



Cláudia Castelo. *Passagens para África: O povoamento de Angola e Moçambique com naturais da metrópole (1920-1974).* Porto: Afrontamento, 2007. 406 pp. 18 EUR, ISBN 978-972-36-0879-3.

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Published on H-Luso-Africa (May, 2010)

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Passage to Africa

Cláudia Castelo's book, which loosely translates as *Passage to Africa: Portuguese Settlers in Angola and Mozambique (1920-1974)*, offers the most comprehensive analysis to date about twentieth-century Portuguese settlement in Angola and Mozambique. The study focuses on the period beginning with the end of military conquest and the installation of administrative government in 1920, and ends with the fall of the dictatorship in 1974. Castelo, who wrote an earlier study about *lusotropicalismo*, promises to interrogate the idea that the Portuguese had a special relationship with Africa.^[1] She organizes the book into three distinct sections. In part 1, she explains the political and ideological context of settlement during three distinct periods: the end of the nineteenth century until 1920, 1920 through the Second World War, and from 1945 until 1974. This section provides a clear chronological narrative and structure to the study and emphasizes how Portugal's colonial policies changed over time. Part 2 makes a detailed demographic breakdown of the Portuguese who settled in Angola and Mozambique, and part 3 analyzes how the settlers responded to and made lives in their colonial context. The author makes explicit that the study focuses on the Portuguese in Angola and Mozambique; this is not a book about African responses to and interactions with Portuguese settlement.

Castelo situates her book in the historiography of white settlement in Africa.^[2] Her study will help to

dispel the idea of a uniquely Portuguese colonialism, what Edward Alpers has called "a far-away land called Portuguese Africa."^[3] At the heart of the argument is Castelo's impressive number crunching of individuals arriving and departing Angola and Mozambique by steamer; after 1907 the Portuguese did not need passports to travel to the colonies, and so their settlement was not recorded in Portuguese emigration statistics. She also draws on census data, conducted in 1940, 1950, 1960, and 1970, to provide detailed demographic information about the settlers. Part 2, "Demographic and social characteristics of white settlers in Angola and Mozambique," demonstrates that white immigration to Angola and Mozambique only took off from the mid-twentieth century, and that on the whole Portuguese settlers resembled other white settler communities in Africa, not only demographically but also in their attitudes toward Africans, the land, and their role within a colonial social order. By 1970, whites in Angola and Mozambique numbered nearly a half million and lived primarily in urban settings, with a near equilibrium between men and women, and on average they were better educated than their counterparts in Portugal (p. 379). In spite of the rapid growth in the settler population—in 1920, Angola and Mozambique had small white populations, 20,700 and 11,000 respectively—immigrants to the African colonies never constituted more than 12 percent of immigrants leaving Portugal (pp. 174, 181).

In part 1, "White settlement in Portuguese Africa: Ideology and politics," Castelo explains the two intellectual currents motivating Portugal's Africa policy after the Congress of Berlin. The first preached the development of the colonies and its peoples; and the second defended a colonization based on economic exploitation of natural resources and Africans' labor. This second current, according to Castelo, won the day and determined the legal statutes governing forced labor and land concessions to settlers and metropolitan and foreign business interests. Castelo explains how particularly under the *Estado Novo* (1933-74), economic policies dictated that the interests of Angola and Mozambique were governed by a mercantilist system, which subordinated colonial interests to those of the metropole. These policies, in spite of a nationalist, pro-colonial rhetoric, discouraged Portuguese settlement.

Settler perceptions of Angola and Mozambique as places of opportunity began to change during the commodity boom after the Second World War. These economic opportunities developed as Brazil restricted the number of Portuguese immigrants allowed in. Growing white settlement brought benefits to the Portuguese economy because the growing settler populations in the colonies bought Portuguese products (p. 110). Castelo explains further how changing politics in the post-WWII context led to a series of new laws to make Portugal's colonial policy more politically palatable. The 1951 Colonial Act scrapped "colonies" for "overseas provinces" and redefined Portugal as a "multi-continental nation." Assimilation became the Portuguese solution to warding off increasing demands for independence. This is the period when Brazilian sociologist Gilberto Freyre visited Angola and Mozambique and argued that the Portuguese had a special capacity as colonizers because they created multiracial societies. Castelo argues that it was this doctrine that was of enormous utility for the strengthening of the idea of a "united, trans-continental Portuguese nation," and for the settlement of Portuguese immigrants in Angola and Mozambique (p. 108). The outbreak of the Angolan nationalist war for independence in 1961 and the subsequent abolition of enforced African legal inferiority (the *indigenato*) and forced labor further changed the political landscape, as did the Portuguese decision after 1961 to open up Angola and Mozambique to foreign investors, which further spurred investment and white settlement. Though in retrospect, it seems counterintuitive that as African independence progressed, white settlement in Angola and Mozambique rose dramatically, most especially in Angola.[4]

One of the strengths of Castelo's work is that her analysis of settler motivations and government policy explains *why* settlers moved to the African colonies, especially during a period of increasing political instability. Castelo explains motivations behind the decision to migrate to the colonies as including state propaganda, particularly under the *Estado Novo* (1933-74), but more important, she argues were push factors, such as a lack of economic opportunity at home, and factors of attraction, such as social mobility and the idea of adventure (pp. 202-203). In fact, state-sponsored settlement schemes played a relatively minor role, in spite of being a goal of successive governments. About seventy thousand went to both colonies on government schemes between 1953 and 1973, for example (pp. 209-210).

