

Invitation

mod workshop on 'urban security'

Security is one of the biggest issues in urban policy debates today, especially since events such as 9/11 and 26/11. In such policy discussions, the word 'security' is mostly understood as a concept related to 'hard security issues', like terrorist attacks, foreign policies or questions of executive law. In fact, the dialogue on security is very often 'fear-oriented' and argues from a cultural nationalist/regionalist view. Threat scenarios and risk analyses are built upon two major presumptions: (a) of an existing 'good' status quo and (b) of potential external forces to destroy or weaken this status quo. This framing of security questions exists in issues ranging from employment insecurity about migrant workers from other states and countries, cultural insecurity about public display of ethnic and 'other' identities, to environmental insecurity of climate change. This security discourse often leaves no room for questioning the results and consequences for an urban society – and for discussing alternative concepts.

The roles of civil society are often raised only after a conflict breaks out. Concepts like capacity building, community participation and re-building formal and informal infrastructures contain possibilities (though not unproblematic ones) for building up a civil society based on fundamental human rights. The open question is why these concepts are not part of existing strategies before a conflict might break out. Also the dialogue on security seems to close down any concepts of an open, democratic and equal society, and re-interpret 'community participation' as exclusionary practices.

If security issues already play an increasingly important role in society, how is it being materialized into the existing urban fabric in India? How are architecture and urban planning functioning as domains of production of security? Can there be a different way and a practical positive vision?

To identify new ways, it is necessary to understand the security discourse in India and to see whose interests are involved in it. The interaction between community oriented and personal security aspects is another important basis understanding today's Indian city landscapes. We need to keep in mind how the political and cultural agenda of security emerges out of differences between local and global perspectives and their interactions.

The **mod** workshop is designed to initiate theoretical and application-oriented research by critically questioning existing concepts, their causes and effects and identifying possibilities of 'secure' urban development approaches. The workshop will create an initial discourse on 'urban security' in an interdisciplinary way. There will be real-time documentation of the results of the workshop. We will also take part in a collective mapping of in/security in Bangalore, which will then be available as an open-source online resource.

mod workshop on 'urban security'

Friday, 11th March 2011, 10:00am - 05.30pm

Venkataramanan Associates, 10/2, O'Shaughnessy Road, Langford Gardens, Bangalore 560 025

R.S.V.P. along with a brief introduction to sumandro@gmail.com

Please note that seats are limited.

Workshop Sessions

Friday, 11th March 2011

10:00-10:15: **Introductions**

10:15-11:30: **'Freedom from Fear'**

>> How do we define 'security'?

Does 'security' come from democratic structures and rights? Borders of democracy? Right to privacy? Access to education and economic infrastructure? Freedom of speech? Inflation of food prices and security of life?

11:45-01:00: **Security as Knowledge**

>> Security as information and Information as security?

Is post-9/11 understanding of insecurity the fear of the unknown? Can knowledge bring security? Can knowledge take away of security? RTI, UIDAI and open data and security?

01:00-02:00: **Lunch**

02:00-03:15: **Architecture and Securities**

>> Can we 'build' security?

Closed or open buildings and neighborhoods? Public and semi-public spaces? Culture and religious needs? Military spaces in the city? Who will feed the city of tomorrow? Healthcare for everyone? Where does protection ends?

3:30-4:45: **In/Secure Spaces and Atmospheres in Bangalore [Mapping Session]**

>> A 'security' map of Bangalore?

Where in Bangalore are we confronted with issues of security? What things in Bangalore make us feel un/safe? Is community life a public infrastructure of security?

05:00-05:30: **What's Next? How we do it?**

>> What will a secure future look like?

Who should cooperate? How we cooperate? How to involve local and global perspectives? Can there be architecture(s) of peace?

Note: For each session we have a central question and a set of phrases to illustrate what we will like to discuss. These phrases only indicate, and do not restrict, the course of the discussions.