Ringue* by the residents. We stood next to my *Son Jon's* drum and

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acoustic guitar, and our luggage. Besides the inelegance of the transport service provider, his behaviour denounced the insensitivity of the Secretary of Tourism of the Lisbon City Council in updating the working class. For me, that moment had a clear meaning: just as there were demolitions in the now extinct neighbourhood of *Damaia*, there was a risk that it could also happen in Cova da Moura. The taxi driver's biased attitude had just stated, "that possibility".

During fieldwork research period (2017/2018-19), there were countless occasions when residents would make harsh complaints regarding the constant imposition of obstacles and the tightening of borders by both civil society and local administrative institutions. "These borders are everywhere", so they say. Of the most recent complaints, heard amongst residents and members of the association, one can mention: the refusal in delivering the neighbourhood by construction companies, or goods purchased in furniture and appliance stores such as IKEA; the postponing attitude of the *Amadora's* Mayor Office in solving matters of urgent matters for the neighbourhood (such as the transfer of the former Integrated Basic School [IBS] building to the management of the Cultural Association *Moinho da Juventude* [ACMJ]. The process has been delayed for more than two years). Finally, there are constraining situations we experienced, too, e.g.: the closing down of the neighbourhood's access to the *Sta. Cruz Damaia* train station, after nine o'clock every night on weekdays, and its total lock-down throughout the weekend; among several other issues.

II. PROSPECTS FOR A POSSIBLE DOUBLE APPLICATION TO THE REPRESENTATIVE LIST OF INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF HUMANITY - UNESCO

The will expressed through the desire of the *Kola San Jon* group from *Cova da Moura*, on carrying out a double candidacy, between Portugal and Cape Verde, on the *Colá* Festivities to the UNESCO diploma on Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity is real, legitimate and, somewhat, unusual. As one knows, candidacies of this profile have already taken place between contiguous countries. In pairs, according to the examples of Senegal and Gambia, about the Mandingo initiation ritual *Kankurang* (2005); and in a trio, between Benin, Nigeria and Togo regarding *Gelede's* oral heritage (2001), amongst other cases considering the African continent. In South America one can mention the case of Argentina and Uruguay regarding Tango in 2009. As one can see, at first glance, these examples seem to be quite different from the Cape Verdean and Portuguese eventual double candidacy. In this case, one needs to deal with a historical relationship between metropolis and colony prior to 1975.

In this paper, I approach the safeguarding process of *Kola San Jon de Cova da Moura*, as a performative practice registered in the National Inventory of ICH (NI/ICH) in Portugal and published in the Official Bulletin (OB) on October 13th, 2013. The main argument supports a fact, that has been evidenced by different social and individual actors, related to the moment the festivities were registered in the ICH inventory. Among several good reasons hold by the residents and members of the group, within the scope of the association, as well as by anthropologist (Júlia Carolino) and ethnomusicologist (Ana Miguel), who worked with ACMJ during the safeguarding process, there is one that stands out: the one that guarantees the qualification of the neighbourhood; prevent the threats of demolition; and stand against the different types of segregation suffered by the residents.

That said, this study aims at the trajectories of social struggles and cultural resistance carried out by African immigrants and descendants. The subjects of study are the residents of the *Cova da Moura* neighbourhood. They have been collectively represented by ACMJ, since the mid-1980s, in the Municipality da *Amadora* - Lisbon metropolitan area, Portugal. In this context, we aim at a diversified and comprehensive transnational trajectory, in which the strategies and their programs comprise the ethical, moral, and epistemological aspects considered during knowledge production processes by and for the communities. Therefore, we refer to the fundamental role played by immigrant individuals and social actors in various instances. A practice characterized by the multiplicity of features that cover a network of African communities¹ residing, mostly in precarious self-built neighbourhoods, resulting from the occupation of idle land on the banks of large metropolises, or, in other cases, abandoned buildings in degraded urban areas.

Between the 1980s and 2000s, with PALOP's² immigration increasing, with the same segregation constraints as in the past, these neighbourhoods integrated the landscape of all Lisbon's municipalities. Their topography was demarcated, in the eyes of geographers and architects who saw them as a continuity, labelled "the Cape Verdean belt", contrasting with the urban fabric. An expression that pervades other areas in the Humanities with a doubly suffocating

¹ In the early 1990s, there were about a dozen immigrant associations in Portugal. Six years later, the number went up to almost eight dozen associations. Currently, the ACIDI network recognizes the existence of approximately one hundred and fifty immigrant associations, and an indeterminate number of other entities, which, although not officially recognized by the Portuguese state as immigrant associations, develop activities within the scope of supporting immigrant communities in various areas of influence (LOPES, 2020, p. 390).

² African Countries with Portuguese as Official Language (*Países Africanos de Língua Oficial Portuguesa*).

meaning. On the one hand, the persistence of “a still open wound”³ in the Portuguese social fabric, that is, a malaise that prevented the development and the social transformation so expected by the Portuguese then. On the other hand, even though African immigrant individuals come from different countries such as Angola, Guinea Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, or even, Senegal, Zaire, Guinea Conakry, all this diversity was deliberately stifled in a single Creole identity: Cabo Verdean.

III. ALTO DA COVA DA MOURA: THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Before the 1980s, *Cova da Moura*'s neighbourhood (16 ha² area) was in the enclave of the Parishes of *Buraca* and *Damaia* and belonged to the Municipality of *Oeiras*. Currently, these three zones, plus the southern area of the Parish of *Reboleira* are integrated into a single administrative area: The Parish of *Águas Livres*, Municipality of *Amadora*. *Cova da Moura* is located at 15 kilometres from Lisbon, with easy access to public transportation (subway, train, and bus), as well as to the main highways that cross the surroundings (HORTA, 2000, p. 146).

Cova da Moura's history dates to the 1940s, during the *Estado Novo* regime (1933-1974). A dictatorial regime characterized, on the one hand, by a strict control and supervision of illegal land occupation and, on the other hand, by the permanent struggle of temporary agricultural workers for a parcel of land, in the face of large properties and large estates, to guarantee housing and subsistence stability (Baptista, 1994, p. 910).

