Unbundled security services and urban fragmentation in post-apartheid Johannesburg

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1. Introduction

Graham and Marvin’s ‘Splintering Urbanism’ thesis, presented in a groundbreaking and stimulating book (2001), analyses of urban service provision using a historical perspective. Their thesis demonstrates that the recent transformation of service provision paradigm, based on ‘good governance’, public–private partnerships and different forms of privatisation, has led to increasing levels of inequality in terms of access to services in contemporary cities. Their analysis is part of a broader literature concerned with the transformation of governance in today’s cities and its implication regarding the state’s capacity to govern, rule or regulate urban societies. Unlike Brenner (2004) and Hibou (2004) who argue that transformation of state modes of intervention do not prevent it from exerting important forms of control over society, Graham and Marvin, in agreement with Jessop (2002), show that privatisation and the unbundling of urban services lead to increased social inequalities and reduced state capacity to regulate the social effects of such market dynamics.

Graham and Marvin’s splintering urbanism hypothesis goes beyond the study of material network service provision such as water, electricity and telecommunication. It can be interestingly used to analyse any kind of service involving networks – even those which are partly immaterial such as policing services 1 or more precisely security networks in contemporary cities. Changing security governance, implying new technologies and more importantly diversifying sets of stakeholders, raises the question of public coordination and regulation of these multiple security actors. In this regard, should one speak of security “networks” (Newburn, 2001) or of security “partnerships”? The latter involves the idea of the possible regulation by public authorities, whilst security networks do not necessarily imply coordination at a broader level, since several networks can coexist in the same city with limited links to one another, thereby forming “splintered” security systems.

Similarly to the Graham and Marvin’s mythical “golden age” of a universal service based on the generalisation of public infrastructures in modern societies, Garland (1996) shows how the state monopoly of the legitimate use of violence was a myth that founded the modern state. Maybe even more than water and electricity, security provision under an incrementally integrated pub-

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1 As Johnston (1999, p. 192), we define policing as ‘the act of governance (or rule) directed towards the promotion of security’.
lic army and police force was one of the primary functions of modern states, overcoming the fragmentation of the warlords of the Ancien Régime (Weber, 1979). The rising privatisation and unbundling of security provision are therefore far reaching, not only in terms of equal access to security as a basic right for all urban residents, but also in terms of the capacity of the state to manage and maintain regulatory power on what is still one of its core functions.

In post-apartheid South African cities, these two questions are central for the new democratic government. Is the state able to repress some of the huge social and spatial inequalities inherited from the apartheid past – of which access to security is not the main, but certainly a very large and shared social concern? And, is the state able to govern efficiently and legitimately a policing system in a very divided urban society, whose residents are diversely affected by crime and using different devices to protect themselves?

Before looking at post-apartheid security provision dynamics and the scope of their regulation by the state, we need to give important historical and contextual elements that can help place South Africa in Graham and Marvin’s general framework. As stressed by Jaglin (2005a), the South African case is very particular. As a developing country it is faced by the difficulty of generalising public services in a society characterized by massive poverty. But the South African state has shared and somehow implemented the modernist dream, through a state-driven segregationist project that was convenient for the taylorist industrialisation process, as it provided industries with a mass of workers deprived of basic rights and therefore easy to control (Crankshaw, 1997). However, again following Jaglin (2005a), the “golden age” of public supremacy on the production of security never really existed. As early as the 1970s, the state police focused on its political objectives and subcontracted its civilian duties to the private sector (Carrier, 1999; Schönsteich et al., 2004). The growth of private security companies (local and international) preceded in time the current public neo-liberal policies. On the other hand, the 1980s saw the development, or at least the political visibilisation, of self-justification of black townships (Schär and Nina, 2001), as the civics2 decided to render the townships ungovernable and created their own governance – and security – structures, based on social control and sometimes mob justice and vigilantism. So security provision was already fragmented under the apartheid, modernist regime.

In the post-apartheid era, new challenges are shaping the form of security provision. As is common in transitional countries, South Africa and especially its economic capital Johannesburg have undergone a rapid rise in crime levels.3 This rise is due partly to the restructuring of the police service which had to transform from a political force into a civilian police, to restructure its personnel and resource distribution, and also to reconcile with residents by enforcing decentralisation and the principles of community policing. International trends for good governance and community participation in the production of security, the necessity of regaining residents’ particular in townships) confidence, as well as the current inability of the police service to ensure security, led the post-apartheid state to enhance non-state actors’ participation in the provision of security. They have therefore encouraged local security initiatives, which have bloomed all over Johannesburg since the advent of democracy in 1994. These shifts have boosted local creativity and experimentation, but they also have encouraged the development of highly unequal security systems across the city. It is this juxtaposition of different security networks4 that we wish to analyse here, questioning the impact this proliferation of local initiatives has on security provision and its public regulation in Johannesburg.

Whilst the thesis of splintering urbanism will be used as a leading thread in this paper, I will complement it with another body of literature, entrenched in the French urban geographic tradition that has developed more specifically around the notion of “urban fragmentation” (Jaglin, 2001, 2005a, 2005b; Navez-Bouchanine, 2002). Using the same image as Graham and Marvin to describe contemporary cities, this literature complements the “splintering urbanism” approach (mainly focused on urban policy and governance) by drawing a specific attention to urban space and spatial practices, which give the idea of splintered and fragmented cities more of a “lived”, practised and experienced dimension. It is all the more relevant for the study of security governance, as security concerns generate specific urban practices and forms. Residents’ spatial practices adapt to (real or perceived) insecurity by, for instance, sidelining feared spaces, imposing specific time and spatial patterns to their movements (Koskela, 1999), changing their use of public space (Mitchell, 1995; Graham, 1998). Security concerns also lead to specific urban and architectural forms, from fortress cities (Davis, 1990) to panoptic architecture and planning (Foucault, 1975; Coleman and Sim, 2000; Lyon, 2003), where diverse security stakeholders (from urban developers to security providers, CCTV technology specialists and urban designers) play a major role. Hence the notion of urban fragmentation is operational as it considers different complementary “dimensions” of fragmentation, providing a framework for a multi-dimensional analysis and measurement of fragmentation trends, less developed in the more historical and urban policies-oriented splintering urbanism approaches. Defining fragmentation as a de-solidarisation of the city (no longer functioning as a system but more and more as juxtaposed, uncoordinated “fragments” drifting apart), one can indeed differentiate between several dimensions of fragmentation. Spatial fragmentation refers to sharp contrasts between different parts of the city, physical access between those being rendered more and more difficult, or not even considered nor planned for. Economic fragmentation helps understanding the rise of large masses of segregated urban proletariat not being employed in zones of activity, nor considered “useful” in the metropolitan economy. Political fragmentation consists of the development of separate municipalities or jurisdictions managing segregated areas, at the expense of fiscal redistribution and common political representation. And social fragmentation refers to the increasing separation of spatial and social practices of residents in the city. We will use in particular the spatial and political dimensions of fragmentation for the purpose of this paper.

The paper is structured around three couples of oppositions that are relevant in understanding the questions raised by this variety of security networks across the city, and illustrate three different and complementary dimensions of urban fragmentation:

(1) closed/non-closed areas (raising question of access and spatial fragmentation);
(2) voluntary versus compulsory contribution towards a local security project (raising the question of fiscal fragmentation and resource redistribution);

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2 Civics are black township residents’ associations, mainly developed during the struggle against apartheid, with very tight street and neighbourhood networks.

3 We will not discuss here the complex causes of the absolute, high level of crime in South Africa, which we link mainly to the extreme level of social and economic inequality, and to the history of state violence and deprivation of rights organized under apartheid.

(3) community versus private security project (raising questions about the monitoring of such projects, and thus of political fragmentation).

When considering each of those dimension of fragmentation, we will question whether the current public policies in the post-apartheid context are widening or narrowing the existing gap in access to security between the suburbs and the townships.5

2. The rise of spatial fragmentation, or the question of access

The first and most visible form of spatial fragmentation in the Johannesburg area, which is at the centre of burning local political debates, is to be found in the proliferation of road closures. A group of residents gather and decide to close off the public roads giving access to their neighbourhood by erecting temporary or permanent barriers (with or without pedestrian access), some of which are monitored by private security guards paid by the residents.6

2.1. Security projects in the wealthy suburbs: closed versus non-closed areas

More than 300 road closures have been implemented since 1996 in the most affluent areas of Johannesburg (Landman, 2004b). They match the socio-economic pattern of the city, divided between the northern parts, formerly white, middle- to upper-class suburbs, and the former lower-income black7 townships mainly concentrated in the southern parts (Soweto meaning South Western Townships) – with the exception of Alexandra township, located very close to Sandton, the main suburban commercial and business district (Fig. 1). This north-south spatial divide is made more complex by the evolution of the core of the city and of its immediate surrounds, which have undergone extensive urban decay in the last two decades, and which the municipality is currently trying to revamp.

