

**Guayaquil: critical analysis of its approaches towards urban resilience.**

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**Abstract:**

Guayaquil, the most populated city of Ecuador, evidences the urban dynamics that have determined the urban development of the region. In its fragmented urban landscape, inequalities, social fragmentation and environmental degradation configure simultaneously formal and informal territories of self-exclusion, spatial segregation and ecological risk. In the context of these socio-environmental vulnerabilities, it becomes necessary to position urban design practices in relation to socio ecological resilience frameworks to develop guidelines for spatial intervention.

At a global scale, discourses dealing with urban vulnerabilities have positioned urban resilience as a desirable goal and a strategic topic for governments and planners, often focusing the implementation of top down approaches aiming to cope with the impacts of climate change and natural disasters. Leaving aside the socio-spatial dimension of the urban environments and a wide range of other vulnerabilities, plans and policies have not completely incorporated the complexity of the interplay of natural, human and spatial systems. Furthermore, only few of them have explicitly made reference to urban design, operative at the intermediate scale.

Similarly, in Guayaquil, emerging concerns about the consequences of climate change have led to the development of adaptation and resilience-based strategies focusing on risk mitigation measures. The aim of this paper is to present a critical review of the approaches on the formulation of these strategies and programs. Through the review of urban resilience definitions and urban design literature in relation to resilience principles, the analysis assesses the conceptual and normative aspects behind the institutional responses for areas in the vulnerable urban edges of the city and also presents the challenges and opportunities to operationalize urban resilience through urban design.