POSITION PAPER

Daydream Continent: Europe as a Space-Time Horizon in Architectural History

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This article defends an attention to past meanings of 'Europe' as a prospective idea, focusing on the circulation of architectural ideas between European states and settler territories in late colonialism. It proposes research that questions the relation between present-day European architectural expertise and 'Europe' as a colonial space-time horizon. The latter term denotes how past colonial futures, understood as circulatory formations, entailed an imagination of social spaces that was never fully actualized, acting instead as a guiding device. Drawing on archival research in South Africa and in Mozambique, the article examines how during the Second World War architects in the region projected a 'European' space that, while being envisioned in contrast to an unequal non-European space, was not simply a propagation of coeval space-time in European cities. In addition, it notes how professional discourse in the 1960s articulated the hierarchies of development that structure the domain of Europeanness. However, the article does not stress the mere denunciation of 'Europe' as integral to colonial rationality, recalling instead the potential of prospective ideas as a form of open daydream.

Introduction: The Architectural History of Europe as a Prospective Idea

This article contributes to our reflection on the present-day meaning of 'Europe' in architectural history by defending an attention to past meanings of Europe as a prospective idea circulated through various domains of expert knowledge and practice, including architecture. It conceives of the formation of 'Europe' as a relational process, intrinsic to the architectural dimension of historical projects like colonialism and development, amidst epochal changes in the planetary *nomos*.[1] The article focuses on the circulation of ideas between the European region and southern Africa, the last global area where European states created settler colonies.[2] It proposes research that questions to what extent the association of architecture and 'Europe', understood as what I call a 'space-time horizon', has persisted in ways that continue partaking in the formation of subjectivity today, notably among professionals. The article draws on archival research from the beginning of the Second World War to the political independence of the Portuguese colonies and the ensuing regional isolation of the Apartheid regime. It examines southern African architectural knowledge production by settlers of European origin or descent in Mozambique and South Africa and by visiting experts. The aim is to tease out the disjunctions between lived space-times and 'Europe' as a normative space-time horizon. Nevertheless, it is emphatically not the purpose of this article to denounce 'Europe' as a prospective idea. Instead, evoking the phenomenological

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approach of Bachelard on architecture as space, which first appeared in 1958 (1994), the article concludes by recalling the potential of prospective ideas as a form of daydream regarding future social space-times.

Circulations of the Future within Social Space-time

Even though the history of architecture and urbanism is a discipline devoted to examining past ideas about the architectural future, as well as prospect-laden architectural practice, the discipline has yet to theorise the ways in which the concept of the future itself has been formed in a contingent manner in specific locations. In addition, while innovative work has been done by social scientists on the circulation of ideas, particularly in South and East Asia (Manjapra 2010; Ong 2011), architectural histories about Europe — a region shaped by the persistence of of past colonial, authoritarian, and developmental rationalities — often foreground what Hart has termed an 'impact model' (2002: 12), instead of circulation. At a time when some commentators argue that European prospective thought on architecture and urbanism is in crisis (Murphy 2016), it is timely to undertake ethnographically informed histories of architectural futures to support innovative ways of conceiving spatial prospectiveness in Europe. I propose to discuss how ways of conceiving futurity in Europe were partly formed through colonial occupation in southern Africa, and to learn from the plurality of epistemologies of space-time in both Europe and Africa.

By being more attentive to the history of past futures as circulatory formations, through a questioning of the role of futurity in architectural discourse and practice, European architectural historians are supremely equipped

to reinforce their intervention in the transdisciplinary scholarship on space (Lefebvre 1991; Certeau 1984; Massey 1994; Scobey 2001; Simone 2004). While the latter scholarship — influenced by the work of architectural historians such as Giedion (1974) and Zevi (1957), although this legacy is rarely acknowledged — valuably defines space as social space-time, historians have seldom reflected upon time within space-time, and in particular upon the future. I propose the term 'space-time horizon' to denote how architectural futures are enmeshed with the imagination of social space-times that are never fully actualised, but act as guiding devices.

