

**MIGRANTS, SETTLERS AND COLONS:
THE BIOMEDICINE OF DISPLACED BODIES**

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Abstract:

Madeiran islanders have been for more than two centuries the protagonists of a large-scale diaspora that brought them from their north-Atlantic home to remote places as Hawaii, California, Guiana or Southern Africa. Scarcity of land, a rigid social structure, periodic famines and rampant poverty made many embark to uncertain destinies and dreadful labour contracts in cane plantations. In the late 19th century, a few hundred Madeirans were involved in a venture of “engineered migration” that brought them to the plateau of Southern Angola. In the context of a “scramble for Africa”, European governments eagerly promoted control over territories not only via military actions and scientific surveys but also by placing settlers there. Fearful of the German, Boer and British advances over southern Angola, the Portuguese government tried to attract Portuguese farmers to the place. But few of them responded, other than the impoverished Madeirans who were already eager to migrate anywhere. Their case challenges the clear distinctions between the categories of settlers, colons, and migrants. That becomes particularly apparent in the study of the health reports about them. In this paper I will analyze data from different health reports – from the physician of the India vessel in which they sailed in 1884, from the different colonial physicians who were assigned to the area, and from later studies on the physical condition of the colons. While trying to assess the health condition of displaced bodies, those health reports use stereotypes and metaphors that show some persistence on the relationship between biomedical knowledge and migrant populations...

Key words ANGOLA; COLONIZATION; ACLIMATIZATION; COLONIAL
MEDICINE; RACE; MADEIRA ISLANDERS; MIGRATION; SETTLEMENTS;

1. Madeirans in Huíla

In 1884, and for the following 7-8 years, hundreds of Madeiran islanders were boated by the Portuguese government to the coast of southern Angola and then tracked the mountains up until the Huíla plateau, where they were supposed to start new agricultural communities.

Image 1:

Map of routes of over sea displacement and inland routes in south Angola

This was a new type of experience for the Portuguese administration, and soon it was used to strengthen pro-colonial political arguments. In spite of the difficulties, the displaced Madeirans survived and its descendents lived through the 20th century.¹ They were later turned into a kind pioneering heroes of the white colonization of Angola. But back in those times there were very low expectations about their adaptation to the environment.² Some of the documents related to the assessment of the community successes were signed by colonial physicians. These physicians commented on the health and physical condition of the displaced Madeirans, which makes them a good case to discuss the ways in which biomedicine has thought and acted upon the bodies of migrants, colons and settlers.

¹See Nascimento (1891, 1892, 1912), Felner (1940) , Dias (1923, 1926, 1928, 1940), Machado (s.d.) , Correia (1925, 1930, 1934) and, for more recent analysis, Jasmíns (2000) Medeiros (1976), Silva (1971-73)

² E. g. Almeida (1885), Botelho (1895, 1896)

From the European perspective, the displacement towards tropical areas and warm climates was not a mere displacement of bodies across space. The tropics had long been regarded as the white men's grave. The predicament for the moving bodies was a grim one, redeemable at some point by the theories of acclimatization. These claimed that the human body, like those of plants and animals, could adapt to life in the tropics. There might even be such thing as intermediary stations for the purpose – such as the highlands with their milder climate. There were many ideas, preconceptions and attempts to theorize on the issue. Many supported the view that the move to the tropics would directly lead to degeneration.³

Those debates are at the background of the commentaries on the physical fitness and the adaptation of Madeirans to the Southern Angola lands. The background debates are also interwoven with the racialist ideologies that were then taking shape and building form to reach their peak in the first half of the 20th century. But at the time the concepts of flexibility and adaptation were still pervasive in medical appreciations of displaced bodies.

