Editorial

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This special issue focuses on local level governance of security in poor urban neighbourhoods of East Africa. The issue seeks to address both a theoretical and policy gap in the security governance where the bulk of scholarship has focused on state security actors and often treated non-state security actors as secondary and even symptomatic of deficiency and incapacity in the state or public security. Traditionally, political theory has treated security as the exclusive domain of the state with Thomas Hobbes' Leviathan providing the justification for the view of the state as the sole wielder of legitimate force and violence. Every other form of organized violence or civic peace and security was therefore seen as marginal, of second order or subsidiary to that of the state. In the contemporary state, the everyday embodiment of that monopoly of state violence and control over security is the public police. In this traditional perspective therefore, other forms of policing and provision of security in the state only follow the lead and operate with the permission of the state police.

Increasingly however, scholars from various disciplines have come to question this view of security. Following Michel Foucault and Bruno Latour, Wood and Shearing have suggested that governance needs to be reconceptualized to reflect the realities of how power actually operates (Wood and Shearing, 2007). Here the call is to rethink the view of governance that is wedded to and takes its default starting point as the sovereign when in reality power is best understood in its localized and everyday interactions. Building on this as well as insights from other disciplines scholars working on security governance have suggested that in reality, security is best understood by looking at the partnerships, interfaces, overlaps and interactions between public security actors such as the police and other actors such as private security and citizens' own initiatives among others (Wood and Shearing, 2007; Abrahamsen and Williams, 2011; Baker, 2004). The long-assumed monopoly of the state in security has eroded and waned, paving the way for these forms of partnerships. Instead, as the introductory chapter to this issue points out "security production, regulation, authorization is now hybrid (Black, 2002), polycentric (Wood and Shearing, 2007) and networked (Castells, 2000)." Globally and in light of these

developments therefore, security governance needs to be "re-imagined" to paraphrase Jennifer Wood and Clifford Shearing (Wood and Shearing, 2007).

The case studies in this issue build on this call for theoretical re-examination of how security is produced, regulated and governed and also on the call to study power and governance in their everyday forms. They are located within an urban African context where the post-colonial state has struggled with the provision of basic services including security. More specifically, they seek to understand how security in poor urban neighbourhoods of four East African cities is governed through citizens' initiatives even when the state may not be as responsive or effective in providing quality and accountable security. The distinction that these studies make by specifying their focus on "community-led" security mechanisms is aimed at weeding out other forms of security arrangements such as private security as well as those associated with gangs, vigilantes and militias.

The studies use a "nodal governance" analytic framework to examine the mentalities (ideas) shaping community-level security organizing, the technologies or methods chosen and preferred, the resources available and mobilized for security provision and the institutional form that such initiatives assume to generate the desired security outcomes where they operate. Nodal governance is a framework within the plural security theories that suggests various actors or nodes interact, influence each other, resist each other, and enrol each other in various ways so as to advance their objectives (Wood and Shearing, 2007). Nodes are also auspices (such as private, civil society) under which security is organized and governed and are sites where knowledge, capacity and resources are mobilized to achieve desired security outcomes (Burris et al, 2005). The cases that are presented in this volume cover findings from studies on local level security governance in the urban areas of four East African countries: Nairobi in Kenya, Kigali in Rwanda, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania and Kampala in Uganda.

References

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