'Europe' as a Space-time Horizon in Colonial Southern Africa

> An objective analysis of cultural reality leads to a denial of the importance of racial or continental cultures … [Culture] is a social reality that is independent from the will of men, skin colour, eye shape or geographical limits. (Cabral 2008: 234)[3]

> Orientalism is never far from what Denys Hay has called the idea of Europe, a collective notion identifying 'us' Europeans against all 'those' non-Europeans, and indeed it can be argued that the major component in European culture is precisely … the idea of European identity as a superior one. (Said 1979: 7)

As Mudimbe proposed long ago, 'the colonializing structure' entailed an ideal opposition 'between the so-called African tradition and the *projected* modernity of colonialism' (1988: 5; emphasis added). Indeed, at least from the early 1940s onwards, professional architectural discourse in both South Africa and Mozambique — then occupied by Portugal — often used the term 'European' instead of 'white' when distinguishing a privileged social space-time in prospective visions of divided cities, implicitly or explicitly foregrounding the idea of a specifically 'European' spatial culture vis-à-vis the domain of the 'native', instead of directly denoting 'race' as a category of difference. There seem to be two central aspects to this architectural discourse: 'European' space is always envisioned in contrast to an unequal non-European space; in addition, the imagination of 'European' space is not a propagation of coeval social space-times in cities in the European region, but is instead a projected vision, entailing an imagination of the transformation of socio-spatial practices.

During the Second World War, the term 'European' was often used in the main architectural journal *South African Architectural Record* (*SAAR*), for instance to distinguish suburban 'householders' from 'servants' in a discussion of civil defence shelters (Hanson and Martienssen 1940) (**Figure 1**). The term was also used to distinguish housing projects that were intended for South Africans of European origin or descent, for example in the description of a 1940 exhibition of fifth-year student designs inspired by CIAM modernism ('The Sixteenth Annual Exhibition', 1940: 170), aimed at building anew the 'small towns in the Transvaal' ('The Sixteenth Annual Exhibition', 1940: 177). In contrast, in the selected drawings, the term 'European' is elided, as only the 'native township', 'native location' or 'natives' — always separated by a railway — are characterised as exceptional spaces. Housing for South Africans of European origin or descent is captioned 'housing' or 'flats', since the future space-time described as 'European' in the written description was naturalised as normative within everyday professional discourse. A letter to *SAAR* by Angus Stewart, who had graduated from Wits in 1934 and was a frequent contributor to professional debates (Herbert 2016), shows to what extent such prospects were at odds with actual spatial practice, notably of
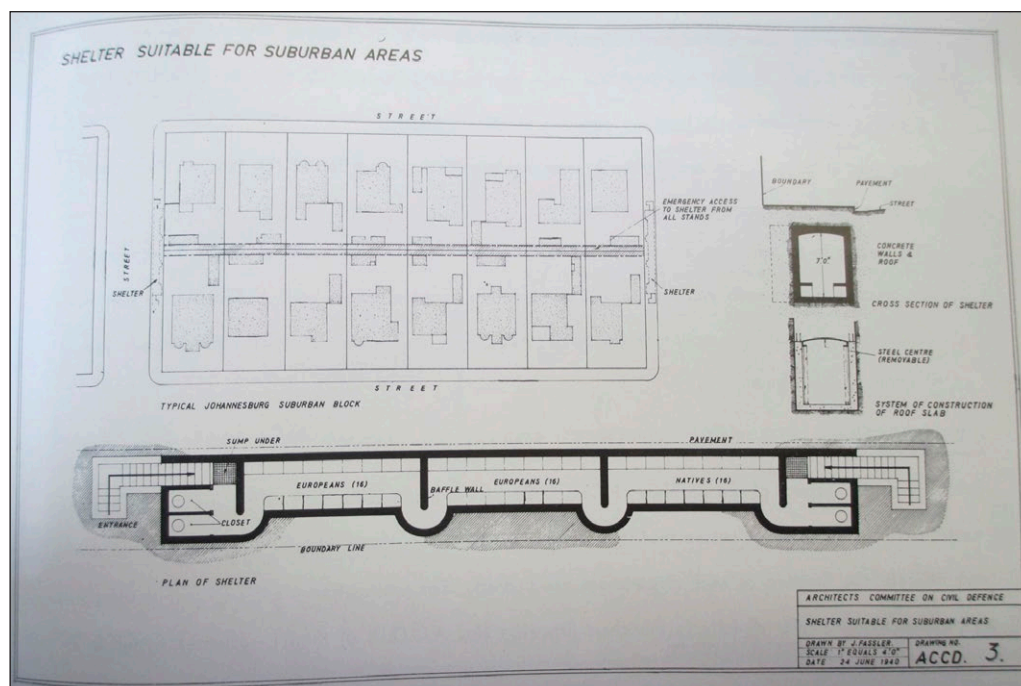

