

# Urban Waterfront Regeneration and Public Participation. Confrontation or Cooperation?

## The Case of Kalarand, Tallinn



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## Abstract

This paper explores community movements' role in town planning through a case study of a small waterfront regeneration project in Tallinn that was presented to the public in 2008 but has not yet been initiated owing to the strong opposition of the local community. The aim is to study the influence that active local communities may have on regeneration projects that tend to commercialize and privatize public space. The theoretical framework of the paper sets the context of revitalization of urban waterfronts through various examples of projects that have been undertaken in different cities with the aim of giving abandoned port areas a new use. It is discussed that many of these developments have common characteristics, such as disregard towards local cultural aspects of the place, which has led to a certain standardization of urban waterfront areas. As an alternative, examples of waterfront interventions that have been recognized by the European Prize for Urban Public Space will be presented. The aim of it is to bring out the positive characteristics of those projects to construct a vision of a 'humane waterfront'. The study case is dedicated on the development proposal of Kalarand, focusing on the role of the local community in the planning of this urban space. It will be argued that the participation of community movements in the planning process is essential for avoiding the stalling of the project owing to conflicts between developers, governors and the local community. Also, it will be discussed that public intervention in terms of appropriating a place is necessary for the creation of *lived spaces* that are places of complexity and variety of activities, which is what characterizes a 'humane waterfront'.

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 Presentation and justification of the research**

There are two main interests that have conditioned this research: firstly, my will of continuing the study of citizens' role in the production of public space which is a field of investigation I was first introduced to when writing the dissertation of my Bachelor's degree in Humanities. The paper that studied the role of civic movements in the development of some public spaces of Barcelona taught me that certain urban spaces are of great interest for different urban actors that aim to impose their vision of the city through the grounds of public space. The master's course in Spatial Planning and Population Studies has allowed me to extend my vision on the complexity of public space and its management, showing the technical and legal sides of urban planning. Secondly, focusing on waterfront redevelopment and its importance for creating an image for the city comes from my experience of living in Barcelona, a city that is often considered a model for urban planning. Studying the relatively recent conversion of Barcelona's waterfront into areas of leisure and lucrative activities inspired me to look into the current state of the water's edge of my native city, Tallinn, that is awaiting future changes. The subject of my case study –the improvised urban beach known as Kalarand– is an example of the complexity of urban space where conflicts of interests are bound to emerge owing to the high economic value of the land and the alternative uses that the space could possibly receive. The question of the seaside is also of special interest owing to its potential of representing the image of a city that aims to improve its position in its geopolitical context. The paper, thus, comes from an interest of studying the repositioning of the seaside in the era of entrepreneurial cities, and the impact that market-led urban redevelopment projects may have on the citizens.

### **1.2 Structure of the research**

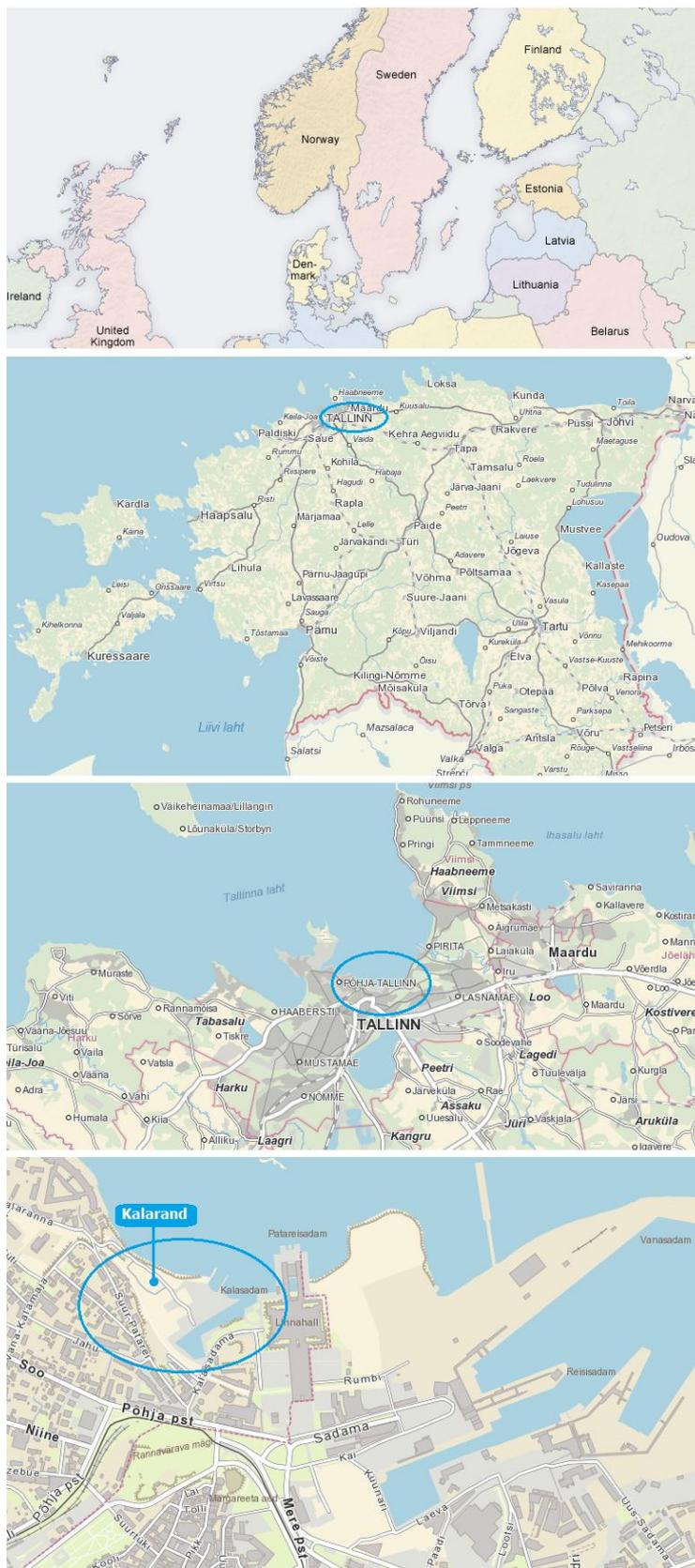
In order to fully understand the potential and significance of Kalarand, it needs to be positioned in the wider context of waterfront redevelopment which will be discussed through examples of several cities in the first part of the paper. A little historic overview of changes that have taken place in the postindustrial era in port areas will be presented. Aspects such as redevelopment strategies, serialization of spaces, social impacts of urban regeneration and requirements for successful projects of revitalization will be discussed in order to set the

theoretical framework of the paper. The aim of this chapter is to filter out the characteristics that would help form a vision of a waterfront that could be considered as *humane*. The second part of the investigation focuses on the case study that comprehends the proposed detail plan of Kalarand and Kalasadam, a 7-hectar waterfront plot that is situated within a few minute walk to the gates of the historic centre of Tallinn. Public participation in the configuration of public space will be the main point of interest of this chapter as the opposing public forces are what have stalled the development project so far. The final part of the paper will draw conclusions on the connection between urban regeneration and public participation, aiming to underline the importance of collaboration between various urban actors in order to achieve a consolidated vision of urban change.

### 1.3 Methodology and study area

The general study area of this research is the waterfront and its regeneration that has become a common theme in urban planning ever since the 1970s. The methodology of the paper is fundamentally based on a revision of academic bibliography that not only gives a historic overview of the changes that have taken place in former industrial waterfronts, but also presents strategies and tendencies that have become common in the regeneration of the water's edge. Another important source of information is the webpage of the European Prize for Urban Public Space that will be used for presenting exemplary cases of waterfront regeneration that have been rewarded a prize in the biennale competition. While the contextualization of Tallinn's urban planning is based on the academic writings of Cerrone, Feldman and Haas, the case study itself will include a wider range of information, such as an expert analysis of the legitimacy of the detail plan, statements published by the NGO that has been the main opponent of the development project of Kalarand, as well as journalistic reports.

Figure A. Kalarand is located in the northern part of Tallinn



Source: Elaboration based on maps of Maa-amet

## 1.4 Context and localisation

Tallinn is the capital of the northernmost Baltic state, Estonia, holding about a third of the country's population (430 000 out of a total of 1.3 million inhabitants). Estonia restored its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 with a clear vision of rapidly steering towards the West. In 2004 it joined the NATO and the European Union and in 2011 it adopted the euro. Tallinn has strong links with the Finnish capital, Helsinki, that is within a distance of 80 km across the Gulf of Helsinki. Owing to its location on the Baltic Sea as well as for its Oldtown being recognised as a UNESCO Heritage site, Tallinn is a popular tourist destination, attracting more than 9 million visitors in 2012 (Statistical Yearbook of Tallinn 2013: 100). Given the goal of being the “metropolis of the Baltic Sea” (Cerrone, Tuvikene, Vaher 2010), Tallinn still aims to attract more residents, foreign investors and tourists. In 2011, Tallinn wore the crown of being the European

Capital of Culture, an event that helped liven up the cultural life of the city and provide an excuse for creating new spaces, such as the Culture Kilometre, that aim to draw more attention on the creative industry of the capital. As another strategy of attracting new residents, ever since January 2013, all those registered in Tallinn have the right for free public transport, a measure that seems to have had a fairly noticeable effect on the city's population, nearly tripling the annual growth of the number of residents in comparison to 2013.<sup>1</sup> The next big goal is to be denominated as the Green Capital of Europe in 2018, another symbolic title that would allow set Tallinn as an example to other cities of the Baltic Sea region (Tallinna Keskkonnaamet 2013).

**Table 1. Annual growth of of the number of residents of Tallinn<sup>2</sup>**

Year	Residents	Annual Growth
2009	404005	2633
2010	406703	2689
2011	411980	5277
2012	416144	4164
2013	419830	3686
2014	429899	10069

Source: Elaboration based on information supplied by Tallinna Linnavalitsus

Within a little more than twenty years the city has apparently made a significant leap from being an ex-Soviet and post-industrial town to becoming an outstanding and commendable city in the Baltic Sea region. However, several academics (Cerrone 2012, Feldman 1999, Haas 2006) that have studied the urban planning tradition of Tallinn question the exemplariness of the city's urban progress, criticizing the lack of control that has characterized Tallinn's urban planning policies.

Tallinn's present urban planning has been conditioned by two main factors: its relatively recent secession from the Soviet Union and its rapid transition to a free market after Estonia's

<sup>1</sup> Consult Table 1.

<sup>2</sup> Figures according to January 1 of each year. Consult "Tallinna elanike arv" (Tallinna Linnavalitsus).