Road closures are concentrated in the northern, wealthier suburbs,8 since the closure is costly to monitor: permanent guarding of the barrier means hiring a crew of security guards. This experience contrasts sharply with other African cities (e.g. in Nigeria or Kenya), where a less powerful municipal control over public space and a lower degree of formalisation of non-state security initiatives allow road closures to spread in poorer neighbourhoods as well (Bénit-Gbaffou et al., 2006).

This pattern, particular to South Africa, explains the form taken by the debate between residents and the municipality. The latter accuses the former of reproducing apartheid-like segregation in a post-apartheid context (Vircoulon, 2005): wanting to exclude the “undesirable” elements of society on a merely racial basis. This debate has hidden another fundamental debate, on the problems posed to traffic, access (in particular to public vehicles as ambulances and police), and increased congestion on the main arteries of Johannesburg.

Indeed, many neighbouring residents have complained about the question of access and the displacement of traffic created by the closures. For instance, in the wealthier part of Johannesburg, the residents of Sandhurst erected a steel fence around their suburb in 2002, creating one of the biggest enclosed suburbs in Johannesburg (encompassing more than 500 houses). The luxury Saxon Hotel, within the enclosure, and Hyde Park High School in the neighbouring suburb have made an alliance with Hyde Park residents to take legal action against the enclosed residents (gathered under the Sandhurst Heritage Foundation), complaining about the huge daily traffic problems, in particular for the access to the high school.

“So angry were Hyde Park residents that they took matters in their own hands and twice knocked parts of the fence at the end of last year, and three times this year. There are rumours about the Foundation calling a meeting two weeks ago at which residents were asked to boycott the Hyde Park shopping centre in revenge for the action taken by the Hyde Park group.” (Heckl, 2003)

Concerning the pedestrian access to the enclosed neighbourhood, in particular for domestic workers employed in the area, it is not clear whether the closures are a burden to them – imposing lengthy detours when the pedestrian access is denied at some of the gates or an improvement of their working conditions – since they are, and consider themselves, affected by crime in their area of employment (Mabin and Harrison, 2006). However, as far as mobility is concerned, road closures are an important form of spatial fragmentation in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg.

Another issue, not so much debated as quantitative evidence is lacking to document it, can be seen in the displacement effect not only of traffic but also of crime in the neighbouring areas. A very plausible real effect of enclosures, crime displacement is at least perceived very strongly by neighbouring residents and leads to the rapid spreading of road closures, one following the other: this pattern takes on several in-depth case studies selected in order to illustrate a variety of income levels, urban settings, crime patterns and community solutions – including suburban, inner city as well as township areas. For each of the case studies considered, the research consisted of a series of interviews with key stakeholders (civic and residents’ association leaders or common members; local councillors and city officials; police officers at top and lower rank); and attendance at public meetings and events (community policing forums, sector crime forums, street committees, police management meetings, civic and residents’ association meetings, marches against crime, etc.). The depth of the case studies, attendance at many different meetings with sometimes similar (or absent) participants, allowed crosschecking discourses and witnessing of actual practices of community policing and dynamics. Of course, choosing this anthropological approach raises the question of representativity – some secondary, less in-depth case studies and the reliance on the vast existing South African literature on the matter, helped redress this possible bias.

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5 This paper is based on a three years extensive research in Johannesburg (2003–2005), on the theme of ‘communities’ various responses to crime and their relationships to the state. The methodology chosen was therefore qualitative, based on several in-depth case studies selected in order to illustrate a variety of income levels, urban settings, crime patterns and community solutions – including suburban, inner city as well as township areas. For each of the case studies considered, the research consisted of a series of interviews with key stakeholders (civic and residents’ association leaders or common members; local councillors and city officials; police officers at top and lower rank); and attendance at public meetings and events (community policing forums, sector crime forums, street committees, police management meetings, civic and residents’ association meetings, marches against crime, etc.). The depth of the case studies, attendance at many different meetings with sometimes similar (or absent) participants, allowed crosschecking discourses and witnessing of actual practices of community policing and dynamics. Of course, choosing this anthropological approach raises the question of representativity – some secondary, less in-depth case studies and the reliance on the vast existing South African literature on the matter, helped redress this possible bias.

6 For the sake of this paper, we make a distinction between road closures and gated communities (or, as they are called in South Africa: “security villages”: Landman 2004a); private walled complexes, originally built this way, and where the streets are entirely private (and therefore supposedly managed and maintained by the body corporate, a private entity): no need there for negotiations with municipalities. The impact of gated communities on spatial fragmentation will not be considered in detail here, for two main reasons. First, they are not primarily, nor necessarily, linked to security concerns, as they are mainly a global, suburban housing product. Secondly, although they also promote forms of spatial fragmentation, they, in a way, make it easier to document it, can be seen in the displacement effect not only of traffic but also of crime in the neighbouring areas. A very plausible real effect of enclosures, crime displacement is at least perceived very strongly by neighbouring residents and leads to the rapid spreading of road closures, one following the other: this is quite obvious when looking at the process of enclosing an area.

8 By “wealthy” or “wealthier” suburbs, we do not intend to stress the absolute amount of wealth owned by residents – which can vary tremendously in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg, from a lower middle-class to an upper bourgeoisie. We use “wealthy/wealthier suburbs” in relative terms, compared to the inner-city and the townships, where even if some social diversity exists, the majority of residents is considered poor: high incidence of unemployment, high proportion of incomes below the poverty line, of residents lacking access to basic services, etc. To give a few examples for the cases mentioned in this paper, based on the 2001 Census, residents' average monthly incomes are: in the suburbs, R16,000 for Observatory, R25,000 for Atholl, R26,000 for Parkview, R33,300 for Sandhurst; in townships: R2,000 for Meadowlands, R1,700 for Alexandra; in the inner-city: R3,900 for Hillbrow, R4,700 for Yeoville. N.B.: One rand (R1) is equivalent to £0.07 (September 2007).
Map 1 - Road closures in Johannesburg (2004)

Fig. 1. Road closures in Johannesburg (2004).

However, the debate has recently taken another dimension, as the matter was discussed in the Human Right Commission, a state institution established by South African Constitution (1996), which has been hearing the different stakeholders and trying to balance the right of freedom of movement (highly connoted in the South African context where Blacks weren't allowed to this basic right under apartheid rule) versus the right of security and protection of persons and goods. The Commission's conclusion was a clear dismissal of the use of road closures, considering that it “has the potential to and does indeed in practice violate a number of rights” (SAHRC, 2005: p. 26), and strongly recommending the search for alternative solutions.

Those alternative solutions exist, but they are quite costly. Residents who have not been authorised to erect gates, as in Observatory, or residents who did not want to close off their area (for reasons of principle or doubts over road closure's efficiency) have indeed hired private guards, either patrolling the streets or monitoring the entrances of the suburb, as is the case in Atholl, a middle-to upper-income suburb next to Alexandra township, and where the residents have hired private guards permanently posted at each of the seven entrances to the suburb.

“We have no booms in our area. South African law guarantees freedom of movement. I’ve got my freedom of speech, so I can also ask the people where they are going. They have the right not to answer but then I can ask the police to come and ask […] Also road closures are not effective. Because of the law, you are not able to restrict the access anyway. And the criminal has more space and time to act from within; he is actually protected from police by the closure” (Atholl security project operational manager).

2.2. Enclosed/non-enclosed areas: a common quest for the control of the street

Does it mean that areas such as Atholl are “more open” than boomed suburbs? Not necessarily. Constant patrols and permanent guards are less visually aggressive than gates and booms, but they may be more effective in deterring “loiterers” of all kinds, as Atholl Security Project manager reflects in his fantasy of total social control:

“All the contractors coming in, we don’t know who they are. Then we hear about a theft… I say, stick with people you know! We’ve got a team of dedicated builders, plumbers. The residents can phone me anytime, saying ‘I need a locksmith’, I can find the right guy for everything. We’re trying to get rid of the mentality of outsourcing. Too much information is getting out of the area. Some domestic workers have been working for 25–30 years for the same person. But theft still happens! You trust them and the following day all your jewellery has disappeared… We’ll check them for you. And also, with the new domestic workers law, should you want to fire your domestic worker, they’ll take you to the Labour Court, suing you for unfair dismissal… My plan is to put domestic workers every month on a polygraph test. I’ll set up a company that would be responsible for paying the salary to the domestic worker; we would dismiss and replace the domestic for you. And we could do our polygraph test every month. We would take care of everything. If a domestic worker wants a job, she’ll come to me, I’ll interview her. I’ll check her record at SAP [South African Police], photocopy her ID book, check the reference, phone the family for you. […] My plan is to replace all the guards by CCTV cameras: we would need about 150, one every three houses. Every security member becomes complacent after a while. CCTV allows us to get rid of this complacency. Look, the security here has got a salary of R800 to R1200 per month, for 24 shifts a month, 12 hours each. There is no relief, it is wrong that you work that long and get that type of salary. So, either they contract on a second job, or they do crime. With the CCTV, you get rid of that man worrying about his wage and his family” (Atholl security project operational manager).

