

The New Waterfront: Examining the Impact of Planning on Waterfront Regeneration in Da Nang

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Abstract : Urban waterfront redevelopment is a global phenomenon, and thousands of schemes are being carried out in large metropolises, medium-sized cities, and even small towns all over the world. This opportunity brings the city back to the river and rediscovers waterfront revitalization as a unique opportunity for cities to reconnect with their unique historical and cultural image. The redevelopment can encourage economic investments, serve as a social platform for public interactions, and allow dwellers to express their rights to the city. Many coastal cities have effectively transformed the perception of their waterfront area through years of redevelopment initiatives, having been neglected for over a century. However, this process has never been easy due to the particular complexity of the space: local culture, history, and market-led development. Moreover, municipal governments work out the balance of diverse stakeholder interests, especially when repurposing high-profile and redundant spaces that form the core of urban economic investment while also accommodating the present and future generations in sustainable environments. Urban critics consistently grapple with the effectiveness of the planning process on the new waterfront, where public spaces are criticized for presenting a lack of opportunities for actual public participation due to privatization and authoritarian governance while no longer doing what they are 'meant to': all arise in reaction to the perceived failure of these places to meet expectations. The planning culture and the decision-making context determine the level of public involvement in the planning process; however, in the context of competing market forces and commercial interests dominating cities' planning agendas, planning for public space in urban waterfronts tends to be for economic gain rather than supporting residents' social needs. These newly pleasing settings satisfied the cluster of middle-class individuals, new communities living along the waterfront, and tourists. A trend of public participatory exclusion is primarily determined by the nature of the planning being undertaken and the decision-making context in which it is embedded. Starting from this context, the research investigates the influence of planning on waterfront regeneration and the role of participation in this process. The research aims to look specifically at the characteristics of the planning process of the waterfront in Da Nang and its impact on the regeneration of the place to regain the city's historical value and enhance local cultural identity and images. Vietnam runs a top-down planning system where municipal governments have control or power over what happens in their city following the approved planning from the national government. The community has never been excluded from development; however, their participation is still marginalized. In order to ensure social equality, a proposed approach called "bottom-up" should be considered and implemented alongside the traditional "top-down" process and provide a balance of perspectives, as it allows for the voices of the most underprivileged social group involved in a planning project to be heard, rather than ignored. The research provides new insights into the influence of the planning process on the waterfront regeneration in the context of Da Nang.

Keywords : planning process, public participation, top-down planning, waterfront regeneration

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