Independence in 1991. Soviet planning was highly centralized as industrial development in the areas was planned following the demands of state agencies, state-owned enterprises and the Soviet military. As a consequence, after the fall of the Soviet regime, all forms of planning, participatory or not, were held in disrepute (Levy 2000: 326).<sup>3</sup> This left the recently democratized city in a vulnerable situation: the lack of public funding made urban development heavily reliant on private investment at a time when little regulations had been set for future city development. The rapid privatization of land has led to an extensive 33% of private land ownership, while more than 96% of all the residential spaces are privately owned in Tallinn (2002 data; Cerrone, Tuvikene, Vaher 2010).

Figure B. Urban Contrasts



Source: Panoramio

As for the waterfront, throughout the Soviet period (1940-41, 1944-91) most of it was administered by various Moscow-based institutions, for which the area was functionally and visually disconnected from the rest of the city, and closed to civilians. This way the administrative and political processes kept the waterfront separated from the rest of the city centre. The first plans proposing to reconnect the seaside with the city were drawn up in the Tallinn city government in the late 1960s and reinvigorated in the early 1980s. A partial implementation of the idea of opening the city up to the sea took place in 1980 with the construction of Tallinn's Linnahall in the wave of structures that were constructed for the Olympic Games of Moscow, Tallinn being the host for sailing competitions. However, bigger interventions were stalled because of the opposition of the state agencies, particularly the Soviet military that administered properties in the area.

<sup>3</sup> Cited in Haas (2006: 66).

Figure C. Linnahall by architects R. Karp, R.Altmäe. 1980.



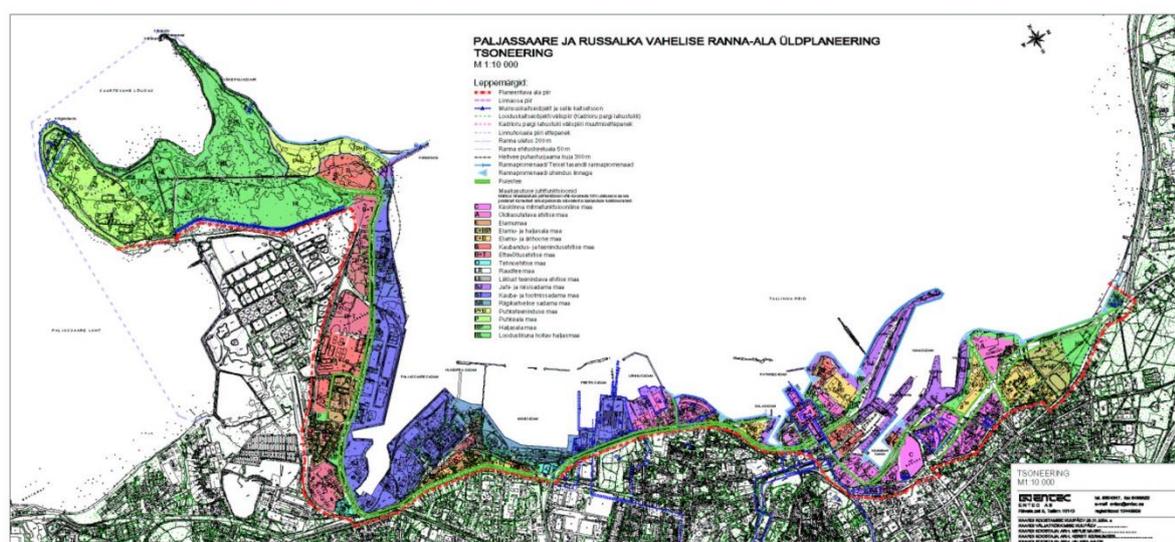
Source: Lift11

A second opportunity arose with the declaration of independence in 1991 and the country's rapid adaptation to neo-liberal politics that attracted foreign capital. At that point, 80% of Tallinn's estate was owned by the State (Cerrone 2012). Cerrone holds that these circumstances could have possibly led to public-private development projects, where land at the water's edge would not be sold, but rather lent by the public administration to a private developers in return for a long-term and stable income. However, as the city had no specific strategy regarding the area, and the relationships between the city and the (state-owned) port were tension-laden, particularly over how much of the waterfront land should be transferred to the city, these municipalisation efforts bore no fruit (Feldman 1999: 837).

In 2001, the first City Master Plan that set the framework for all successive detail plans was approved. As a continuation of the Master Plan, in 2004, a district-based Comprehensive plan of Tallinn's waterfront area between Paljassaare and Russalka was published with the aim of setting the criteria for opening the city to the seaside. With no actions undertaken during the first years, the document was brought back in 2007 to state concepts and aims of the program. The totality of the area comprises about 500 ha and 20 km of the coastal land of Tallinn. As stated in the document, the main goal of the program is to join the city centre with the seaside and recuperate Tallinn's fame as a maritime city. The aim of the comprehensive plan is to make the area between Paljassaare and Russalka more "attractive and open and

improve Tallinn's competitiveness on an international level.”<sup>4</sup> It is also meant to attract more private investment and offer new solutions for a better public use of the waterfront. In addition, the surroundings of Linnahall are expected to become the gateway to the city and a multi-functional urban centre that would also be hosting Tallinn's new Town Hall, adding complexity to the urban space that at the moment lacks a joint vision.

Figure D. Zoning of the Russalka-Paljassaare Comprehensive plan. 2004



Source: Tallinna Linnavalitsus

<sup>4</sup> Tallinna Linnavalitsus. “Comprehensive plan of area between Paljassaare and Russalka”.

## **2. Waterfront regeneration. From spaces of production to areas of consumption**

The aim of this chapter is to set the theoretical framework of the paper to contextualize the case study of Kalarand. Firstly, a historic overview of the changes that have taken place in the waterfront areas during the last decades will be presented through the example of Baltimore Inner Harbour. Following that, the paper will discuss the different strategies that are most commonly applied for waterfront development. In general, these tend to be either socially- or market-led. These strategies are also important for understanding the tendency of certain urban spaces, such as the waterfront, to become 'serialized' as a result of development models that ignore the vernacular culture. The possible negative effects of these changes, such as social exclusion and gentrification, will also be discussed in order to underline aspects that go against the creation of liveable and socially well accepted revitalized waterfront areas. This will lead the chapter to the final parts that will list the requirements for the creation of humane waterfronts, putting special emphasis on the necessity of public participation. Lastly, for examples of urban interventions will be presented in order to construct a certain dream scenario for future waterfronts.

### **2.1 Historic overview of waterfront development**

During the past decades, port cities all over the world have restructured themselves in order to meet the new challenges and needs that have risen. These changes have mainly been a result of the evolution of maritime technology and the evolving multifunctional character of post-industrial cities that have gradually lessened their dependence on port activities (Kostopoulou 2013). New practices in international shipping has led to the use of much larger ships, containerization and more extensive stocking areas that has forced ports to slowly move away from central city locations (Kostopoulou 2013; Marshall 2001a). The traditional harbour economy has gradually been losing its function as the core economic base of the urban development, involving a sharp reduction in number of local workforce, depopulation and urban dereliction. In many cases, such as Baltimore Inner Harbour or London's Docklands, port closure has been followed by the decline of other economic activities tied to traditional harbour and manufacturing industries which has led them to abandon their water bound sites

and move to suburbs. Dock areas in historic waterfronts have often degenerated from symbols of prosperity into symbols of economic and social decay, and become “spaces of redundancy” (Marshall 2001a:5).

The first projects of regenerating these leftover places in the city were undertaken in the US in the 1970s, Baltimore Inner Harbour being one of the first and most examples to be followed by other post-industrial cities. By the 1950s the Inner Harbour of Baltimore, once a lively and prosperous area for commerce, had become a redundant space, a deserted area with abandoned warehouses and empty streets. As a whole, the city was suffering from a rapid decrease of population as well as of a significant economic decline. Consequently, radical changes needed to be undertaken in order to resuscitate the local economy.

As a first measure, the downtown of Baltimore was revitalized following the redevelopment plan approved in 1959. Raising private funds for the plan was done by the Committee for Downtown which, together with the Greater Baltimore Committee set out plans for the Inner Harbour project that began with the development of Charles Centre, a 33-acre office area between the existing retail and financial districts, which arose from private initiative. Over 200,000 square meters of office buildings, 40,000 square meters of retail shops, a hotel, theatre, and 300 apartments were provided (Hall 1993).<sup>5</sup> As the first part of the redevelopment proved to be successful, it was decided that the adjacent maritime waterfront would be re-used for tertiary facilities and middle class and tourist settlements with the aim of bringing people to the water’s edge (Kostopoulou 2013). A municipal centre was reconstructed, new office buildings were constructed on prestigious waterfront sites, while multi-family housing was developed along the east and west sides of the Harbour, together with a centre of recreation, culture and entertainment for the local population (Millsbaugh 2003).<sup>6</sup> In 1968 a new pier was built, followed by a public promenade that connects public recreation areas, picnic shelters and play areas. The city also began promoting the waterfront area as a place for free entertainment and recreation activities. At the same time, large corporations began committing to the construction of large office towers along the Inner Harbour, the World Trade Centre was approved, and plans for a marina and finger piers were underway (Kostopoulou 2013).

In 1973, the Baltimore City Fair already drew 1.5 million people to the harbour over one weekend, with festivals and other activities held at the water’s edge (Miller 2011).<sup>7</sup> In

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<sup>5</sup> Cited in Kostopoulou (2013: 4582).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

1979, the Baltimore Convention Centre opened, followed shortly by the opening of James Rouse's Harborplace, a festival marketplace that proved to be a great success, putting the city into the top tourist league: within two to three years of opening it had 18 million visitors a year (Hall 1993).<sup>8</sup> By 2000, sixty new projects had been completed in the Inner Harbour area, including the Science Centre, the National Aquarium, various sport facilities, twelve hotels and a subway station, while the eastern area of the Inner Harbour has been developed with residential buildings, retail shops, restaurants, and hotels (Millspaugh 2003).<sup>9</sup>

Within three decades of redevelopment, Baltimore's Inner Harbour was transformed from a neglected backwater into a vital part of the city, turning it into a model in demonstrating how to replace industrial jobs with a service economy based on leisure and harnessing private capital to public money (Miles 2010: 60). According to Miles (2010: 60), Baltimore's Harborplace constitutes "a form of sanitised cultural entertainment whilst providing a model to replicate what was achieved in Baltimore for other cities such as Sydney, Barcelona and Tokyo, each of which displays many of the key characteristics associated with Baltimore's revitalisation." In Europe, since the 1980s numerous examples on different scales have been produced, ranging from the larger at London's Docklands, to smaller projects such as Canute Wharf in Southampton. Urban waterfront redevelopment projects aiming at reintegrating abandoned harbour areas into the urban fabric have thus become an international phenomenon of urban renewal.

