

Experiences of Public-Private Collaboration for Stimulating Urban Retail Environments in the Basque Country (Spain)

M Gloria Aparicio de Castro

*Corresponding Author, Doctor in Economic and Business Sciences
Professor at the University of the Basque Country in the area of Marketing and Research
Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales
Avda. Lehendakari Aguirre, 83, 48015. Bilbao (Spain)
E-mail: gloria.aparicio@ehu.es
Tel: + 34 94 601 3865; Fax: +34 94 601 3710*

M Pilar Zorrilla Calvo

*Doctor in Economic and Business Sciences
Professor at the University of the Basque Country in the area of Marketing and Research
Vice minister of Commerce and Tourism at the Basque Government
Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Empresariales
Avda. Lehendakari Aguirre, 83, 48015. Bilbao (Spain)
E-mail: pilar.zorrilla@ehu.es*

Abstract

For over a decade now, work has been ongoing on the professional organization and management of town centre retail spaces in Spain under what is known as the *Open Shopping Centre* model. Introducing this model has involved a process of public-private collaboration in several different phases, conditioned to a large extent by the specific context of each initiative. With a view to furthering the process of benchmarking developed out of the experiences of recent years, we shall use case analysis to explain trends in initiatives for retail regeneration and stimulation undertaken in the Basque Country (an autonomous community in the north of Spain) since 2000. We analyze the factors that have prompted these initiatives, assessing and comparing the landmarks and conditions that have marked, or are determining, progress in the dynamic of collaboration between municipal authorities and retailers for a competitive improvement both in the retail sector and in the environment in which it operates: the city. Finally we list which are these key factors.

Keywords: Retail revitalization; urban retail; public-private partnership; case studies; Spain.

Introduction

In Spain for over a decade now, work has been ongoing on the professional organization and management of urban/retail spaces along the lines following the *Open Shopping Centre* model¹. As

¹ The concept of urban centre management and the figure of the professional manager are directly related to the practice common to English-speaking countries of Town Centre Management (TCM), whose foundations form the basis for what

stated in the 1999 Malaga Declaration (Gómez, 2000), the purpose is... “to facilitate the transformation of traditional retail areas into *open shopping centres*, by providing support to the necessary associations, within the framework of the execution of comprehensive projects”, (item 9 of the Declaration), and to “determinedly promote integrated management of the urban centre through the creation of a *professional management* that apply the techniques used in shopping centres in a way that will especially impact the promotion and marketing of the town centre, by maintaining conditions of safety, cleaning and hygiene, upkeep of pedestrian areas and car parks, organization of public events, celebrations, advertising, etc. and impact on usage to favor such a transformation”, (item 10 of the Declaration).

There is broad consensus, amongst both professionals² and academics (Warnaby, 1998, 2000, 2006; Warnaby et al, 2004; Rovira, 2000; De Nisco et al, 2008; Guy, 1998) regarding the need for an approach based on integrated management for the different urban, social and economic processes coexisting in the urban centre. However, no model with a universally valid methodology of application has been clearly developed, beyond the identification of a need for public-private collaboration or partnership as a means of drawing together the interests of very varied agents whose voice needs to be heard. This absence of model is understandable if, as Rovira³ argues (2000, p. 28) “...*the purpose is to create a light, self-reliant and flexible structure, but one which is controlled by, shared in and made up of everyone with an interest in the town; one which has public support and commitments on financing, which includes everyone and excludes none. The management formula chosen must involve and engage all economic and social agents (public and private); it must provide real and loyal leadership for promoting and undertaking projects of consensus and commitment. The form of management chosen must contribute to finding solutions to existing problems, not to creating new ones*”. In other words, the working proposal is necessarily vague, since as well as being inclusive, the management model must also be flexible and capable of adapting to the specific characteristics of each city and each institutional environment in which it is introduced.

Purpose and Methodology (Case Analysis)

The term *open shopping centres* encompasses some very different practical approaches (Molinillo, 2002). The name is used as a convenient flag for identifying a new way of viewing retail stimulation through management of the urban space, in which retail business is carried out in a new way in collaboration with the authorities. However, individual interpretations and means of operating may vary greatly from case to case. In terms of spatial application too, the concept may apply either to a complete urban nucleus or municipality or to just part of it, in areas that are particularly well-suited for joint management: central shopping streets and/or axes; urban shopping areas; old quarters or historical centres; traditional town centers; town centers with no traditional character, etc. (Ministerio de Industria, Comercio y Turismo, 2008).

