
The research project is situated in the field of qualitative social studies concerned with the construction of places, neighbourhoods and belonging. Specifically it investigates the construction and transformation of neighbourhoods in the fast expanding megacity Khartoum, the capital of Sudan.

Beside looking at the urbanization processes, rural/urban shifts and the modelling of living conditions by external actors and conditions, my research focuses on how people perceive the neighbourhood as a resource they use and construct in a contiguous process.

Sudan has been all throughout its history a place of turbulent conflicts and transformations. Since independence people have moved to the capital looking for better perspectives or driven by war, hunger and natural disaster. The challenge to build up neighbourhoods in the urban environment of Khartoum opens windows of opportunity for both those living there for generations and newcomers. On the other hand, the pressure of governmental interference and neglect, increasing poverty, a strong gentrification and the capitalisation of housing policy minimize the space for most people and fundamentally influence their living conditions.

In the Sudanese context neighbourly life is perceived as a qualitative marker of “Sudaneseness”. To be a good neighbour is essential for the self-concept of many Sudanese. As a neighbourhood unfolds on a concrete place, the potentials of neighbourly behaviour become visible for everybody on an everyday basis. Formal and informal institutions are built up and used to create a common framework where people meet and act. There is interplay between individual and collective practices, social boundaries arise and modify. This specific form of belonging is practised and bargained among neighbours. The interest of this research is to look specifically at the Sudanese context so often described as a conflict about identities and to investigate the
ability and self-confidence to create sustainable neighbourly networks that resonate in many Sudanese sayings and comments.

Therefore, theoretical assumptions should be open for divergent perspectives and unexpected statements. The Grounded Theory approach seems to be a suitable way as the processes of data collection and data analysis are closely connected.