The neighbourhood's historical trajectory can be summarized in three periods: a) the first dwellings, when the area was essentially agricultural (1940-1974); b) the “revolution” (1974-1978), characterized by the moment of socio-political upheaval and coinciding with the arrival of half a million returnees from the former colonies, and the increase in African labour immigration; and, finally, c) its “consolidation”, that is, the period of the housing self-construction boom, during the 1990s. We refer to the time when public policies, social housing programs, immigration policies, issues concerning citizenship etc. were inaugurated. A time span covering since Portugal's accession to the European Union and the Euro era, until today.

The story of *Cova da Moura*'s trajectory is about times of standing tall against an identity policy that reduced poor immigrant residents to hegemonic representations both of illegality and criminality. The official discourse was unable to conceive them as an “administrative and judicial problem. Rather, the

emergence and development of neighbourhoods like *Cova da Moura* have always been a “social problem” that required state intervention (cf. Antunes, 2017).

In turn, from an insider's perspective of the neighbourhood, during the process of construction of the place, the first voices that arose among the demands were those of the “returnees”. Men, usually heading their families, referring to themselves as victims of decolonization and forced displacement. The late creation of the neighbourhood residents' commission in the late 1970s carried a protest from this group that sought to categorically distance itself from the other African immigrant residents, mostly Cape Verdeans from the island of Santiago (*badius*).

Over the decades, these speeches have been appropriated by official mechanisms and the media, which reduced all the neighbourhood's residents to a group of lawless, illegal, and marginalized individuals. Official documents, and papers published in the academic field seemed to agree with the definition of *Cova da Moura* as “a model illegal neighbourhood”, which “had taken on its illegal origins” and the struggles for “legalization” (Horta, 2000, p. 213).

a) *Associativism and cultural identity*

Since *Cova da Moura*'s foundation, the mobilization around Cape Verdean identity has worked as an important resource for articulating strategies of struggle amongst residents. Note that, identity is an event that comprises the flowing of subjects' life experiences, beyond an abstract series of oppositions. According to Cuberos- Gallardo, the process has been endowing residents with a criterion of cohesion and defining group limits. Hence, the trajectory led to the adoption of its own codes and shared referents, to the extent that the processes of residents' mobilization have been systematically reinforced since their origins by resorting to the forms of traditions and modes of sociability of Cabo Verde islands (2017).

In *Cova da Moura*, resident's struggling for basic infrastructures has always demanded lots of efforts. The Cape Verdean population, which had been increasing since the beginning, took place, without leading, in the neighbourhood residents' commission. The institution initially revolved around Portuguese residents, returnees, and a supposedly small African elite. As the few improvements made in the neighbourhood were selective, Cape Verdeans began to feel ignored and their claims postponed by other commission's priorities.

The emergence of ACMJ happens in response to a doubly conflicting situation: one with an external root, leading residents to organize themselves in the defence of their demands before uninterested government institutions; and the other, a conflicting situation of an internal character that made them confronting the situation of abandonment, forming their

³ See Preamble to Decree-Law n.º 163/1993, of May 7th.

own association in order to face an older population in the neighbourhood, ethnically Portuguese, to whom the urgency of their needs was not an option (Cuberos-Gallardo, 2017, p. 245).

In this context, the association favoured a healthy confluence of factors enabling the population to activate a process of self-organization in which lack of material infrastructure was systematically paired with the claim of its differentiated cultural identity - the Cape Verde traditions. At this point, we argue that as a phenomenon historically built of resistance to the constraints imposed by the host society in several segregation dimensions: residential; educational; political; religious; citizenship; and, in relation to the alienation of labour rights, the practice of popular traditions originating in Cabo Verde's archipelago, such as *batuko* (RIBEIRO, 2012), *funaná*, as sound dimensions of *tabanca* (CIDRA, 2011; TRAJANO FILHO, 2016)⁴ or the *São João* festivities (MIGUEL, 2010; 2016; QUEIROZ, 2019; LOPES, 2017; 2020) are strategies forged within ACMJ to represent migrant communities. Such practices have been adopted during the struggling process for visibility waged by social and cultural movements.

This essay focuses on the festivities of *Kola San Jon*, organized, and carried out by residents in the neighbourhood of *Cova da Moura* since 1991. They were recognized as ICH in Portugal, in 2013. In this wake, the festivities of *Colá San Jon* in *Porto Novo*, *Santo Antão* – on the Cabo Verde islands – are staged as a comparative background and, at one time, reproducing a secular cyclical phenomenon that pervades the entire construction process of Porto Novo Municipality and spreads through Cape Verdean Diaspora⁵. The research methodology adopted in this work does not deal with the perspective of linear progress, but seeks to build its arguments through a cyclical historical context, in which critical phases end cycles that, in turn, will necessarily be followed by a phase of social resilience: a decolonizing cycle of construction.

⁴ Cape Verdean musical genres from Santiago: a) *batuko*, considered the oldest Cape Verdean cultural manifestation, has records from the 18th century. A performative practice, essentially feminine, involving music and dance, with poetic components and the use of collective singing and percussion; b) *funaná*, a musical genre created during the 20th century, belonging, like *batuko*, to the sound dimension of the ritual of *tabanca* and characterized by the experience of the populations of the interior of the island of Santiago. Since National Independence (1975), *funaná* has been a source of inspiration for musicians living in the diaspora with a biographical connection to their traditional context (CIDRA, 2011, p. 6). For more information on *tabanca* see Trajano Filho (2016).

⁵ It is worth to warn the reader on the approach adopted in this text. It does not directly affect the festivities of *Kolá San Jon de R^a de Julián*, on the island of São Vicente, nor *Colá San Djon de Praia Branca*, on the island of São Nicolau, although it constantly refers to them.

From this historical perspective we seek to identify, amongst the countless troubled episodes that occurred since the late 1970s, and throughout the 1980s and 90s, other narratives that describe the violent and explicit processes, involving the demolition of houses in *Cova da Moura* and the consequent abandonment of unprotected families. At the same time, we try to learn about the creative (re) construction skills developed by the increasing resident population, whose collective construction activities supplanted the municipality's capacity for inspection and demolition.