This study uses a case analysis to examine a number of experiences in retail regeneration and stimulation in the Basque Country⁴ since 2000, when work on the first such scheme began. Our aim is to analyze the factors that have prompted these initiatives, assessing and comparing the landmarks and

is known in Spain as the Open Shopping Centre [*Centro Comercial Abierto*]. Nonetheless, although this model has been extensively tried out, primarily in the UK, it is under constant evaluation, review and redesign. See Warnaby (2006).

² A clear example are the First and Second European Commerce and City Conferences, held respectively in the cities of Malaga (Spain, 1999) and Lille (France, 2000), which led the way by putting forward recommendations on the work to be carried out or more recently, the two editions of the Urban Commerce Conference, held in 2006 and 2008 in Vitoria-Gasteiz and the two Forum on Urban Commerce, Agora, held in Malaga in 2008 and 2009.

³ Rovira is the director of AGECEU - the Spanish Association for Town Centres Management - <http://www.agecu.es/>

⁴ The Autonomous Community of the Basque Country comprises three provinces: Álava, whose capital is **Vitoria-Gasteiz**; Gipuzkoa whose capital is **Donostia-San Sebastian**; and Bizkaia, whose capital is **Bilbao**. For its relatively small land area (7,300 sq km) it has a large population (2,098,055), with a density of 287 per sq. km. Industry, fishing and commerce are all very significant.

conditions that have marked, or are determining progress in the dynamic of public-private collaboration for a competitive improvement both, in the retail sector, and in the environment in which it operates: the city.

In recent years, case analysis has become one of the “non-habitual” scientific research methods most often used in different areas of business economics. It enables the phenomenon in question to be analyzed in its real context, using multiple sources of quantitative and/or qualitative evidence simultaneously. It is especially useful in cases in which the complexity of the phenomenon to be studied makes it difficult to progress using more quantitative methodologies and targets (Yin, 1989, 1993, 1994; Villarreal and Landeta, 2008).

Precisely such circumstances arise in this analysis and we have therefore chosen to use case analysis methodology. It is not viable to make a study of experiences of public-private collaboration in the process of stimulating the urban-retail environment, without adapting it to the physical, social, economic and institutional circumstances of each place; the primary contribution of case analysis in this context is to further the process of benchmarking that has been emerging in recent years as a necessary and increasingly widely-used technique in the area. Table 1 shows some of the experiences of public/private collaboration in urban-retail stimulation processes in the scientific literature analyzed using case analysis methodology.

Table 1: Summary of experiences of public-private collaboration in urban-retail environment stimulation processes in the scientific literature.

Cases of experiences in European cities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coca-Stefaniak, J.A. et. Al (2009) ● Coca-Stefaniak, J. A. et al. (2008) ● Lloyd, M. G. et al. (2007) ● Lowe, M. (2007) ● Bennison, D. et al. (2007) ● Emery, J. (2006) ● Mitchel, A. et al. ● Paddison, A. (2003) ● Lopes, C.J. (2000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 4 ciudades europeas (1 española) ● Novi Ligure (Italy) ● Inverness (Scotland) ● Southampton (Gran Bretaña) ● Manchester (Gran Bretaña) ● Birmingham (Gran Bretaña) ● Castle Vale-Birmingham (G.B.) ● Achmore (Escocia) ● Coimbra y Aveiro (Portugal)
Cases of experiences in Spanish cities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coca-Stefaniak, J.A. et. Al (2009) ● Coca-Stefaniak, J. A. et al. (2005) ● Aldeiturriaga (2000) ● Criado, C (2000) ● Lorens, V. (2000) ● Llarch, E. et al. (2000) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tarrasa (y otras 3 europeas) ● Granollers (Barcelona) ● Bilbao ● Málaga ● Gandía ● Varias ciudades de Barcelona
Cases of experiences in American cities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stokes, R.J. (2007) ● Stokes, R.J. (2006) ● Caruso, G. et al. (2006) ● Hernandez, T. et al. (2005) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● San Diego (California) ● Frankford (Philadelphia) ● Chicago ● Toronto (Canadá)

Source: Authors, based on bibliographical review

Following this line of research, we analyze the experiences of four municipalities in the Basque Country: Bilbao, Eibar, Galdakao and Getxo. In all of them, starting from a common goal—to improve the competitiveness of their environment through stimulation of the retail sector—and with an analysis of the viability of creating an *open shopping centre*, with public financial backing, each of the four has had a different experience. Given the objectives of our study, we believe that this is the case-selection criterion that offers the greatest chance for learning (Stake, 1994).

