“Fantastic” colonial cities: Portuguese colonial utopia

Alexandre RAMOS
CIDEHUS – University of Évora
Email: alexandre_d_ramos@hotmail.com
ORCID: 0000-0003-3872-5536

Abstract

Cities of Portuguese Africa reflected the repurposed colonial policy of the post-second World War period (1939-45) in terms of their urban design, architecture, economy, and leisure. In the last decades of Colonialism, countering the winds of decolonisation blowing from the East, the Portuguese government took a series of political and diplomatic steps aimed at preserving its ideologically remodelled Empire (i.e., now officially known as Ultramar), following the Revisão Constitucional de 1951. Consequently, both old and new colonial cities became the most visible stages of social and economic projects and experiences emerging from the recently adopted colonial narrative. Therefore, the main goal of the current chapter is to understand how this phenomenon of expansion and renovation of these cities, as portraited in cinema, revealed the fantasy and utopia of the colonial politics of the Estado Novo – i.e. a multiracial society, coexisting in harmony, in a sort of Portuguese pax of which the self-determination of Angola and Mozambique was the antithesis, i.e., the dystopia.

Keywords: Cinema, Architecture, Portugal, Angola, Mozambique, Colonial Fantasy.