‘A SOCIETY IN WHICH IT IS WORTH HAVING A PLACE.’ MODERNISATION THROUGH COOPERATIVISM IN LOURENÇO MARQUES’ LATE COLONIAL BAIRRO DA COOP.

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Abstract:
From the early 1960s through the late 1980s, the built environment of Mozambique was shaped by changing paradigms of urbanisation, architectural styles, and technologies. This development stemmed from the commitment of a multitude of actors from disciplines as diverse as civil engineering, tropical architecture, urban sociology or meteorology. They all contributed to the onsite production of local construction expertise and to the diffusion of international research results.

In most cases their activities were linked to research institutes such as the Laboratório de Engenharia de Moçambique and the Sociedade de Estudos de Moçambique or to government agencies on the local Direção de Urbanização e Construção) and provincial/national levels Gabinete de Urbanização da Região de Lourenço Marques, Direção Nacional de Habitação. The research of these institutions both reflected and reproduced the dramatic political ruptures of that period and went hand in hand with specific social claims. At the same time they give insights into Mozambique’s changing embeddedness in transnational scientific communities from Portugal, South Africa, and Brazil to Bulgaria, Tanzania, Cuba, and North Corea.
Phenomena like Pancho Guedes’ workshops in Nigeria or the influence of Brazilian architecture on the Portuguese colonies in Africa have been highlighted by architectural historians over the last years. However, little attention has been paid to a systematic analysis of the transnational networks of engineering knowledge production in Mozambique. This paper will give a brief overview on the most significant institutions in this field and the changing transnational contexts of their work. I will take a look at the research trips of their members, their participation in international conferences such as the Jornadas de engenharia e arquitectura do ultramar or the Jornadas luso-brasileiras de engenharia civil), their publications such as the post-colonial journal Construir), the exchange of publications with international research institutes and, later, the presence of the cooperantes.

I ask how the wider geopolitical positioning of Mozambique and the actors’ individual choices contributed to the introduction of new building technologies, research projects, social norms as well as aesthetic models and how they coined genuinely Mozambican architectural topoi on the ground.

My analysis consists of a close reading of debates around two remarkable architectural projects: The cooperative housing scheme COOP, inspired by Brazilian high-rise architecture and built with Swedish technology tested in the Belgian Congo gives insights into the ambivalent desire to establish a “lusotropical” settlement. The Bairro Residencial Universitário BRUJ, on the other hand, designed by Eastern German architects and build with German prefab technology not only shows the ties to new development cooperation partners but also symbolises the end of a short post-colonial policy aiming at technological independence and ecological building principles.

Borrowing its framework from material culture studies, this paper tries to connect the at times isolated research on Luso-african architecture with recent debates on modernist architecture and postcoloniality. Following scholars like Duanfang Lu, Ola Uduku or Johan Lagae, I will sketch out pitfalls of a eurocentric perspective: Looking at Mozambique’s modernist heritage as a Portuguese heritage and not as a shared history; reproducing lusotropicalist myths; and misjudging 1974 as the end of Mozambique’s architectural history.

Keywords: Engineering, architecture, transnational networks, Bairro COOP, Bairro Residencial Universitário
DISCUSSING MAY 1968...IN MOZAMBIQUE

In 1968, Portuguese imperialism in Mozambique (and beyond) was heavily challenged by Frelimo’s armed struggle for independence and a growing international discontent with Portugal’s unwillingness to decolonise the colonies.¹ The fight against colonialism was one of the incitements of the global student riots in May 1968. However, when the housing cooperative Societade de Moçambique para o Fomento da Construção de Casas, or, COOP, published the first issue of its relaunched journal in early 1969, it offered a very different reading of these events. Rather than relating the protests to, for example, minority rule in Mozambique, May 1968 was pictured as an expression of a general social alienation with little or no differences in Japan, the USSR, or the “Third World”.² COOP was on the rise in these years and placed its activity as a way to overcome alienation through cooperative modernisation. This transformative momentum of cooperativism was seen as universal and independent from political systems. This paper will give an outline of COOP’s attempts to materialise change in a colonial society without overcoming colonialism.

