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TITLE OF DIPLOMA THESIS:

Environmental planning of outdoor spaces in the urban environment.

The case study of coastal parks of Thessaloniki.

AUTHOR: Vlassi Eleni

ABSTRACT

Redesigning Thessaloniki's seafront resulted to thirteen theme parks. Out of these thirteen theme parks, five were delivered to the public in 2008, and the rest now being under construction. The new design reforms the previous existing parks and creates linear outdoor spaces along the coastal line. The use of clear geometric relations and architectural elements, that run along the coastline such as a wide linear pebble-covered pedestrian walkway, a wooden deck and a bike route, that are used to connect the parks have a strong influence on the overall image. Special constructions and sports courts, auditoriums and playgrounds, skateboard and biking tracks, outdoor exhibitions and musical performance decks, cultural pavilions and cafes along with water elements are only some of the recreational, cultural and educational elements they can offer to the public. The parks equally feature plant theme parks, a lot of trees and seating places. This coastal reshape, even though partly, reactivated apart of the city that until then acted mostly as a recreational place for the local population and upgraded even further the already expensive surrounding residential area. Three years after their opening, this thesis tries to answer what this park really is, what it could have been and whether the expectations related to the project were fully met. This thesis also examines the environmental design principles that "environmental friendly" urban outdoor green spaces should take into consideration. The environmental aspect of every green space is given by analyzing the natural elements and distinguishing them from the artificial, so to see the success or not of their incorporation. The more positive elements a space gets from the above critical process, the more successful it is considered. The critical analysis of Thessaloniki's aforementioned park case, has shown that the strict-lined architectural design that tried to balance new elements and connect to the urban tissue is a rather successful one, while some of the design maneuvers it includes are - in an "environmental-friendly" point of view - rather out of target in creating a natural green environment, mainly because of how both construction materials and natural elements are used. This thesis all in all, critically explains why this case study is in fact a successful design but at same time unsuccessful in creating a natural place for the city.

KEYWORDS

Seafront, Thessaloniki, Park, Urban, Green space