

Making Sense of Heritage Planning in Theory and Practice - Experiences from Ghana and Sweden

Heritage has become a key element in the development of places, and historic areas have become valuable spaces because of their economic relevance for global cultural tourism. However, the interpretations and management of historic areas are inevitably contested and subject to multiple and conflicting claims, representations, and discourses. These challenges are nowadays often approached through inclusive planning processes, but they nevertheless tend to ignore the specific complex relations that underpin heritage in development context.

This thesis brings heritage theory and practice into dialogue with theories of place branding, planning and sustainability research in order to make sense of the complexities and the challenges of heritage planning in different socio-political contexts, and thereby contributing to heritage planning becoming more locally responsive. It employs methods of discursive analysis to study situations where heritage is integrated in development processes, and to analyse how different sets of values and objectives are negotiated, and the consequences of these negotiations.

In Ghana, tourism development is politically used as a tool to create new jobs and business opportunities, and to strengthen the local economies. Heritage, and in particular the historic built environment, is in this context interpreted as a resource for development, which has also been the guiding premise in an internationally sanctioned regeneration project in Cape Coast. Yet, the historic built environment is interpreted differently by local stakeholders, and the ambitions of the project have not had

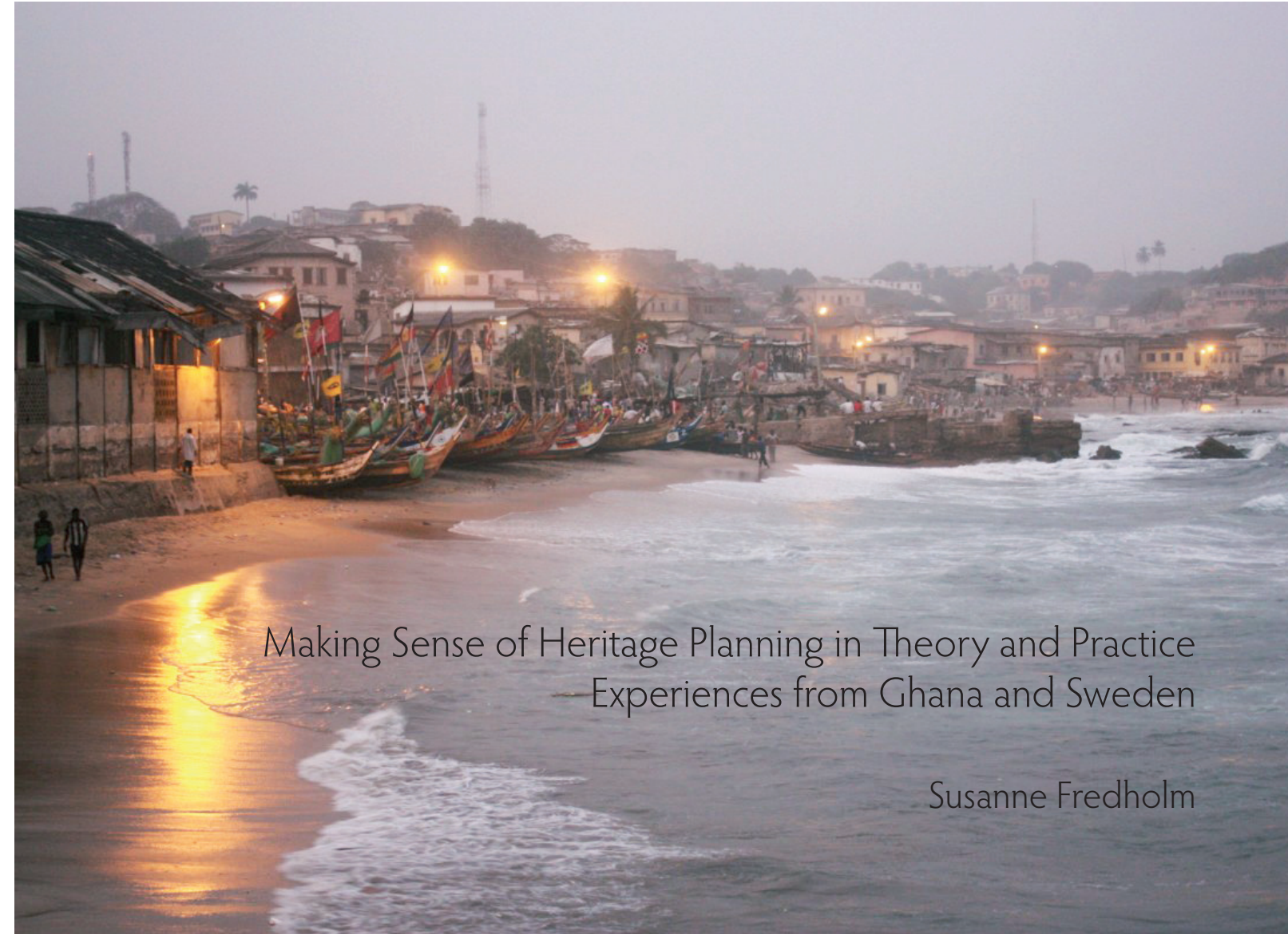
great effect on the local planning system. Civil engagement in safeguarding the historic landscape of Fröå in the county of Jämtland, Sweden, has resulted in benefits which reflect regional policy objectives to combine heritage management, tourism development and social inclusiveness. Yet, when future management of Fröå is debated, heritage authorities prioritise traditional heritage values over social commitment. This reflects the general county-wide applied heritage planning, which show difficulties implementing policy objectives of being pro-active and supportive of heritage activities from below.

The findings are presented in five articles which are linked and examined in an introductory monograph. A conceptual framework is developed and used to illustrate how resource-driven politics are put at work in historic built environments, and in particular, how different value frames and strategies are structured and re-negotiated over time. It is suggested that heritage planning constantly balance a demand/supply-driven point of departure, a process/product orientation, a bottom-up/top-down approach, and laymen/expert knowledge. The balancing of these features in relation to internal and external markets governs the way heritage planning is performed. Applied to the case studies, the conceptual framework makes evident the diverse and interwoven discursive laden and institutional constraints that make it difficult for heritage planning to move from a focus on objects to a focus on process and outcome in line with contemporary developments in theory.



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