

Public and Private in Space: Values, Legal Practice and Land-Use Planning in Latvia

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Abstract

Spatial structures are representing different activities and patterns of public and private relationships. Public life and land-use planning revolve largely around the balancing of public and private relations, where community interests and values are realised in individual practices. Over the last decade, public and private relations issues most visibly concerned territories which have become spaces for new building interests. The dominant private interests do not create obvious contradictions with overall public interests as such; rather, they create an ignorant situation in relation to community interests. Changes in land use particularly became the subject of discussions and the focus of decision making in sub-urban as well as in valuable nature (especially coastal) areas. The implementation of private rights dominates in planning practice. However, from the aspect of public interests, decisions on development mainly concern ethical questions. Land use ethics are based on values which cannot be considered to be absolute and are subject to various interpretations. In social and legal practice, private and public relations involve balancing, in which rights and responsibilities play an important role. Baltic coastal and Riga sub-urban areas represented by land-use and urban transformation processes in the context of public and private relationships have been explored. The representations in space, where and how we can see results of that relation, how it is represented by boundaries, what are the roles of state and local government in that interplay - are questions explored. The research is based on analysis of legal and decision making practice, interviews, landscape and GIS spatial analysis.

Keywords: public private relation, planning, land use, boundaries

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