Over the last years, architectural modernism in colonial (ÇELIK, 1997; CRINSON, 2003) and postcolonial (UDUKU, 2006; LE ROUX, 2004; ARCHIAFRIKA, 2005) Africa has become a popular research topic. Due to the late decolonisation of lusophone Africa, the architecture of late colonial Mozambique is based on surprising transnational networks. Architects and urban planners in Lourenço Marques not only learnt from other colonial settings, but also from postcolonial states.³ This particularly holds true for COOP.

This paper suggests expanding the essential literature on architectural modernism in Mozambique (FERNANDES, 2009; FERNANDES et al., 2008) and its transnational integration (MILHEIRO/FIGUEIRA, 2009; MATOS/RAMOS, 2009) by a stronger consideration of its political implications. I follow the argument by Johan Lagae (2010) to re-situate colonial buildings in their urban contexts. After a brief physical and historical presentation of Bairro da COOP, I will analyse the social utopia COOP aimed for. I will adopt the suggestion by Duanfang Lu (2010) to analyse ‘Third World’ Modernism in its relation with globalism, developmentalism, nationalism and (post)colonialism.

¹ This text is part of an ongoing PhD project funded by the Heinrich Böll Foundation. I would like to thank Mithila Borker for her helpful comments on this text.
² See O Cooperador de Moçambique (1969), 1 (1).
³ The relevance of Brazilian architecture for Mozambique is most famous amongst these influences. But it is equally informative to find the influential 1960s Nigerian West African Builder and Architect at the colonial Laboratório de Engenheria de Moçambique in Maputo or to read Portuguese hospital planners’ applications for trips to postcolonial Ibadan to visit up-to-date hospitals (Arquivo Histórico Diplomático do Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros, Est.1 Prat.7 M212b). Furthermore, city planners were interested in learning about successful infrastructure policies in quasi-postcolonial Israel (Fonseca 1960).
Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, COOP received several awards at the annual FACIM trade fair for being a model enterprise. However, the cooperative felt a need for operational improvement. In 1970 COOP assigned the South African branch of the consultancy Price Waterhouse & Co. to amend the cooperative’s internal administration process. The consultancy’s main recommendations expressed the need to implement a regular system of management reports. Unfortunately, it is the unavailability of this kind of management reports on internal structures, membership numbers, and the cooperative’s budget that still handicaps a reconstructive analysis of COOP today.

THE BAIRRO DA COOP

COOP was founded in 1951. Although the cooperative started to buy land in several parts of the city, it always aimed at the establishment of a common and, up to some degree, autonomous town quarter. Whenever the founders of COOP described the motivation for their initiative, they mentioned the need for affordable housing for the province’s growing middle class and the political will to import lessons from global cooperative experiences to Mozambique.

The most famous legacy of COOP’s activity in Lourenço Marques is the construction of an urban quarter for roughly 7,500-8,000 people at the surroundings of today’s Praça da Organização da Mulher Moçambicana (or Praça da OMM). Additionally, there are individual houses and settlements by COOP all over the city. Bairro da COOP itself consists of a vast trapezoid area at the heart of a once peripheral zone that experienced heavy transformations since the 1960s. Large parts of the neighbouring grounds were untapped when COOP started construction. The north-western borders of the area are defined by the busy Avenida Vladimir Lenine, the Praça da OMM and the lower middle class neighbourhood of Malhangalene, where in