Domestic workers are also trained at a suburb level to distrust everything coming from the street. In the monthly Domestic Workers Watch meetings organized jointly by residents’ associations and the police in several wealthy northern suburbs, they are taught not to trust anyone knocking at the door; from trade union representatives (who might be fake representatives, having stolen card and uniform) to the street beggar, as is shown by the following dialogue:

One employer: Please beware beggars. Don’t look at them in the eyes; you might start feeling sorry for them. If you give a beggar a glass of water or leftover food, you invite them to come for breakfast, lunch and supper. And they’ll invite all their friends. You’ve got to harden your hearts.

A domestic worker: But if someone is really hungry…? I won’t let him in; I will just give him food through the gate.

Another employer: Don’t! They can grab you! You know what you do? You just throw it over the gate. (Silence in the audience)

First employer: They’ll become a nuisance in your life. We don’t want those people in the streets or at the street corner. These people can work, or they can go to social services, but they actually make more money begging in the corner with a little baby they’ve rented for the day… (A majority of domestic workers applauds). (Hurlingham Domestic Workers Watch, April 2005)

Road closures as well as increased social control, use of CCTV cameras and patrolling guards, reveal the level of fear prevailing in a number of suburbs: paranoia, distrust with police ability to tackle crime, and, sometimes, mere racism. It is difficult to assess the efficiency of these security devices as far as crime is concerned: not only because crime statistics are not available, but also because crime dynamics are very volatile. Local case studies however tend to show that road closures are efficient in the short term in preventing car-assisted crime (in particular “hijackings”), as confirmed by

9 Black people were compelled by apartheid legislation to carry a pass to travel outside their area of residence, and were especially subjected to control when coming into urban areas – where their presence was conditioned on them being employed there (Hindson 1987).

10 The average cost of security in the road closure model would be between R150 and R250 per month per household. For permanents guards in the street, the cost would vary between R350 and R450, depending mainly on the size of the security project.

11 Considered too polemic, crime statistics were no longer provided at the local level by the police at the time of the research and the writing. There was a moratorium on all public circulation of such data set up at the national level that was only lifted in 2006 under the pressure of the media and of civil society organizations. Crime statistics are expected to be released in June 2007.

12 “Hijackings” is the local name of a specific, quite violent form of car theft – the victim driver being followed by car, and as he stops (at a traffic light or to get into his home), thieves jump out of their car, usually threaten the victim at gun point to get the car and possibly other goods. This form of crime has risen as development of efficient car security device (such as gear locks) has made car theft more difficult. This constant search for new security device leading to ever more sophisticated (and more violent) forms of crime casts a doubt on road closures’ ability to prevent crime in the longer term.
a number of policemen working in enclosed suburbs. If CCTV and private guard patrols are less visually aggressive and less intrusive in terms of car traffic than enclosures, it is not sure whether it allows for more pedestrian mobility; pedestrians (who in most cases are also black and poor) are highly suspect.

This suspicion of “loiterers”, or for pedestrians not “known” by the community, not familiar, is shared by Soweto residents, even though it obviously takes a different form, as most of Sowetan are pedestrians in the streets of Soweto. However, in the evenings, young people gatherings are considered suspect, as stated by a street patrol in Meadowlands:

“There are about ten guys, they play soccer in the street. After, they gather at a street corner, talking. I am not saying they are criminals. I am just checking. They know I am watching them: I told them, ‘if anything happens in the location, then you are in big trouble’. They just kept quiet. […] If you see something unfamiliar in your area, call your neighbours. Give the patrol the name of your lodgers in your yard. Because sometimes when patrolling, we see people we don’t know in the yard, and we can’t tell if these are criminals or lodgers. We need to know, if we see a person, where he stays. […] There are guys who move around in the streets, drinking or drunk: that must end. We are going to deal with them as well.” (Chairperson: Meadowlands Crime Forum, and street patrol).

2.3. “Zero-tolerance” public policy and the “criminalisation of poverty”: beware pedestrians!

This perception that people drinking in public, or walking in the street, or even begging, are potential criminals who need to be chased away or arrested, is broadly fuelled by public policies, be it police attitude, the justice system or the municipality. The “theory” of the broken window and its conservative application, “zero-tolerance policy”, as they have been exemplified and marketed by Rudy Giuliani in New York City, are widely quoted and applied by public officials.

The municipality has indeed passed several by-laws, allowing police to arrest beggars, vagrants who are drunk or drinking in public, and even “loiterers”, defined as people who “unlawfully and intentionally lie, sit, stand, congregate, loiter or walk or otherwise act on a public road in a manner that may obstruct the traffic”.14 This definition gives police a great flexibility in who to consider a loiterer. Moreover, the justice system has started applying the same “zero-tolerance approach”, opening “community courts” aimed at punishing crime each community considers as prevalent in its area. This also encourages police to make those types of arrests, as is obvious in the following list, reporting the weekly arrests in Parkview, a middle- to upper-class neighbourhood in the north of Johannesburg:

“illegal immigrant (10), possession of unlicensed firearm (1), possession of dagga [marijuana] (2), possession of drug (1), possession of suspected stolen items (1), fraud (1), drinking in public (3), dealing in liquor (2), theft (9), begging (20), drunkeness (4), robbery (1),-housebreaking and theft (1), assault (2), drunken driving (1), negligence (3) [sic]”15.

Johannesburg municipality is also encouraging what is called Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), town-planning principles that try to limit opportunity for criminals to act, and which sometimes leads to very efficient anti-pedestrian designs. For instance, the municipality has approved a new design for the entry of the northern suburb of Craighall, proposed by residents: four traffic islands will replace the existing traffic lights. The proposed layout includes the relocation of the bus shelter16 and is encouraging pedestrans to use the nearby footbridge to cross the busy road. “We want visitors to have a wonderful reception [in our suburb], no drying grass, vagrants, sign boards and un-kept pavements”.17 A marketing company using huge billboards has been approached for a “contribution,” showing the project is not really about getting rid of the advertisement billboards, but much more of the pedestrian and beggars at the traffic lights, considered a nuisance and a risk.

These exclusionary and segregationist practices, as well as the more general criminalisation of poverty (Wacquant, 2004), can sometimes taste of blatant racism in the specific context of South Africa.18 However, they cannot be understood only as private practices inherited from an apartheid mentality. These practices are indeed widely encouraged by public authorities: directly, through “zero-tolerance” approaches and the invisibilisation of poverty in public “premium” spaces, but also, and more perversely, indirectly, in the state reliance on residents to participate in the production of their own security. This responsibility leads them to develop practices of “risk assessment” that, being based on probability and prejudice, are necessarily exclusionary and, in the still racially divided South African society, often racist.

2.4. Islands of safety, emerging archipelago?

Suburbs appear as islands of safety, with different means and security systems defined locally and adapted to urban layout, crime levels and the extent of residents’ organisations and their financial means. These islands communicate and exchange information, in particular when security systems involve some technologies, or when it implies a level of political organisation as is the case for road closures. Indeed, the ongoing battle against the municipality for legalisation of the road closures19 created the path for two federations of road closures to emerge. Sandton Precinct follows SANFED, Sandton Federation of Ratepayers, an association that was active in organising the rate boycott in the late 1990s.20 The

13 Soweto is made up of several townships that were built at different times to accommodate non-white populations during apartheid. They can be quite diverse socially, although very homogeneous racially. Meadowlands, one of the first to be built as a direct result of apartheid forced removals (1958), includes a majority of formal municipal houses (with informal extensions called backyard shacks), some private houses developed in the 1980s, and male migrant workers hostels (mainly occupied by Zulu residents – as apartheid was also attempting to create ethnic segregation).

14 Section 13(1) of Notice 832 of 2004: City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality Public Roads and Miscellaneous By-laws.


16 This is very reminiscent of the story mentioned by Graham and Marvin (2001, p 271), where the death of a pedestrian while crossing a multilane freeway to go from the mall to the bus stop highlighted the segregationist, or at least very neglectful of the poor, design of the mall, as it failed to accommodate bus access to the complex.

17 A member of the Craighall Park association, quoted in Rosebank Killarney Gazette, June 3, 2005.

18 See Dirsuweit (2002) and Ballard (2005) on how the fear of the “other”, and the fear of the poor in particular, is often equated in discourse and representation to the fear of the “Black” – in a country where the poor are in majority Black and the wealthy still predominantly White.

19 Indeed, the City of Johannesburg did not totally forbid road closures, but conditioned their legalisation to a number of criteria to be fulfilled (City of Johannesburg, 2003, Security Access Restriction, Policy Document). This created a certain lack of clarity on policy principles, and gave suburban residents the feeling of the arbitrary character of the approval of some and the denial of others.

