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In the Planning Field

Planning Social Housing in Israel: Policies and Practical Tools

Ori Ettinger and Sebastian Wallerstein

The development and adoption of policies on social housing is necessary in order to address social concerns that are highly influenced by urban planning processes. These include questions such as: Who will live in the city and what will be their socio-economic status? How diverse will the city be? Will households of various income levels be able to afford adequate housing? How will housing policy influence specific vulnerable groups such as the elderly, single parents or large households? Also, what interventions are required to meet the objectives of a particular social housing policy? This article describes the rationale for creating social housing policy documents at the local-city level and follows the first attempts to apply such a tool in local governments in Israel. Then it discusses recent changes in the Israeli law regarding Affordable Housing regulation (specifically amendment no. 120 to the Planning and Building Act). The new regulation enables district planning committees and 'independent' local planning committees to increase density to supply affordable housing, and also redefines 'Affordable housing' as housing that is rented for 20%-40% below market rate.

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Of Interest:

Articles on theory, research and practice

Circles of influence of urban regeneration: An evaluation of 'Clearance & Redevelopment' and its consequences, from a social point of view

Nava Kainer-Persov and Naomi Carmon

Over 70,000 housing units were approved for urban regeneration under the 'Clearance & Redevelopment' strategy, a program that was initiated and promoted by the Israeli Ministry of Construction and Housing and is currently managed by the Urban Renewal Authority. In Israel, planning and construction of regeneration projects are being undertaken on a wide scale, even though we do not have evidence-based knowledge about the program's impacts. This article reports the results of a first-of-its-kind evaluation study that focused on the social impacts of 'Clearance & Redevelopment' projects. The methodology included a unique definition of social equity that was tailored to fit the context of housing, measurements of outputs/inputs/impacts of the regeneration program, and evaluation in three socio-spatial circles: the circle of the project's or neighborhood's residents, the city's residents and the country's residents. The article concludes with four sets of recommendations directed to public sector policymakers, regarding: increasing social equity in 'Clearance & Redevelopment' projects; provision of aid to municipalities, so that they can initiate and lead regeneration projects; reducing the costs of the projects; and improving construction through innovations in the planning-architectural realm, innovations that do not increase but rather lower the costs of urban regeneration.

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