Mr. Ribeiro, coordinator of the *Kola San Jon* group, refers to "intruders". Once, I asked him why he used that word, he explained that these were elements that used to come to the neighbourhood to carry out demolitions, without the residents knowing exactly to whom responsibility those destructive acts should be credited. It is possible that public officials would be secretly involved in negotiations that fuelled a greater cycle of political clientelism. Mr. Ribeiro confirms an episode written elsewhere, which mentions a violent demolition action that brought down sixteen houses at once. The residents mobilized and claimed the creation of a residents' committee in 1979. Before that, according to the *Kola San Jon* member, there were attempts, but the immigrant residents had not been allowed to represent themselves by a committee of residents.

In Portugal, the implementation of public policies aimed at migrant populations have been neglected for an awfully long time. Suppression of rights and/or exacerbation of inherent requirements for granting them at the local level, were related to the legacy inherited from the *Estado Novo*'s political system, namely: "the weak penetration of the state apparatus in certain areas of the administrative structure and the ubiquity of informal relations in the elaboration of local policies" (RUIVO, 1993 *apud* HORTA, 2000, p. 103).

Twenty years have passed since researching carried out by Horta (2000), in which, the local nature of institutional responses (Municipality of *Amadora*) to the African immigration process was investigated. By that time, Horta alerted to the complex and contradictory nature of the production and implementation practices of those policies. She denounced that national integration policies had been appropriated and reformulated at the local level in a configuration, according to which power structures not only shaped the patterns of integration of immigrants, but also imposed specific profiles of subjectivity, while marginalizing others. Horta also focused on the emergence of deterritorialized association processes and the ways in which they influenced the development of policies and collective patterns of immigrants' organization (2000, p. 97).

ACMJ, while emerging as an entity that clashes with the "old ways of doing politics" established an atmosphere of tension with prior manners of dealing

with local issues administration. Indeed, the association's trajectory is permeated by situations of great tension, such as police violence. It stands against all types of behaviour considered inappropriate or unjustified. The ACMJ also engages - through its members - in the protection of the neighbourhood and its residents, while developing strategies of security in a community level, as well as individual and collective practices of sustainable social life. Therefore, ACMJ is credited as an agent that pursues dialogue and constant contact with other institutions to fight segregation (cf. Queiroz, 2019).

Regarding the Public Security Police (PSP) and their respective activities in neighbourhoods that meet the same conditions produced by urban marginality, the different voices in communities speak of police violence, brutality, collective humiliation, and assassinations. They denounce, as corroborated by the European Union Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI, 2018), Commission's report; the presence of a racist supremacist extreme right wing infiltrating the structures of the police corporation in Portugal. The times I witnessed police activity in the area in 2018 and 2019, actions were ostensible. I once witnessed a police van (nicknamed as *carripana*) speeding through some of the neighbourhood narrow and crowded streets. Exceptionally, in 2017, a couple of police officers had accompanied the cortege on the day of *Kola San Jon*'s festivity in *Cova da Moura*, without incidents.

During fieldwork in Portugal, I paid attention to the process brought by the Public Ministry against a group of seventeen PSP agents: the *Alfragide* Police Station⁶. Initial charges included crimes of racism and torture committed against six young men from *Cova da Moura*, later dropped by the Prosecutor who accompanied the trial. On May 20, 2019, I read in a Portuguese newspaper that an unprecedented judicial decision took place in Europe: eight *Alfragide* policemen had been convicted, nine had been acquitted and the victims would receive compensation.

During the victims and witnesses of police aggression's testimonies, at *Sintra* Civil Court, some of them had several complaints. Some young men testified that right after the violent episode occurred at the *Alfragide* police station, when leaving home early to work, or sometimes, when arriving home at night, they would cross paths with one, or two of the accused agents, in uniform and patrolling the neighbourhood, as if nothing had happened. Some went so far as to declare that they had undergone psychological treatment because they feared for the integrity of their lives. Regarding our study, we should highlight the recent harassment of PSP agents to the group of *Kola San Jon* and companions

during the celebration of the festivities in 2018. The episode took place when the group was paying homage to the late Eduardo Pontes (1936-2015) in a small square of the same name located in front of *Alfragide*'s police station, on June 23rd, 2018 (cf. LOPES, 2020, p. 412- 423).

Throughout its trajectory, the population of *Cova da Moura* has developed an associative dynamic always stimulated within the ACMJ. As we know, other neighbourhood associations⁷ are also engaged in community practices, so that the capacity for mobilization has reached a state of maturity revealing unusual operational abilities and remarkable resilient skills by *Cova da Moura*'s residents (QUEIROZ, 2019). In 2002, three neighbourhood associations came together and, supported by the *Buraca* Social Parochial Centre, they formed a Neighbourhood Commission willing to fight for the rehabilitation and requalification of the area.

While doing fieldwork, I had access to a vast volume of research and publications on the history and trajectory of the neighbourhood and its associations. Talking to the current President of the Governing Council, Flávio Almada, about the production of academic discourse concerning the area, its population, and the association, he mentioned a number over a hundred dissertations and theses, which would be totally or partially related to the history of *Cova da Moura* and the migrant association. In one of the first meetings, I attended in 2017, one of the points defended by him, was the question of the association critically assuming its social role as a producer and holder of knowledge and practices.

In this context, conducting fieldwork both in *Cova da Moura* more generally, and in the ACMJ more specifically, proved to be a complex task and often questioned by several subjects, who were generally curious and sensitive to understand the objectives and the reasons exposed in the research. In other words, the subjects of study, when approached, were armed with the most diverse questions and critical questions about the "true reasons hidden in the researcher's intent".

Quite contrary to the disheartening landscape painted by the taxi driver during the trip from Lisbon airport to *Cova da Moura* in *Amadora*, that Saturday, June 3rd, 2017, we had a most wonderful dinner at Lieve's⁸. We had had such great discussion about traditional culture, that she was willing to show us the people of *Cova da Moura* and ended up introducing us to some people that same night. A curious fact: it was at that occasion that I had the pleasure of witnessing, for the first time, a woman playing the *gaita* (an eight bass

⁷ Residents 'Association (former Residents' Commission) and the *Alto da Cova da Moura* Social Solidarity Association (ASSACM).

⁸ Godelieve Meersschaert, Belgian psychologist and activist, resident in *Cova da Moura* since 1980s, and co-founder of ACMJ.