20 As a result of the demise of apartheid, and the unification of Johannesburg City under a single metropolitan Council, rates and taxes increased significantly in the former white suburbs so far protected by a regime favouring Whites at the expense of non-Whites. This sharp increase, justified by the Council to finance redistribution towards under-privileged Black townships, was resented by businesses and residents of Sandton (former white suburb and economic suburban core of the city), which organised a rate boycott in the late 1990s that was later judged illegitimate by the Court and was subsequently stopped (Dirsuweit and Wafer 2006).
political battle with the City of Johannesburg led to the emergence, in 2003, of a second non-profit company, the Combined Chairpersons Committee (CCC), whose creation was directly encouraged by lawyers who were fighting for a few enclosures and who thought they could be more efficient if representing a broader constituency. Both non-profit organisations coordinate between 30 and 50 road closure committees, to defend them jointly against municipal decisions and to share management and technical experience. This archipelago of road closures seems to be consolidating, adding what can appear as a political dimension to the spatial fragmentation presented here.\(^{21}\)

This overview suggests a limit in the analytical strength of the notion of spatial fragmentation. We argue that road closures are merely a materialisation and consolidation of social dynamics present in many suburbs: fear and paranoia against outsiders, especially pedestrian, and mostly black, outsiders. Urban design, police or guards on the beat, are even more "efficient" than enclosures, in terms of chasing away "loiterers". However, as far as traffic (car and pedestrian) is concerned, road closures indeed make a difference. In terms of visibility and city marketing, they also symbolise the high level of crime and fear to external, international visitors, who cannot help being shocked by such visible infringements on public space. Road closures have come to symbolise the continuation of apartheid in the post-apartheid era, although, as we have argued in this paper, exclusionary practices based on race and restrictions to freedom of movement (considered ‘loitering’) can also be found in non-enclosed areas where private or community policing are taking the lead – precisely what is strongly encouraged as alternatives to road closures by public policies and by some academic literature (Landman and Lieberman, 2005; Naudé, 2004; Shearing and Kempa, 2000). A primary concern for image (road closures being very visible) may partly explain the reluctance of the city to legalise and accept road closures, whilst on another hand encouraging a “zero-tolerance” approach and hiding poverty in its urban peripheries (Bénit and Gervais-Lambony, 2005).

3. Fiscal fragmentation, or the question of resource redistribution

A second type of fragmentation is fiscal fragmentation, i.e. the ring-fencing of local fiscal resources which are no longer going into a common budget and being redistributed, but are explicitly aimed at being spent in the area. This issue is especially sensitive in the South African context as apartheid has for a long time allowed the wealthy white areas to ring-fence their tax resources, whilst the black townships had to rely on their own, meagre, tax resources.\(^{22}\)

3.1. Voluntary versus compulsory contribution to local security projects

There is a second type of opposition when considering the various local security initiatives in Johannesburg. As far as financial contribution is concerned, one can distinguish between initiatives appealing to voluntary contributions, which give them a degree of informality, and security projects relying on compulsory contribution from the residents. There is a variety of security initiatives relying on voluntary participation: road closures, neighbourhood watches, non-profit companies organised by residents, community policing forums (CPF),\(^{23}\) etc.; the ones relying on compulsory contributions – as gated communities and City Improvement Districts (CID)\(^{24}\) – seem on the rise.

Security initiatives relying on voluntary contributions have to remain local in their scope and scale, as they require personal forms of residents’ mobilisation. In suburban contexts where financial contribution is available, the money gathered is often put on the account of a non-profit company created by the residents’ association, and has to publish regular financial statements. Some Community Policing Forums for instance are able to gather quite a lot of money, from business as well as from residents (in the northern suburbs, it varies between R10,000 and R70,000 per month). Likewise, the management of a road closure can cost up to R60,000 a month; of patrolling guards in the streets, up to R80,000. The informal, voluntary nature of the contribution makes it very fragile: not only because such contributions vary (according to the financial situation of the households, their commitment to the community project, their residential mobility), but also because the project is personality-driven, relying on the CPF good faith, and on efficiency and transparency of the funds monitoring.

“There was an individual who was running the [fund-raising] company for the CPF, and he argued with the CPF chair. It was a bit of a personal issue. They argued about money, transparency of the account. From the police side, I don’t know exactly what happened: from the beginning we said we [as the police] don’t want anything to do with the money” (Parkview former police station commander).

Money gathered with the community is aimed mainly to help the police, especially in Community Policing Forums: renovating or extending the police station, donating police vehicles, cellphones or computers, helping with daily police expenses that are not covered by the institution. But it can also be used, especially within road closures, to address “grime” and urban decay: to cut grass, trim trees, replace public lights and repair pavements or potholes, for instance. Most of the time though, these urban services operate in conjunction with municipal services: private guards hired by Parkview residents, for instance, act as “street ambassadors” (as they call themselves for marketing purposes); they watch out for street lights that are not operating, potholes on the road, and call municipal services to fix it.

In gated communities as well as in City Improvement Districts, financial contribution is compulsory for property owners, over and above the rates and taxes paid to the City. In gated communities, security contribution is part of the monthly corporate charge paid by residents. Fees toward security and open space (parks and roads) maintenance are higher than in more classical sectional title forms of property (in buildings or denser flat complexes), because of the spatial extent of the neighbourhood, usually low-density with a lot of open space. As such, part of the service rates (as those for the maintenance of roads, streets, lights and public spaces) is paid to the body corporate; part is paid to the municipality. But relationships between residents and the municipality (and its different departments: water and electricity) are mediated through the body corporate. As the manager of Kyalami Estates (a gated community in the northern part of Johannesburg) explains, men-

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\(^{21}\) See later.

\(^{22}\) Even though there was some cross-subsidisation at the national or provincial level, for instance in order to build public rental houses in the black townships: the cost of institutional segregation. But it was of course limited to the minimum – and white areas were the ones benefiting from taxes based on industries and businesses massively relying on the work and consumption of segregated black residents.

\(^{23}\) Community Policing Forums (CPF) are statutory bodies established by the police at the station level according to the 1995 Police Act, composed of both residents and the police. Their aim is to enhance trust, to address crime at the local level jointly, to create a degree of accountability of the police in front of the residents, and to encourage residents to help the police (be it through voluntary work, donations, information gathering, etc.).

\(^{24}\) City Improvement Districts (CIDs) are the South African equivalent of American Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). They consist of a supplementary levy raised on the property owners of a determined area, which is specifically spent within the area, and managed by a private company contracted by the board of property owners.
tioning his former experience as a municipal clerk, he acts as a mayor, more than as a manager, for his 3000 resident complex.

In City Improvement Districts, this form of fiscal fragmentation occurs at a greater scale (Graham and Marvin, 2001). As mentioned earlier, a CID is an area where a majority of property owners agree to pay a supplementary tax. This tax is rather confusingly levied by the municipality, and then given to a non-profit organisation set up by local property and business owners. This organisation can then contract private companies for supposedly "supplementary" urban services. In Johannesburg, CIDs have been promoted by the Central Johannesburg Partnership (CJP), a "private non-profit organization [...] focusing on serving business – their primary client"25 (whatever this oxymoron may mean). It was formed by a number of businesspeople based in the inner city of Johannesburg and willing to try and reverse the trend of urban decay in the CBD. Quoting the Anglo-Saxon model of Business Improvement Districts, the Central Johannesburg Partnership has inspired (being even part of its drafting) provincial legislation regulating the CIDs. A private (for profit) company, Kagiso Urban Management, which was created and is partly led by the directors of the Central Johannesburg Partnership,26 manages most of the CIDs. The company receives the supplementary levy and spends it servicing the prescribed area. The services consist mainly of hiring private security guards and a team of private cleaners, but also in fixing roads, pavements and streetlights; sometimes also preparing town-planning schemes and sometimes funding some social services as homeless shelters.27

3.2. The CID, a useful tool for local autonomy, “especially in South Africa”

As stressed by the Central Johannesburg Partnership on their web site,28 the CIDs allow for some fiscal and political autonomy from the City:

"[1] CID's provide a way for property owners to take responsibility for their investments. Services provided by the CID are based on the needs and resources of the particular area. In South Africa the primary services offered are usually security and cleaning. Other services provided are informal trade management, identity and marketing.

[2] One of the positive features of the CID model, especially in South Africa, is that unlike rates and taxes, funds paid to the CID can only be spent in the CID area.

[3] Funds are spent on programmes that CID members agree to fund thus giving the contributor a greater level of control.

[4] CID's provide a means for business to play an active role in the general environment of the CID area.

[5] By supporting CID programmes, business allows local authorities to focus their energies on addressing the imbalances of previous policies." [my emphasis]

Indeed, South Africa is characterised by a strong support for fiscal integration at the metropolitan level. The demise of apartheid was also the refusal of “separate development”, and it has taken in Johannesburg the form of powerful civic movements in the 1980s arguing for “one city, one tax base”. Post-apartheid local government reforms subsequently focused on reshaping the formerly fragmented municipal boundaries (which were separating white and well-resourced suburbs from black and poverty-stricken townships). The idea that fiscal resources should be redistributed was a very strong political argument in the creation of metropolitan councils in South African cities,29 and the current resurgence of forms of tax resource selfishness, or fiscal fragmentation, is politically problematic.