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4 See the numerous certificates at the COOP archive.
5 See the correspondence with Price Waterhouse & Co. at the COOP archive, especially the Memorandum on Management Information Requirements from September 1970.
6 Despite the fact that Bairro da COOP is a prominent part of Maputo, the estate has not been a subject for further study so far. Only a few publications on Maputo’s urban history mention the COOP housing development (Fernandes et al. 2008: 195, Fernandes 2009: 31). Using the COOP archive has been a challenging but rewarding fundament for my findings. Especially the Cooperador de Moçambique has been a source of surprising insights into the expectations of a late colonial cosmopolitan middle class. Additionally, interviews with long-term COOP residents and employees, local architects, and members of the COOP management committee have helped me to identify different perceptions of the cooperative. To understand COOP within the wider context of Portuguese settler colonialism, see Morier-Genoud/Cahen (2012) and Castelo (2007, 2012).
7 According to different sources in the COOP archives, the planned size of Bairro da COOP varied over the years in terms of inhabitants and buildings. The goal of building a quarter for 8,399 people seems to represent the highest ambitions and is given in a map of the project that decorates a wall in COOP’s current office. The map is undated but features a postcolonial toponymy.
8 This concerns buildings by “big” Luso-Mozambican architects whose relations with COOP remain unexplored. The Miguel Bombarda Terraces by Pancho Guedes in today’s Avenida Patrice Lumumba were put on the map by art historian Udo Kultermann (1969) in the 1960s. For further information on this project see Guedes (2007). João José Tinoco’s housing scheme Habitação em Banda in Rua do Sol is another COOP development. Fernandes (Fernandes et al. 2008: 195) is mistaken in assuming that all of COOP’s estates were designed by Jorge Valente.
the 1960s Fundação Salazar was building social housing for war veterans. The north-eastern border of the housing development meets the campus of today’s Universidade Eduardo Mondlane. The northern half of the south-eastern border is shared with upmarket Sommerschield, an area under construction when COOP was founded (CAMARA MUNICIPAL DE LOURENCO MARQUES, 1953); the southern half is shared with military barracks. Situated behind the barracks, Bairro da COOP transcended the old demarcation line between black and white neighbourhoods. Avenida Kenneth Kaunda divides the area into a northern and a southern part. The southern part is dominated by four twelve-storey buildings along Avenida Vladimir Lenine and five ten-storey buildings along Avenida Kenneth Kaunda, designed by architect Jorge Valente (FERNANDES et al., 2008: 195); terrace houses cover the remaining area. The northern part is exclusively structured by terrace houses.

Fig. 1 - The surroundings of Bairro da COOP. Map elaborated by the author. Grey colouring indicates Bairro da COOP, yellow colouring indicates Fundação Salazar project, red colouring indicates Bairro Residencial Universitário, blue colouring indicates Bairro dos Cooperantes.

Although presently the housing development has a surprisingly homogeneous appearance, today’s Bairro da COOP is only a part of what had once been planned. The territory now used by the Russian embassy in the southwest of Praça da OMM was originally a COOP-owned building plot reserved for five twenty-storey tower blocks. The grounds of present-day Bairro dos Cooperantes, an ad hoc project resulting from the need for housing for international volunteers in the late 1970s,
was meant to be used for sports facilities. *Figure 2* shows the most ambitious original plans of the cooperative in the mid-1970s.

![Figure 2 - COOP master plan, mid-1970s. Image courtesy of José Cochofel, Maputo](image)

**HISTORY AND ORGANISATION**¹⁰

According to their intentions and financial opportunities, individuals could choose between different membership types. The membership types most frequently referred to were the sócios efectivos normais, paying members who generally aimed at constructing homes, sócios auxiliares normais who wanted to use COOP’s other services such as the cooperative-run book shop *A Nossa*

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¹⁰ Most of the following information regarding COOP’s earliest period is taken from the instructive *Relatório e contas do exercício de 1960*, the only report of its kind still available in the COOP archives.
Livraría, and sócios electivos normais populares, a status that gave COOP workers some limited possibilities of employee participation.

The rising membership numbers coincide with the growing influx of Portuguese settlers into the colony, but the available data on COOP’s associates does not name their status as new settlers, second-generation Luso-Mozambicans, etc. In a report from 1960, the departing directorate of COOP lamented that the cooperative was still not meeting the foreseen number of members. By 1968, the numbers on members and construction had made remarkable progress. Thanks to the workplaces offered by COOP to 1180 employees and considering the families depending on them, one of 74 inhabitants of Lourenço Marques (estimated to have 350,000 inhabitants) depended directly or indirectly on COOP.

In 1968, COOP consisted of 12,434 members. These were composed of 4536 sócios efectivos, 947 sócios populares, 3350 sócios auxiliares, 1053 members of COOP’s cultural department (including the bookshop, an option used particularly by university students) and 2548 members of an emerging cooperative bank. 5,483 members aimed at building a house with COOP.