Data gathering was based on a protocol of questions/variables that were considered in all cases, allowing us to make comparisons and evaluations on the model of collaboration work in urban-retail stimulation strategies. Specifically, in each case we gathered the following information:

- How, why and from whom the initiative for launching a plan for retail stimulation / revitalization in the urban environment had arisen.
- In cases in which steps have been taken towards formalizing the collaboration process:
 - How they have managed to advance beyond the initial stages of work in collaboration: coordinating different views, reconciling different interests and the operating system used for shared work.
 - Problems that have had to be addressed and the means of overcoming them.
 - Factors that have helped advance the project.
- In cases in which it has not been possible to make further progress following the viability study:
 - Difficulties that have prevented collaboration on urban-retail stimulation from commencing.

The sources we used for obtaining information were the documentary evidence, primary information gathering (in 3 of the 4 cases we participated actively and directly in the viability study for the launch of the *open shopping centre* initiative, monitoring through observation and interviews with the participants in the different projects).

Particular Circumstances in the Development of *Open Shopping Centre* Initiatives in the Basque Country

To provide a specific framework for analysis, we first need to make some observations on the specific circumstances governing the development of *open shopping centre* initiatives in the Basque Country (in Spain, by law, the regional authorities of the autonomous communities have exclusive jurisdiction in domestic trade).

Public-private collaboration strategies for urban retail stimulation may be spontaneous, arising from the industry itself (on occasions linked to the special involvement of some leading retailer or a particularly dynamic local retailers' association); or alternatively, the primary initiative may come from the public authorities.

In the case of the Basque Country, the important input of the public institutions, particularly the regional government's trade department, in promoting this type of collaboration, should be acknowledged. Specifically, the Basque Government's Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism has had an aid program in place since 2000 to incentivize zone-specific retail cooperation strategies within a municipal context. The nature of this aid has evolved over time. At the early stages, the local retailers' association had to approve the project presented by the town council, but no further collaboration was involved. However the *Merkagune* Decree⁵, currently regulating these schemes, specifically makes such collaboration as a requisite.

In this context, the first initiative of public-private partnership for the stimulation of the urban-retail environment to be signed was in Bilbao in 2000. The *Bilbao Dendak* initiative set up the Association for the Revitalization of the Retail Sector in Bilbao. In March 2001, the association took in the figure of the town centre manager, financed by the Basque Government. Shortly afterwards, the other two provincial capitals in the Basque Country, Vitoria and San Sebastian, developed their own platforms of collaboration between the city council and retailers' associations, also incorporating the figure of the town center manager. Once the professional management had been set up in the three provincial capitals, the Basque Government examined the need to consolidate the projects underway, maintaining a commitment to stable funding over three years to meet the costs of the manager. Guidelines were also established for subsequent economic self-reliance once the initiative achieved greater maturity.

⁵ The Decree of 4 October 2007 of the Basque Government's Department of Industry, Trade and Tourism regulates aid under the *Merkagune* Program. It has therefore been dubbed the *Merkagune* Decree.

With the model for stimulating the urban retail environment of the three provincial capitals developed, the Basque Government's next step was to develop a mechanism, *Merkagune* Decree, for supporting development of the *open shopping centre* model in other municipalities. The aim is to encourage public-private collaboration between the municipal authorities, retailers' associations and other mixed associations in municipalities in the Basque Country.

The Case of Bilbao: a Mature Experience of the Public-Private Partnership

The background to the public/private collaboration for the revitalization and stimulation of the urban retail environment in Bilbao dates back to 1995, with what was known as the Tourism Cluster. The cluster was part of a general process of transition to adapt the city from an industry-centered urban model to one based on services. It consisted of a stable task force comprising businesspeople from the retail and hospitality sectors, hotels, travel agencies, the chamber of commerce and the tourist office. It had backing from the city council, through its Municipal Area of Arts and Tourism (at that time the council had no specific department for commerce).

With the plan for the Guggenheim Museum and other works of urban transformation underway, there was a need to give the city a tourist boost; the result was a reappraisal of the importance of local commerce and a drive to turn it into a tourist attraction.

In 1997, the Bilbao Commerce Forum [*Mesa de Comercio de Bilbao*] was set up, at the initiative of the Chamber of Commerce. Based on the two main retailers' associations in Bilbao city centre, (the Old Quarter Traders' Association and the Ensanche Traders' Association), the new group continued the work begun by the Tourism Cluster, complementing its actions with the guidelines of the Malaga Declaration. This forum was the embryo for *Bilbao Dendak* –the Association for the Revitalization of the Retail Sector in Bilbao- the first public-private partnership to be set up for stimulation of the urban-retail environment of the Basque Country.

Set up in 2000 as a non-profit public-private association, Bilbao Dendak's stated mission was to “*contribute to the development of a competitive and professionalized retail sector that will create employment and wealth in the city and contribute to positioning Bilbao as a commercial city, by enhancing the quality and professionalization of the service, variety, differentiation and specialization of its commercial offering, and the effectiveness and efficiency of its planning and organization*”⁶.