⁶ <https://www.publico.pt/caso-esquadra-de-alfragide>.

accordion) and singing *funaná*. It was a *badju di gaita*, adapted to *kotxi pó* (electronically programmed rhythm of *funaná*), while the woman played the accordion and sang *badiu* verses, one man played electric bass guitar, another played the *ferinho* and in the background the binary pattern was heard on its beating electronically programmed in the drum machine. People danced excitedly, rotating their bodies on themselves or in pairs through the steady two-step rhythm of *funaná* music.

A diversity of cultural events is associated with *Cova da Moura*. *Noites Cabo-verdianas* are usual on a weekly basis, when the *mornas*, *coladeiras* and the Zouk Antillean rhythm songs are played. These parties usually take place in the restaurants *Bibia* and *O Coqueiro* where one can dance, eat, and drink, until dawn. Over the months, I learned that, baptisms, confirmations, weddings, birthdays, and even funerals are celebrated. Apart from distinguished residents' funerals, in which there may be *tchoru* (lament) accompanied by *batuko* rhythm, without *tornu* dancing; and/or *Son Jon* drumming during burial, the festivities of *Santiaguenses* and descendants, are usually held with long *batuko* sessions. During these events, family members, relatives and acquaintances arrive from other neighbourhoods, cities or even countries, just to be part of the family event.

IV. MOINHO DA JUVENTUDE CULTURAL ASSOCIATION: AN INSIDE LOOK

On Tuesday, June 6th, 2017, I attended the first group meeting held by the Tomkiewicz Centre⁹ (a kind of think tank that seeks solutions to problems faced by the association and the neighbourhood in general). The group of professionals at the meeting consisted, among employees, volunteers and visiting researchers or in field work, of thirteen people. Among them, there was a member of the *Moinho* board, four researchers working in the field (in addition to me, two Brazilians, one Portuguese and one Austrian) and several professionals living and working in *Cova da Moura*¹⁰.

Thus, at that meeting a reflection was proposed on the participation of ACMJ in the Seminar on Diversity, Education and Citizenship held at the Institute of Education of the University of Lisbon (IE-UL), in June 2017; and several issues about the methodology and the effective participation of the community in the events promoted by the association were discussed; finally, the evaluations of that academic year were displayed, as well as the adjustment of priorities for the next academic year of 2017/2018 were planned.

⁹ Stanislas Tomkiewicz (1925-2003) was an internationally recognized paediatrician and psychotherapist. He dedicated his whole life to children and adolescents in psychological distress, and victims of injustice and ill-treatment.

¹⁰ The initiative for meetings and projects carried out by the Tomkiewicz centre was launched since 2013.

Regarding issues related to ICH and tourism, there was a discussion about *Sabura*¹¹ project. On the occasion, it was discussed the organization of a course for "guides", the term used to describe future professionals was "experts from experience". Individuals who are qualified for this role must have an in-depth knowledge of many stories related to the history of the neighbourhood, its residents, and the history of immigration in general. People do not just qualify themselves for this role, there is a certain tacit consensus expressed by the community that gives them some or no authenticity at all.

Other issues addressed in that meeting referred to the issue of the neighbourhood's requalification and the resistance strategies adopted by the community in relation to the various problems involving the troubled relationship with the Municipality of *Amadora*, and the Public Security Police. In addition, other topics such as alcoholism, drug abuse, police violence, gender-based violence etc. prompted reflections and strategic discussions in favour of the victims and the respective denunciation of possible aggressors.

The impact of the topics covered during the meeting, as well as the many more meetings that would follow on a two to three events per week basis, especially in the periods leading up to the festivities, during fieldwork is unquestionable. In reality, the field research methodology had to be adapted, in order to cope, on the one hand, with the richness of opportunities provided by the resident's interaction within ACMJ, and in the abundance of potential data that could be collected in various ways. On the other hand, it provoked a critical curiosity around the person of the researcher (his/her academic qualifications, his/her practical skills); his/her techniques (e.g. interviews, participant observation, etc.); and created conditions for fostering a collaborative approach in anthropological research, during which the researcher is willing to act as a volunteer in one or more of the valences of the associative structure, depending on his professional abilities or skills.

Still at that meeting, Flávio Almada - also known as LBC SoulJah (*Luta bu Consigi* - Fight for It), rapper, human rights activist, educator, mastering in Translation

¹¹ The *Sabura* project, a Creole expression that means "to appreciate what is good; to taste" aims to organize visits like projects developed in other social districts (e.g., Johannesburg - South Africa). The objective is to show that their reality is quite different from that stigmatized by social communication, which confuses punctual and fracturing events with a daily and normal experience. In this sense, ACMJ seeks to present the daily life and social dynamics of the neighbourhood, its cultural and human heritage, its "ethnic wealth" (diversity), and integration in the community where this population is inserted. Visits can be scheduled by email. During the visit, a resident of the neighbourhood (the expert of the experience) guides the visitors and tells the story of the place and its people.

and Creative Reading, poet and current President of the ACMJ's Board of Directors raised a question that would guide, from then on, the form and character of the relationships built with the research subjects, within the scope of the association and the neighbourhood in general, during fieldwork process: He proposed a discussion around the training practice and work methodology performed by ACMJ and the Tomkiewicz Centre (CT). An analysis of the methodologies used in working relations, concerning the community's emancipatory processes, the educator spoke about the need for "endogenous agendas and methodologies", emphasized the importance and the need for the community to edit its own agenda and designing of methodologies by the people themselves. Then he warned about caution with research questions on everyone's agendas.

The conversations, with Flávio became common facts during our daily activities at ACMJ. We would discuss authors, activists, activists, martyrs of the African revolution and classics of contemporary African critical theory¹². In early June 2020, the *Antipode Foundation* released online a documentary entitled "Geographies of Racial Capitalism" starring the geographer, professor at the University of New York City, abolitionist, activist, and scholar of the phenomenon of mass incarceration, Ruth Gilmore and, aforementioned Flávio Almada.

Gilmore admits to having identified with the project and nicknamed it *Pop-up Universities*. This narrative refers to the same subject inferred by Flávio during the meeting held in 2017 at the Tomkiewicz centre. At the end of 2018, during the fieldwork period, an exceptional event took place. On the afternoon of October 10th, 2018, Ruth Gilmore, Achille Mbembe and Mamadou Ba (former football player, activist, and Portuguese politician) chaired a round table where the situation of incarceration of the migrant population in Portugal was discussed, in a room occupied by more than fifty people at ACMJ, in the Cova da Moura vicinity.