Figure 1: 1940 scheme for civil defence shelter in suburban South Africa (Hanson and Martienssen 1940: 351).

'the European population'. His letter seems to represent the concerns of architects regarding the design of future urban division, which demanded a transformation of the social space-time of South Africans of European descent:

> To build such towns would demand some alteration in social conditions … [M]y friends in the dorps [i.e., villages or towns] plant a few vegetables, have an orchard, run a few hens, and, more often than not, keep a cow. My statement is not necessarily an argument against flats. (Stewart 1940: 183)

Stewart was aware of the representation of a novel social space-time for those of European descent or origin, but even though he recalled that black South Africans also engaged in practices that articulated a new social space-time, he was unable to conceive of the latter outside of assimilation into a purportedly European spatial culture. Furthermore, assimilation was deemed possible only for the privileged: 'the Bantu appears to be able to adapt himself to European surroundings — provided that he can afford it. I refer to a Bantu couple, both teachers, whose house I have seen' (Stewart 1940: 183).

In neighbouring Mozambique, a territory then occupied by Portugal and hence neutral, the term 'European' was similarly employed by architects to denote a set of 'customs', defined in contrast to those of the 'indigenous'. As in Johannesburg, Portuguese experts dealt with cities where their fellow settlers came from various European states; while many were Portuguese there were also sizeable British, Greek, or Italian contingents.[4] Some architects studied in South Africa instead of Portugal, like Carlos Ivo, who graduated from Wits in 1941 and probably recalled the debate provoked by the above-mentioned exhibition as he participated in the committee that evaluated the first master plan for Beira, Mozambique's second largest city.[5] The winning scheme of the competition organised by the Beira municipality in 1943 was designed by a team led by José Porto, based in Porto, Portugal, and classified the citizens of future Beira according to a conflation of 'race' and 'customs', planning a hierarchical spatial segregation according to three distinct neighbourhoods: 'Europeans' were to enjoy a less dense, seaside location; 'Asiatics' — a category which included Chinese, Indian, and 'mixed race' citizens — would live in denser conditions,[6] separated by 'the Chiveve Lake and a golf course' (CACMB 1951: 131); while the 'indigenous' would live in a dense, distant peripheral area (CACMB 1951: 23). It is noteworthy that the principle of Beira's future segregation according to 'customs' was not criticised at all by João Aguiar in the acerbic essay he published in 1946 as a representative of the central state's Office for Colonial Urbanisation; he only considered the distance between the future 'indigenous neighbourhood' and the city centre excessive.[7] Similarly, within the committee that met in 1943, Ivo merely disagreed regarding the self-building processes envisioned for the 'indigenous neighbourhood'. Drawing from his lived experience in Johannesburg, Ivo argued that as the city grew 'the indigenous will enjoy a mentality that will allow barracking in large buildings'