2. New European trends in colonization and settlements

What was new about promoting white settlements, or engineered migration, in colonial Africa? For centuries, the relationship between Europeans and Africans had been about the slave trade, that is, mainly about forcing Africans into the New World plantations. The Portuguese had been highly involved with the South Atlantic traffic

³ It was not until the 19th century that “race” came to be seen as a stable biological entity by European scientists. Until then, human bodies were perceived as more flexible and adaptable to the environment (Harrison). Once monogenism was accepted, climate was seen as the main responsible for the variations observed between human types. It followed that those who moved from one type of climate to another might undergo physical change; from the perspective – and fears – of Europeans, it was not only the graveyard that waited for them in the tropics, but the specters of darkness, degeneration and castration. This was what had happened with the Portuguese, northern Europeans pointed. Already dark and used to warmer climates to begin with, the Portuguese had gone through the paths of degeneration by miscegenation in India, Brazil and Africa.

lines which mostly fed Brazil. But things had changed in the 19th century: Brazil became an independent nation in 1822, the slave trade was increasingly prosecuted by international partners, abolitionist currents grew in importance and influence,⁴ and in 1878 slavery was definitely abolished within Portuguese territories.⁵ In the meanwhile, other European nations promoted initiatives that materialized their interests in administering Africa. Overlapping claims to territory and conflicting interests led to a sort of tensions that boiled down to a truly Eurocentric approach to Africa – the Berlin Conference (1884-85) and the European scramble for the continent.

The Portuguese administration had to adjust to the new trends; old-fashioned colonialism, entitled on ancient conquest rights, was no longer acceptable by other European partners. Needless to say, Africans were not taken as partners in the European plot over Africa. Either as a resource or a nuisance, they were seen as a part of the landscape. The trend was about moving Europeans to Africa. The initiative of displacing Madeirans into southern Angola was part of that movement.

Much of that experience, however, was due to chance rather than planning. Its analysis reveals other tensions and dramas that involved the islanders of Madeira, themselves ready to leave their home to escape unbearable poverty and land-scarcity. In a sense, what was colonization and settlement for some of the political actors was yet another choice of labour migration for those who were actually displaced.

3. Earlier experiences in Southern Angola: place and people

There had been some previous attempts to move Europeans into the south of Angola. In 1849, two boats had come from Pernambuco, Brazil, with people who were

⁴ Sá da bandeira, 1873

⁵ Other forms of forced labour continued into the 20th century. The end of slavery did not equate to generalized citizenship. Most Africans were subject to the status of *indigenas*. Only the very few *assimilados* had the rights of citizenship.

escaping post-independence turmoil. Their leader, Bernardino Abreu e Castro, was a Portuguese political exile in Brazil (a *Miguelista*) who also did not get along with the site and had to run from some anti-Portuguese conflicts (*Revolução Praieira*).⁶ According to his biographers, he envisaged a wealthy plantation system in Southern Angola.⁷ He tried the sugar-cane plantation with no success – ecological and social conditions were quite different from what had been the support of that system in Northeastern Brazil. Free labour did not abound in the Southern Angola, and slavery was about to be extinguished. Abreu is himself portrayed as an abolitionist by some of his chroniclers, although his position on the issue – as on the purpose of building a new Brazil in Africa – remains unclear.

The next attempts to create white colonies in the area were also deemed to failure. While some commentaries blamed it on the inappropriateness of the sites, most considered them good enough and blamed the failure on the poor quality of human types used for the settlement experiences.⁸ The people who had been brought there were prisoners, low-rank soldiers, German migrants who faked skills,⁹ reckless youth

⁶ Pelissier (1998), Vicente (1961)

⁷ Vicente (1998). It had come across some policy makers to move pro-Portuguese people out of independent Brazil into Africa and create there one, or more, “new Brazils,” (Jasmins, 2000). Raul Candeias da Silva refers that in 1839 Luanda sent a ship to Rio de Janeiro to board discontent Portuguese residents and bring them to Angola (Silva 1971:343). Later, he comments that many of those who embarked were those who had failed in the Americas, and were not suited for a proper colonization of Africa either – they were either merchants, breadmakers, “artists” of different sorts, and hoodlums (*Vadios*).

⁸ E. g. Joao Almeida, discussed by Silva (1972b). Doubts about the quality of the colons did not spare the Madeirans, who were seen by some authors as a scum of drunks and hoodlums (e.g. Pereira do Nascimento, 1909, apud Silva 1972b:435) Discussing both the secondary and primary sources, Silva concludes that unlike Sousa Dias, who blamed the improper preparation of the site, the fault of failure was the poor quality of the colons (1973: 340).