V. THE VERNACULAR AND ITS FORMS: FROM THE FORBIDDEN CULTURE TO THE ESTIMATED HERITAGE

The first encounters with members of the *Kola San Jon* group in *Cova da Moura* happened spontaneously. Since the meeting at which I was formally introduced to the group and received, in a way,

a collective endorsement, permission, and even invitations to visit their homes, took place on June 11th, 2017. During the time spent with *Kola* members, they often took the initiative and created effective conditions for me to carrying out fieldwork within the group. Before that day, however, I met Mr. Alves, a natural *tamboreiro* (drummer) from *Vale da Garça* in *Santo Antão*, and resident at Cova da Moura. Mrs. Delgado (Niche) one of the coordinators of *Kola San Jon* and Chef at the *Cantina Social do Moinho*. Like her, several nannies who take care of children in their homes, such as the *tamboreira* Ana Gomes, as well as others who attend at the day-care centre *Árvore*, maintain a routine that requires begin the day before sunrising. Many parents must leave home early to their shifts as employees in cleaning companies; supermarkets; offices; Schools; transport stations etc.

Both during dawn and at dusk, the clientele use public transportation is ethnically marked. The heterogeneous presence of a human frame whose mobility depends essentially on this system is unmistakable. Cape Verdean, Angolan, Guinean, São Toméans, Mozambicans, Senegalese (among other African nationalities) immigrants, as well as Afro-descendants (I mean Portuguese descendants of Africans), Brazilians, and to a lesser extent, immigrants from Asian countries such as India, China, Pakistan and Bangladesh (see Malheiros *et al.*, 2013) are part of this "sea of people" from which foams a mixture of diverse languages unknown to Europeans native speakers.

This "human frame" unfolds people, subjects of study, life stories, projects, capabilities, and limitations. Transnational mothers, parents of more than one family, couples who are proud of their children and grandchildren's ancestry that extends from Brazil to Scandinavia. *Tamboreiros, tamboreiras, coladeiras, chief commander*, amongst other characters: all members of the group *Kola San Jon de Cova da Moura. Batucadeiras of Finka Pé* group, rappers, and *funaná, morna, zouk love, kola* dance and *kotxi pó* singers.

By adopting vernacular perspectives (of linguistics, history, rationality, art etc.) methodology applied to revisiting the history of the Cova da Moura neighbourhood and, by affinity, the history of Cape Verde, the possibility of multiple narratives around the same facts is considered, such as: the process of genesis, formation and consolidation of *Cova da Moura* neighbourhood; the foundational moment of the festivities in *Cova da Moura*; the plural narratives about the long cycles of starvation on the remote island of *Santo Antão*, in Cabo Verde etc.

From different local contexts and their interrelations, we focus on the notion of "traditions of struggle" pointed out by Mbembe. According to him, "tradition" does not involve a "trip" to the past nor the preservation of a supposed authenticity through any object, ritual, or artifact. But an innovative and creative

¹² Names like Frantz Fanon, Kwame Ture, Frederick Douglass, WEB Du Bois, CRL James, Michel- Rolph Trouillot, Cedric Robinson, Patrice Lumumba, Amílcar Cabral, Walter Rodney, Reiland Rabaka, Milton Santos, Ruth Gilmore, Achille Mbembe, among many others, populated the conversations, their works were sometimes admired, other times respectfully and vehemently criticized when confronted with equally urgent current problems, which demand total attention.

attitude from which subjects reinvent themselves in the contemporary world. That happens from an attitude of evocation, activation and updating the original experience - tradition - and finding the truth of oneself not outside him or herself, but rather, from one's own standing ground (Mbembe, 2016, p. 67). Above all, the ability to constantly experience *being-before- oneself* (*ibid.*, p. 152 my emphasis).

Therefore, in *Cova da Moura*, it is from the mobilizing actions within the neighbourhood that a new logic is developed. In which, Cape Verdean identity is mobilized as an axis of resistance in face of speculation implied in the institutional plans of requalification¹³. For twenty years, the neighbourhood's history has been a succession of disputes stimulated by the speculative wave of landowners and construction companies interested in the area (Gallardo, 2017, p. 248; Jorge and Carolino, 2019).

In this context, *Cova da Moura's* trajectory is woven in a dynamic tapestry of crises pervaded by mobilization and resistance cycles: adaptation to new challenges and opportunities; overcoming the constraints through community's mobilization – the *Junta mōn* institution. This dynamic fabric also suggests a cortege, in which creative resistance struggles ensue through sports practicing, the improvement of education, leisure conditions, and the associative trajectory for the reconstruction of archives based on the negotiation of new content in the light of old forms of tradition: the walking archives (cf. Borges, 2020).

VI. COLÁ SON JON / KOLA SAN JON: TWO VERSIONS OF THE SAME ARCHIVE?

In this regard, we approach the pervasive nature of the archive, as a memory institution concerning life experiences, negotiated through different layers of meanings, interpretations, and prospects. Instead of figuring out aligned words that ignite thoughts, once formed in another time and place, in visible characters in the great mythical book of history, we choose the density of discursive practices, systems establishing what is said as if it were the deed¹⁴. Speeches that are established as events, with their own conditions and mastery of appearance, and things, with

their own possibilities and fields of use. According to Foucault, all the elements that make up the systems of declarations, events or things are defined as archives (2002, p. 104).

The permeability of the archive is paradoxical, and it comprises, in the first place, expanded discourse - interpenetrated interpretive layers encompassing archival institutions and their role in Western societies - as well as the plurality of narratives that depend on it. Second, this penetrability describes a fluid practice or experience. And, thirdly, it does not expend the necessary efforts to represent the emerging social practices derived from the changing archival institutions (Ivacs, 2012, p. 471-2).

Although this reference is peripheral, it reminds us the historical conjunctures which understanding is essential to apprehend the occurring transformations in the process' development. Let us report back to the last forty years. They were marked by the fall of Berlin wall (1989); the collapse of the Soviet Union (1991); and the crisis of ideologies in Western societies. The so-called crisis surrounding the fallibility of the exclusive reference to certain modalities of reason, as a *sine qua non* condition for understanding the world through totalizing schemes, has given the planet's dominant forces a turning point in the socio-cultural and aesthetic.