2,500 people lived in Bairro da COOP in 1968. At the same time, the amount of constructed houses was rising as the cooperative could now count with the financial support of agencies such as the Companhia de Seguros Império and the Caixa Económica Postal. Corresponding to the cooperative’s growth, its budget planning also underwent several adjustments. An important resource for COOP’s investments was the Mealheiro Cooperativo, a COOP-run banking institute founded in 1955 and since then persistently advertised amongst the

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11 Interviews conducted on November 15, 2011 with José Cochofel, architect and COOP resident since 1975, and Eugénio Mandlhate, COOP guardian since 1972. Unfortunately, it was not possible to find COOP’s foundation charter or the first legal estatutos. The membership options and internal structure of COOP changed several times over the years (see for example “Projeto de novos estatutos”, in: O Cooperador de Moçambique, 1973, 5 (8), 17). Generally, there is little information available on the first estatutos of COOP and the rights and duties of different types of associates.

12 Moreover, they pointed out difficulties in getting credits from banks. However, the unwillingness of banks to offer loans led to a certain pride of being able to base the budget for 1961 exclusively on the contributions of the members. This situation was used to showcase the “extraordinary economic power of the poor” considered as the backbone of the “morale of the fight that we began nine years ago”. See the Relatório e contas do exercício de 1960 at the COOP archive.


14 A quarter of COOP’s members (and even 30% of the sócios efectivos) were women, most of them doing wage labour. This fact was pointed out at several occasions to underline COOP’s openness to ‘modern’ family models and, even more, to define a target group for companies interested in advertising their products in the cooperative’s publications. See O Cooperador de Moçambique (1968), 1 (2): passim.

15 See O Cooperador de Moçambique (1968), 1 (1): 11.
members.\textsuperscript{16} By 1974, COOP employed personnel in fields as diverse as administration, construction, an architecture department, a bookshop, a supermarket and a hospital ward.\textsuperscript{17}

The most important organ of COOP was a general assembly which consisted of all sócios efectivos. The general assembly’s directory was elected for several years at the assembly’s ordinary meetings and represented the highest executive board. The directory was complemented by the Director Permanente, an informal primus inter pares not mentioned in all of COOP’s estatutos. The position was permanently held by the cooperative’s founding father, Caetano Oliveira Nunes. Oliveira Nunes, literally sócio number one,\textsuperscript{18} was omnipresent within the institution. He wrote manifestos for the establishment of a Banco Popular de Moçambique, maintained communication with construction companies in Italy, the United States, Sweden and South Africa,\textsuperscript{19} and published passionate articles on cooperative culture in the Cooperador de Moçambique.

\textbf{Fig. 3 - Aspects of COOP buildings today}. Photograph by the author, 2012.

\textsuperscript{16} See the brochure O mealheiro cooperativo at the COOP archives.
\textsuperscript{18} See the entries in the account books on membership fees at the COOP archives.
\textsuperscript{19} See the bank’s advertising booklet ‘Carta a um Moçambicano’ by Oliveira Nunes and the respective correspondence at the COOP archives.
HOUSING CONSTRUCTION AND THE MODERNISATION OF MOZAMBIQUE

The first striking dimension of COOP as a modernist project is its global integration. COOP took its ideological blueprints from examples worldwide. Depending on foreign technology and construction expertise, the building industry of COOP had a global component too. At the beginning, most of the engineers and enterprises involved were Portuguese or Mozambican. In 1960, the directors expressed their satisfaction with the work of the head of their architecture department, Jorge Gonçalves Valente. Nevertheless, the plan to erect a district of unparalleled size in the province forced Oliveira Nunes and his colleagues from the mid-1950s on to extend their networks. They corresponded with international companies, received business partners in their hometown and visited factories and settlements in Europe.

A remarkable example of these activities was the effort to introduce Siporex in Mozambique. A Swedish enterprise from Stockholm owned the rights to license the production and distribution of

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20 For example, the cooperative guidelines published in the first edition of the Cooperador de Moçambique (1969), 1 (1) were taken from French author Guy Salaries.
21 See the respective correspondence at the COOP archives.
this type of cellular concrete. When Oliveria Nunes looked for cheap construction techniques, Siporex was a convincing option. The director was particularly impressed by advertising material on the installation of a Siporex plant in the Belgian Congo.22

Fig. 5 - *Houses built with Siporex technology in Léopoldville, Belgian Congo*. Photography taken from Siporex catalogue *Precast Structural Insulating Cellular Concrete*, sent to COOP in 1960. Courtesy of COOP archives.

