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COLONIZING AND INFRASTRUCTURING THE ANGOLAN TERRITORY THROUGH  
COLONIST SETTLEMENTS: THE CASE OF THE CELA SETTLEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses the theme of colonist settlements, studied within the scope of the territorial infrastructuring of Angola between 1875 and 1975, in particular the Cela agricultural settlement, one of the largest of its kind. Since the early 1900s, the Portuguese government tried to occupy Angola through agricultural settlements, but it was only in 1928 that this type of colonization was attempted, resulting in a failure. In the 1950s, the Estado Novo dictatorial regime initiated a new colonization policy, and the Cela settlement was set up in the Amboim Planalto, near Gabela, South Cuanza, commencing its activity in 1952. The plan of Cela was designed by architect Fernando Batalha within the Colonial Public Works agency. In the 2000s, after the Angolan independence and the civil war that followed, the settlement was refurbished by the Israeli cooperation. The intervention built new houses, following the aesthetics of some of the existing ones, improved the collective infrastructures, and gave a new identity to the enterprise, renaming it *Aldeia Nova* (New Village). It is intended to understand how a colonial historical reality is addressed today in the official discourse as a “progressive” scenario and an experience of new agricultural development and community models. In this case the official reference is the *kibbutz*, an Israeli colonial settlement model, with all the colonial issues still remaining. This paper is part of the ongoing research entitled "Coast to Coast - Late Portuguese Infrastructural Development in Continental Africa (Angola and Mozambique): Critical and Historical Analysis and Postcolonial Assessment".