Following Baltimore's example, one of the main changes that have gained attention in the renewal of waterfronts, is the transformation of derelict land areas into landscapes of consumption, more specifically into commercial and entertainment complexes. The industrial decline followed by the unlimited expansion of the service economy has resulted in the increasing popularity of regenerating urban cores by progressively incorporating leisure and tourism activities into urban waterfront redevelopment. Also, the culture industry and the symbolic economy around it is becoming one of the protagonists of the renaissance of cities and waterfronts (Zukin 2005). Examples of old port areas and its vacant warehouses and factories being adapted to host cultural events and amenities can be found in Helsinki (Makasiini), Berlin ('RAW-Tempel') and Tallinn (Culture Cauldron); while big-scale reconstruction of waterfront areas to prepare them for the arrival of the 'creative class' (Florida 2005) can be seen in Barcelona (22@) or Istanbul (Golden Horn Cultural Valley). The difference is that the latter two can be considered as a continuation of neoliberal top to

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<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

bottom flagship projects, while the first three are examples of public endeavours that have gradually lead to bottom to top solutions.

## 2.2 Strategies of waterfront redevelopment

As in other urban areas of high historic, social and economic importance, the redevelopment of waterfronts is a demanding task owing to the particular complexity of the space. Several academics have studied the strategies that are most often applied for this type of urban transformation. Bruttomesso (2001) defines three methods of revitalizing the water's edge: firstly, 'recomposition' policies are what mainly concentrate on giving common unitary sense to the different parts –both physical and functional—which make up the areas. The outcome of this first phase is a new character that “keeps the different elements together while also furnishing an unusual and attractive image for future users” (Bruttomesso 2001:40). Secondly, he defines 'regeneration' as re-examining and revitalizing urban zones that are of a considerable size and often located a short distance from the city centre. As a third element of waterfront revitalization, Bruttomesso speaks of 'recovery' projects as interventions of restructuring and restoring buildings of historic and architectural importance for new uses.

Christopher Law (1994) makes a distinction between revitalisation policies that are market- or socially-led. The latter have typically emphasised the needs of residents for better housing, community facilities and jobs (p. 148). Meanwhile, market-led policies attempt to capitalise on the advantages of the core, which are usually found in the city centre, and encourage activities such as office development and tourism. Exploring the politics of waterfront development that emerged around Cork's preparation for the 2005 European Capital of Culture, O'Callaghan and Linehan (2007:321) suggested that entrepreneurial governance approaches can have negative impacts on the rights of citizens as the public sector becomes increasingly more dependent on the private sector and its interests. Even though such governance may contribute to harnessing private investment in certain public developments, the ones to gain most of such endeavours are the private developers. Analysing London's Katherine's Dock regeneration process, Falk (1992:125) also denoted that the creation of a development corporation has shown that private investment can achieve a great deal in a short space of time, but it also proves that the relaxation of planning controls can lead to the creation of unpopular places that do not provide the kind of communities in which people want to live.

All in all, the derelict waterfront offers a variety of opportunities encompassing housing, hotels, heritage, sports, recreation, tourism and local commerce (Clark 1994, Knaap and Pinder 1992, Norcliffe 1996). According to Norcliffe (1996:130), the renaissance of the urban waterfront is, in a fuller historical perspective, just another round of accumulation of capital. This corresponds to what Logan and Molotch (1987) call a 'growth-machine' – urban space as a market commodity that can produce wealth and power for its owners, which also explains why the ordering of urban life becomes a matter of real estate agents and other elites that aim to benefit from the capitalisation of land. Following the logic of the growth machine, in waterfront development the common justification for pushing working class residents, including the elderly, off their territory is that the land can be put to a "higher and better use" (Beazly, Loftman and Nevin 1997).

Owing to the potential of capital profit, the most popular functions in the new waterfront have become high-value housing, heritage-related activities, water-based leisure opportunities, retailing, office development and, especially in the era of city marketing, hotels catering for the leisure business and conference markets (Knaap and Pinder 1992). As a result of this tendency, many postmodern waterfronts have opted for an eclectic character that offers a mix of activities that have been steered towards dock premises and sites, contrasting uses such as museums, art and media studios, craft workshops, small firms, community associations and voluntary agencies, yacht storage and repair, water sports and leisure centres (Clark 1994).

As for housing, Knaap and Pinder (1992) argue that one of the most striking features of regeneration schemes is the extent to which residential development is dominated by high-class housing. These schemes have become the norm, the typical explanation offered by developers being that development costs associated with these projects are too high to allow the construction of less-expensive property on any significant scale. Norcliffe also states that the postmodern redevelopment projects are concerned not so much with quantity, but with the quality of distinctiveness. He denotes that status flows from occupying a consumption niche that only a few others, maybe nobody else, can occupy (1996:130). Owing to this tendency, only in a few instances has social housing been included in waterfront development, more commonly the regenerated water's edge tends to exclude the working class and contribute to the "increasing segregation of upwardly mobile urbanites" (p. 131).

In general, the spreading of tourism and leisure-based activities may also contribute to additional segregation. Restaurants, pubs, aquariums, museums, festival markets, historic ships, hotels and other related facilities that have become inseparably associated with the

revitalised waterfront may have effects of segregation. Recreational activities such as aquatic sports allow those practicing sailing or other water-based sports an exclusive access to the water, while the simple flâneur is left contemplating these pleasures from ashore. Perhaps the strongest spatial segregation is provoked by hotels that offer exclusive views to its visitors, excluding those with no excuse of entering the facility from the water's edge. While the land next to the waterfront gets privatized, the view of this natural resource becomes an exclusive privilege for those with sufficient purchasing power for waterfront accommodation or housing.

As another common element of waterfront regeneration, Norcliffe defines the conservation of old ships, factories or other buildings related to the port as the industry of heritage that claims to seek the identity of the place, however, tends to contribute more to the construction "placeless Anyports" (1996:131). In this sense, the new urban waterfront becomes another spatial manifest of postmodern consumer culture that has the effect of homogenizing places, providing ports all over the world with similar "identical" facets.

### **2.3 Serialization of spaces and the social impact of waterfront regeneration**

The quest for a competitive world-class city is often envisioned by state and city planners as a way to attract investments, talent and tourists. The waterfront, owing to its visibility and intermediary position between land and water, has become a key site of urban transformation with the power to recapture economic investment. The urban waterfront, as postcard view, has the ability to shape an image for a city, to add value to city economies, and create desirability (Marshall 2001a:10). Also, waterfront development allows for new civic expressions that can reinforce the character and quality of the historic core (Marshall 2001b:137). This idea was first proven by Baltimore's Inner Harbour project that is considered to be the pioneer that set the premise for successful waterfront regeneration, however, other port areas such as Barcelona's Port Vell, London's Docklands or Sydney's Darling Harbour have popularised the idea of a revamped waterfront. Ever since the first "successful" waterfront regeneration projects, city planners have been aiming to attract investments, talent and tourists through the replication of previous successful models of redevelopment. Applying best practices pioneered elsewhere and replicating success stories enables cities to be competitive while overcoming the time-lag and uncertainty of initiating a new development approach (Chang *et*

*al.* 2004).<sup>10</sup> However, as Falk (1992:120) argues, copying ideas in inappropriate circumstances can lead to development schemes which lack character and fail to attract the necessary range of activities.

That is to say, the combination of exclusive housing, spaces of consumption and cultural amenities may not always be the most “successful” way of regeneration, especially when considering that other type of solutions (public beaches, baths, parks, maritime passages) could possibly attract a greater number of users. This, in fact, is one of the arguments in the dispute over the redevelopment of Kalarand: the current detail plan foresees the construction of a harbour for 335 vessels, however, an expertise analysis (Kalvik 2014) found that the construction of it would hardly turn out to be economically and environmentally viable.

In this sense, the detail plan of Kalarand is an example of hastily made planning projects that copy-paste models carried out elsewhere without studying the exact needs and conditions of the site in question. This leads to a serialisation of spaces and to “geographies of everywhere and nowhere” (Chang and Huang 2008:231), producing characterless catalogue-based urban spaces. With “geographies of everywhere” Chang and Huang refer to the trend of borrowing ideas from cities and waterfronts deemed to be ‘world class’ and infusing landscapes with foreign aesthetics, alien designs and transnational businesses with the aim of improving the city’s competitiveness on the global scene. The latter, however, refers to the high probability of these policies leading to the creation of ‘geographies of nowhere’—that is, spaces that fail to make an artistic expression, neither relate to the local culture and traditions.

According to Chang and Huang, one of the main negative impacts of the creation of ‘ageographical’ landscapes that include mass tourist spaces built for efficiency, standardisation and mindless replication, is that they destabilise local place-ties (2008: 231). The diminution of local identification with places are common effects of copy-paste development models that break the dynamics of the local community. Even though the construction of high-class housing, cultural and recreational establishments, shopping centres, hotels and leisure parks may create new jobs and improve the image of the formerly abandoned waterfront, it also has the risk of creating social exclusion, if not by force, then by symbolic codes of dress, taste and income. Priorities such as job creation, income levels, investment activity and business expansion may conflict with such criteria as respect for social relationships, local identity, ‘heritage’ and environmental diversity (Clark 1994: 229).

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<sup>10</sup> Cited in Chang and Huang (2011:2098).

The construction of a harbour for private yachts, a commercial centre or even a maritime museum in an area that has traditionally been a dock for the local fishermen alters the use of the space and creates certain opposition to the former activities.

On the other hand, revitalization policies that aim to conserve the vernacular architecture of historic neighbourhoods may lead to real estate speculation and, on a longer run, to the social exclusion of the residents of the former run-down areas. Gentrification is what Glass' (1964)<sup>11</sup> defines as a process of displacement of working-class residents in inner city areas by more affluent social groups and, on the other hand, the physical rehabilitation of those areas. Rérat et al. (2010) hold that the concept of gentrification has recently been extended to include new high-status developments, such as the regeneration of brownfield sites. This corresponds to Kalarand, an improvised beach that is growing its popularity despite being an unofficial swimming place. Its surroundings, however, are a type of redundant land that awaits for new uses to be applied either by the residents or by the developers. In this sense, the risk of gentrification around Kalarand is of an indirect type –new constructions on the waterfront would not displace residents (as the site has no buildings), however, the privatization of land and the altered use of the popular beach would most probably exclude many of the current users from accessing the place. As Sharon Zukin (1995) holds, new architectural aesthetics, as well as explicit and implicit norms of use of a place can also contribute to the social filtering and exclusion of certain social groups. The project of Kalarand foresees a maximum volume of 41 000 m<sup>2</sup> of new constructions, including apartments, a private yacht harbour and port facilities. Regarding the new housing, it seems to have been destined to high-income groups as the development company initially stated that: “The project is targeted to upscale individual buyers who prefer to live in the proximity of city centre and appreciate a sea view, along with a completed quay that will provide moorings for private boats.”<sup>12</sup> It is plausible that low-income residents could afford high-class apartments, nor a private boat, which leads to the conclusion that the socio-economic profile of the future residents of Kalarand's Residential Complex are expected to be of rather little difference.

