



Universität
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Research Project

Exploring the Public - A Comparative Ethnography of Public Spaces in Maputo and Johannesburg (Dissertation Barbara Heer)

Project funded by own resources

Project title Exploring the Public - A Comparative Ethnography of Public Spaces in Maputo and Johannesburg (Dissertation Barbara Heer)

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Departement Gesellschaftswissenschaften / Visuelle und politische Ethnologie (Förster)

Project start 01.01.2010

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Status Completed

This comparative ethnographic study explores in two cities in Southern Africa how different urban dwellers encounter each other in the shared urban space. Both cities, Johannesburg and Maputo, are shaped on the one hand by historical social and physical divisions of the city (Apartheid, Portuguese colonialism), and on the other hand by new processes of segregation driven by economic forces ("privatisation"). The project wants to shed light on how these and other similarities and differences between the two cities shape the way different urban dwellers encounter each other in the everyday life.

14 months of comparative research in Johannesburg and Maputo have been carried out by one PhD candidate. Field research has been conducted applying an action- and actor-oriented, mainly inductive approach avoiding normative Western concepts.. Fieldwork is guided by a combination of different strategies: neighbourhood marked by physical proximity and socio-economic difference as a methodological starting point, 'following the people' strategy, and analysis of specific places. The project adopts and adapts the Emic Evaluation Approach (EEA) (Förster 2011 et al). The project follows a case-oriented, individualizing comparative strategy which aims at clarifying the characteristics of one case by contrasting it to another detailed case.

This project is integrated in the Research Group on Political Transformations at the Institute of Social Anthropology, University of Basel. Fieldwork have been conducted in collaboration with Witwatersrand University, Johannesburg, and Universidade Eduardo Mondlane, Maputo.

Keywords public life, public space, privatisation, segregation, urban governance, Maputo, Johannesburg

Financed by

Other funds

Add publication

Published results

3178891, Heer, Barbara, Spaces of Encounter and Unequal Neighbourhoods. A Comparative Ethnography of Agency, Space and Difference in Maputo and Johannesburg, Publication: Thesis (Dissertationen, Habilitationen)

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