In the Euro-American academic centres, concerns revolved around national identity based on popular and/or working-class culture, but also, on the issues raised by the increasing immigration flows from the former colonies. In the context of the 1990s, a "new" irreversible process of "reckoning with the past" began. This was multiculturalism process, which has proven to be more complex than believed. And, despite the explicit efforts undertaken by the old imperial regimes in order to erode/destroy the traditional archives of previously subjugated nations, these have been transformed and gained an increasing voice as "the undeniable truth of past sins and sufferings" (*ibid.*).

According to Jacques Derrida, the narrative, in scientific discourses concerning the difficulty of interpreting archives as cultural and physical phenomena is not new. However, after "Archive Fever: a Freudian impression" (1995), most of the critical approaches to the treatment of archives have focused on the epistemological doubt about fragmented and biased storage by these institutions. It is undeniable that nowadays diverse voices are rising claiming new archives, while the technological and informational revolution participates and structurally reconfigures the nature, features, credibility, and authorship of the archives.

Through wars, ethnic conflicts, and genocides provided by the maintenance of colonial imperial systems during the 20th century; cataclysms, epidemics, and, pandemics that we have been mask-facing in this millennial transition, we have learned that it takes a

¹³ As is it known, despite its persistence over the past four decades, *Cova da Moura* has been the target of several institutional and private actions aimed at its demolition. In 2006, 78% of the population expressed a desire to stay in the area according to a survey conducted by the Faculty of Architecture of Lisbon. However, reports commissioned by the CMA suggest 80% of demolitions in the built fabric of the neighbourhood (Lopes, 2020).

¹⁴ Institution here entails a more comprehensive conception than the conventional domains established within the scope of nation-states and modern societies. It mainly refers to structures or mechanisms of a social order, which regulates behaviour of a group of individuals within a given community

bigger structure, than mere official documents, political regimes or testimonies from “secret agents”, to apprehend all these traumatic processes and events. In this sense, research on oral history, recording of interviews with mundane actors from historical scenes, permission to infiltrate discrete devices, notes, and autobiographical data in the ways of exploring historical repositories, from the beginning, intends to create a mass criticism of raw material about private individuals, useful for the historical and social construction. A practical method which could be quite useful, not only for those whose history is liable to be excluded, but that could also highlight the positive role memory institutions play in building more cohesive societies based on democratic principles (Ivacs, 2012, p. 478).

It is believed that Derrida foresaw the promising future of the archive, and provided a new definition for archiving to include the subject of the source, the human being himself in the therapeutic mission of the archive in the quest to cure the collective trauma. The philosopher defines two major dynamic forces acting, dialectically, during the objectification process defining individual responsibilities for preservation, to the detriment of suppression. At this point, Derrida questions the traditional historiography¹⁵ and he prevents that media memorization, like the archiving process, does not provide full objectivity or completeness. Omissions or suppressions must be recognized as attributes of the psyche, and archives must play the role of consignment, as an external technique to assist the memory process (cf. Derrida 1998; Ivacs, 2012)

VII. THE “ARCHONS” IN CORTEGE

a) *Kola San Jon de Cova da Moura*

Festivities led by *Cova da Moura*'s residents are part of the cultural and sports groups, study, and discussion groups' annual agendas, within the associations, but they do not stick to them. They are also part of a dialectical relationship with a great variety of partner institutions. The mains supply is necessarily daily. Communication is one of the most important aspects. The flexibility of holiday dates is seen as a resilient approach. The work done within the group of *Kola San Jon*, in the associations and by the community, helps the self-recognition of internal qualities. It helps building an image of the festivities that deconstructs discourses of stigmatization and segregation imposed from the outside. Such unpleasant attitudes find strong resistance there as they contrast with a strong sense of closeness and community grown within the scope of local community (cf. Queiroz, 2019).

Kola San Jon Festivity, held since 1991, at *Cova da Moura*, in *Amadora* is associated with a specific

founding moment evoked by different actors involved in a recent and equally specific historical context (Ribeiro, 2000; Horta, 2000; Miguel, 2010; 2016; Ribeiro, 2012; Queiroz, 2019; Lopes, 2020). One refers to the historical context in which they are involved, both the late colonial process undertaken in African colonies under the Portuguese yoke - forced labour; voluntary and involuntary international migration programs etc. (cf. Monteiro, 2018); and the events that have happened in Portugal, since the outbreak of the liberation wars in Africa - the crisis of the returnees; the gradual intensification of immigration from the “new” countries (former colonies); the increase in demographic pressure and the crisis around property in the process of democratization after 1974; and the consequences of this phenomenon that survived until today in the problems faced by Portuguese society (cf. Antunes et al. 2016; Antunes, 2017).

Regarding immigration, although several Portuguese authors treat the phenomenon as a novelty, the city of Lisbon, has always been subject to demographic pressures, preoccupying the civil authorities since the end of the 19th century. However, authorities have always addressed this problem ineffectively, preferably through segregativity measures, carried out on the basis of police prohibition, interdiction, coercion [violence], with collusion of the media, especially after the process of accession to the European Union, 1986 (cf. Horta, 2000; Alves, 2013; Antunes, 2017).

Celebrations of *Kola San Jon* serve some hermeneutical provocations pertinent to the recent history of African immigration, and the process of building ICH in contemporary Portugal. The first provocation is a critical perspective concerning the approaches that interpret colonial institutions and their rites as events of resistance to colonial domination, from a simplified binary relationship as resistance/collaboration (cf. Trajano Filho, 2006). Second, we refer to the arbitrary uses and abuses of “prohibition” and “punishment” categories by public and private authorities against the neighbourhood's residents, throughout their story. As demonstrated, the questions about the stigmas of illegality, criminality and violence in the discourses, policies and practices of migrant “integration” in Portugal, as well as structural negligence, the suppression of rights and the exacerbation of the requirements inherent to granting them at the local level have always been tough obstacles for post-1960 African labour immigrants.

