



International Conference – Green Urbanism, GU 2016

Urban and social impacts of Waterfronts Development, case study: Jeddah Corniche

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Abstract

Waterfront development has always been a common topic of interest in urban studies. Through the special nature of coastal areas, urban development of these places has its own characteristics that influenced by the typology, view, land value and environmental factors.

In addition, social factors, that include community characteristics, local culture and traditions affect and receive effects from this development. Development of waterfronts plans should adhere to the notion that the waterfront is an inherently public asset.

Planning a waterfront development, required the city officials or a developer to start by envisioning a network of well-connected, multi-use public spaces that fit with the community's shared goals. By orienting waterfront revitalization around public spaces, new urban design should enhance the quality of existing destinations and that results in a whole city identity that is greater than the sum of its parts.

This research discusses both urban and social impacts of waterfronts development, taking Jeddah Cornish development as a case study.

The research aims at pointing out the main impacts of waterfront development on both Jeddah Urban development and social development. The research's methodology follows both quantitative and qualitative methods, and conducting a community survey that measure the main impacts of Cornish Jeddah development project.

The research concludes the main impacts of waterfront development to assure its sustainability.

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Peer-review under responsibility of the organizing committee of GU 2016

Keywords: Public Waterfront, community development, urban development, social impact, Jeddah Cornish

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1. Introduction

Over the past decade, rapid urbanization, intensive use of water resources, consumption patterns, lifestyles, and increased industrialization in Saudi Arabia exacerbate the challenges of protecting the environment and of addressing related problems – water scarcity, pollution, solid waste, and biodiversity (UNDP, 2004)¹.

Water is a defining force that fundamentally shapes the character of each place it touches. The role of water in transport, industry, sanitation and nourishment made it the *raison d'être* of human settlement. It is a feature to be honored and celebrated, not to be treated merely as cosmetic or as just a commodity, as defined by The Water Front Center, (Urban Waterfront Manifesto, 2016)². It also indicates that waterfronts, are unique places where land and water meet, where a finite resource embodying the special history and character of each community. Urban waterfronts, like the cities they help define, are dynamic places.

The last three decades have witnessed profound changes along abandoned or underused waterfronts. The trend is accelerating in cities around the globe. It applies to canals, lakes and rivers as well as coasts. (Urban Waterfront Manifesto, 2016).²

Urban landscape results from the interactions between social and natural factors. As a part of natural ecological landscape, the form and changes of wetland landscape are thus highly associated with human activities. (Xuelei, Longmei et al, 2007)³

Moreover, urban wetland (e.g. river system pattern) plays a decisive role in the form of a city and its pattern, and affects the sustainability of urban development directly (Liu et al., 2005)⁴.

According to The New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan that was prepared by the Department of City Planning's Vision 2020: Public open spaces on the waterfront can transform neighborhoods, turning previously inaccessible lands into vibrant community gathering areas that foster economic growth. (Vision 2020: New York City Comprehensive Waterfront Plan, 2011)⁵ Problems remain on the waterfront, including uneven development, crumbling infrastructure, and many neighborhoods that are almost cut-off the waterfronts.

Overall, it is meaningful to research the relationship between the dynamic changes of the urban waterfront of the city and the dynamic changes in social activities of its community, which is the core interest of this research.

2. Objectives and Methodology

The main objective of this research is to investigate the main impacts of waterfront development on both urban and social development of the city, taking the Jeddah's waterfront as a case study. The research also investigates and measures the role of the existed waterfront in shaping people activities. Also it's a testing tool of getting community members involved in waterfronts development projects which could encourage for creating a manifesto of community partnership in development projects in KSA.

To achieve the outlined objectives of this paper, a qualitative research method is used where it best fits the research approach, while a qualitative method as an interpretation is used of how the waterfront development is understood and experienced. The data is collected from a social context where the researcher is flexible yet sensitive to the collected data; and the qualitative approach is mainly about generating a comprehensive knowledge on data that is contextual, detailed, and rich. Additionally, qualitative data is about engaging the participants in conversation, interviews and surveys that are conducted in a natural relaxed setting that is in contrast to a research that is conducted in a laboratory or controlled environment (Skulmoski, Hartman, & Krahn, 2007). Furthermore, a qualitative research is oriented towards investigating a concept or a phenomenon in a descriptive manner from participant's point of view in the contextual world they experience this concept or phenomenon (Waltz, Strickland, & Lenz, 2010).

3. City of Jeddah:

Jeddah is a Saudi city located in the middle of the eastern coast of the red sea and is considered the economic and tourism capital of the country. Its population is estimated around 3.4 million and it is the second largest city after Riyadh, the capital (Jeddah Municipality, 2016).⁸

The foundation of the city of Jeddah is dated back to around 3000 years when groups of fishermen used to settle in it after their fishing trips. After that, the tribe of 'Quda'ah' came to Jeddah 2500 years ago and settled in it and was

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