(CACMB 1951: 29). In contrast, an engineer whose opinion was ultimately adopted by the committee justified the need for division as a means of defending 'indigenous' social space-time: 'It is precisely to shelter them from the inconveniences of being neighbours of Europeans of low condition or of Asiatics, that we need to provide to the indigenous a primitive environment, that is isolated from those elements' (CACMB 1951: 29).[8]

Later sections of the memorandum reveal the shared unequal spaces of early 1940s Beira, and show to what extent envisioning a future segregation was associated, for professionals, with the desire for a fundamental transformation of the spatial practices of citizens of European origin, notably mitigating the 'promiscuity of the different races' (CACMB 1951: 85). The introduction of electricity, water, and sewage systems into the settler neighbourhoods would supposedly reduce the undesirable 'mob' of Mozambican domestic workers employed by the 'house mistresses' (CACMB 1951: 92). In addition, limiting the size of backyards would foster their use as gardens, impeding their use for urban farming by the 'indigenous workers' (CACMB 1951: 141), or for detached dwellings of 'servants' (CACMB 1951: 143). Yet experts faced not only shared spaces, but also a lack of considerable material distinction between the residential architecture of settlers and of Mozambicans. Coeval reports prepared for the colonial governor, not intended for publication, state that only a minority of urban settlers had homes considered materially and aesthetically adequate: in Quelimane, 'many Europeans were living in *palhotas maticadas* [i.e., huts with a clay plaster finish] as it was common to live in the bush in the beginning'.[9]

As Stoler has noted, such concerns were common in colonial commissions as 'repositories of colonial anxieties' (2002: 105) and as 'features of statecraft … that coded and counted society's pathologies' (2002: 106). In the case of Mozambique, by being attentive to prescriptive statements that are concerned mostly with the domestic space of settlers, we understand how the latter was both shared and unequal,[10] and contrasted with a future 'European' space-time dependent on hierarchical segregation. We can conceive such prescriptive statements as rejecting the spatial dimension of what Mbembe has termed 'itinerant identities, of circulation' (2013: 148). Mbembe proposes this term when discussing the important role in subjectivity formation of borderlands not subject to the direct control of state apparatuses in Africa; at the domestic scale, colonial spatial experts were concerned about the lack of control regarding 'itinerant' performances that did not consistently privilege 'Europe' as a space-time horizon.

By the 1960s, southern Africa was the only global region where European states, namely Britain and Portugal, maintained settler colonies. In 1961, the Angolan liberation war began, immediately after the independence of Congo the previous year. Even though the Mozambican liberation war began only in 1964, the early 1960s were a time of great concern among settlers regarding the dangers of unequal urban division, taking into account the political independence of present-day Tanzania in 1961, the ongoing process of autonomisation in present-day

Zambia, and the war in Angola. Portuguese architects in particular tended to elide discourses on a future spatial Europeanness in a time of imminent war, denying any kind of explicit sorting of the population while embracing the extant self-built part of cities. A manifesto against the 'divided city' and forced resettlement was published in June 1963 by 'Pancho' Guedes, who had graduated from Wits in 1949 ('Várias Receitas', 1963). This manifesto was followed by a series of newspaper accounts, as well by an unpublished municipal survey undertaken by José Dias, who had graduated from Porto and was likely exposed to the coeval technical turn of architectural pedagogy there, as well as to the legacy of the 1961 survey of Portuguese peasant housing *Folk Architecture in Portugal*. Dias' survey would later be included in the new master plan for Lourenço Marques (**Figure 2**), which embraced so-called 'areas of traditional housing' in its vision of urban growth (Azevedo 1969: 31).[11] References to a 'European' spatial culture are merely implicit, although it is clear that Guedes argues that modes of prospectiveness characteristic of colonial and development planning, focusing on aided self-help for the creation of new peripheral neighbourhoods of single-family housing, were inadequate when imagining a future undivided city.[12] Indeed, his manifesto seems to herald more recent arguments on a planning practice that focuses on the situated potentialities of African cities (Robinson 2006).