In this wake, based on the evidence that the neighbourhood was built with great effort by the residents themselves - thus realizing the “dream of life” of many, and giving the place its own geography - one argues that the rhizomatic configuration woven in several intertwined arteries over time, has made it

¹⁵ See the discussion on the concept of history and the process of professionalization of the historian's social role, in Trouillot (1995).

possible for previously purely strategic spots to become places of encounters, points of sociability, for example: *cafés*, associations, alley corners, squares. These places carry their own stories, they are significant spaces in the social organization of those who inhabit the neighbourhood (*ibid.*). In this context, one argues that these were the similar conditions on which choices were based. We mean the path's symbolic mapping taken annually by the group of *Kola San*, through the streets and alleys of *Cova da Moura*. Which brings us to the "specific founding moment" mentioned earlier (Lopes, 2020, p. 222-23).

The argument around the "specific founding moments" of the group and the festivity of *Kola San Jon* in the *Cova da Moura* neighbourhood is less related to the essence of an "authentic" moment, than with the identification of relationships' networks established amongst different individual and social actors who acted, consciously and collectively, within the community. This initiative was supported by an important social actor – the ACMJ, to encourage a festival, through which they could celebrate their cultural identity: The *Kola San Jon* Festivity. A process that resulted in a case which the construction of a heritage safeguarding process demonstrates an instrumental nature: to guarantee the urban qualification, and fight against social/racial discrimination to change the neighbourhood's reality. This is an authentic objective, although it proposes a quite different image of *Colá Son Jon* in *Santo Antão* island.

b) *Colá Son Jon de Porto Novo*

In this paper, *Colá Son Jon de Porto Novo* festivities act as a comparative background that works as framework, not exclusive, to be modulated or falsified. Other similar festivities pertaining to the Cape Verdean Creole universe, such "*Festa das Bandeiras*" (Flag's Festivity) and *tabancas*, are also considered. However, at this moment we are less interested in the description of the *Colá Son Jon* festivities (Lopes, 2017), than understanding the historical aspects and social, economic, political and religious factors that influenced the construction of the famous festivities since they existed before the foundation of the city of Porto Novo itself.

c) *What do historical narratives tell us (written archives)*

The island of Santo Antão is at the northwest of the archipelago, and it was discovered in 1462. However, it was populated only in 1548. The main settlements were initially established in the island's north and northeast, in the village of *Maria Pia* (now Ponta do Sol) and in the village of *Santa Cruz (puvoson)*. For a long time, the mountain range that separates the northern region from the island's southern region was considered insurmountable. The island was governed by a Captain Donatory, equipped with overseers, with

wide administrative, legal, and economic powers, over the entire community.

It was mostly populated by enslaved people captured on the Guinea Coast, some Europeans (around a dozen) and elite mestizos from the islands of Santiago and Fogo, which, at that time, were already populated (cf. Cabral, 2015). Among the great contradictions and gaps that permeate the private and official narratives about Cabo Verde islands by Portuguese and Brazilian authorities and adventurers (cf. Santos, 2017), it seems that the island of Santo Antão was the most punished by the starvation cycles and the consequent scourges that plagued the Cape Verdean archipelago until the middle of the 20th century.

We argue that the starvation cycles experienced by the island's population, are pervaded by a mysterious foggy veil and a mountain range of obstacles of all kinds¹⁶. If, on the one hand, subsistence agricultural production was conditioned by drought cycles and torrential rains, on the other, when there was agricultural production, due to the lack of roads, but mainly, due to the island's topology, there was no mobility of goods in an intensity that could transform the island's economic conditions (Évora, 2005, p.35).

It is worth arguing that the reasons encouraging the settlement of Cabo Verde islands were strictly economic. Hence, it is wiser admitting that the weight of the crime against humanity, which resulted from the initial activities of the colonists from the Iberian Peninsula, took place under the Portuguese Crown Royal Charter of 1466. This charter, allowed the creation of Treasury and Judiciary Offices, granted "absolute rights" over Africans and secured an exclusive license to trade on the adjacent coast (Rodney, 1970). It should be noted that while the Crown encouraged the settlement of islands and archipelagos, it strictly prohibited the presence of European traders on the coast of the continent. If this were not the case, most settlers of European descent that could be found off the coast of Guinea, although their presence there was illegal, were from the Cabo Verde islands.

¹⁶ When assessing the number of victims, in relation to the total population to assess its importance, Cabral shows that in the periods of crisis of the 18th century, hunger claimed 50% of the population of the islands. Among cyclical crises, which occurred between periods of approximately two decades, we have a peak of 40% at the end of the 19th century and 35% in the last crisis of the 20th century. Cabral demonstrates that in 223 years (1747-1970) the people of Cape Verde lived more than half a century of hunger, with a total number of victims higher than the population of the archipelago in the 1970s. In the 20th century, the country suffered 21 years of hunger, having lost in each of the "great famines" (precisely those that will coincide with the 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars), between 15% and 35% of the population. In every four years of the last two centuries of Portuguese domination, the Cape Verdean man who lived in a permanent state of "specific hunger", suffered a year of "total hunger". Thus, in his fierce denunciation of Portuguese colonial imperialist forces, Cabral reiterated then: "this is yet another denial of the so-called civilizing and Christian work of Portugal in Africa" (CABRAL, 2015 p. 140).

In the same year, the Crown was alerted of the Cape Verdean traders' presence on the African coast, it granted the trade with the Guinea Coast's monopoly to Fernão Gomes, a prominent Lisbon trader. The legislation that resulted from this agreement restricted the Cape Verdeans participation in legal trade in Guinea. The establishment of a list of goods and products to be exploited exclusively by the Crown or its tenants was one of the ways that the kings of Portugal used to stifle their participation in African trade:

As a rule, these goods comprised the items most demanded by the Africans: iron bars and tolls, tin bracelets, beads, cotton, and other types of cloth. Therefore, Cape Verdean traders were allowed to carry to the Guinea coast only goods produced in the islands – horses, cotton thread and cloth, and amber – and in vessels equipped and commanded by the islanders (TRAJANO FILHO, 1998, p. 102).