⁹ Silva (1973:313). At some point the government had sponsored the settlement of migrants from other countries, and a group of Germans was embarked in eth 1860s. However, in spite of claiming to be masons and carpenters, they were not even able to build proper homes, something that was part of the migration contract.

from institutions,¹⁰ Algarvian fishermen.¹¹ Even the priests were placed there as a punishment for immoral behaviour elsewhere.¹²

Why did the displacement of Madeiran islands succeed where the others had not? Embellished by historians a few generations later, the Moçâmedes/Huíla experience is presented as an act of engineered colonialism with a premeditated change in tactics,¹³ like a controlled experience of settlement devoted to success and to prove that the white colonization of Africa was indeed possible. The arguments used by the chroniclers refer to the correct choices of site (appropriate climate, suitable for the acclimatization of European species, whether vegetable, animal or human) and human stock.¹⁴ Thus the Plateau of Huíla – which had a climate suited for European-style agriculture and for European bodies, ideal for acclimatization, and a good start for farming communities. But why Madeirans? One argument could be that they had the agricultural skills that lacked on the others.¹⁵ But were those Madeirans the good farmers for the Huíla plateau? Did they have any idea of where they were going? Did anyone know, indeed?

¹⁰ A group of youngster from Casa Pia joined the German contingent in the 1860s, and they, also, were seen as rebellious who would not help in a proper settlement.

¹¹ A few contingents of Algarve fisherman, from Faro and Olhão, sailed in their own boats to the Moçâmedes coast. Until then, fishing activities were practiced only by African natives. The Algarvians settled in the coast, and they can not really be considered a part of the plateau contingents. It should be noted that prejudice about algarvians was widespread among the Portuguese intelligentsia at the time.

¹² Silva compiles a number of cases of priests accused of immoral behaviour in the region (1973:339)

¹³ Raul Silva explicitly credits Pinheiro Chagas for the migration of Madeirans (Silva 1972:528, 1973:342).

¹⁴ These two conditions had been spelled out way back in the 18th century by governor Sousa Coutinho, in a quote that most chroniclers see as the very beginning of the attempts for the white colonization of Angola: “*colonisar as terras altas angolanas, por meio de casais brancos de bôa gente e sabedores dos principais officios manuais*” (to colonize the highlands of Angola with white couples of good people, knowing of the main hand skills).

¹⁵ Some of the arguments claim that they were looking for easy lives which did not involve the endurance of agricultural labour and the building of sustained communities; that they were unable to create proper associations and community life; that they rapidly left agriculture for the easier life of commerce; and that when they persisted in agriculture, they chose the wrong crops and the wrong timings. In sum, nothing was good, and there was no real support from the state besides the initial help in kind and travel. Even those who were fully sponsored by the government, like the soldiers, had to endure immense difficulties.

4. The political context

A short incursion on the facts of the period may suggest a different interpretation of the events. First of all, the context: the flow of Boers¹⁶ marching north into the southern Angola territories (the Northern Trek) threatened the Portuguese claims over the land. The many episodes of native resistance were not taken as an official threat: wars with natives were part of the colonial trivia.¹⁷ But the presence of a few white settlers of Dutch descent, as well as the proximity of the British,¹⁸ in the context of a mounting tension between Europeans about African land, became the motive for a change in colonization policies.

Pro-colonial positions were not too popular in Portugal right before the 1880s.¹⁹ The country was devastated by civil wars and many among the poor migrated to the New World and to wherever they could find work. Madeirans would go as far as the Sandwich islands (Hawaii) and work in the sugar-cane fields as indentured labourers --- just a step out of slavery.

The idea of re-directing the Portuguese migrants towards the unused lands of the Portuguese colonies slowly gets shape in the parliament and gets to the legislation in 1881:

... the emigration of the kingdom's continent and adjacent islands goes to inhospitable lands, where Portuguese citizens, generally subject to lion contracts, go, pushed by misery, seek in the hard labour of colons and servants, so many diseases, fatigue, and often death itself.

More than once in the parliament and in the press there has been the expression of the need to call into our vast overseas domains the currents of emigration that impoverish the country, by stealing them of their more robust hands.

¹⁶ Raul Silva refers that "commanded by a certain 'captain Botha', they killed and devastated the peoples of the region" (Silva 1972:525)

¹⁷ Historians of different angles (Pelissier 1998, Silva 1972) describe the 1850s and 1860s as filled with wars with African groups.