The social upgrading of locale by incoming high-income groups, reinvestment of capital in inner cities, landscape changes and direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups are all features of classic gentrification (Rérat et al. 2010). The social upgrading of a place

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<sup>11</sup> Cited in Rérat et al. (2010).

<sup>12</sup> This was the literal description of the project until the company published a new text on their web page. A print screen image of the web page can be found in the annex.

through rehabilitation, construction of cultural amenities and new residential areas and the real estate speculation it may lead to result in higher tax yields which is one of the main reasons why gentrification may elicit the approval of local political leaders, who correspondingly moderate their support for displacees (Zukin 1987: 136). This has also been the case of Tallinn's urban planning where private developers have had a major role in influencing the decision making that concerns the detail plans. In this sense, gentrification can be considered an investment for capital accumulation that helps promote capital's long wave of expansion that internally redifferentiates urban space while legitimizing corporate expansion throughout the central city (Zukin 1987: 141).

#### 2.4 Towards a Humane Waterfront?

According to various researchers (Chang and Huang 2008; Clark 1994; Zukin 2005), mindless repetition of regeneration models, hasty flagship projects and the serialization of spaces these may lead to, can cause social exclusion and harm local place-ties by creating spaces that fail to relate to the local culture. Is there an alternative to copy-pasting models that aim to convert the water's edge into a space of consumption, middle-high class housing and recreational activities that only a few can economically allow? What would be the alternative to the creation of such spaces, can we imagine a new, *humane* waterfront that would respect the preferences of the users of the water's edge, maintain a local character and at the same time satisfy the developers' need for a profitable business venture?

Following Hanna Arendt's (1958) line of thought, democratic cities (and consequently its public spaces) are funded upon the principle of public oration and plurality of opinions. That is to say, the people that are accustomed to act and speak jointly in a determinate space are the ones that mold the place, endowing it with a humane character. However, despite being a result of years of human action, owing to various –mostly economic—changes, cities and their water's edge have not always maintained a human dimension. Historically, infrastructures that serve the needs of heavy industry have turned many docklands into non-places, into mono-functional spaces with no claim of providing an environment for social interaction. Ports, harbours and docks (just as well as airports, railway- and bus stations) are most often associated to one specific economic activity and when this loses its importance, they meet the need of reinventing its purposes. However, transforming the former industrial areas into liveable and creative districts may require something more than just physical 'recomposition' (Bruttomesso 2001). Areas that in the past have lacked a 'humane' character

will hardly become liveable places if public opinion is not taken into account in the design of the place.

Cities are what its inhabitants compose, consequently, the physical remodelling of urban areas is equivalent to the modification of the inhabitants' everyday trajectories and habits. It is equal to breaking one's customs, altering the daily uses of determinate spaces and, finally, changing the everyday users' relationship with his/her surroundings. Following this argumentation, a 'good' urban change ought to be conceived in close collaboration with the principle users – the local community and the daily commuters – that are most affected by changes that are to be undertaken. The production of *lived* spaces is, according to Lefebvre (1974), impossible without acts of appropriation performed by the users of the space.

In *Production of Space* (1974) Henri Lefebvre makes a distinction between three different types of public spaces: *perceived*, conceived and *lived* space. The first one is a materialized, socially produced, empirical space that is directly experienced, open, within limits, to accurate measurements and description (Benach 2004: 151). This category stands for spaces that have been designed and built by architects, *perceived* by professionals of urban design. According to Castells (1982:304), urban design is the symbolic attempt to express an accepted urban meaning in certain urban forms. Therefore, perceived, designed urban spaces are initially and foremost a mere *symbolic attempt*<sup>13</sup> of providing a public space solution to the necessities of the inhabitants. Perceived spaces are public and open only as far as limits and accurate measurements allow them to be. This, however, does not necessarily mean that local residents agree with such limits and perceive them as places of interaction. Nuria Benach (2004:151) points out that perceived spaces often need to go under a previous observation before they become occupied and appropriated by the citizens. In *The Humane City. Cities as if People Matter* (1989), John Short also criticizes the lacks of professional urban design:

The design of buildings and cities is too important to be left only to the architects. (...) Our cities have become the graveyards of outdated architectural theories. The giant towers, once the building of the future, are now the tombstones of architectural modernism (p. 43).

What Short refers to is that mindless, only design-based urban planning will lead to characterless urban spaces that will sooner or later end up being abandoned as a result of the arrival of new fashions of urban design.

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<sup>13</sup> My emphasis

The second type of public space described by Lefebvre is a *conceived space* that is conceptualized by planners, scientists and other urbanists “all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived” (Soja 1996:66). In Lefebvre’s tripartite division, these public spaces are remarkably outstanding for the presence of regulations and symbolic elements of official power authorities. Conceived spaces are based on and derived from a theoretical concept of what representative, public spaces *ought* to be, therefore, they are mostly defined by a rigid image-reflecting character, which makes it difficult to adapt them into liveable spaces.

Lastly, a *lived space* refers to social space in all its complexity and multiple symbols. These are places that have been appropriated by the inhabitants of the city with their “capacity to generate qualitatively different places, virtual counterspaces, spaces of resistance to the dominant order” (Soja 1996:67). They are spaces of people, places that are humane and liveable owing to the fact of having undergone acts of appropriation by the regular users of the space. Lefebvre and Benach hold that neither conceived, nor perceived places will become lived spaces as long as new uses that might convert the place into a space of contact, conflict and entertainment, are not applied. In relation to the study case of this research, the waterfront spot that will be analysed in the second part of the paper could currently be classified as a lived space. Despite the obsolete surroundings of Kalarand, the improvised beach has characteristics of being a humane, lived space owing to the acts of appropriation that have been carried out there ever since 2010. As a public initiative, the little sand strip next to the old Fisherman’s harbour has been cleaned up and a changing cubicle has been installed to encourage people to use the beach that lacks the official classification of a public beach. Therefore, it can be considered that for the moment being, Kalarand has a ‘humane’, lived character thanks to the users and acts that have been regularly carried out there ever since 2010.

It is therefore the inhabitants’ capacity of creating alternative uses of a space that defines the final approval of a place as an open, public space. Kalarand is a lived space not only for the fact of being a publicly used beach, but as well as for being a space of conflict of interests which, according to Castells (1982) is one of the main features of public space. This particular part of Tallinn’s waterfront is of high interest for several urban actors as it is located right next to the main harbour and the Old Town. For this reason, the beach of Kalarand and its surroundings have a high potential of representing a (new) image of the city. However, the detail plan that foresaw the construction of a yacht harbour, an upscale residential complex and a promenade that would reduce the current accessibility to the water

has been strongly opposed by the local community as their vision of the water's edge differs from the interests of the private developer.

Following Lefebvre's and Castells' line of thought, the planning of public spaces should be defined as a process of conflicts between various urban actors that have their interest in the configuration of the public space. However, could it somehow be considered as a collaborative operation? Clearly, the more actors involved in the regeneration project, the longer the planning process, however, as various academics (Dargan 2009, Falk 1992, Hoyle 2000) hold, well planned public involvement in projects of regeneration could help avoid major conflicts and delays in the execution of projects. Also, it is considered that the sooner community groups become involved in the planning process, the better it is for all concerned (Hoyle 2000, Sairinen and Kumpulainen 2005). However, as Dargan (2009) concludes from his study on public participation and local regeneration in the UK, even though resident participation has firmly been established in the regeneration process and is viewed as an inherently necessary practice, the participation process remains fraught with difficulties. He points out that residents are often excluded and disempowered in a process that is meant to be empowering as they are rarely afforded the same status at the negotiating table as their professional and political counterparts (2009: 307). The same can be said about the planning process of Kalarand where public participation started only when the detail plan was made public in order to allow suggestions coming from other actors besides the developers. In an article written by a member of the board of Pro Kapital and the legal representative of the company, Telliskivi Selts (the neighbourhood NGO that has been active in the negotiations) and its members are labelled as "protesters that fight against the development project".<sup>14</sup>

Describing the tendency contrary to planning that aims to include public participation, Logan and Molotch's (1987) define the urban space as a 'growth machine' that is controlled by the urban elites. The main characteristics of such a 'machine' are the following:

1. There should be no violent class or ethnic conflict.
2. In the good business climate, the work force should be sufficiently quiescent and healthy to be productive.
3. Local public should favour growth and support the ideology of value-free development.
4. The media should present a favourable image to outsiders.

These features that ought to favour liberal urban planning policies of constructing a successful metropolis could also be applied on the smaller scale of waterfront regeneration. However,

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<sup>14</sup> My translation from the article of Rammelkoo and Nurmela (2014) in *Postimesess.Tallinn City*.

having no ‘violent class’, that is to say – opponents that represent a variety of opinions – is what would exclude urban space from being public space. Projecting an image of a business-friendly environment may favour foreign investment, nevertheless, strategies that only aim at mobility, international competition and image marketing, often homogenise space on consumerist and aestheticised grounds, producing more ‘serialised’ spaces that lack local character. According to Groth and Corjin (2005: 505), development policies that ignore the necessity of public participation run the risk of losing a “dimension of socioeconomic richness and cultural mobility upon which the traditional metropolis thrives.”

In this kind of scenario, single-minded “zero-friction spaces”<sup>15</sup> and staged images of the ‘public’ replace the spaces of idiosyncratic interaction. (...) At their most extreme, these new modes of generating or transforming urban space no longer provide for friction: they tend to reduce the city’s complexity, impact negatively on relational spaces of encounter and transition or, simply, may no longer provide the conditions for the ‘city as habitat’ in specific areas (p. 505).

Zero-friction spaces can be understood as monofunctional, conflict-free areas, places that lack the characteristics of a lived, public space. Therefore, market-led regeneration projects that ignore the necessity of public participation are more probable of failing at creating urban spaces that could satisfy the preferences of the local residents, as well as at attracting new users for the *perceived* space. However good the design of the urban space, it will not become humane as long as spontaneous friction – encounters and uses of an alternative type – are not permitted in the space.

## **2.5 Requirements for successful waterfront development. Public participation in the production of space**

What are, then, the necessary requirements for successful public space development? Chesters (2009) argues that regeneration has to be conceived as a field of relationships that is always open to new inputs – energy, knowledge and resources – and that social movements are potential bearers of such inputs. He suggests that the confidence to embrace these inputs allows for the emergence of potentially novel solutions and innovations, which might otherwise be overlooked or perceived solely as sources of conflict and struggle (2009:372).

In “Complexity on the Urban Waterfront” (2001), Bruttomesso suggests a potential criteria for successful waterfront development projects. Here are some of the aspects he underlines:

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<sup>15</sup> Hajer (1999, p. 31); cited in Groth and Corijn (2005:505).

