Posters

AN ARCHITECTURAL ETHNOGRAPHIC HISTORY OF MOZAMBIQUE'S INDEPENDENCE

LISANDRA FRANCO DE MENDONÇA

Resumo | Abstract

At zero hour on June 25, 1975, at Machava Stadium (now Independence Stadium) in Lourenço Marques (now Maputo), as the Portuguese flag was lowered, the People's Republic of Mozambique was officially born. This text offers insights into the months before and after the independence of Mozambique to highlight the myriad of actors, themes, and circumstances that emerged in the public and private spaces of the capital city as it faced the exodus of around 200,000 European settlers and mixed-race professionals and entrepreneurs caught off guard by events in the metropole and the pace of local developments. Independence processes in the region intersected with southern African and global geopolitics. Many countries, including Mozambique, became one-party states, rhetorically committed to a self-styled Marxism-Leninism. The socialist turn translated into the rapid nationalisation of some services, land, key industries and abandoned or rented property. The latter, justified both as a necessary reorganisation of the housing stock and an effort to promote a more egalitarian society (resulting also in the replacement of city dwellers/settlers with Africans), can be seen as «year zero» of the Mozambique Liberation Front's socio-political experience with urban space and its revolutionary subjectivity, the «Homem Novo» (socialist man). How did the incoming residents adapt to urban living? How did the modern utilities, materials, and functional organisation of the dwellings evolve in response to their new tenants? What lessons can we draw from this experience? This exploratory research has been carried out in Maputo over the last few years, delving widely into the rich iconographic collections of local state archives.

Palavras-chave | Keywords

Mozambique; Maputo; Decolonisation; Architecture.

Resumo biográfico | Short biography

Arquiteta, historiadora de arquitetura e investigadora em conservação do património com foco em Moçambique. Doutorada em Arquitetura e Urbanismo e em História e Restauro da Arquitetura, pela Universidade de Coimbra e pela Universidade «Sapienza» de Roma, respetivamente, com uma dissertação sobre a arquitetura do século XX do Moçambique colonial.

Entre 2019 e 2025 foi investigadora júnior na Universidade do Minho, no Laboratório de Paisagem, Património e Território (Lab2PT), no projeto «Arquitetura da Descolonização — Urbanidade Pós-colonial e Depois: A Mudança Epistemológica na Cultura da Arquitetura Moderna e na Abordagem da Conservação». Iniciou essa investigação na Universidade Técnica de Berlim, como investigadora convidada bolseira da Fundação Alexander von Humboldt, no Grupo de Investigação «Identidade e Património».