

Participatory planning for urban regeneration – the Polish experience

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1 ABSTRACT

Urban regeneration has become an important part of the planning agenda already decades ago. Since a few years it has also become important for fastly developing countries, including the post-socialist ones. This process is accompanied by growing awareness of the local communities, which intend to actively participate in the decision-making process regarding the urban development and redevelopment of numerous sites. Besides conflicts and protests regarding localization of different developments, one can also note the growing amount of requests regarding influencing and acceleration of the development. In these cases the local communities are interested not in stopping the development, but – on the contrary – in spurring it. But still they intend to control the development and select the best – from their point of view – solutions. This has accelerated the transition in the approach to the participatory process – from the “accepting” mode to the “getting ahead” one. The first one is usually based on preparation of the development proposal by the investor and/or local government and submitting it to the public, usually expecting its acceptance with little or no adjustments. The other one is based on starting the public discussion on the development problem without prior preparation of the specific proposal; on the contrary, the outcomes of the public discussion serve as the basis of preparation of the specific proposals, submitted again to the public for further discussion. Present situation in Polish cities already proved the development of the latter approach and its superiority to the first one in regard to the acceptance of the local communities to the final result of the discussion on the selected sites. Also, the “getting ahead” methodology allows discussing serious development problems, defining the real conflict areas, possible solutions to it and – finally – public consensus on the final proposal. In the paper two specific cases are discussed: the Korfanty St. in Katowice and Old Town Market Square in Starogard Gdanski. In both cases two described participatory methods were used, which proved superiority of the “getting ahead” one. In both cases it allowed defining the core of the conflict and developing the possible scope of solutions. In result, it allowed achieving results more comfortable for the local community and meeting its basic requests