- Multiple activities in redeveloped zones. The mix of functions, referring to the different sectors of the principle urban activities (economic-productive, residential, pertaining to culture and leisure, mobility), often represents the keystone of the success to redeveloping a waterfront.
- A significant number of activities linked to previous and original uses for these zones with the purpose of keeping alive the memory of such unusual aspects, and preserving meaningful traces of the identity of these places.
- An outline of the routes that facilitate and develop interaction between different activities rather than separating them.
- The co-presence of 'public and private', referring to functions (government offices, museums etc), spaces (plazas, roads, parks etc) and the actors managing the services on the waterfront.

Falk (1992: 133) insists that success depends on following a process with four main elements: development strategy, adaptive re-use, research and consultation, and community partnerships. According to Clark (1994: 225), the key to successful development starts with detailed evaluations of previous projects that should establish the expected outcomes of future planning. He criticizes the fact that regeneration evaluations too often consider 'success' in terms of concrete achievements such as the amount of land reclaimed and put to profitable use, the rise in land values, the attraction of new types of residents and customers, and the construction of new houses, flats and leisure facilities. This line of argument equates change with success and avoids evaluating other challenging aspects such as the opportunities foregone and the social impact of regeneration. As an alternative, Clark suggests that the evaluation of change ought to analyse whether public assets have been sold cheap, to the benefit of private speculators and to the permanent disadvantage of local people. Instead of measuring the 'growth machine' factors, Clark emphasizes the importance of examining how well local basic needs, such as public facilities, meet the necessities of the residents. Also, an examination of housing prices ought to be carried out, analysing whether the rates are affordable and appropriate for the characteristics of the area.

Judging redevelopment schemes by what they lack may lead to evaluations that find the new urban frontier very tame, however, it contributes to developing a more critical approach to future waterfront regeneration. For example, Sairinen and Kumpulainen (2005) suggest that social impact assessment (SIA) provides possibilities to improve strategic management and land-use planning practices of urban waterfront areas. The evaluation process that consists of

analysing, monitoring and managing the intended and unintended social consequences of planned interventions and any social change processes invoked by those interventions<sup>16</sup> would always be carried out prior to any physical interventions. SIA allows gathering information on the social significance, values and meanings of waterfront areas, as well as of the appropriate ways of conserving, preserving and changing these environments for mixed use (2005:134). In this sense, SIA could be a powerful tool for improving the social sustainability of land-use plans and regeneration projects, as well as for avoiding conflicts that may delay redevelopment plans.

As Short (1989:79) holds, good cities are those which encourage the engagement of citizens in political discourse. This also goes for urban change: good regeneration projects are those which encourage the involvement of residents in political discourse insofar as urban change is always a matter of unceasing negotiations between a society's actors (Castells 1982), may they be politicians, developers and other urban elites, or the residents.

### **2.6A consolidated vision of a humane waterfront**

Taking into account the features that have been underlined as requirements for a successful waterfront development, the following section will present four urban interventions that have been carried out on the waterfront of different European cities. The aim is to accentuate the positive aspects of those interventions in order to compose a certain 'dream scenario' of a humane waterfront. All the examples are interventions that have been published on the web of the European Prize for Urban Public Space ([publicspace.org](http://publicspace.org)), which is an initiative that aims to recognise and foster the public character of urban spaces and their capacity for fostering social cohesion.

#### ***Havnebadet, Copenhagen (Denmark)***

Perhaps one of the most prevailing problems with post-industrial waterfronts is how to allow straight access to the water that most probably suffers from contamination. As a common solution, canals and docks have been transformed into promenades or service based-areas, maintaining the public character of the blue space insofar as the visibility of the water is guaranteed. However, the inquietude for bathing in central city areas remains present. The

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<sup>16</sup> Definition given by the International Association for Impact Assessment, quoted in Sairinen and Kumpulainen (2005:123).

**Figure E. Havnebadet public baths**



Source: European Prize for Urban Public Space

intervention of the port of Copenhagen is interesting for this precise aspect –for creating a new swimming spot in its natural surroundings. The baths were a continuation of the Havneparken park that had been created earlier as part of the transformation of the old marginal district that has now become one of the most attractive centres for social and cultural activities. The platform, which is completely covered with treated pine slats that give it a furthermore close-to-earth feeling, has an almost rectangular perimeter 25 metres wide and 90 metres long. The surface is interrupted by four large openings of different shapes and sizes which define four swimming pools, destined either for recreational activities or for strictly sporting swimming. The baths have no entrance fee and can fit a maximum of 600 visitors at a time. The aim of the baths that were inaugurated in 2003, is to go beyond the uses of a mere sports venue and become a public space for social interchange, a meeting point designed for rest and recreation (Bordas 2004).

### ***Västra Hamnen, Malmö (Sweden)***

In 1997, Sweden's third biggest city, Malmö, acquired seafront land that was mainly in disuse in order to convert it into a new district on the shores of the Baltic Sea. Adjoining the city's historic centre, and near the new university campus, this project was to transform a vast area

of old, abandoned industrial wharves into a new and attractive urban pole that would be of structural significance for the future growth of the city, besides boosting the economy and improving the environmental quality of the maritime facade (Oliveres i Guixer 2002).

One of the priorities and most important aspects of this project was the proper formalisation of public space in Västra Hamnen ('Western Docks') as it was destined to become a new residential, cultural and leisure area. The physical and economic accessibility to the former area of large-scale infrastructures was another fundamental factor as the aim was to offer housing to citizens with different acquisitive possibilities, thus fostering social equilibrium between the different districts of the city and identification of all its inhabitants with the new area (Oliveres i Guixer 2002). The new public spaces were not only destined to become meeting points for social interchange, but they also had to meet with the criteria of environmental quality, sustainability and durability. The public areas of the waterfront of the formerly industrial Western Docks were planned with the hope that the citizens would appropriate them and that they would become an attraction for residents and visitors alike.

**Figure F. Västra Hamnen housing**



**Source: Kellner, A.**

The new set of public spaces consist of a maritime esplanade, a shoreline park and another large park in the centre of the district, as well as the inner streets and passageways of the new district that are of public character owing to the limitations imposed on the circulation of vehicles. Favouring alternative means of transport not only improves sustainability, but also helps create a district that is safe for children. In the interior park wooden quays offer a space for different sporting activities and strolls or resting near the water. The park is connected to the shore through numerous paths and a square that has been designed as the

district's central public space in the middle of the maritime walkway that joins the new port and the shoreline park. The guidelines for establishing the outside public spaces partially followed the provisions of the Malmö Urban Development Plan, reinforcing the idea of continuity in their formal treatment of urban spaces with aspects such as lighting, vegetation or street fixtures (Oliver i Guixer 2002). The transition between the new district and the already existent city is provided through streets that connect a new university campus with Västra Hamnen and Malmö. This way, the university campus not only adds diversity to the new district, but also guarantees its incorporation to the city.

Another aspect that Västra Hamnen stands out for is its sustainability. Before the construction began, an exhaustive analysis of the state of the ground was done in order to develop a system of maximum efficiency in terms of energy use, garbage disposal and transportation. In terms of urban sustainability, Västra Hamnen is considered the first climate-neutral district in Sweden that uses 100% renewable energy (Vendena 2011). Energy is supplied by solar and wind power systems and geothermal heat pumps, also, rooftops in the area frequently incorporate living roofs, solar power systems, or both. Public transportation is easily accessible and runs at a high frequency.

### ***Bymilen, Copenhagen (Denmark)***

Bymilen is a small-scale (7,300 m<sup>2</sup>) private project that the European Prize for Urban Public Spaces has recognized as a positive example of a private developer's willingness of improving the quality of urban space in a formerly industrial port zone. In 2005, a Swedish bank decided to establish its Danish headquarters on the northern shore of the port, on a fairly square corner plot that had once been used as an open-air parking lot. The positioning of the two new free-standing towers freed a good part of the more than seven thousand square metres of private land that was decided to open up to the city and convert into a public space. Bymilen ('Urban Dune') is a fully accessible hillock of uneven contours respecting the values of sustainability and offering an informal space of interaction for the employees of the bank, as well as for the elderly to stroll around the hills and for adolescents to use the place for skateboarding. Although the bank clearly sought to enhance its corporate image by creating this urban space (that still awaits to be appropriated to become a 'lived space'), its aspiration

to improve the urban quality of the formerly industrial area is worthy of a recognition to set it as an example to other private companies that are installing in old industrial areas. The intervention is also of interest for the urban development of Tallinn as the presence of private parking lots in semi-obsolete urban areas is a very common phenomenon in the capital of Estonia. With the intervention of Bymilen, the cars were moved to the underground level to take advantage of the land on the street level and contribute to the improvement of urban qualities of the new port district. Even though investing money in the creation of public space will doubtfully have a direct economic outcome for the private developer, the indirect results, such as attracting more visitors and clients and improving the living qualities of the neighbourhood could, on a longer run, also be measured in economic terms.

**Figure G. New public space between the buildings of a private bank**



Source: European Prize for Urban Public Spaces

### *The riverside of Rhône, Lyon (France)*

In 2003, the City Council and the Greater Lyon Urban Community decided to call for entries in a competition with the idea of recovering the left bank of the Rhône river. The water's edge was to bring about reconciliation between the city and its river by offering new public space that would become a meeting place, a leisure area and a zone where people could relate with nature. The project occupies an extension of approximately ten hectares over a front of over

five kilometres running along the left bank of the Rhône. Throughout its length, the new riverside frontage has a tiered section of variable width with two main levels: an upper level that separates vehicular traffic from the circulation of pedestrians; and a lower level that is almost exclusively for pedestrians. This lower part has a succession of riverside woods, fields planted with different grasses and paved areas of tiered seating that are repeatedly crossed through by tracks for strolling, skating or cycling. Along the river there are cycling tracks and stopping points that contain lifts, stairs, health services, drinking-water fountains, information points, bicycle- and skate-rental establishments, ice cream and drink stalls and nurseries. The most central and representative point of the intervention is the Guillotière Bridge, once an inaccessible area that has now become a venue for concerts, parades, screenings and other type of public celebrations. Adding to this, a former complex of swimming pools and public baths has been revamped with the addition of a series of zones for playing handball, basketball, volleyball and petanque. Finally, in the northern zone of the intervention, a natural riverside space, a wetland environment consisting of islets of alluvial sediment and riparian woods connects the river with the Tête d'Or Park, which is the 116-hectar green lung of Lyon.

Aside from the extensive public space facilities that were created during the renovation of the left bank of the Rhône, another remarkable aspect of the intervention are the requirements that were established for assuring public participation for the design of the riverside. According to Bordas (2008), fifteen workshops with a total of 600 participants were held, these focusing on discussing details of specific areas, such as sustainable transport, aquatic activities and fishing. Also, a public exhibition that attracted 85,000 visitors, was held with the aim of introducing the renovation plan to the citizenry.

