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CALL For PANELS

VAD Tagung 2012/Köln 30.05. – 02.06.2012

Titel: Embattled Spaces – Contested Orders/ Umkämpfte Räume – Umstrittene Ordnungen

Trans-national networking as well as processes of partial de-coupling of such networks in some regions lead to new conflicts over the allocation and the constitution of physically, normatively, and virtually constituted spaces in Africa. Not only conflicts over protected areas, natural resources and corresponding reforms of land tenure but also conflicts over “tradition” and “culture” as economic resources and sources of normative orientation in local contexts dominate public debates and development discourses. African politicians, artists, and journalists as well as the populations of rural regions, of poor urban neighbourhoods, as well as inhabitants of elitist urban ghettos conceptualise current conflicts as contestations about spatial orders. They relate these to critical global and national developments and present these spaces as embattled (or at least worth to be embattled) or they hope that co-operative solutions to these “spatial” problems will ameliorate their living standards substantially. The scarcity of land and other resources portrayed as crucial for development and well-being and the competition over them are dramatized and become politically exploited like the loss of “authentic” cultural and ethical values. This loss has obviously been enhanced by intense media networking accelerated by fundamental changes in the media scene. Classic media (print, radio, and TV) become more diversified and the spread of mobile phones and the internet offer new opportunities. Thus, these discussions do not only deal with physical space but deal increasingly with virtual spaces, whose economic, social, and ideational utilization calls for new negotiation processes.

Current processes of economic and cultural globalization and the rapid urbanization as well as related discourses and violent conflicts hark back to former disputes which took place in pre-colonial and colonial times. However, specific historical aspects and forms of presentation and negotiation of conflicts are added. Social movements for example refer to globally promoted civil rights and personal freedom and repeat the call for democracy. The concept of a civil society is confronted with notions of autochthony. Such intra-societal contestations always deal with different conceptions of order: spatial structures in the sense of cultural landscapes, social and political order and religious modifications of imagined communities. These different conceptions of order converge and allow different actors, stakeholders, and national institutions to selectively lay claim on them and to use them for the implementation of their specific aims.

The conference intends to reflect on these current and historically established processes on the basis of four topics of interest:

- (1) Commoditising Space – Indigenising Land
- (2) Contested Environments - Negotiating Spatiality and Resources

- (3) (De)Legitimised Orders – New Models of Governance / Alternative Moralities
- (4) Language and Media – Signification and Representations

We kindly invite you to send your panel proposal to the following mail-address:

VAD-2012@uni-koeln.de

by

31 May 2011

at the latest.

Thank you very much in advance!

Your VAD-2012 organisation team