After a visit to Sweden around 1959, Nunes became a franchise holder of Siporex for Lourenço Marques and plans were made for a factory for Siporex blocks which was to be modelled after a plant recently installed in post-revolutionary Cuba.23

In 1961 the construction of the plant had still not begun. Something described by Oliveira Nunes as the “African crisis” and the calamity of the construction sector had made investments in Mozambique riskier and it became difficult to find financing for the enterprise.

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22 In COOP’s own feasibility study, the anonymous authors summed this enthusiasm up: “Léopoldville – our case is identical”. See study in COOP archives.
23 He stated: “After a long survey in Europe, I am quite convinced that Siporex will be one of the solutions to cheaper housing conditions in South Africa for all types of building, including single quarters, married quarters, Non-European housing, factories and every type of building [sic]”. See undated and untitled manuscript, probably for presentation purposes, COOP archives.
But the situation was characterised as offering new opportunities. In a letter to possible investors, the director stated:

> [T]he characteristics of the material and the construction plans of the state, especially concerning housing for blacks, suggests that the organisation will meet a good market [...], even more so as the responsible authorities are interested in this initiative. This is why beyond the normal consumption of the market; it seems to be legitimate to expect good perspectives. [...] The institution of the enterprise – representing a major investment, by the way – is an affirmation of the currently needed presence [of Portugal], particularly because it targets the improvement of housing for blacks. (undated letter to investors, ca. 1962, COOP archives)

Thus, by imposing itself as a helper of the colonial welfare state, Oliveira Nunes hoped to benefit from the colonial war. To his Swedish partners, alarmed by the war for independence, he made clear that Siporex Mozambique “is an activity which on account of its aims is free from any loss, in the event of any political modifications verified in Mozambique”.  

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24 See Oliveira Nunes’ undated letter to Swedish Siporex engineer Lundgren.
Besides the transnational entanglement of building technology,\textsuperscript{25} aesthetics stood out as another aspect of COOP’s global modernism. The urban design of COOP’s tropical cooperative echoed experiences from Brazil. Even though the planned 20-storey buildings of Bairro da COOP might not have been modelled directly after Brazilian prototypes, the local population described the towers and the then attractive prospect of a cityscape dominated by densely erected high-rise architecture as “Brazilian style”. In Lourenço Marques, São Paulo was known as a culturally outstanding place and for its intensive use of urban space.\textsuperscript{26}

\textbf{Fig. 7 - Planning details for 20-storey buildings. Image courtesy of José Cochofel, Maputo.}

A second dimension of the modernism of Bairro da COOP can be found in its developmentalist claims. The cooperative discussed the social and economic challenges of Mozambique as typical for a developing country.\textsuperscript{27} On the other hand, COOP postulated a need for societal transformation on a broader scale and showed open sympathy for the student riots of 1968. Cooperatives were described as an appropriate means of transformation towards the society the students were

\textsuperscript{25} In August 1962, COOP had still not found investors for their factory. Possibly because of the war, earlier possibilities of a Swedish government grant for Siporex Mozambique investments had failed. As there is no documentation on the history of Siporex Mozambique after that year in the COOP archives, it was not possible to clarify whether buildings which started construction in the following years were engineered with Siporex technology.

\textsuperscript{26} Interviews conducted in Maputo with José Cochofel, November 15, 2012, and Eugénio Mandlhate, November 15 2011.

\textsuperscript{27} See for example \textit{O Cooperador de Moçambique} (1969), 1 (2), 2.
fighting for, a society in which “it is worth having a place”. In a surprising move, the statement by the West German radical student leader Rudi Dutschke was wholeheartedly taken over by the bourgeois O Cooperador de Moçambique.

The field where COOP saw the most urgent need for development plans was the field of low cost housing. The cooperative attentively followed the international debates of the 1960s on social housing and stressed their activities as an intervention in this field. COOP wanted to achieve a global living standard by providing affordable housing.

