

Transecting security and space in Maputo

Till F Paasche, James D Sidaway

Abstract:

Over the past four decades, the Mozambican capital city of Maputo has undergone rapid changes. Although still governed by the (formerly socialist) party that inherited the city from a collapsing Portuguese colonial state in 1975, postsocialist Maputo recasts disparities in class and power. This paper negotiates these fractures, based on two walking transects through the central areas of the city conducted by the coauthors. Initially informed by ‘psycho geography’ literatures on negotiating and representing cities, these were supplemented by and enacted through a focus on security and policing. While the state uses police to secure vital interests, other sites and spaces experience limited policing. To bridge this security gap, commercial and ad hoc security providers are contracted to secure private homes and enterprises. We describe an increased and uneven commoditisation of security. The security landscape of central Maputo thus comprises a complex patchwork of privately secured micro enclaves that relay and rework enclaving on larger scales.