Nevertheless, in Mozambique, 'Europe' as a space-time horizon continued to be crucial for journalistic accounts, for everyday language within the state apparatus, and for surveys. This was done in ways that attempted to deny similarities with the practices of the Apartheid regime in South Africa and that often contradicted the actuality of the relatively insulated European space that had resulted from planning efforts from the 1940s onwards. For example, a newspaper account in 1963 noted how there was one 'European family' among the 30 families that had moved to the new 'economic neighbourhood' in Machava, arguing that 'this will not be a neighbourhood only for blacks' ('Uma Vitória', 1963). When actual urban space was confronted with the desired future, European and South African cities continued to be a reference, as they had been in the previous decades, especially in the settlers' press. The same newspaper thus could lament the lack of parking meters in Mozambican city centres ('Parques e Parquímetros', 1963), and eulogise a future city where discrimination according to 'race' was not spatialised,[13] in both cases explicitly in opposition to South African cities. In contrast, perhaps due to unequal economic relations, as well as to the hierarchies of development that internally structure the domain of Europeanness, in South African professional discourse architecture in Mozambique was not represented as a reference, even if Portuguese architects like Guedes were esteemed members of the professional association and attended its events. For example, in 1964 Guedes was one of the invited lecturers at the conference of the Institute of South African Architects ('Institute of South African Architects', 1964: 16), and later that year Bernard Cooke eulogised the 'fantasy' of his lectures at Wits (Cooke 1964). However, throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, before Guedes' appointment as Chair of Architecture at Wits in 1975, his experimental designs were almost never published in *SAAR* nor in its successor, *Plan*, while numerous new buildings in northwestern Europe and Rhodesia were ('Queen Victoria Museum', 1966).[14] Only in 1975 did a travelogue briefly lament the lost Europeanness of the built environment in post-independence Mozambique Island and Lourenço
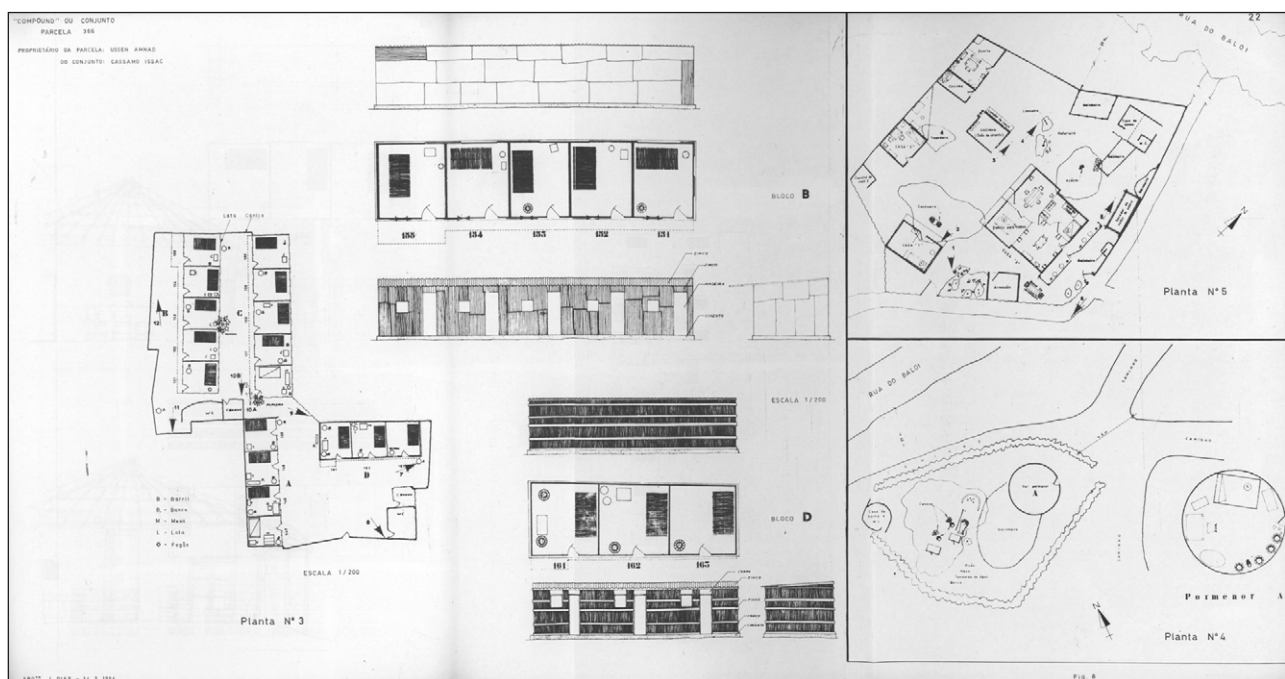