Subsequently, a 1517 decree still prohibits Cape Verdean commercialization in the ports of Sierra Leone. A little later, Cape Verdean presence in trade relations between Portuguese and traders in the Coast was totally illegal. The accusers complained about the "evils that Cape Verdean residents inflicted upon business at the Guinea Coast" (*ibid.*, p.75). As of 1550, while trade between Cape Verde-Guinea was leased a Royal *Feitor* was residing permanently in Santiago. In religious matters, the Guinea Coast also belonged to the jurisdiction of Santiago, since its creation in 1533, the Diocese of Cape Verde-Guinea stretched between Gambia and Cabo das Palmas in present-day Liberia (Rodney, 1970, p. 78).

d) *What do collective memory tell us (walking archives)*

Currently, the dry bed of a limestone stream, where rests the small chapel, considered the Mother Church of the City of Porto Novo, is believed to be a holy place. There, on the 23rd and 24th of June, various religious events related to the saint's celebrations are held. Because, according to "the ancients", that is the place where the saint was initially sheltered by the legendary *Mé Maia* (Mother *Maia*). According to the late *tamboreiro* and storyteller known as Jon de Nhonhô, here is his statement:

"We listen to the stories about Son Jon and Mé Maia because they have their history. There are still descendants of Mé Maia alive. She ended up in Porto Novo, through fishermen, but she was originally from *Ribeira Grande*. (...) She found the saint by the sea, after realizing the saint's desire to live in a quiet place, she sheltered him in a cave on the banks where the church was to build and took care of him. It was customary to stroll along the seashore at that time in search of something that the sea could offer as food. She dedicated herself to being with the saint for her entire life and, despite the difficulties, Son Jon always answered her prayers. According to the people who told the story to my father, mother, and grandmother, how *Mé Maia* and *Son Jon* governed their lives. When she was old, *Mé Maia* asked *Son Jon* to let her see her family. Her relatives, knowing of her

condition, came from the sides of *Figueiral*, to visit *Mé Maia* in *Porto dos Carvoeiros*. I remember an old lady telling me and my father this fact in *Coculí*, in 1942. *Mé Maia's* family members came to Porto Novo, with a tick stick (the sisal flower), to improvise a bed on which she it would be carried to *Ribeira Grande*, on the back of men. When she heard about these preparations from her family, she said so to *Son Jon*; '- Oh Jon, they came to pick me up, but I don't agree to go with it. Give me my strength and my courage so that I can reach *Ribeira Grande*'. While the men were preparing themselves to face the way back carrying *Mé Maia*, she decided to walk a little ahead to say goodbye to the people, accompanied by some ladies who also came to pick her up. When the men went on to reach *Mé Maia*, they never did. She was assisted by *Son Jon*. On very dark nights she used to go by the sea, she would turn a turtle upside down, and used her meat to feed herself and make oil from its grease to light the saint" (João Baptista da Luz, 1932-2018, known as Jon de Nhonhô, adapted from Lopes, 2017, pp. 55-56).

A careful reading of the above excerpt, with no pretension in interpreting myths, suggests that the cult of the saint, in this case guarded by a woman, precedes the settlement of that arid region. In a more extended versions of the myth, the same storyteller refers to the maintenance of order in the old place of the festivities. Nhonhô (2018) explains how *Mé Maia* ruled *Son Jon* and, according to him, the saint not only accepted, but also helped, instructed, and guided *Mé Maia* in solving her problems¹⁷.

This kind of narratives is abundant in the *Santantonense* historical oral heritage. Rodrigues (1997) presents us with an interesting collection of songs and traditional sayings from the island. As argued in Lopes (2017), the multiplicity of musical, poetic and performance events that take place during the cycle of festivities, from May 3 to June 29, is impressive. These cultural activities, almost always, attest the sociological tension between countryside and city, in the plurality of festive corteges that arrive in the city. The artistic events, transversal to the religious dimensions of secular and popular Catholicism, interpenetrate the profane, the erotic, the corporeal and the sacred.

Historically, drumming on the island has had commercial and communication functions. And, until today drumming drives a 22 km annual pilgrimage. An event which is permeated by the heterogeneity from migrant life trajectories. As we know, few countries in the world have been as profoundly shaped by migration as Cabo Verde (Carling and Batalha, 2008). Immigration and emigration processes define the structural construction of the nation's identity.

In addition to religious obligations, profane motivations (whether civic or erotic) present in the history of the festive corteges in *Santo Antão*, it remains to

¹⁷ *Código de Vida – Jon d'Nhonho*. Documentary exhibited on October 7th, 2018. Available in: http://rtc.sapo.cv/index.php?paginas=13&id_cod=72217. Accessed on: 25/06/2020.

consider that of despair, agony and suffering imposed by starvation. The secular procession of “os flagelados do vento leste” who wander through dry nature and finally witness the marginal trajectory that leads to the formation of *Portonovense* society.

First, as a natural harbour through which enslaved people were transported from the African continent towards Europe or the New World, *Porto dos Escraveiros*. Second, as fishermen and small traders’ village, and at a time when charcoal was widely used while kerosene was considered a “luxury item”, *Porto dos Carvoeiros*. And finally, the contemporary city of Porto Novo, the current stage of the most disputed pilgrimage festivity in the country, the *Colá Son Jon* festivity (LOPES, 2017). Provider of young migrant labour to European countries, especially Portugal, Italy, and Luxembourg.

In turn, *Kola San Jon de Cova da Moura* festivity, identified as a performative practice involving percussion, vocalization, dance, and the use of artifacts, is constituted through a political approach to tradition in a transnational dimension. The heterogeneity of the neighbourhood’s population proves that the adherence of various flags to the procession gives legitimacy to the festivity as a performative arena, taking into account linguistic, musical and bodily aspects, as well as the exercise of a cultural identity as a process. A resilient cultural identity in process.

Kola San Jon’s festivity reminds us of both the cycles of starvation and death, compensated by periods of lesser scarcity and extremely rare moments of abundance; and the painful dialectic of a population that, facing all the evils of retreatants, in the exodus, ended up in an arid region that leads to a port. It symbolizes the hope for *escaping* (migrate), or otherwise, the despair of contemplating an insurmountable blue obstacle. It is related to this phantasmagoria as well as to its reinvention in the socially precarious situation imposed on African immigrants in Portugal, during contemporary times (Lopes, 2020, p. 576).

Finally, we believe that one is facing a case in which the quest for heritage uncovers aspects of an instrumental nature: ensuring the qualification of *Cova da Moura*; facing the constraining/blocking forms of discrimination imposed on the neighbourhood and its population, both by civil society and State institutions (i.e. the Public Security Police; the Municipality of Amadora; companies providing services and deliveries etc.).

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