



**FROM LOCAL POLLUTION TO THE HYGIENIZATION OF
THE COLONY. THE LEPROSY BETWEEN A SOCIAL EVIL
AND THE TROPICAL MEDICINE (PORTUGUESE GUINEA
1951-1974)**

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Abstract

This communication begins with the life story of *Cubambono*, a *diola* from Portuguese Guinea, attacked by the *irã* [animist spirit] of *Sambun Asu*, whose action imprints signs on a person's body, marking him as a transgressor of the groups' code of ethic in the eyes of the community. His segregation from social life is imposed, and he is isolated in the *kaliako*. Confined beyond sight, he avoids to *pollute* society, until his healing or death. It is from the condemnation to the *kaliako* that he is rescued by the intervention of colonial Medicine [decade of 1960], in one of the periodic visits of *Missão do Sono* to his village, identifying in him evident signs of leprosy, and taking him to Cumura's Leprosarium [Bissau].

Through this life story, we access the social construction of the disease that exists among the *felupes* and is put [as many other representations, as many as the social groups] in contrast with colonial Medicine, which aimed to be taken as hegemonic, in an attempt to sanitize the bodies and the space, giving expression to colonial normative imperatives. This way, we intend to revisit leprosy as a health problem in Portuguese Guinea and strategies of exploration and combat established to face it, without forgetting the social and cultural representations of the disease, built on various perspectives: indigenous, medic, economist, colonial propaganda.