**Figure H. Public space near the Guillotière bridge used as a scenario for concerts**



Source: European Prize for Urban Public Space

The creation of facilities that function as public baths and promenades that run along the water's edge is one of the first criteria that would guarantee accessibility to the water and thus, maintain the public character of the blue space. Secondly, providing parks and plazas for social interaction and open-air events could give a furthermore public character to the water's edge. On the other hand, when it comes to housing, this should be organized with a purpose of allowing access to citizens with different acquisitive possibilities to foster social equilibrium. In terms of diversity and complexity, mixing functions, referring to the different sectors of the principle urban activities (economic-productive, residential, pertaining to culture and leisure, mobility), is another keystone of the success to redeveloping a waterfront. The co-existence of a new private bank, a residential area and recreational facilities is not necessarily a utopia when conceived with a vision of long-term improvement. Lastly, as exemplified through the intervention of the riverside of Rhône, holding workshops and public exhibitions to plan and communicate future changes is another necessary aspect that must be taken into consideration for successful waterfront development.

### 3. The proposed regeneration of Kalarand and Kalasadam

The aim of this chapter is to study the characteristics of the area that comprises Kalarand and its nearby surroundings and corresponds to the detail plan of Kalasadam in order to contextualize the redevelopment project that has been under discussion for more than a decade. The first part of the chapter will give a little historic overview of the area and a description of its current facilities and importance in the urban life of Tallinn. The second half will study the dispute over the redevelopment project that has been stalled ever since its public presentation in 2008. The aim is to analyse the aspects that have become obstacles for the regeneration of this part of Tallinn's waterfront in order to study and propose what could have been done better to avoid the halting of the project.

#### 3.1 A brief historic overview of Kalarand, Kalasadam and Kalamaja

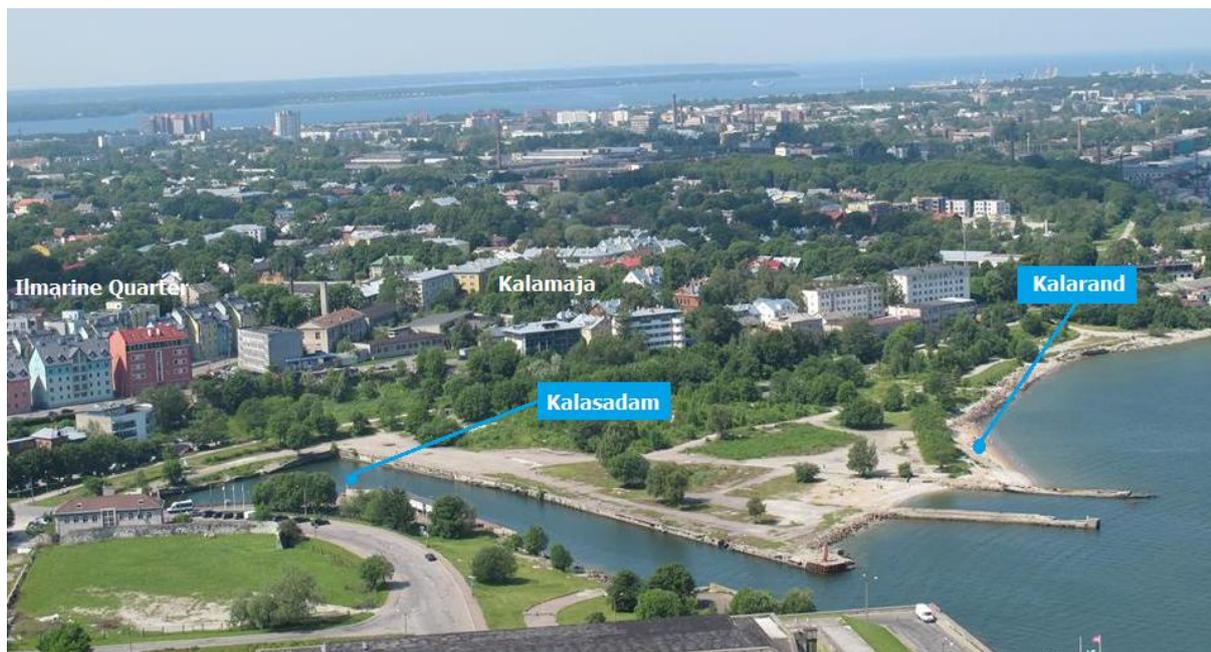
Historically, the neighbourhood of Kalamaja ('Fishermen's House'), together with Kalarand ('Fishermen's Beach') and Kalasadam (Fishermen's Harbour) was a place for the fishermen of Tallinn and its surroundings. First written sources mention Kalamaja in 1421, even though it is believed to have existed in much earlier times. Already back in the XV century local fishermen used the little bay that is a short distance from the centre of Tallinn for anchoring their boats. In the 19th century Kalarand is known to have been a common place for the Fish Market and by the end of the century it had become the center of Estonia's seafood industry (Nerman 1996). However, during the Soviet era it was turned into a border zone and entirely closed to the public.

The neighbourhood of Kalamaja (that has now been classified as an area of cultural and historic value<sup>17</sup>) has been burned down on several occasions (1570, 1710, 1854), however, it has always been rapidly restored as the demand for housing in this waterfront area has always been high. It has had an important role in the development of Tallinn's urban culture and

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<sup>17</sup> (In Estonian: 'Miljööväärtuslik ala') In legislative sense, an area determined by a plan where specific planning and building regulations are set connected with the area's historical and cultural particularities and with the need of preserving them.

Figure I. Aerial photo of Kalarand, Kalasadam and its surroundings



Source: Elaboration based on the photo of Vitismann, M.

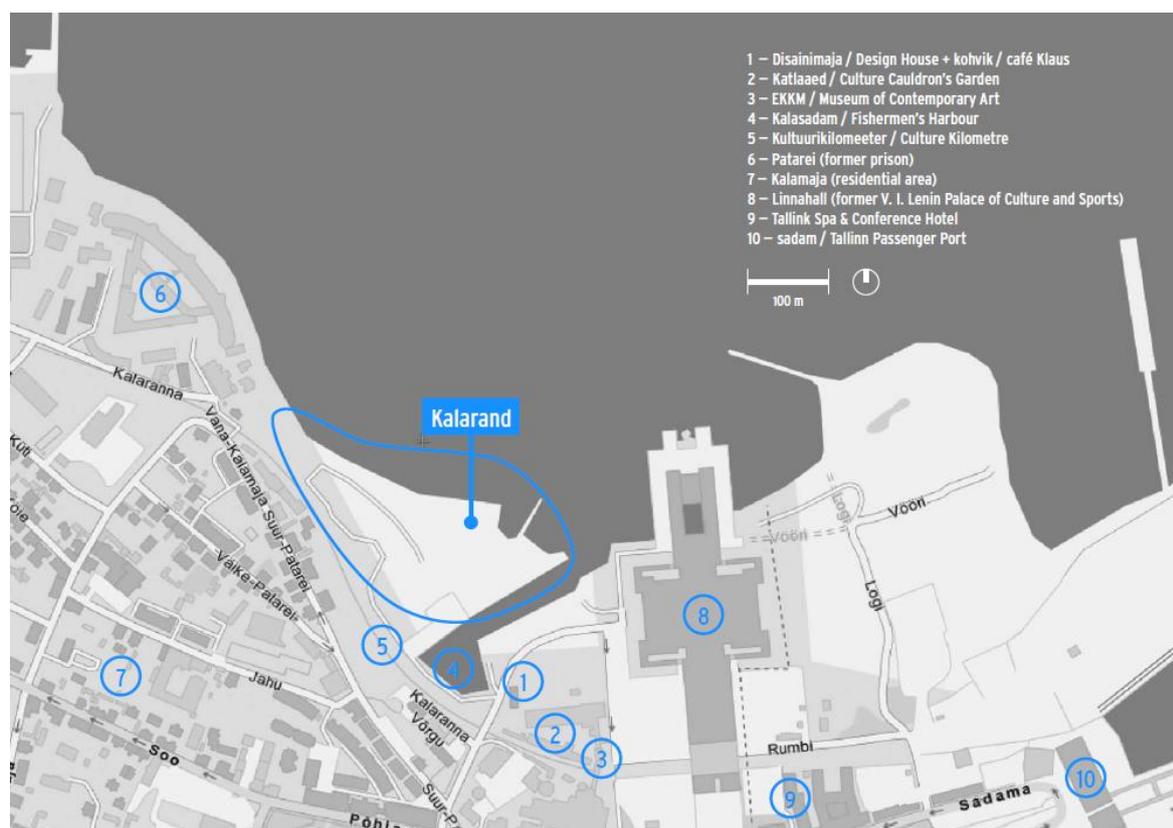
continues to be so as nowadays it is known for having one of the most active neighbourhood associations and a busy agenda of local street events. Owing to the rising interest towards the real estate in this neighbourhood, Kalamaja has experienced a rapid increase in the rental prices as more and more companies are installing in the neighbourhood that is becoming ever more popular amongst the “creative class”<sup>18</sup> and young people. Several old factories have been transformed into alternative scenarios for arts, restaurants or co-working places. The area has a wide selection of culture-related establishments, such as the new Seaplane Harbour museum, the Culture Cauldron (an alternative centre of creativity) and the Contemporary Art Museum of Estonia.<sup>19</sup> In the framework of Tallinn being the European Capital of Culture in 2011, an old railway track was transformed into a pedestrian pathway known as the Culture Kilometer that joins Linnahall with the previously mentioned places, as well as with the Patarei fortress (an old prison where exhibitions and parties take place), Noblessneri Shipyard (another scenario for theatre and culture events) and the recently renovated Kalamaja Cemetery park. Within its three years of existence, the Culture Kilometer has also become an

<sup>18</sup> Referring to Richard Florida’s (2005) definition of people whose economic function is to create new ideas, technology and content. According to his theory, attracting people related to these activities is a key strategy for successful city marketing and for improving the city’s competitiveness amongst other towns.

<sup>19</sup> The latter two were initially occupied buildings but have now become somewhat more legal, self-managed spaces that offer regular cultural activities.

important non-motorised pathway for strollers, joggers and cyclists. To add up, Kalamaja has one of the most active neighbourhood associations of Tallinn, Telliskivi Selts, that not only organizes local street events, but also aims to improve the involvement of civic participation in questions that concern urban matters. The NGO also plays an important role in the dispute over the future of Kalarand and its surroundings.

Figure J. Kalarand and the equipments surrounding it.



