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Government-aided participation in planning Singapore

Emily Y. Soh ... Belinda Yuen

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This paper explores various dimensions of public participation in urban planning in Singapore: the changing nature and attitudes towards citizen participation, the players and methods of participation, and the means of evaluating their impact. Singapore's urban planning has been characterised by its top-down approach until recent years. In the current context of the global competition, a "well-planned city" no longer equates to a functional and efficient city but also one that supports a good quality of life where citizens could take a more active role in shaping the urban environment. The planning authority is experimenting with various avenues of participation, and refining methods and implementation of the participatory process. In the absence of a robust civil society in Singapore, the planning authority can have a positive role in not only encouraging public participation in planning but also actively convening voluntary citizens to form focus groups to interface between the state and citizens at large. Looking beyond participation processes, this paper will explore some methods and issues involved in evaluating participation outcomes, and make a case for why public participation is set to gain ground and become a permanent feature in Singapore's urban planning arena.



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Keywords

Civil society; globalization; focus groups

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