¹⁸ Raul Silva also notes that "All through the occupation of Angola, the Portuguese always feared that the English, drove by ambition, would settle in our territories" (Silva 1971:371).

¹⁹ Many thought that the African colonies were a nuisance and undeserving of any effort. Some advocated their sale to other European potencies. The anti-colonial position was not, or not mainly, about humanistic feelings regarding the Africans, but about European positions in the tropics.

*More than once opinion has demanded from the public powers to respond to the situation of these disgraced beings, whom, by not finding in their motherland neither property nor work go, often, subject themselves to a true slavery, disguised under the colours of freely arranged conventions.*²⁰

5. Re-routing people to Africa

The government tried to make African destinies more attractive by offering good conditions to those who were willing to migrate there. Editals were posted in the different districts. In Braga, for instance, the governor Jeronymo da Cunha Pimentel announced in February 14, 1884, that the ship *India* would bring up to 50 colons to the district of Moçamedes, in Angola. Up to 8 in that district could be included; the candidates should sign the term in Braga and present themselves in the ministry of Navy and overseas until the following 22nd – that is, in about a week!

The call aimed at “valid men”, under the age of 35, preferably married, farmers or artisans of farming-related activities (carpenters, masons, ironsmiths, etc.). In sum, the government tried to capture the healthy bodies, both on physical and social grounds. In turn, if offered the sum of 30,000 reis, the trip, and a number of tools: a gun, an axe, a shuffle, a hoe, basic household ware). And a protection, a direction in life that would lead them to a desirable destination:

at arrival in Angola, the colons will be under the protection of the emigrants office, which will give them the appropriate destiny in the district of Moçâmedes, which is, as everyone knows, very healthy, rich and with all the conditions of the best European countries, where they will have protection of the authorities and the convenience of those who speak the same language and share the same motherland.”*²¹

The fact is that few responded, though. In the list of migrants aboard the *India* in the trip that left Portugal in March 1st 1884, only three had signed the term in Braga

²⁰ Diário de Governo, 1881, #185, August 20.

²¹ Edital, Braga, 1884, Arquivo Historico Ultramarino, sala 12, Angola, diversos, maço 1079 (our emphasis).

(Luiz da Silva, from Vila Flor, Bragança; Domingos Machado, from Famalicão, and Antonio Soares, from Braga). There was one migrant who had signed in Viseu and seven who had signed directly at the ministry. Plus nine who had signed in Funchal (but one, in fact, was from a different and later contingent). A few telegrams between Funchal and Lisbon show that there were migrants in the Madeira Island who were ready to leave, whereas not many in mainland Portugal had responded to the government appeal. Of that total of 20, some were lost – either died or went after non-agricultural destinies once out of the boat.²²

6. Why Madeirans

Madeirans were probably the most disenfranchised among those who at the time searched for labour and land outside Portugal. They embarked into destinies as inhospitable as the Guiana, at least since the 1840s²³, where they succumbed easily, and to places as distant as Hawaii.²⁴ They also embarked to Trinidad – both for labour and for religious reasons²⁵ and the United States. Southern Angola became an officially sponsored alternative. While the Portuguese government promoted their settlement as part of a strategy for land occupation in the context of the European scramble for Africa, the Madeirans had little perception of the politics involved and went about their lives as they could, trying to replicate the practices they knew from their mother island. One

²² This episode is ignored by the historians who wrote about the Madeiran migration; they refer only to the November trip of the same ship “India”. Without ever explaining why Madeirans, Raul Silva, who otherwise provides a minutiously detailed account of the white colonization of Southern Angola, simply refers to the fact that “When Manuel Pinheiro Chagas took the foreign Overseas and Navy office the rhythm of the Angolan colonization accelerated (...) This minister sent to the south Angolan lands the first madeiran colony, composed of 222 individuals of both sexes. Embarked on the vessel ‘India’, they set foot in Moçâmedes in November 18, 1884, and established for good in Lubango in January 19, 1885, under the direction of sir José Augusto da Câmara Leme” (Silva 1972:528).