Source: Kalarand Workshop Tallinn 2012

Kalarand gained wider public interest in 2011 as part of the urban installations festival LIFT11 that took place in the framework of Tallinn, European Capital of Culture 2011. The authors of the installation, Toomas Paaver, Teele Pehk and Triin Talk made the first intervention attempt on their own initiative, in summer 2010, setting up a changing cubicle at Kalarand. In summer 2011, the same initiative was repeated on a somewhat bigger scale by building a more solid cabin, sunbathing platforms and a bench. Waste containers were provided and garbage collection was arranged for the summer season. A sample was taken of the water, which proved suitable for bathing. Although the area became cleaner and tidier, Kalarand remained a ‘swim-at-your-own-risk’ beach not listed among the official beaches of Tallinn and, therefore, without lifeguard service. Ever since 2010, the same actions of

maintenance and remodelling of the beach by its users have been repeated each year in the beginning of the summer, the little strand even has its own fan page on Facebook where followers are informed of the latest activities related to Kalarand. Being the only bathing beach in central Tallinn, it has gained rapid acceptance and popularity amongst users from nearby neighbourhoods as well as from other parts of the city. According to the authors of this LIFT11 installation, the idea of cleaning and presenting Kalarand at the urban installations festival as a self-liability beach was to attract attention to the plans within this area of Tallinn as a substantial residential and harbour development. The authors' aim was to offer ideas for "diversifying the developers' plans for the area and helping the owner of the land improve the image of the place as well as its future quality and usability."<sup>20</sup>

Figure K. Culture Kilometre in 2012



Source: Elaboration based on the photo of Maa-amet 2012

### 3.2 Situating Kalarand and Kalasadam in the context of Tallinn's urban planning

As it has been explained in the introductory part of the paper, Tallinn's urban planning has been marked by two main conditions: firstly, Estonia's relatively recent independence from the Soviet Union (and Soviet central planning tradition); secondly, the country's rapid conversion to a neoliberal free-market economy that gave private investors great power of influencing Tallinn's urban development. In a review of urban planning in Tallinn, Haas (2006:66) brings out that during the first years of independence the rapid political flux and

<sup>20</sup> Paaver, Pehk and Talk (2011).

economic concerns took precedence over long-term planning. Estonia rapidly became “Europe’s purest free market economy” enjoying “the thrill of the *laissez faire*,”<sup>21</sup> as *The Financial Times* expressed just seven years after the country’s independence. In a study on urban waterfront regeneration in Tallinn, Merje Feldman (2000:844) quotes a government official whose opinion very well illustrates the free market-led planning policies of the 1990’s:

It is very difficult to cooperate [with the private sector] because the legislation has so many holes in it. We do not know how our decisions affect private owners. Therefore, we try to be very flexible and liberal [...] In addition, our part in any kind of partnership would be mainly 'moral' as we have no funds to commit [to a venture which does not bring an immediate profit].

The legislation holes and the lack of public intervention and financing allowed Tallinn to become what Cerrone, Tuvikene and Vaher (2010) characterize as a classic post-Soviet landscape that manifests the lack of a homogeneous vision of the city:

Tallinn’s urban fabric has typical post-socialist features, creating an inordinate playground for neoliberal development: the city core has dispersed, suburbs are more and more attracting residents, commercial centres follow the suburbs along the arterial roads to the edges of the city, high-rise buildings raise their heads, historical old town turns into Disneyland and traps the tourists, big art and culture centres emerge along with alternative movements.

The change to a free-market economy was accompanied by a land reform which allowed land to be transferred from the state to private ownership through restitution and land sales. The properties expropriated by the socialist government in 1940 were returned to the previous owners or their heirs and if a new buildings had been built on the lot since the expropriation and if someone else had claims to these buildings, properties were not returned but compensation was paid instead - approved city plans to change the land use did not prevent restitution. This gave birth to private agents, developers, construction companies, estate agencies (brokers), commercial banks, investors and more on to supply the new high of urban and especially suburban developments.<sup>22</sup> Owing to the lack of public funding and legislation, these actors managed to carry out their one-off development projects by submitting detail plans that would need the approval of the City Administration that was very “flexible and liberal”.<sup>23</sup> This way, until 2001 – during ten years of rapid growth and *laissez-faire* politics – the urban changes of Tallinn were taking place without a city master plan and

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<sup>21</sup> *Financial Times* 1998, cited in Feldman (2000: 843)

<sup>22</sup> Ruoppila (2007), cited in Cerrone (2012:11)

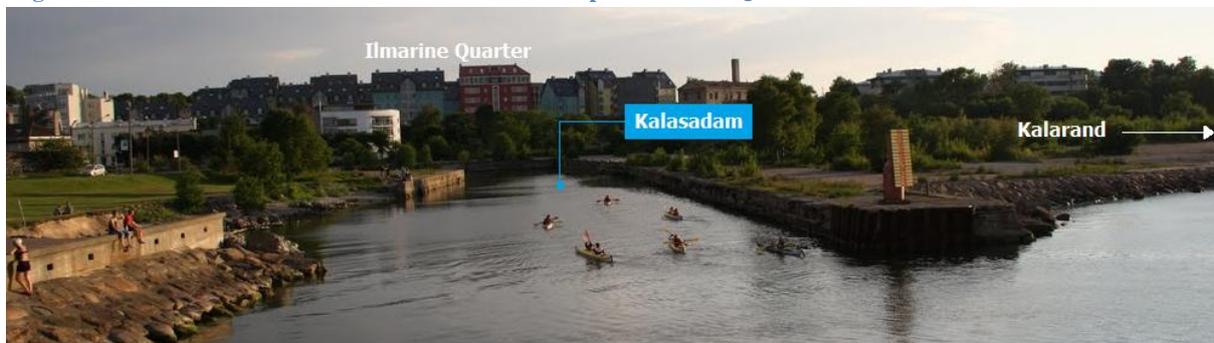
<sup>23</sup> Quoting the government official cited in Feldman (2000:844).

the transition from a post-Soviet city to a neoliberal capital was done through fragmented detail plans that lacked a joint vision. Finally in 2001 a framework for all detail planning was approved and posterior district-based plans have been added to the Master Plan of Tallinn (Tallinna Üldplaneering).

However, according to Cerrone (2012: 12), the strictness of the Master Plan contrasts with the fact that modifications to the General Master Plan can be made at the time the developer is proposing the development project, through the submission of a detail plan to the City of Tallinn. When a detail plan is presented, the city government analyses it and sends it back with relevant notes so that developers could work out a modified second draft which will be accessible to public consultation. If there is no public opposition, the plan will be fully approved, otherwise it must go under another round of corrections. This means that developers, real estate companies, small entrepreneurs and agencies are as a matter of fact the designers of the city, with the apparent role of the municipality of approving/improving or rejecting the detail plans submitted for the development of privately owned land (Cerrone 2012: 15).

This is the context in which the detail plan of Kalasadam was developed. Pro Kapital, the main developer of the Kalaranna project, is one of the leading real estate development companies with several large-scale commercial and residential projects in the capitals of the three Baltic states.<sup>24</sup> Its main shareholder is Ernesto Pretoni, a somewhat infamous Italian entrepreneur who controls real estate development from the Baltics all the way to Italy, Russia and Egypt. With the development project of Kalaranna, Pro Kapital would extend its physical presence in the area as it already owns a residential complex (Ilmarine Quarter) of 13 houses within a 5 minute walking distance from Kalarand.

**Figure L. View from the sea towards the residential complex Ilmarine Quarter**



**Source: Elaboration based on the photo of Triini-Mannike (Panoramio)**

<sup>24</sup> The company and especially one of its former leaders, Ernesto Pretoni, is infamous for several scandals related to tax fraud in connection with a series of late 1990s real estate deals allegedly conducted to hide money from the government. More information in Gunter, A. (2002).

Figure M. Kalarand view towards the east and towards the west.



Source: Elaboration based on the photos of Klementi, K.

The development project of Kalarand and Kalasadam has been under discussions ever since the submission of the first detail plan in 2008. The project comprises an area of 7 hectares and foresees the creation of a waterfront promenade, a private yacht harbour that can dock up to 335 vessels and the construction of private housing . The maximum amount of apartments allowed on the plot is 400, equivalent to a surface of 34 000 m<sup>2</sup> (which, according to the expertise done in 2014, is double the volume permitted in the general plan).<sup>25</sup> The maximum percentage that new constructions may occupy of the 7-hectare plot is 35%. In accordance to the Office of Town Planning, buildings may not surpass 5 storeys in order to maintain views to the sea. As for the Culture Kilometer, it is expected to be converted into a road that would traverse and connect several parts of North-Tallinn.

### 3.3 The dispute over the future of Kalasadam and Kalarand. Public participation in the configuration of public space?

When the detail plan of Kalasadam was first made public in 2008, it met unforeseen opposition, with 300 persons expressing their opinion on the necessity of changing the plan.<sup>26</sup> Owing to the high number of complaints, the detail plan was returned to the developer who was expected to introduce modifications to the plan in order to ensure it meets the requirements of the opponents. However, in 2012 the same detail plan was reintroduced

<sup>25</sup> Kalvik (2014).

<sup>26</sup> MTÜ Telliskivi Selts (2014).

without any significant adjustments. At that point Telliskivi Selts became the leading opponent of the dispute, aiming to draw attention to the legal contradictions of the plan, meanwhile offering alternative ways of improving the development of the waterfront. This time more than 2000 persons gave their signature demanding changes in the detail plan.<sup>27</sup>

The main requests of the opponents were that, firstly, Kalarand should maintain its sandy beach and the opportunity of swimming there. With that, Kalasadam should also maintain its current shape, ensuring the transition from sea to land with a 50m wide car-free public promenade. Secondly, it was claimed that the architecture competition for constructions foreseen in Kalasadam and its surroundings should be organized before the ratification of the detail plan. Thirdly, the opponents insisted that the Culture Kilometer as a waterfront promenade that has gained wide public use since its creation in 2011, must endure in the future.

In June 2014 the detail plan was once again under discussion. The developers claim that the uncertainties that have not been solved so far by changes in the detail plan will find a solution through proposals made at the architecture contest that will be held for the development project of Kalarand and Kalasadam. However, what concerns the activists of Telliskivi Selts is that with this planning sequence too many aspects of the final detail plan will be left unclear to the point when public intervention in the process will no longer be legally possible.

In May 2014, with the aim of proving the project's illegitimacy, Telliskivi Selts commissioned an expert evaluation<sup>28</sup> of the detail plan of the surroundings of Kalasadam and Kalarand. The analysis presents the following errors in the detail plan:

1. The detail plan ignores several legal aspects and regulations that have been set with the General Plan of Russalka and Paljassaare as well as with the General Planning Laws.
2. The foreseen volume of construction of new buildings in the area largely surpasses the legal figures permitted in the General Plan.
3. The current detail plan does not assure that the public promenade will have continuity throughout the area (as required in the General Plan).
4. The plan lacks a qualified study on the economic and environmental sustainability and viability of the harbour that is expected to dock up to 335 vessels.
5. The detail plan lacks the official agreement of the Ministry of Economy and Communication, the Ministry of Environment, the Maritime Administration and the Aviation Administration.

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<sup>27</sup> MTÜ Telliskivi Selts. (2012b).

<sup>28</sup> Carried out by an expert in development projects of harbours. Consult Kalvik (2014).

