

Security Governance in South African Neighbourhoods

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The implementation of security regulations, the strategies for safe urban environments and especially the technologies of control represent a field of potential social conflict. In South Africa, the increased demand for safe urban environments (especially in the aftermath of the 2010 World Cup) is prominent, and the expansion of policies of order and control has become the common institutional answer to this demand. It is important though, to reflect on these strategies in the context of existing policies to negotiate urban conflicts (cf. Berking et al. 2006) as well as in the light of broader urban development strategies. Given the world wide competition between cities the regulation and management of space is responding to perceived preferences of the market: orderly places shall attract business. Critical urban research is focussing on fragmentation and social inequality, as well as on discourses of safety and security (e.g. Häußermann et al. 2008, Glasze et al. 2005, Zukin 1991/1995). Criminological research shares this topic, but also discusses the dialectics of security through control against the rights to individual freedom (cf. Leiterer 2007, Krasmann/de Marinis 1997). Urban research on safety and security in South Africa tends to focus on the perception of safety, depending on various social factors, but also on the localities and the built environment (Hansen 2006, Lemanski 2004). Thus, the spatial dimension of society is increasingly acknowledged (cf. Hentschel 2007, Kempa/Singh 2008, Donaldson/Ferreira 2007, Steinberg 2008). Concepts of order, however, vary, and cities in Sub-Saharan Africa are often influenced by external viewpoints (and policies and technologies). In South Africa, development cooperation of GTZ as well as KfW is promoting „Safe Nodes" in the tradition of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (Mathéy 2006). Thus, there is a gap between existing research on urban security and the implementation of related strategies through state institutions – although both spheres are influenced by western discourses and technologies. What is also lacking is knowledge on existing localised "institutions" of order and control such as neighbourhood associations. Against the background of urban apartheid (divided neighbourhoods) this paper wants to inform the debate based on evidence collected in selected neighbourhoods in Johannesburg. There is a special consideration of "spatial identities" and the relations of places in everyday life. In this respect, the ideas of security governance (Johnston/Shearing 2003) shall be used fruitfully for the interpretation of institutional aspirations in these neighbourhoods.