²³ See Ferreira (2001)

²⁴ See Spranger (2001). They had to sail the Atlantic all the way south of the Cape Horne and back North in the Pacific Ocean.

²⁵ See Ferreira (2001), and Fernandes (2004)

thing that should be noted is that they were used to a type of agriculture hardly compatible with the highlands climate, and their initial crops were deemed to failure.

So the second trip of the ship *India* in 1884 (October/November) goes straight to Madeira to get the passengers for Moçâmedes. About 250 embarked in Funchal.²⁶ Officially the contingent was composed of 20 *operarios*, plus 15 family members and 70 colons, plus 116 of their family members, 66 of which were children.²⁷ But these were not the only ones: the day after they left Funchal, another 20 were found on board. They had embarked illegally, and in the next stop, in Cape Verde, the captain waited for telegraphic government instructions. They all followed route anyway, making the 200 plus contingent that most chroniclers report.

They arrived to Moçâmedes in November 1884 and were housed in barracks built for the occasion (two for the families, one for the older girls, one for unmarried men and boys). There were plans to cross the mountains that stood in the way to the plateau, which they reached in January 1885. Some among them remained at Lubango, some went to Humpata and some founded the small colony of São Pedro da Chibia. Three years later they were the cover story of the pro-colonial Portuguese newspaper “*Colonias Portuguesas*”, one of the few – yet vocal – pro-colonial media

IMAGE 2

PHOTOS FROM COLONIAS PORTUGUESAS

²⁶ Almeida (1885)

²⁷ Silva 1884; Almeida 1884-5.

The newspaper commented that Moçâmedes was the only successful case among the Portuguese attempts to colonize Africa in current times, and that it should provide an example for more.

*it is there that several colonies have kept and prospered, it is there that the reproduction of the white race and the joyful and healthy living of the European migrants speak louder than any study about African regions and climates, encouraging us to send there all those who in the motherland do not find easy ways to provide their own subsistence.*²⁸

In spite of the joyful tone of the reports of *Colonias Portuguesas*, and in spite of the many glorified reports produced by 20th century historians and even by some in physical anthropology, the life of Madeirans in their early years in Huíla was not easy. Their trip there had not been easy to begin with: while the sailing reports produced by the captain refer candidly to the ocean, winds, speed, motor repair, harbours, who entered, who left, the report produced by the physician on board about the actual people that sailed shows a much harsher picture of an overcrowded vessel where their physical suffering prolonged what had been and already harsh life.

7. The harshness of displacement

The first comment of the naval physician Alexandre Almeida about the Madeirans who embarked aboard the vessel “India” from Funchal to Moçâmedes reveals discomfort regarding their appropriateness for the purpose of cultivating land, as if they had not been subject to any selection.²⁹ Among the contingent there were some “valetudinarians”, some “into age”, many without the necessary fitness for the agricultural work; many were just too young, and some had skills or arts that were

²⁸ *As Colonias Portuguezas*, 30 Abril 1888, p. 29.

²⁹ Almeida, Alexandre Noberto Correa Pinto de, facultativo naval de 1ª Classe, “Transporte Índia: Relatório Medico, 1884-1885. Arquivo Central da Marinha, “India”, Transportes Diversos, Cx 673 (1884-92).

useless for the taking off of a new colony. Those who embarked illegally to show up a few days later asking for food, in a total of 24, were in total indigence, deprived of clothes and of any resources. In Dr. Almeida's words, they were probably "escaping the misery of their homeland", and maybe motivated "by the love of the unknown" and the "desire of seeing lands". But, still in his words, with the health in ruins, they would pay in short time with their lives what had been their escape from home. Some among them would willingly abandon the trip in Sao Vicente (Cape Verde).

The physician elaborates intensely on the necessary adaptations that the vessel should be subject to in order to provide a better and healthier trip to the passengers. As it was, they had to breath improper air, due to poor ventilation, and endure unnecessary dampness, due to the sailor's habits of throwing buckets of water as a method of cleaning. In spite of all, the health condition of the passengers was considered regular and stable. The first death comes during their brief stop in Luanda for fixing the engine and thorough cleaning of the vessel. It was an 8-months infant who had come on board already in ill health, showing the symptoms of profound anemia, refusing alternatives to the mother's milk, itself weak and scarce, and slowly falling into a uninterrupted sleep that lead to death. But there was a counterpart to that: on the day they left Luanda a Madeiran woman gave birth to a baby girl which they named "Maria India."