Many of Castelo's most interesting additions to the historiography are found in part 3, "Settlers' interactions with the physical environment, local populations, and colonial administration." She is careful to avoid simplistic colonial dichotomies, as realities were permeable and complex and changed over time. The emphasis is on how settler identities evolved in the context of racial hierarchy and a changing colonial discourse about a specifically Portuguese colonization from the 1950s. Castelo discusses ideas about the "perfect settler" as laid out in pamphlets from the 1940s; "the romantic vision of the settler bound for Africa was replaced by nationalist vision: the settler as a lasting guarantor of Portuguese rule in the overseas provinces and an indispensable part of the civilizing mission/work" (p. 248).[5] Settlers were instructed to feel superior to local peoples and to practice policies of segregation. African peoples were generally treated as a homogenous block in these formulations. In these aspects, the culture of the settler communities was not unlike conditions in the other colonies of settlement, such as Algeria, Kenya, and Rhodesia. Likewise, Portuguese ideas and representations of "the native" reveal a basic similarity to ideas in other colonies of settlement.[6] Castelo's detailed analysis and explanation of the various legal and social means of enforced discrimination, including daily humiliations, repudiate the basic arguments inherent in *luso-tropicalismo*—that Portuguese colonialism was somehow more humane than other colonial experiences. Castelo argues, in contrast, that before the 1940s in spaces of long settlement, such as Luanda and Benguela, where far fewer Portuguese women went, there existed common marriages between Portuguese and Africans, and settlers were probably less racist than in more closed settler societies like Algeria and Kenya (pp. 379-80).

Castelo ends with a discussion about the lacuna in the historiography about the tensions between colonial powers and their settler agents in the colonies (p. 331). Though most white settlers in Angola and Mozambique remained patriotic Portuguese until their mass exodus on the eve of independence, they did voice consistent resentment against central planning from Lisbon, which limited their freedom to trade, and subjugated colonial interests to metropolitan ones. Castelo ends with reference to memoirs written by settlers who returned to Portugal at independence, feeling betrayed because they had believed that Angola and Mozambique were parts of Portugal (like Minho or the Azores), and who feel nostalgic for a lost paradise (p. 371). She leaves open what happened to the settlers after independence to another study.[7]

Castelo's *Passagens para África* makes a significant contribution to at least two historiographies: white settlement in colonial Africa and twentieth-century Portuguese colonialism in Angola and Mozambique. Scholars of Portuguese emigration will also find sections of the book of interest, particularly the author's demographic profiling of migrants based on steamship passenger lists and colonial census material. I hope to see an English translation in the near future, so that the book is read more widely.

Notes

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Citation: Jeremy R. Ball. Review of Castelo, Cláudia, *Passagens para África: O povoamento de Angola e Moçambique con naturais da metrópole (1920-1974)*. H-Luso-Africa, H-Net Reviews. May, 2010.

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[1]. Cláudia Castelo, *O Modo Português de Estar no Mundo: O Luso-Tropicalismo e a Ideologia Colonial Portuguesa* (Oporto: Edições Afrontamento, 1999).

[2]. Dane Kennedy, *Islands of White: Settler Society and Culture in Kenya and Southern Rhodesia: 1890-1939* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987).

[3]. Edward A. Alpers, "Studying Lusophone Africa: Retrospect and Prospect," *Ufahamu* 23, no. 3 (1995): 94.

[4]. The white population in Angola increased from 172,529 in 1960 to 280,101 in 1970; and in Mozambique from 97,245 in 1960 to 162,967 in 1970 (p. 143).

[5]. See, for example, José Conçalves Santa Rita, *Colonização de Povoamento: Breves Notas* (Lisbon: Sociedade de Geografia de Lisboa, 1949).

[6]. An insightful study on this subject in a Portuguese colonial context—which surprisingly does not show up in Castelo's bibliography—is Mário Moutinho, *O Indígena no Pensamento Colonial Português* (Lisbon: Edições Universitárias Lusófonas, 2000).

[7]. Rui Pena Pires, *Os Retornados: Um Estudo Sociográfico* (Lisbon: Cadernos do Instituto Para o Desenvolvimento, 1987); and Rui Pena Pires, *Migrações e Integração: Teoria e Aplicações À Sociedade Portuguesa* (Oeiras: Celta Editora, 2003).