Voluntary and compulsory financial contributions by the residents to their own security have many points in common. Both systems indeed allow the wealthy residents to upgrade their own, locally-based, urban services thanks to their ability to fundraise and the importance of the locally-based resources. The Parkview experiment was famous in this regard, residents having raised, through the CPF, enough money to pay reservists30 to patrol the street when off-duty, and eventually to hire private guards who where helping the police. This initiative was rapidly disrupted however by the Police National Commissioner, who used the argument of the inequity to stop the residents' initiative, as the former police station commander explains:

“National commissioner [...] gave a lead line to close the whole thing down. It's like people pay the police to do fancy footwork', and 'it's exclusive policing', 'this system is unfair, [it only exists because] people can afford it'. It caused massive uproar in the community. But I was threatened with dismissal, and we decide to tone down the whole thing" (Parkview former police station commander).

This initiative funded on "voluntary" contributions was toned down as "elitist" – while CIDs, at least in business areas, are encouraged – but that might be because of the Parkview initiative's ambiguous relationship to the police (see later).

It is useful here to distinguish between fiscal “secession” and fiscal “fragmentation”, the former being an extreme form of the latter – severing the links to the rest of the metropolitan area, in particular through the setting up of a separate municipality so metropolitan wide taxes did not have to be paid (Boudreau and Keil, 2001). In CIDs as well as in enclosures, residents continue to pay their local taxes and contribute to the metropolitan budget (therefore one cannot really talk about “secession”). They at least rhetorically acknowledge the need for redistribution towards black townships, but stress the need to supplement declining urban services by local initiatives. In this sense, we will not go as far as Dirsuweit (forthcoming) who interestingly argues that road closures can constitute a form of urban secession, especially in Sandton where she stresses the continuity between the enclosing process and the rate boycott initiative in the late 1990s. First, because the scale of enclosures generally remains limited to that of the neighbourhood, or of the street, and seldom reach spatial dimensions wide enough for residents to consider themselves living in “self-sufficient” territories.31 Secondly because they do not imply...

26 Which casts a doubt on the “non-profitability” of the Central Johannesburg Partnership – not necessarily on its leaders' commitment to inner city revival. It is a common mistake in public discourse, in particular, not to expect business to be business oriented.
27 This social concern however needs to be considered with caution, if not some degree of cynicism. The Rosebank Homeless Association, for instance, was subsidising a crèche for the children of the homeless begging in the streets (damaging the "image" of the suburb) – not understanding (or willing to understand) that the very presence of children is also a means for the homeless to attract attention and pity from passer-by. Therefore, very few beggars actually used the service – it did not respond to their needs. However, the crèche proved very useful for domestic workers employed in the area, who could leave their children during their working hours. Seeing this, the Association suppressed the service, because it was not addressing their needs – not to see children in the street anymore.
29 There have been several local government restructuring processes since the end of apartheid (1995, 2000), all of them stressing the importance of a metropolitan-wide government as a necessity for redistribution.
30 Reservists are residents who volunteer to serve under the police for 40 hours per month. They are trained by the police, they wear police uniforms, they have the same rights, when on duty, as police officers, but they are not paid.
31 Even if this idea itself is always a myth: even the segregated, larger white municipalities under apartheid were dependent on the black townships' labour and consumption. But suburban residents could spend their life ignoring it, most never having set a foot in the townships – this cannot be the case for residents of enclosures of small dimensions' often located in dense urban fabric.
any fiscal secession, as residents continue paying their full taxes to Johannesburg Metro. And finally, because unlike CIDs, road closures rely on voluntary contributions. They do not imply the creation of an entity funded by compulsory tax, which we argue gives the initiative a public legitimacy endorsed by law and recognised by government, and leads to the development of what can be seen as a mini-municipal authority.

CIDs, however, constitute in this regard a more serious threat in terms of fiscal (and political, see below) fragmentation. One might be concerned by the current pressure led mostly by suburban residents groups (in enclosed or non-enclosed areas) on the City to legalise residential CIDs, as was attempted, but quietly dismissed, in the City of Cape Town (Didier and Morange, 2006). Many local security initiatives32 indeed led to the expressed desire by local leaders to implement a residential CID. For them it is a way to have a more comprehensive strategy, since security is a complex issue. It is also a way to be able to levy residents’ contributions more efficiently: in CIDs, they would become compulsory. We argue that this constitutes a threat for fiscal and political fragmentation, since the principle of tax ring-fencing or fiscal selfishness is entrenched in the CID system. This is maybe more damaging symbolically than are voluntary contributions within enclosures, which at least are not legalised, levied, legitimised and even promoted by the City itself.33 CIDs represent a compromise, or even a drawback, on the principle of “one city one tax base”. Their legalisation and public endorsement gives strong political legitimacy to the principle of spending local taxes locally (in the name of community or local participation), which was precisely what the apartheid city was about. The principle of CIDs is therefore undermining, to an extent that is difficult to measure especially in the short term, the very powerful principle of a metropolitan, redistributive tax base.

3.3. Public policies: between redistribution principles and liberal policies

Taking the matter further, how valid is the argument raised by CIDs or CPFs that private levies or donations in wealthier suburbs (that are spent there) allow public authorities to concentrate in poorer areas? As in the CIDs marketing discourse, some CPFs in middle-class suburbs argue they do not, and will not, expect public resources to be spent in their areas:

“In 1996 I was appointed station commander at Parkview police station. Parkview police area is what you call a historically advantaged area. A lot of the police force was directed to formally disadvantaged areas. However, in Parkview, crime was out of control; a lot of pressure was put on me from the community: ‘what are you doing to reduce crime?’. I couldn’t ask for personnel – we have other priorities. So I had to make a plan. [..] It was really frustrating being a station commissioner in Parkview. Everyone was saying ‘You’re OK’, you couldn’t get any sponsor, everyone wanted to be politically correct, and give to Alexandra (township), [..] In 1996 I had less than 100 staff, for 12 suburbs and 140,000 people34a (Parkview ex-police station commissioner).”

Redistribution was the key word in 1995, when the police service was restructured and transformed from a political into a civil police. Police personnel were directed towards the townships, where they were very scarce previously, while former white areas saw their police personnel shrinking in this metropolitan redistribution. Private fund-raising initiatives, though sponsors or residents’ contribution, may then have been seen, as in this quote, as a form of pragmatism in a context of lack of public resources: people just “made plans”. The risk however is to build a two-tier system, concentrating public investment in the poor areas, and developing private services for the rich (even though there remains cross-subsidisation, since police is financed through national tax). The scope of the problem however depends on the level of public control of these private initiatives in the wealthier part of the city. But how far has redistribution of police personnel gone towards the previously disadvantaged areas?

As is visible from Fig. 2a, police staff are concentrated in the city centre (Johannesburg CBD and its immediate surroundings), in Soweto and in Alexandra former townships, where the biggest police stations are located. However, if one examines the proportion of police officers per 10,000 residents, there is still an under-representation of police officers in the deprived (and very dense) areas, as it shown on Fig. 2b. The higher proportion of police officers for 10,000 residents (darker circle colour) is located around an axis going from the Johannesburg CBD to the north-east, the growth corridor which concentrates all the suburban emerging business and commercial districts, as in Rosebank and in Midrand.35

This growth corridor also emerges when we consider the municipal police spatial distribution across the city of Johannesburg (Fig. 3). With very few municipal police officers (500 in 2005), Johannesburg Metropolitan Police Department, launched in 2001, reflects even more than national police the municipal strategies and priorities: policing the “premium spaces” in the city.

Indeed, following a 2001 World Bank report stressing the importance of crime as one of the main deterrent for international investment in Johannesburg,36 the City of Johannesburg’s policy first and foremost focuses on combating crime in the ‘shop-windows’ of the City, in a rather straightforward (some could say, cynical?) growth strategy more focused on the investors’ perceptions than on the daily lives of residents:

“The City intervention should be focused on “geographic focus areas”. […] They are generally areas where the City, Gauteng [Province] and the private sector are investing or planning to invest. […] It must be remembered that Jouburg 2030 strategy requires the Johannesburg City Safety Strategy to focus on the crimes which affect the perception of investors. The majority of violent crime takes place out of sight of investors.” (City of Johannesburg, 2004: p. 13)

Three out of four focus areas are located in the City centre or in surrounding areas, where the private sector is not (yet) entirely confident to invest. The fourth focus area is in Soweto (Moroka), which does not correspond to the same pattern, but reflects the municipal attempt to develop parts of Soweto as a place of investment. However, Moroka does not correspond to any municipal development project in the area, and was chosen mainly because the national police had made it a priority station.

32 Enclosed areas like Sandhurst (Bénit-Gbaffou et al. 2006); non-enclosed areas like Houghton, Savoy, Waverly, Parkmore (Golembeski 2007), Sloane; lower-income neighbourhoods as Hillbrow (Fraser 2007). Berea and Orange Grove, are running informal residential CIDs and preparing their case should the municipality allow for it. See note 42 below.

33 See later.

34 In fact, there are only 28,000 residents in the Parkview police precinct (statistics provided on my request by the South African Police Service, Provincial Area Board, 2005).

35 The main “growth” corridor, the “shop-window” of the city attracting businesses headquarters and international business visitors, is located on this North East axis in northern Johannesburg, across former white, middle-to-upper-income, areas. It stretches from Johannesburg CBD to Midrand (Beavon 2004), and rests on a number of suburban business and commercial nodes, the main one being Sandton CBD, secondary ones being Rosebank, Iillovo, Hyde Park, Rivonia, etc. (Fig. 4).