![COOP Advertising in O Cooperador de Moçambique 1971](image)

**Figure 8.** Nós fomos os primeiros a dar-lhes uma casa. COOP advertising in *O Cooperador de Moçambique* 1971), 3 6).

The particularly difficult housing situation in Mozambique’s caniço districts was pointed out as a serious problem within the field of low cost housing, but not as a problem apart. In a way, COOP

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29 In 1969, *O Cooperador de Moçambique* proudly informed its readers about a letter from a Belgian Company Director who had been impressed by COOP as a “housing development whose standard easily compares to the best in the world” (*O Cooperador de Moçambique*, 1969), 1 (6), 2).
considered the improvement of the *caniço* as its field of expertise and intervened in public debates.\(^{30}\)

A third dimension of COOP’s modernist project consists in its relation to the Portuguese nation. The study of COOP’s publications suggests that the idea of being a part of Portugal was only *one* part of the cooperative’s collective identity. In contrast, there is a certain pride of belonging to the cosmopolitan *bourgeoisie* of proto-national Mozambique. This is exemplified by a fevered letter to the editors in the *Cooperador de Moçambique* in 1973. Referring to an article on COOP’s outstanding position amongst the province’s biggest enterprises published in the paper, one of the associates asked:

*Can all the other ten enterprises be classified as Mozambican enterprises?! Effectively in most of the cases, the profit is taken out of Mozambique, to the Metropolis or abroad, where their head offices can be found. According to this, are they Mozambican? There will not be many enterprises bigger than COOP which are constituted exclusively of Mozambican money! (O COOPERADOR DE MOÇAMBIQUE, 1969, 1 (3), 12.)*

This strong feeling about being Mozambican and thereby part of a family of African nations defines the editorial policy of the *Cooperador de Moçambique*.\(^{31}\) However, there is a feeling of belonging to another community beyond the borders of the province. COOP’s directors continually emphasised the bonds of solidarity that linked their housing development to the International Co-operative Alliance, the major global lobby for the cooperative movement. The inventory in the COOP archives suggests that the organisation exchanged information and journals with at least 20 different cooperatives ranging from Mexico to Germany. The declarations of the Alliance were spread and the International Day of Co-operatives was celebrated on a regular basis. Transcending cold war borders, the coverage of *O Cooperador de Moçambique* placed COOP in a transnational community and included reports on initiatives from Portugal, France, Brazil, Angola, South Africa, East Germany and the Soviet Union.\(^{32}\) As some of the mentors of the cooperative movement in Portugal were

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\(^{30}\) See the article on Caniço in *O Cooperador de Moçambique* (1969), 1 (3), 12.

\(^{31}\) For example, a series of articles on university campus construction in other African countries indicates how the editors compared Mozambique’s development with the progress made by other, *post*-colonial African states. Instead of setting Mozambique apart from the rest of Africa as a semi European nation, the paper highlights the common challenges faced by the continent as a whole.

\(^{32}\) This positive reference to communist states is obviously particularly surprising. See for example the article “Carta da Alemanha” on cooperative supermarkets in Eastern German Cottbus, *O Cooperador de Moçambique* (1969), 1 (5).
hard-pushed by the state after 1926, the Portuguese Estado Novo was even less attractive as a political environment for cooperative transformation.\(^{33}\)

A last manifestation of the modernism of *Bairro da COOP* follows from the ambiguous conjunction with the colonial condition. The argument put forth by several historians of colonial architecture that the colonies served as an experimental laboratory for new social, technological and aesthetical forms (WRIGHT, 1991; AVERMAETE et al. 2010) can be retested in a paradigmatic way. For COOP, the colony offered more elbowroom for innovations in urban planning. It provided an access to land that helped the society to become Portugal’s biggest housing cooperative. At the same time, it allowed for limited political opposition to the *Estado Novo* by supporting opposition members and experimenting with collectivism without a nationalist framing. In the metropolis, a cooperative as autonomous as COOP would probably have been confronted with stronger governmental control. This came along with the creation of new material metaphors for the society they wanted to live in. When *arquitectura popular* was still used for public buildings of the empire, the aesthetics of large scale collective dwellings stood out as a political statement.