The ship *India* would continue to South Africa and Mozambique and back after leaving the Madeirans in Moçamedes. There, they started a new chapter of their lives. The hardships of life were not left behind in the island: they were to see much more difficulties ahead, including being thrown in lands that required a type of farming quite different from what they were used to. One of the ironies was that the African climate in the highlands was much colder than what they knew and expected. Their agricultural and food habits all seemed inappropriate. Medical reports dismissed them on all

grounds, including on their food choices: how could they prefer a vegetable-based diet of yams and sweet potatoes when the land allowed for cattle raising and meat consumption, as did the Boers and some native groups?

8. Adaptation and degeneration assessed by colonial medicine

One of the sharpest examples of the biomedical assessment of the Madeirans performance at their early arrival years corresponds to the medical reports of the Moçâmedes sanitary district signed by Joaquim Bernardo Cardoso Botelho in 1895 and 1896.³⁰ Botelho was particularly insulting to the Madeirans: in 1896, in a long digression on acclimatization, he describes them as “indolent”, “pariahs” and “unsuited for colonization.” Being “lazy, drunk, immoral and dirty,” Madeirans – with some exceptions -- did not have “one quality that brings them above the blacks from whom they only differentiate by colour”.³¹

Among his comments there were assumptions and beliefs about race and human flexibility that reflected both scientific theories and a few of the floating prejudices and commonsense ideas that Europeans had about themselves and about Africans regarding issues of body, health, race and environment. Botelho was well into the discussions on acclimatization; he distinguished between *aclimatação* and *aclimatamento*, referring, respectively, to the individual processes of adaptation and the promotion of policies towards that goal, or to the “adaptation of race”. Simplifying the discussion by choosing *acclimatation*, he considered that its study should be a political priority which required the cooperation between the government and medical entities. To guarantee a successful colonization, the health a bodies of migrants should be monitored ever since they

³⁰ Botelho 1896

³¹ Botelho 1896

registered for leaving: biopower as phrased by a 19th century colonial physician in southern Angola.

Botelho elaborates on the procedures towards the right monitorization of the colons' health and the simultaneous development of acclimatization studies. It should all start at the moment of recruitment: the colons-to-be should first get a detailed medical account of their condition written by the physician of their home town. Then the report should be brought to a medical inspection in Lisbon, reviewed and annotated. The document should then be sent to the health services of the colony of destination, and provided to the local colonial physician. The later should then monitor the health of the colon and report all possible details to the colony health services, who in turn should report them to Lisbon. Only in this manner could the necessary studies of acclimatization be accomplished.

That was a fantasy of colonial biopower which was never implemented; yet it reveals the beliefs on acclimatization as a branch of biomedical knowledge. In Botelho's writings, those beliefs co-exist with several others – what were then the scientific views on race, the pervasive background notions about human flexibility, and the European fears about tropical climates and African settings. Even though intertropical, the Moçâmedes district had places with European-like climate. Botelho argued that clinical observations indicated the influence of the Moçâmedes climate over the white race, “and therefore the adaptability of that race to that climate.” Reviewing the different flows of migrants that arrived to the area and their bodily responses, Botelho concluded that “the acclimatization of the white individuals in Moçâmedes is incomplete, less imperfect than in other sites in the province, except in the plateau of Moçâmedes.”³²

³² Botelho (1896)

In his words, the “white race” of the district suffered from a generalized asthenia, caused by a slow impoverishing of the organism. One of the symptoms of the impoverishing of the race (*depauperamento da raça*) was the fact that women were prone to hysteria when getting close to puberty. Using the jargon common to medicine and physical anthropology, the transplanted human bodies had gone down from the strong constitution of their original types, lymphatic-sanguineous, to the debilities of a nervous-lymphatic type.³³ The specter of degeneration was alive and well in Botelho’s thoughts and writings, to the point of recommending that the descendents of the colons should intermarry with uncorrupted whites coming from Europe. This was a topic that lingered over and way into the 20th century, with or without the support of physical anthropologists and their measuring compasses.