36 Considered more important than labour education or transportation problems, for instance, and even more than trade unions lack of flexibility, which is usually the main complaint from corporate firms.
Fig. 2. Spatial distribution of police personnel in Johannesburg, 2005.

Fig. 3. Spatial distribution of municipal police in Johannesburg, 2005.
Last but not least, part of the City strategy to compensate for the partial redistribution of police forces to former townships, and ensure a high security level in the wealthier parts of the metropolitan area, is to encourage the development of City Improvement Districts (CID). CIDs indeed form an “invisible” (for public budgets) investment in economic growth areas, since they are driven and managed by the private sector.

Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA), which is a City department in charge of economic growth, is sometimes directly responsible for the development of City Improvement Districts:

“In some areas the Johannesburg Development Agency convinced the community to form a CID, for instance Market Street is a ‘government CID’. In Newton also, we gave ourselves five years to redevelop the area: we act as a de facto manager of the precinct. But after these five years, what will happen? CIDs are sometimes an ideal conduit to continue the management of an area. […] However, in most cases, we as JDA are not sitting at the CID’s managing Board. […] We are busy establishing a CID in Newton: it is easier because there are corporate companies. There is also going to be a CID in Constitution Hill: here the City of Johannesburg is the major owner, so it shouldn’t be too difficult. [Half jokingly] Eventually we would like the whole city to be covered with CID!” (Marketing and communication officer: Johannesburg Development Agency).

This strategy has several important political and social consequences. The City loses its control and legitimacy in the security management in business and commercial nodes, as the Central Johannesburg Partnership and its profit-making brother, Kagiso Urban Management, make sure the political benefits are theirs. The irony of a City of Johannesburg-owned precinct being serviced by private companies matches the one of police officers asking for a private security company to secure their premises! Moreover, security management companies in such areas are promoting short-term, “quick-fix” and partial solutions, where “undesirable” people can easily be chased away without having to provide for social facilities, as the City probably would have to.

What is the City gaining from such a loss of political visibility and management capacity over business and commercial nodes? We argue that this fiscal fragmentation growing through the development of CIDs is a political tool for the municipality, allowing the City to have resources channelled for the securitisation of business and commercial cores without being accused of avoiding redistribution and following the apartheid legacy of the bigger share of the public budget being invested in white and privileged areas. The City actively promotes what proves quite rewarding, private companies matches the one of police officers asking for a private security company to secure their premises! Moreover, security management companies in such areas are promoting short-term, “quick-fix” and partial solutions, where “undesirable” people can easily be chased away without having to provide for social facilities, as the City probably would have to.

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4. Political fragmentation, or the question of monitoring

This leads us to a third dimension of fragmentation: political fragmentation, which is very close to the second (fiscal fragmentation) – since financial control and management is key to political power and legitimacy. The question is: does the proliferation of non-state led security initiatives challenge the ability of the state to monitor and regulate the provision of security?

Of course, the idea of a state monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, which is a fundamental political myth upon which modern states have been built (Garland, 1996), may differ from the idea of public supremacy on the production of security. Hibou (2004) argues, quoting Max Weber, that the former remains even when the production of security has been privatised, since states keep the power to make and unmakes the rules, select private operators and “partners”, on more or less arbitrary grounds. However, this argument can be challenged, as the political control cannot easily be dissociated from its operational and technical instruments – be they infrastructural or governmental.

Indeed, the notion of “public–private partnerships” in the security field needs to be questioned. First, because a distinction is necessary between community and business partners. Both are non-state actors in the production of security and both are potentially partners of the police in the production of security. However, neither have the same powers, practices and consideration of the public authorities. Second, because this notion of partnership blurs the fundamental question of public monitoring or regulation of these very heterogeneous security projects, the proliferation of which (necessarily uneven through space and class) leads to an increasing inequality in the residents’ access to security.

4.1. Community monitoring the police?

The demise of the apartheid regime left a very negative image of the South African Police Force, soon to be transformed, very symbolically, into the South African Police Service (SAPS). At stake in this transformation was first the shift from a political to a civilian police, being accountable for its acts and responding to the residents’ security needs. Second, a trust relationship needed to be built between police and the residents, particularly township residents for whom police were the enemy after decades of political and administrative police harassment. This is why the Police Service Act of 1995 established Community Policing Forums (CPF), that each police station had (and still has) to launch in its area of jurisdiction. The CPF’s role was to monitor the police, and hold them accountable for their actions.

Very soon, however, this power of local “communities” over “their” police was reduced, particularly because it raised a number of political problems. CPFs were more and more seen as a platform for racial confrontation and for opposition to the African National Congress, and to change in general, as is stated by a ward councilor (belonging to the Democratic Alliance, the main opposition party to the ANC):

“Initially, the Police Act had given a lot of power to the CPFs: police were accountable to them. The CPF could say, do this or that, they had the authority. But the most powerful CPFs were in the previously advantaged areas, and they were dealing with black, illiterate police officers… So it was confrontational. In 2000, there was an amendment to the Police Act. And now, CPFs are no longer telling the police what they have to do. They just can put some pressure” (Democratic Alliance ward councillor for Observatory).

This shift in the balance of power is reasserting state power, after a short period of experimentation, first by imposing the presence of local councillors in CPF meetings, through the White Paper on Safety and Security (1998: non paginated):

“It must be clearly recognized that Community Police Forums have played a valuable role in ensuring greater co-operation with the SAPS at local level. This must continue. But given that democratically elected local government has
Fig. 4. City Improvement Districts in northern Johannesburg (2007).
now been established, it is appropriate that the functions of CPFs be supplemented by duly elected representatives of local communities."

A second text reasserts the authority of the police over the residents, and explicitly limits the powers of Community Policing Forums. Using the vocabulary of power, responsibility and management, it clearly reflects the power struggles that have occurred under the former 1995 Police Act, which the wealthy and white residents were able to use against the police:

“– A CPF has no power of command or control over the Service and the policing of the area remains the responsibility of the Service;
– Management of the Service at the national, provincial, area or station level is the responsibility of police management at the respective level, and the CPF may not perform any function of management of Service at any level;
– A CPF is not entitled to have access to police registers or files without the approval of the provincial, area or station commissioner concerned.”

CPF's have thus become merely consultative bodies where information is exchanged, and where a relationship with the police can be created on the basis of mutual acknowledgment: but the “community” no longer monitors the police. Instead, “sector policing forums”, explicitly led by the police at a sub-station level, have been established, making CPFs increasingly obsolescent institutions.

4.2. A massive appeal to “communities” to address police manpower shortage: but which communities?

This appeal to community monitoring followed by the reassertion of state power and final responsibility for the management of security is paralleled in a broader feature of the security system in Johannesburg. Lack of resources (in particular of police manpower) to ensure an acceptable level of security has led public authorities at the highest levels to call for a community and private participation in the production of security. President Thabo Mbeki’s address to the Nation, in 2002, calling for residents’ volunteer work to supplement the police, is often quoted in this regard:

“[...] Clearly, many of these crimes, as well as those related to rape, domestic violence and child abuse cannot be policed with any measure of success by the security agencies acting alone. Credit is due to the thousands of South Africans who have joined the Community Police Forums and our Police Service as reservists. Together, if each one of us lends a hand we can do much better. During the month of February, communities and their organizations have mobilized to enlist more volunteers. Sustained throughout the year, and with each one making a contribution, we can surpass the 30 000 target set by the Police Service.”

This address legitimates emerging forms of community mobilisation, often started through Community Policing Forums which give residents a platform to meet and discuss security issues in a very open, flexible legal framework, and allow them to build, in loose or close partnership with the police, their locally-adapted security projects. And indeed, “community” responses have been very different according to urban setting, type and level of crime risk, and income levels.

In the poorer parts of the city, there has been an important personal involvement of residents in the reservist force, much more developed in Soweto and Alexandra than in the northern suburbs. Reservists constitute as much as half of the total police force in some Sowetan police stations. Township residents, about 50% of Johannesburg residents, are allocated 42% of the police personnel, but constitute 63% of reservists for the whole of Johannesburg. And their number is underestimated, as many residents are not formally included in the reservist force (for a lack of training facilities), but still partly work with the police, patrol their streets and somehow offer a response to the lack of formal police workforce.

In wealthier parts of the city, residents have mobilised as well, but a number of them have subcontracted their “collective duties” to the private sector, using money (that they have) more than their own time (that they consider lacking) as their contribution to the production of security. This difference in the form of involvement is well known by the African National Congress and by government, who are quite critical of suburban CPF's:

“Most CPFs don’t function the way we are expecting. There is no teamwork. We want community involvement, even if it is different in Soweto, with the street committees, and in the suburbs, where you have residents’ associations. But here in Soweto we know 90% of our neighbours. In white suburbs, they just throw money at the problems. And even black people who now live there, they behave like Whites. They just got their alarm system, they don’t know their neighbours” (Meadowlands CPF Chairperson, and Community Police Relation for the Gauteng Province Department of Community Safety).

