Battle for Kigamboni

The case of the Kigamboni redevelopment project, Dar es Salaam

Jennifer Norström
Abstract:
A common theme of discussion raised by contemporary scholars is the making of cities competitive internationally to become a city of world class, which is argued to be the main priority facing urban planning and policy makers in the twenty-first century. These redevelopment projects are justified through various ways, however, mainly that they will spearhead economic development and increase national income. This study explores the Kigamboni redevelopment project in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. It uncovers the vision and justification performed by the Government and it explores the tensions that emerged as a result of the lack of participation and transparency. When envisioning the future, the actors of the government pictures Kigamboni as very different from what it is today. It is argued that the urban visions of becoming modern are shaped without taking the different memories, stories and desires of the local residents of Kigamboni into consideration. In addition, the study illuminates the contestations by the residents, arisen in the context of the redevelopment project, with a main focus on a local organisation - the Kigamboni Committee. The community formed the Committee in order to reach an understanding of the project affecting them. The local association argues to represent the people of Kigamboni and aims to follow up on the project and undertake initiatives to highlight rights. However, the empirical findings reveals that it is questionable whether the Committee is actually representing the people of Kigamboni as they claim. The thesis further sheds lights on the importance to discuss the politics of social mobilisation.

Keywords: Tanzania, Dar es Salaam, Kigamboni New City, critical planning theory, redevelopment, replacement, civil society, non-government organizations (NGO), power, globalization