9. Physical anthropology, adaptation and race into the 20th century

Decades after Botelho’s reports, the descendents of the Madeira colons were measured by the compasses of physician and physical anthropologist Germano Correia, who served in Angola in 1922-23 (Correia 1925, 1930, 1934). The children and grandchildren of those who had been granted degeneration were now acclaimed as the epitome of the extreme adaptability of the Portuguese to the tropics. The “luso-angolans” had not succumbed to tropical illnesses, they had not mixed with the local population, they had not decayed in any sense and, according to the “scientific measurement” of their bodies, their condition had improved in a intertropical zone.

For Correia, they were the ultimate proof that white colonization of Africa was possible, viable, and, contrary to widespread beliefs, might “improve the race.” He used

³³ Botelho was so prejudiced about the Madeirans that included on the original types those from Beira Alta, Tras os Montes, Minho, Douro and Azores – that is, those who had originated in the Northern parts of the country and had landed in Moçâmedes probably via Brazil – and explicitly excluded the Madeirans, whom he saw as useless pariahs, from the study of acclimatation. .

this case to elaborate endlessly on the virtues of a scientific colonization. This should be a procedure with full control over the variables regarding environment and people – as opposed to what he saw as the amateurish and ignorant ways used by many European nations, who had sent their nationals to settle in inhospitable lands and had seen nothing but massive death and degeneration.

The case of the Huíla Luso-Angolans was also used to support Correia's views on race and white supremacy. He talked and wrote to audiences who shared his views and who still had doubts about the interest and viability of creating European settlements in Africa. His message was to promote the interest on such an endeavour, unquestioned it was that Europeans were entitled to do so in the territories over which they held political claims, oblivious of the fact that the place was actually inhabited by Africans.

Correia's data on *luso-angolans* were insufficient to make scientific claims about their acclimatization; he had only measured 23 subjects. Trained in the *Laboratoire d'Anthropologie* in Paris after graduating in Medicine in the Medical School of Goa in 1909 and in the Medical School of Porto in 1912, with further training in Tropical Medicine Institute in Lisbon, he was aware of the standards of validity for scientific work. However, he could not help his enthusiasm about the case of luso-angolans, who helped him strengthen his argument for the luso-descendants of India (Correia 1919, 1920, 1928, 1931, 1945-46). He claimed that the Portuguese in the tropics improved their race by **not** interbreeding with the natives; he was still conjuring off the fears of degeneration and the European prejudices that lied over him and over the Portuguese in general, seen as prone to “caffrealize”, “mongrelize” and hybridize in the tropics. Correia's views are like and upside down “lusotropicalism”, the very

opposite of Gilberto Freyre's apology of miscegenation a few decades later.³⁴ Correia's future in the history of ideas was a dead-end; his views on human fitness and race were dangerously close to those upon which eugenicist ideals escalated, leading to some of the horrors of the 20th century. His works – particularly those about the luso-angolans -- should be kept as a reminder of the dangerous liaisons between science, ideology and power as enacted by the relationship between physical anthropology, racialism, acclimatization and colonial biopower.

10. Racism and biopower today: migrants and illness

Such dangerous liaisons are not a curiosity from the past. As much as the theories of miasma survived long after the general acceptance of germ theory, whether in a explicitly or underground, the ideas associating physical fitness, adaptation and “race” which were developed by Europeans who studied displaced populations in the tropics still haunt many representations about migrants and illness in the contemporary world. To go no further, let us remind how Haitians were framed as AIDS carriers in the 1980s. Those nexuses are not just a thing of the past: they cause pain and damage in the present, and our take on the future needs to get to know them as much as we can.

³⁴ Like Freyre's lusotropicalism, Correia's attempts to theorize on the Portuguese adaptation to the tropics were a sort of blending of ethnic pride and imperialism in response to the accusations of degeneration by hybridism and miscegenation that hanged over anyone of Portuguese descent. Formulated by the Brazilian sociologist and anthropologist Gilberto Freyre, lusotropicalism claimed that the very essence and originality of Brazilian society lied upon the hybridization promoted by the Portuguese colonizers, who had gone around the world mixing with other peoples and creating a new universe of mulattoes.

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