This public call to have wealthier, suburban communities participate “personally” and not mainly financially, in the way township civics do, appears at best illusory, at worst naïve or politically and racially biased about what “community” is about. Indeed, community mobilisation cannot be commanded, at least in a democratic society. And it is rather simplistic to consider “civics” in the townships as epitomising entirely positive and fostering only integrative social dynamics while “residents’ associations” in the northern suburbs would be only exclusionary and selfish, and not even deserving the name of “communities” (Bénit-Gbaffou, 2006).

Wealthier residents, however, are not unaware of these differential mobilisation patterns, in particular as they are confronted with township (and black) CPF’s in the regional forums organised by the police. In this sense, the existence of integrated platforms where CPF representatives from different backgrounds (suburb versus township, rich versus poor, White versus Black) can meet and share experience and concerns plays an important role in bridging social gaps. A member of the Bedfordview CPF (which uses its R70,000 monthly budget, from residents and business contributions, to pay for high-technology security devices, such as a

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39 Which is not very surprising – unemployment is rife in the township and becoming a police reservist not only provides a social status and role in the community; it also gives hope (often disappointed though) for a possible future integration in the Police service.
40 It is interesting here to stress the parallel with the Splintering Urbanism example, where separate road networks are proposed to time-poor, money-rich residents, leaving time-rich and money-poor residents to use the congested traditional network, or to avoid peak hours for travelling (Graham and Marvin, 2001). The main difference here is the spatial dimension: whilst the Splintering Urbanism example is dealing with common road infrastructure networks used by both categories of population with a segregated access, our security example is very neighbourhood based – it is not “public” (in the sense of a public use of a space). Local security networks differences are used as a political and identity tool: they are not targeted politically as the sign of a resource inequality, nor used as an argument for fiscal redistribution.
41 Even if one should not overestimate the impact of these occasional encounters.
CCTV system at the police station, tracker systems on the cars donated to the police, etc.) states:

“I met a lot of other CPFs [in the CPF training session organised by Provincial Department], it was interesting. In other areas, it is more emotional and passionate. Here in Bedfordview the relationship with the community is good, but people are not involved themselves. We need to get people more involved themselves. […] We haven’t even considered making use of community for patrol or neighbourhood watch. Here there are a lot of boomed areas, which are controlled by their own organisations, ADT, Coin [major security companies], and so on. We consider it is a help for the police. The police won’t say that openly, but they provide extra security, they are really a great help. And a lot of them participate [financially] to the CPF, since many residents own companies that can contribute” (Bedfordview CPF Secretary).

Some suburban CPFs tried to involve community in the production of security, refusing to subcontract their participation to private agencies and to rely exclusively on high-technology. However, this participation proved difficult. The example of Parkview security project mentioned earlier is very revealing of the contradictions and difficulties of the “partnerships” and power sharing between the community, the private sector and the police. Characterised by strong personalities, in the police management as well as in the Parkview CPF, the Parkview initiative tried to set up a form of “community security organisation”, in order to address the police manpower shortage without giving up the community and the police monitoring of the security guards management, as would be the case when hiring a private security company. The CPF therefore created a non-profit organisation, which would pay for street guards thanks to the voluntary contribution of the residents. These guards were managed on an operational level by the police, whilst the money was managed, theoretically, by the CPF and its non-profit organisation. The system worked to a certain extent, as remembered by the Parkview former station commander:

“We started our own security company. It was run without profit by the CPF. All profit generated went back into CPF. It was pro-active policing. The CPF had this nice little business; the community wanted it. […] They had the support of the police; they had the same radio channel, a direct link with the police. It was in a way the police’s own private company! I could dictate them where to go: ‘there is crime in that street, deploy 10 guys over there.’ It is the way we should actually work with private companies! I can’t say to ADT [the biggest security company]: ‘go there, there is crime!’ They will say, ‘how many customers do we have in this street?’”

This architecture was quite complex (and therefore fragile), playing on legal loopholes and uncertainties regarding the role and powers of the CPFs. This solution tried to answer a number of questions regarding power sharing: how to give the police the monitoring role over private guards without involving money management, which could lead to bribery and corruption? This is a constant problem for setting up sustainable public–private-community partnerships, as was stated in the wandering thoughts of the former Parkview station commander.

“I think the way to go is a very simple one. I was looking the other day on the internet – I don’t know many things but I keep informed about other experiences. In Miami police, Disneyworld is doing the same thing. There are 40 police-men deployed in Disneyworld, fully-fledged policemen. Disneyworld allocates the budget from the Disneyworld account, and pays the Miami police. Here, if the community says “we are willing to pay the salary of 100 additional policemen”… Er… [Realizing it might raise some problems, e.g. corruption] But we need private, local people to run it. Or… community could pay into the national budget of the police, and then they would allocate permanent policemen to that station.”

A second question is indeed: how to create a security company with a community monitoring (and especially a CPF monitoring, since the police services are a statutory member of the CPFs and cannot, without scandal, directly hire private guards?) Is there a sustainable alternative, in the context of police manpower shortage, to the hiring of a fully-fledged private security company, whose involvement in the security issues is driven by profit-making, and can neither take into account police, nor community needs? The Parkview initiative was dismantled by the Police Provincial Commissioner, first because there were growing disagreements between the CPF and the non-profit company it had set up to collect money and pay the guards. Secondly, because the system was under attack from private security companies, who complained to the Police Provincial Commissioner about “unfair competition”, since the “community security company” had the full recognition of the Parkview police. However this latter argument was not used as much as the “elitism” of such an initiative, a criticism that could be addressed to most community and business security initiatives in the northern suburbs.

4.3. Subcontracting security management to private companies: in search for an impossible partnership?

City Improvement Districts seemed to provide another answer to these questions, and have been extended to residential neighbourhoods in Cape Town, under the name of “Community Improvement District” (Didier and Morange, 2006).42 The extra levy collected by the municipality in the CID area is transferred to a management body composed of the property owners of the area (all of which have to contribute a levy to the CID depending on the rateable value of their property). The management body uses the funds collected to contract with a private company hiring security guards and cleaning agents to improve the level of services in the area.

However, neither the community at large nor the municipality or the police are really monitoring the process. Indeed, the levy raised is not democratically monitored; it is used by a private company hired by the property owner’s association. This company can be fired if unsatisfactory, but it is only accountable to the property owners and not to all of the residents. If tenants are entitled to be “members” of the CID managing board, they have no voting rights, as voting rights are legally defined as proportional to the amount of levy paid (up to a certain limit so as to avoid a political monopoly by a major local property owner).43 The Roodepoort city centre,44 which has been undergoing a massive urban decay, has for instance an association of residents which has been involved in the area

42 Residential CIDs have been discussed at City level for a few years already. Although the City apparently looks at such initiative with sympathy (Fraser 2007), at least in the inner city areas, no legislation has been passed so far – probably due to the fear that suburban neighbourhoods (formerly belonging to white municipalities and currently opposition stronghold) will use the instrument for their own benefit, leading to fiscal and political fragmentation.
43 Gauteng City Improvement District Act No. 12, 1997.
44 Once a separate municipality, Roodepoort city centre now constitutes a secondary commercial and business node located to the West of Johannesburg CBD, in the midst of a more predominantly Afrikaner and industrial part of the city.
Regeneration (Roodepoort Development Forum). The Roodepoort Development Forum expressed its discontent, after having been excluded from the CID managing board:

“We are not happy that the Roodepoort Development Forum has been sidelined from the board in the proposed CID structure, which foresees property owners as the major role players”.

More research is needed to study the composition of such managing boards (Dubresson and Kasamijja, 2006), but it seems quite obvious that the major property owners, the bigger companies, are dominating the board and making the main decisions. The CIDs therefore drift away from the CPF ideal, which attempts to give voice to the different components of a community – as far as possible in community mobilization processes that are by definition unequal and unstable. Here, the Johannesburg Development Agency (JDA) is looking for efficient and powerful partners such as corporate business to set up the CIDs. CIDs therefore act as a “shadow municipal agency”, with its own jurisdiction, compulsory levy and staff, and with no democratic accountability to residents.

The level of municipal regulation on CIDs remains to be assessed as well. It is not necessarily non-existent, but it can lead, as documented by Charlotte Lemanski in Muizenberg, Cape Town (2005), to hidden undemocratic practices as for instance violent evictions of the poor and the migrants. The quick fix solutions to reduce crime adopted by the private sector somehow match the municipal longing for global city status. In this case too, the City may not be so unhappy if the CID takes responsibility for the revamping of the area: evictions provoke less criticisms, revolts and law suits when they are led by the private sector... This is probably one important effect (and sometimes cause) of political fragmentation: to dilute responsibility and make contestation and mobilisation more difficult to sustain, in relation to an unreachable and invisible enemy.

As far as police are concerned, it seems very difficult for them to establish partnerships with private security agencies that go beyond the simple exchange of information. Berg (2004) concludes her study of partnerships between police and security companies in Cape Town CIDs with the fact that private companies, engaged in fierce market competition, have little regard for community or police interests anyway. Even though a relationship is necessary (at least because the police remains at the end of the chain, the only power able to make an arrest and take the criminal to jail), partnerships remain limited, as was also mentioned by Parkview former police commissioner.

