

Placemaking and conflict in inner-urban community: the case of Tivoli Gardens, Kingston Jamaica

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Abstract

Placemaking within the inner-urban communities of the Kingston Metropolitan Area of Jamaica is defined largely by violent conflicts and political patronage making them disconnected, inward looking and self-enclosed. This increases antagonism amongst the various urbanisation elements of the KMA. They are deemed successful by their patrons and life within them is accepted as their stead. Consequently, these inner-urban communities continue to lose opportunities for placemaking that arranges all elements of urban life to achieve a unified and functional sustainable product for the KMA.

Placemaking within Tivoli Gardens, one such inner-urban community in Western KMA, involves strong element of conflict associated with; politics and repeated conflicts, skirmishes with the security forces, indigenous security and governance structure, don-man-ship, poverty, and marginalisation. Ironically, the community prides itself in its strong internal social network and spatial security. Citizens express satisfaction and successes with placemaking despite being exposed continually to multiple conflicts.

Using qualitative and quantitative methodologies the research explores how conflict and post-conflict situations are significant placemaking elements within Tivoli Gardens. Analysis shows covert and explicit socio-political elements influencing the repeated re-emergence of conflicts. These contradict the wider contemporaneous development objectives of the wider KMA. By capturing the cluttered dynamics of post-conflict conditions, superimposed on socio-spatial arrangements, the research uses placemaking concepts and principles to resolve the challenges in addressing repeated cycles of conflicts. The intimacy between the social and spatial practises, within post-conflict environment, fosters unsustainable inner-urban community development.

Key words: inner-urban - post-conflict – placemaking - Tivoli Gardens – community development