As a conclusion, the expertise confirms that the detail plan does not have a viable solution for the creation of the beach promenade and harbour; and that the trying of the case has not been lawful. As a consequence, the expertise states that contents of the detail plan must be reformulated.

What is more, Telliskivi Selts finds that by now the regulations that were imposed with the general plan of Russalka and Paljassaare are outdated.<sup>29</sup> According to the law, detail plans must be done in accordance to the urban changes of the recent years, however, the general plan was first ratified in 2004, meaning that it ignores the existence of the improvised beach of Kalarand and the Culture Kilometer. By now both have become spaces of public interest and therefore require attention and adequate solutions in the detail plan. The detail plan of Kalasadam comprises areas that are essential for guaranteeing access to the water's edge, it requires consulting with the representatives of the public opinion in order to take into consideration their view on the future use and accessibility to this public good. According to the Planning Law (PlanS § 16 lg 1 p 10)<sup>30</sup>, the General Plan and the detail plan must be perceived in cooperation with the NGO-s and associations that represent local inhabitants. However, as there is very little tradition of previous consultation, the public is only informed once the initial approval of the detail plan has been given by the city government. However, the case of Kalarand shows that such policies of 'public involvement' prove to be little efficient. As the complaints submitted in 2008 and the objections presented in 2012 have not found any concrete solutions, the project has been stalled until further notification. Both sides continue negotiating with the city government in order to ensure that their requirements are

**Figure N. Kalarand with the former Patarei prison in the background**



Source: Avaste, R.

<sup>29</sup> MTÜ Telliskivi Selts (2012a).

<sup>30</sup> Planeerimisseadus (2002).

fulfilled.

Meanwhile, the improvised beach of Kalarand continues to improve its popularity amongst the residents of the neighbourhood, as well as among other visitors that appreciate the proximity of a bathing spot to the central city. This way, the growing presence of spontaneous users of the space contributes to the successive appropriation of the place. Groth and Corijn's (2005) study on the phenomenon of 'informal actors' in the temporary reappropriation and animation of 'indeterminate' spaces of Helsinki, Brussels and Berlin brought similar conclusions:

The longer the [reappropriation] action takes, and with the first obstacles arising, a broader field is incorporated: the neighbourhood and sympathisers are informed, consulted and mobilised. It is through such coalition-building opposing the 'official' planning [...] that the informal actors become players in the public debate. (p.521)

Although in the case of the development project of Kalarand, the opposing actors are not exactly informal (Telliskivi Selts is a registered NGO and several other opponents are well-known urban activists), Groth and Corijn's study is adequate for comparison as the creation of the improvised beach can also be considered as an act of reappropriation performed by the users of the 'indeterminate' space. According to these authors, the longer the opponents –the creators of counterspaces to the dominant order– persist, the higher the probability of increasing their role in the planning process. In this sense, there is prospect that the developers may have to increase their compliance towards public opinion and at least partially adapt the project to the needs and preferences of the current users of Kalarand.

The civic 'involvement' that officially started in 2008 with the first public presentation of the detail plan, consisted of the emergence of 300 opponents to the plan. In this context, public involvement can merely be conceived as a citizen's right to submit objections to a detail plan. That is to say, participation is seen in terms of confrontation. This proves Castells' (1982) argument that urban change is not the result of a collaborative work of various social classes that make up a joint culture, but rather a painstaking outcome of conflicts that occur amongst various urban actors that have their interest in defining the urban space.

Although the succession of events around Kalarand seems to prove Castells' thesis, it must be asked if participation could not be understood in another sense than opposition? Could it not be perceived as collaboration between various agents that aim to reach a compromise that would consider the interests of all sides involved in the project? Inclusion of

the public opinion in an early stage of the project does not necessarily mean that the residents must have a direct say in the design of the project, but it could, for example, entail the mapping of the area and of the interests of the people that reside in or visit the area frequently. This type of previous investigation on the possible social impacts of a regeneration project might help prevent certain negative effects, facilitate negotiations related to the project and avoid the stalling of the project. What is more, a previous fieldwork is necessary for giving the architects an idea of the degree of complexity required for the space that will be transformed. Multifunctionality does not only mean that a waterfront can offer facilities of recreational sports, restaurants, hospitality and private housing, but that it also allows private *and* public uses, independently of the visitors' purchasing power.

## Conclusions

Preliminary studies, consults and well planned public involvement in regeneration projects that affect public space, such as the water's edge of Tallinn, is one of the keystones for successful waterfront redevelopment. However, continuity, complexity and diversity are unlikely to become protagonists in planning systems that are heavily reliant on private investment, as in the case of Tallinn. Owing to the lack of public funds and laws that would regulate urban planning, excessive freedom has been guaranteed to private developers whose often shortsighted vision has led to the construction of an inordinate, dispersed city. The case study of Kalarand is an example of how such historic, economic and legislative circumstances may impede establishing efficient policies of participatory planning. It is also an example of how the incapacity of cooperation between the actors interested in the configuration of public space may lead to the stalling of projects that, in principle, aim to improve the quality of the urban space. The unceasing opposition of the local community has become the principle force demanding more complexity in the uses of the water's edge. Consequently, they are also responsible for the construction of a *lived space* in the midst of a high-value terrain that awaits the approval of a development project that is expected to entail the privatization of the public blue space.

One of the most important characteristics of Kalarand is that it is the only beach in central Tallinn that offers straight access to the water. The simplicity and naturalness of the sand strip is what already makes the beach a phenomenon, especially when taking into account its proximity to the city centre and the main harbour. Conserving this unique character is what could save Kalarand from becoming an urban waterfront of 'everywhere and nowhere'. This type of copy-paste of surroundings and morphologies could be avoided if adequate attention were given to the aspects that define Kalarand as a 'differential space' that is "created and dominated by its users from the basis of its given conditions."<sup>31</sup> Conserving what has been settled during the course of time can be a more difficult of an exercise than creating something new with no previous conditions. However, traces of the past and an adept solution to maintain them present is what adds value to spaces of high public interest, such as the waterfront.

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<sup>31</sup> Lefebvre (1991), cited in Groth and Corijn (2005:521).

## Appendices

Figure O. Miniature of the detail plan that was made public in 2008.



Source: Telliskivi Selts

Figure P. Print screen image of the former description of the development project of Kalaranna. The text no longer appears on the web page of Pro Kapital

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### Kalaranna

Building volume 40,780 m<sup>2</sup>

Total investment: € 58.68 million

Kalaranna is a residential development project located in North-Tallinn borough, it foresees a series of luxury apartment buildings offering a sumptuous view to Tallinn's coastline. The location is attractive for a residential area: it is located right next to the sea, Old Town and City Centre, and enjoys a good access both by cars and public transport.

The detailed plan has been partly established already, but not fully approved. Historically the site has been a fishing harbour and a market place. The project is expected to be developed in one single stage and will include a yacht marina. Overall, the project is targeted to upscale individual buyers who prefer to live in the proximity of city centre and appreciate a sea view, along with a completed quay that will provide moorings for private boats.

The establishment of the detail plan is currently in process.






Source: Pro Kapital

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**Table 1.** Tallinna Linnavalitsus (2014). "Tallinna elanike arv".

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**Figure on the cover.** Cerrone, D. "Kalaranna beach".

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**Figure A.** Maa-amet.

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**Figure B.** Mäkelä, R. "Coca-Cola Plaza and Old Factory (Rotermanni)".

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**Figure C.** (Author unknown). "Linnahall just valmis".

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**Figure D.** Tallinna Linnavalitsus. "Comprehensive plan of area between Paljassaare and Russalka". <http://www.tallinn.ee/est/ehitus/Paljasaare-ja-Russalka-vahelise-ranna-ala-uldplaneering-Kehtestatud>

**Figure E.** (Author unknown). "Aerial view of Havnebadet, by the Grand Canal. In the middle ground, Havneparken and, in the background, the Islands Brygge district".

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**Figure F.** Kellner, A. "Västra Hamnen i Malmö".

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**Figure G.** (Author unknown). "Bymilen".

[http://www.publicspace.org/timthumb.php?src=/app/webroot/files/urbanps/projects/G363\\_02.jpg&w=1000&h=586&zc=1&q=95](http://www.publicspace.org/timthumb.php?src=/app/webroot/files/urbanps/projects/G363_02.jpg&w=1000&h=586&zc=1&q=95)

**Figure H.** (Author unknown). "Concert at the tiered seating near the Guillotière Bridge".

<http://www.publicspace.org/timthumb.php?src=/app/webroot/files/urbanps/projects/E078-06B.jpg&w=1000&h=563&zc=1&q=95>

**Figure I.** Vitismann, M. “Kalarand täies ilus kõrgelt õhust”.  
[https://fbcdn-sphotos-g-a.akamaihd.net/hphotos-ak-xap1/t1.0-9/10513312\\_262544907265980\\_3600775295341900094\\_n.jpg](https://fbcdn-sphotos-g-a.akamaihd.net/hphotos-ak-xap1/t1.0-9/10513312_262544907265980_3600775295341900094_n.jpg)

**Figure J.** Klementi, K. [http://kadri.klementi.eu/files/kalarand\\_site\\_info.pdf](http://kadri.klementi.eu/files/kalarand_site_info.pdf)

**Figure K.** Maa-amet.  
[http://xgis.maaamet.ee/xGIS/XGis?app\\_id=UU82&user\\_id=at&bbox=336160.377358491,6375000,768839.622641509,6635000&setlegend=SHYBR\\_ALUS01=0,SHYBR\\_ALUS02=1&LANG=1](http://xgis.maaamet.ee/xGIS/XGis?app_id=UU82&user_id=at&bbox=336160.377358491,6375000,768839.622641509,6635000&setlegend=SHYBR_ALUS01=0,SHYBR_ALUS02=1&LANG=1)

**Figure L.** Triini-Mannike (account username). “Old Fish harbour”.  
<http://www.panoramio.com/photo/65009505>

**Figure M.** Klementi, K. “Fisherman’s beach, view towards the east”; “Fisherman’s beach, view towards the west”. [http://kadri.klementi.eu/files/kalarand\\_site\\_info.pdf](http://kadri.klementi.eu/files/kalarand_site_info.pdf)

**Figure N.** Avaste, R. “Kalarand Beach party 2011 with former Patarei prison at the background”. [http://inura2012tallinn.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/kalarand-ja-patarei\\_reio-avaste.jpg](http://inura2012tallinn.files.wordpress.com/2012/04/kalarand-ja-patarei_reio-avaste.jpg)

**Figure O.** (Author unknown) “2008. aastal avalikustatud planeeringueskiis”.  
<http://www.telliskiviselts.info/sites/default/files/styles/adaptive/public/Kalasadama%20detail%20plan.jpg?itok=eL7nM8Ie>

**Figure P.** Pro Kapital. “Kalaranna”