4.4. Local security projects and urban fragmentation: contradictions between public discourses and policies

Johnston (1999) in his analysis of growing “security networks”, points out the difficulty in governing such diverse policing agents. For him, “the challenge for democratic government is to ensure that the actions of those commercial bodies [and we could add, of community groups] which participate in [security], accord as much as possible with the public good” (Johnston, 1999: p. 193). However, this seems highly problematic from the start, since private agencies are profit-driven, and communities are locally-based and locally-biased. The only way forward is a public policy that reduces crime adopted by the private sector somehow match the other hand, the civic model is still very much encouraged, representing the “good side” of community mobilisation. Therefore, organisation of street patrols is strongly called for by the Sowetan police, in spite of the ongoing risk of vigilantism or mob justice entailed in this form of community participation in the production of security.

Indeed, these patrol groups are on their own, with little police manpower to train and monitor them. Police officers often turn a blind eye to vigilantism and many residents voice their nostalgia for the struggle, where the community monitored the streets, and the criminals were too scared of crowd retaliation to steal in the townships.

Concurrently, and somehow contradictorily, other “elitist” forms of security provision are strongly, although tacitly, encouraged by the City of Johannesburg: CIDs are spreading rapidly, with little doubt and no public debate on this form of political and fiscal fragmentation. They are less politically visible, since big business and not residents’ associations are running it. But they formalise and extend at a larger scale what some residents’ associations in the northern suburbs have been trying to do with more informal and smaller initiatives.

In summary, security projects encouraged or discouraged by the municipal and police authorities are not chosen according to the degree of urban fragmentation they imply (Fig. 5). Interestingly, all security initiatives led by local residents are in essence exclusionary (implying a selection based on physical appearance, social representations and prejudices on who is a potential risk to the “community”). Fighting road closures in the name of segregation is, as argued earlier, not convincing since the alternative local security initiatives are no less exclusionary. More importantly, whilst some models are discarded, public authorities encourage (directly or indirectly) alternative security initiatives that are strongly enhancing political fragmentation – diminishing state capacity to monitor or regulate security networks implemented locally – without really reducing other forms of fragmentation (spatial or fiscal). On closer examination, there seems to be a sort of trade-off between the visibility of fiscal fragmentation and elitist policing (higher for road closures and community guards than for CIDs) on the one hand, and the extent of public regulating capacity on the other, fading away as local security objectives are in line with neo-liberal agendas, and therefore with corporate companies. At least in the “shop windows” of the City, not only do public and private strategies and policies become more intertwined and less oppositional, but also City neo-liberal strategies tend to hide behind “market imperatives” as to avoid political debate.

After such a vibrant call for community participation in the production of security, public policies, both at the national and metropolitan level, condemn many community initiatives that are seen to have gone too far. Indeed, the transitional, somehow experimental period is coming to an end, as stated in the National Crime Combating Strategy which implements a “normalization phase” from 2004 on after the “stabilisation phase” that took place between 2000 and 2004. However, municipal discourses get very politicised and racialised: road closures are condemned as a reproduction of the laager, community initiatives involving fund-raising and community guards are deemed “elitist” policing; northern suburbs CPFs are considered as non-communities or “bad” communities. On the other hand, the civic model is still very much encouraged, representing the “good side” of community mobilisation. Therefore, organisation of street patrols is strongly called for by the Sowetan police, in spite of the ongoing risk of vigilantism or mob justice entailed in this form of community participation in the production of security.

47 The laager refers to the Afrikaner defensive circle of wagons, set up when fighting Africans during the Great Trek in the XIXth century.

48 As was for instance widely reported by the media in Capetonian townships, with the problematic emergence of PACD (People Against Gangsterism and Drugs), a group of residents taking the law into their own hands to ‘chase’ notorious local drug lords (Dixon and Johns 2001). Vigilantist practices occur in Johannesburg low-income neighbourhoods but they are not as well organised nor structured, occur on an ad hoc basis, and are less visible in the media (Bénit-Gbaffou 2006).
As usual, issues on identity hide more fundamental debates on social inequality: the racialisation of the debate around “bad”, “racist” (white) community security initiatives seems to be merely a political tool to avoid criticism on broader neo-liberal policy, relying on the fact that most crime is out of sight of the international investors but that the municipality needs to focus on the areas of investment, leaving for township residents the task to deal with it as they can.

5. Conclusion: On “splintering policing and the fate of the state’s monopoly on the legitimate use of violence

The post-apartheid period is characterized by a twofold and somehow contradictory transformation of security governance. First, there is definitely an attempt to integrate the police system, through the redistribution of police personnel and resources towards deprived townships where it was previously scarce, through the reassertion of public authority after a decade of private and community initiatives and experiments, by implementing overarching policing frameworks (such as Community Policing Forums) and by making strong political statements against some non-state initiatives that the municipality needs to focus on the areas of investment, leaving for township residents the task to deal with it as they can.

Encouraged (indirectly) by public authorities, as a consequence of their discard of other security initiatives

Encouraged (directly) by public authorities

We have argued that municipal authorities are deliberately giving up some of their coordinating and regulatory powers in order to pursue their economic growth agenda, which they perceive the private sector can lead efficiently and at a lower political cost. Developing CIDs to manage security and cleanliness in business and commercial cores, for instance, allows the municipality to have a very exclusionary (and efficient, at least in the displacement of crime and poverty to other, more invisible areas) policy with visible and rapid results, and without carrying the blame for it. As for other services, privatisation of security is a powerful device, not only to gather funding from the wealthiest residents who might resist another tax increase, but also to avoid political mobilisation and contestation by diluting responsibilities and multiplying the number of responsible stakeholders. In CIDs, the most cynical segregationist practices can occur, hidden behind shallow social concerns actually focused on preserving a positive local image for potential investors – and requiring more deprived and invisible areas to bear the cost of an increased concentration of poverty. Resource redistribution towards these impoverished areas is still taken care of by the overall tax system of the City; but the benefits (in terms of growth or investment or property boom) of CIDs does not get taxed nor redistributed to the areas that bear the cost of their exclusionary policies. At a broader level, the ring-fencing of local resources to clean up business spaces with little intervention nor monitoring by public authorities, creates strong dynamics of fragmentation, be it spatial, fiscal or political.

To what extent is there a choice for public authorities? Community participation in the production of security – reflecting diverse crime patterns, contrasted community mobilisation and resources, various sets of local stakeholders – does create inequality in the access to security. This might be difficult to avoid currently, in a context of huge, short-term needs, massive transformation projects and relatively scarce public resources: one does not necessarily wish a bigger share of the scarce public resources to go to the police department. This dual context (urban diversities and scarce public funding), is often used worldwide as the rationale for promoting territorially differentiated solutions (Brenner, 2004; Jaglin, 2005a). However, the nature of state intervention to regulate this locally-differentiated security service provision remains to be determined. In post-apartheid Johannesburg, public authorities seem to have chosen the regulation of security networks based on the differential treatment between business (encouraged to set up their own security device) and communities (treated with much more suspicion and scrutiny, at least in the suburbs); between black and ANC-aligned (legitimated) and white, opposition-party-supporting (discarded) communities: between visible (road closures) and invisible (CIDs, gated communities and moderately vigilantism in the urban peripheries) security initiatives.
This often prevents the state from asking the difficult question of the choice between equity principles and mere pragmatism: if there are no sufficient public resources to integrate the policing system and provide the same service everywhere, are the “elitist” forms of security partnerships acceptable and under which conditions? Which initiatives could potentially trigger secession or vigilantism – forms of autonomous citizenship (Johnston, 2001); which ones can be monitored efficiently? Such questions, keeping in mind the modernist ideal of a universal service, could foster a more dynamic search for efficient regulation and redistribution devices, and help set up, or at least debate, a clearer limit between which delegation of security is acceptable for the state and society, and which one is not – and on what grounds. In this regard, an approach using the different dimensions of urban fragmentation help unravel the complexities and trade-offs of part of the very diverse set of non-state security initiatives.

However, such analytical clarity may not be a desired political outcome for the state, as reflected in the current municipal hesitation on road closures (discarded for political reasons but not forbidden out of pragmatism) or on residential CIDs (favoured in the inner city so that they could relieve the City from political pressure about their contested urban renewal strategy: Winkler, 2006; but feared in the suburbs where they could provide the political opposition with a local platform). The absence of clear sets of rules and principles allows the state to follow its neo-liberal agenda while diffusing and blurring some of the political debate that could occur around this choice, questionable especially in the South African post-apartheid context. Therefore, one cannot say that the state has lost its power of regulation – rather than it has voluntarily released it in some areas, where it can pretend to ignore what is going on. This allows the state to adopt an agenda that is not leaning towards equality of access and redistribution but rather promoting economic growth focused on its urban business cores, at the expense of the poorer peripheries where poverty and crime are consequently increasingly concentrated. A longer-term perspective on the fight against the social and economic causes of crime seems to have been lost on the way.

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