Figure 2: 1964 survey of housing in western Lourenço Marques (present-day Maputo), included in the 1969 master plan (Dentinho 1969: 22).

Marques: 'Once ashore on Mocambique [*sic*] island, one cannot believe that one is in Africa. The architecture is totally European' (Noero 1975).

In 1960s Apartheid South Africa, architects continued explicitly articulating the idea of 'Europe' as a space-time horizon, for instance when discussing the kinds of finishings that would be acceptable in state housing for working-class 'Europeans', in contrast to the purportedly less demanding 'Bantu' (Welch 1963), or when considering the type of spatiality more adequate for each group in segregated public buildings (Non-European Affairs Department 1966). In addition, Cooke's apology of 'emotionally and spiritually meaningful' vernacular architecture as an inspiration for South African architects could plausibly be written without any kind of reference to local vernacular landscapes, expressing instead a fascination with 'Mykynos' [*sic*] in Greece or the 'intimate character of homely domesticity' in Holland (Cooke 1967).

Conclusion: 'Europe' as a Daydream in Architectural History

'Sometimes the house *of the future* is better built, lighter and larger than all the houses of the past … It is better to live in a state of impermanence than in one of finality' (Bachelard [1958] 1994: 61; emphasis added).

As mentioned in the introduction, it is not the purpose of this article to denounce 'Europe' as integral to coloniality, but to understand how the present-day idea of Europe was *also* formed through architectural discourses and practices in late settler colonies in southern Africa. In this region, characterised by transborder circuits both of professional discourse and of spatial capital, architects envisioned a normative European spatiality based on a segregation of the diverse settler community, discussing the transformation of the social space-times of settlers, under conditions of hierarchy within Europeanness. Evoking the phenomenological approach of Bachelard on architecture as space (1994), I conclude instead by recalling the potential of prospective ideas as a form of open daydream or *rêverie* regarding future social space-times devoid of states of finality. If intellectual histories of mid-twentieth century architecture and urbanism focusing on the North Atlantic have for some time suggested a depletion of creative daydreaming, this article argues for recalling less celebrated kinds of past futures. The consideration of the effects of the latter in the European region, framed as an acknowledgment of the plurality of futurities, could constitute a major contribution towards a global history of architecture.

Notes

[1] I evoke Schmitt's concept of *nomos* as global division (2003), since the global scale is neglected in theories of space; for example, for Lefebvre 'the East' or 'the West' were taken-for-granted categories. However, we need to disarticulate *nomos* from Schmitt's celebration of political authoritarianism and European domination.