But while COOP used the colonial condition for experimentation, innovation and resistance, it did not question the colonial superstructure. COOP claimed to fight for “a society where skin colour and religion are no motives for the separation of humans” and to contribute to “an extraordinary process of an even stronger approximation by the definite elimination of reasons that separate humans from each other”.\(^{34}\) This explicitly friendly stance on diversity also found its expression in a

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\(^{33}\) The constant positive reference to critics of the Estado Novo such as António Sérgio could be understood as an implicit criticism of the regime in Lisbon. COOP openly pointed out that Sérgio had to go into exile “after the events of 1926” (O cooperador de Moçambique, 1 (2), 3). After Sérgio’s death in 1969, however, the COOP editors immediately lobbied for a monument for and a street named after Sérgio (O cooperador de Moçambique, 1 (2), 3).

\(^{34}\) See the *Previsão orçamental para o ano de 1974*, COOP archives. During the transition following April 1974, race relations within COOP became a major topic. After disagreements on internal economical queries, both the powerful predominantly white workers’ committee and Oliveira Nunes accused each other of fascist and racist tendencies. According to the local *Tempo* magazine, Oliveira Nunes was accused of showing “incorrect, dangerous and clearly fascist attitudes which have the capacity to provoke a racial confrontation that does not exist between African and European employees (David/Nam 1974, 6–11). Oliveira responded in *Tempo* magazine 199 (1974) and in a booklet on his view of the events. His effort to picture himself as a democrat is representative for many people’s difficulties to redefine their roles under post-independence conditions. Oliveira Nunes claims to have been a democrat and anti-racist long before the events of April 1974 and highlights his exclusion from a career in government positions, his time in prison in 1948 and his involvement in the electoral campaign of Norton de Matos and Humberto Delgado: “There are blacks, COOP employees, for whom the first white hand they ever shook was the one of the *Director Permanente*, and this happened in the beginning of the 1950s, in this distant époque when the black population could not even walk the streets after nine o’clock. […] There was no attempt to establish a confrontation between whites and blacks. At COOP
constant positive reference to black Mozambican culture. Officially, COOP dedicated itself to ‘politico-religious and racial neutrality’ and was open to members from any background.\(^\text{35}\) The public spaces of COOP were constantly used for exhibitions and for the support of upcoming painters and sculptors like Malangatana or Chissano.

Fig. 9 - Architect Jorge Valente explaining the construction plan for low-cost housing for the Secção Popular da COOP to the directors of C.A.N.M. Centro Associativo dos Negros de Moçambique, N.B.). Photograph printed with same title in COOP. Divulgação Cooperativa (1963), 3 (13).

However, and apart from some sócios efectivos with Indian or Chinese backgrounds, full members of COOP were almost exclusively white.\(^\text{36}\) When plans were made for the housing of the black workers of COOP, often registered as sócios populares, their settlements were projected near the zoo, far off from COOP’s main neighbourhood.\(^\text{37}\) Still, for strategic reasons or political conviction, there was never really anything apart from COOP employees.” See O conflicto da COOP. Resposta do Dr. Oliveira Nunes ao texto publicado no ‘Tempo’ de 30 de junho de 1974. COOP archives.

\(^{35}\) See for instance the editorial in O Cooperador de Moçambique (1969), 1 (1).

\(^{36}\) Interview conducted on November 15, 2011 with Eugénio Mandlhate, COOP guardian since 1972. This fact remained absent in the cooperative’s reports on membership growth. Matching with the ideology of lusotropicalismo, no potential associate would have been excluded for racial reasons. The rejection would have rather been based on their limited financial opportunities.

\(^{37}\) This project was inspired by similar plans in colonial Kenya and Rhodesia (COOP. Divulgação Cooperativa (1963), 3 (13), passim).
even the financially underprivileged sócios populares were represented as integral part of the cooperative family.

Fig. 10 - Os recursos incomensuráveis da equipa, photograph used for decorative purposes at COOP headquarters and printed with same title in O Cooperador de Moçambique 1969), 1 2).

CONCLUSION

COOP leaves an ambiguous impression. It embodies a surprising global orientation, an optimistic preoccupation with its „Third World“-surroundings, and a truly transnational identity. Its progressive programme and oppositional attitude, however, remained infused by the wider matrix of Portuguese colonial ideology. A consideration of such contradictory conditions might prove to be helpful for a deeper understanding of other late colonial architectures as well.

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