

Towards Joint Management of City Centers: The Jerusalem City Center

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Recent decades have witnessed the development of various joint public-private mechanisms for the management of city centers. In Britain, these are known as TCMs (Town Center Management) and in the U.S. (and recently also in Britain) as BIDs (Business Improvement Districts). Underlying these mechanisms is the partnership between the public and the private sectors, aimed at developing the city center. This study attempts to evaluate the prospects for adapting one of these models to the management of the Jerusalem city center.

The Jerusalem city center is undergoing a major regeneration process in recent years, characterized by several aspects: physical regeneration, transportation changes, new building, cultural developments, commercial developments and more. One aspect of this process is the attempt to create a public-private body to manage the city center. Although in rather preliminary stages, this is a singular attempt of its kind in Israel and therein the importance in studying its complexities and analyzing the barriers to its development. This study's conclusions are therefore significant not only for promoting the process in Jerusalem itself, but for any city endeavoring to advance a city-center management project.

The study focuses on identifying the forces accelerating the process. Its aim is to unravel the complex interlace of interested parties in Jerusalem and to evaluate their relationship and the difficulties impeding the progress of the process. The study reviews regeneration processes in city centers worldwide, from their individual aspects and the reasons for their promotion, describes similar processes in Israel, identifies their location and what they encompass, and relates to the process in Jerusalem and the measures applied to strengthen its center. The study also reviews individual cases of joint management of city centers worldwide and presents the reasons for their establishment and the variety of models currently existing. Also reviewed are programs recommending the establishment of a similar model in Jerusalem and the main protagonists partaking in this endeavor. Finally, the barriers impeding the establishment of such a mechanism are summarized, proposals to remove those barriers are raised and, based on worldwide experience, recommendations are proposed for the most appropriate body for the city center of Jerusalem.

The study's main conclusion is that two stages are required to advance the joint management of Jerusalem's city center: in the first stage a management body that does not compel traders to contribute financially should operate, much like the British TCM. In the second stage financial participation should be levied according to the American BID model.

The study is a qualitative study based on a single test case – the Jerusalem city center. It is based on interviews with municipal decision-makers, planners, coordinating representatives of the various partners to the management project, and representatives of interested parties, who impact both decision-makers and the process itself. Records of the meetings held by the representatives were also analyzed.