[2] The formation of the idea of Europe was first addressed within the field of history (Hay 1957), after the partition of the European region, during the US-led postwar 'development project' for 'Western' Europe (McMichael 1996: 31). Only after the end of partition was the issue critically addressed from a variety of disciplinary perspectives within the social sciences and the humanities (Delanty 1995; Heffernan 1998; Mikkeli 1998; Pagden 2002), albeit rarely focusing on emerging situated 'articulations' (Pred 2000; Holmes 2000), i.e., discourses and practices that 'bring into interaction elements that are otherwise discrete and separate' (Pred 1995: 32). The role of colonial knowledge in the formation of the idea of Europe, also neglected by most, was noted long ago by Said (1979: 7). By the late 1980s, studies on architecture and planning argued that occupied territories in the early 20th century were a space for experimentation on the role of the built environment in government (Rabinow 1989; Wright 1991; AlSayyad 1992), understood here as the government of subjectivities through the state apparatus, including knowledge production (Foucault 1991: 103). Nevertheless, the role of late colonial practices and discourses in southern Africa is not well known.

[3] All translations are by the author. Amílcar Cabral was an agricultural engineer and leader of the independence movement of Guiné-Bissau and Cape Verde. This quote is an excerpt from a 1972 lecture called 'The Role of Culture' that Cabral presented at UNESCO in Paris.

[4] In 1897, the decade-old settlement had 4,041 inhabitants, of which 1,327 were 'non-indigenous', including 540 Portuguese and members of 14 other nationalities (CACMB 1952: 41).

[5] After concluding a Bachelor in Architecture degree at Wits in the Spring of 1941, Carlos Ivo started a practice in Beira, which still exists today. In 1969 he became the president of Beira's Landowners' Association, as well as a member of Portugal's parliament, a role he held until 1973.

[6] According to the descriptive memorandum, for the future 'neighbourhood of the population with asiatic customs' (CACMB 1952: 24), 'the density will be precisely the double of the density of the neighbourhood described previously … the neighbourhood of the population with *European customs*' (CACMB 1952: 25; emphasis added).

[7] In 1951, the municipality published the minutes of a 1943 meeting on the competition, in response to Aguiar's essay. Aguiar was then working on the master plan for the capital Lourenço Marques (present-day Maputo).

[8] By the late 1950s, this reasoning was foregrounded within the colonial state apparatus in writings not intended for publication, taking into account the independence of Ghana in 1957, as well as ongoing armed conflict in 1950s Kenya: 'If in the disturbed awakening … of the African continent, we Portuguese enjoy a truly paradisiacal peace, this we truly owe

to … the assimilation of intellectual minorities and to the essentially rural life of our indigenous populations'. Letter, Ruy de Araújo Ribeiro, Alfredo Pinheiro Rocha, and Fernando Olavo Gouveia da Veiga to the General Governor, July 1956 (Maputo, Historical Archive of Mozambique, General Government, Box #408, ref. A/27).

[9] Report, Ordinary Inspection of the Municipal Chamber of Quelimane, by Inspector Júlio Augusto Pires, 1949 (Maputo, Historical Archive of Mozambique, Inspection of Administrative Services, Box #67).

[10] Sometimes only the settlers had access to clean drinking water, leaving Mozambican workers no option but to use the sewage-tainted water available in local wells for cooking (CACMB 1951: 103). However, it must be noted that settlers often washed with sewage-tainted water (CACMB 1951: 99).

[11] In South Africa, the first survey of a self-built settlement appeared in *Plan* in May 1975, to record 'modes of living' before the demolition of a 1950s 'Indian squatters settlements' built with municipal aid in Durban (White 1975).

[12] The interest of the colonial state apparatus on aided self-help techniques culminated in the 4th colonial Development Plan for Mozambique, which planned for the 'installation of 50,000 families … in the suburbs of Lourenço Marques … Nampula, Quelimane and Beira' (PC 1974: 219).

[13] In July 1964, the *Tribuna* stated that '"Apartheid" is anti-Christ', in relation to an account of Mozambicans being denied entry at the downtown Continental café ('Em Plena Baixa', 1963).

[14] The single exception is a perspective of a competition entry for the Montepio tower in Lourenço Marques (Cooke 1964).

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Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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