Bilbao Dendak hosts the town centre management of Bilbao. However the city is polycentric in retail terms and there are differences —especially in terms of amenities— between areas in the outskirts and in some cases in the centre; this made it necessary to allow for different rates of development in achieving the platform's objectives.

Bilbao Dendak now encompasses the thirteen retailers' associations in Bilbao, representing both the centre and urban districts. Other participants include an (indoor) shopping centre in the urban centre (Zubiarte), the Corte Inglés department store, the Chamber of Commerce, the Municipal Area of Health and Consumer Affairs (which includes the office of the councilor for commerce), Bilbao Tourism (municipal area of tourism) and Lan Ekintza (a municipal job support and business promotion company).

The first stages of the collaboration consisted of an intense process of learning about other national and international experiences, with trips by the manager to the best-practice cities used in benchmarking. Financial support from the Basque Government in the town centre management, made it easier to involve the sector which gradually began to accept the advantages of the new working model.

One of the principal problems, however arose precisely out of *Bilbao Dendak's* “city vision”, an essential part of its working model, with other districts feeling they were receiving less attention

⁶ These kinds of formalized organization, with representation and participation by public and private agents involved in the urban-retail stimulation of a town or city, are known generally as *platforms of collaboration* — or in the Basque Country, *Merkagune platforms*—.

than the town centre. Active work was needed to bring the different perspectives into line and make retailers in the districts aware of the need to begin commercial stimulation with the central axes, given their drawing power and their impact on the image of the city as a whole. The issue came down to a question of scheduling: the same actions were carried out in all areas, but priority was given to some over others. The districts' "time" has now come. Moreover, now that the project has attained a certain maturity, both the retail sector and the city council now find it natural to work together.

After nearly a decade of experience working in collaboration, during which time many city/commerce improvements have been developed with some recognized best practices (Ágora, 2008), Bilbao Dendak is now well consolidated. The *platform* is the common space for all decisions and initiatives, whether raised by *Bilbao Dendak* itself or by individual members, though in all cases there is a shared vision of the whole, of the city. Examples include the *security application*, which allows retailers to receive information from municipal police on thefts in their area by means of a simple text message. The *Bilbao, Tourist and Commercial City* initiative, a series of actions led by the Bilbao Centre retailers association, *BilbaoCentro*, which has changed the image of the area, associating it more directly with that of the city. This initiative includes promotional and urban/retail stimulation programs, particularly the cultural program, *Bilbao Centro Kultur Gunea*, which have managed to position the area as a shopping and bar and restaurant destination, in which it shares the lead with the Historical Center, the other large traditional shopping area in Bilbao. The initiative *Comprehensive Transformation of Bilbao, Commercial Urban Planning* led by Bilbao City Hall and BilbaoCentro, who are working together to transform the city from the perspective of structure, urban planning (transport, mobility, accessibility, etc.) and services.

Nonetheless, Bilbao's commercial situation is in a state of constant flux and *Bilbao Dendak* accept that many challenges still need to be overcome and that further advances need to be made in developing a shared vision and shared undertakings through public-private collaboration: innovation; access to the commercial sector for young entrepreneurs; incorporation of commerce into the territorial and strategic planning of cities; accessibility and mobility; and regulatory changes.

The Case of Eibar: *El Corte Inglés* (Department Store) as a Threat and Catalyst for a Process of Urban/Retail Stimulation

The town of Eibar, in the province of Gipuzkoa, has a population of around 29,000. In 2003 it commissioned a study to examine the viability of creating an *open shopping centre* to stimulate its urban environment. This initiative initially arose out of local retailers' concern that a new *El Corte Inglés* (department store) center being built on the outskirts of the town, with its increased retail offering, might threaten commercial activity in the main axes or streets in the town. The town council also expressed an interest in collaborating, given the importance of commerce in stimulating the municipality; indeed it provided funding for the viability study.

The study concluded that the initial situation was good for developing a collaborative working initiative between the retail sector and the town council, allowing a competitive improvement in the retail sector and increasing the appeal and drawing power of the town as a whole. The factors that made the starting position favorable were its balanced retail structure, with a percentage of comparison shopping of over 60% concentrated in a defined area; development of a new commercial (indoor) project (*Errebal Centre*) taking in the market and new facilities; a high rate of retail association membership (meaning a high level of involvement by the sector and an interest among retailers in sharing in a common image and a stimulation project led by the local government).

The result was the setting up of *Eibar Centro Comercial Abierto* [*Eibar Open Shopping Centre*], a non-profit association, whose stated mission was to "promote the retail sector in order to make it a first-class commercial reference point in Gipuzkoa, contributing wealth to the commercial and leisure sectors and providing, internally, growth, development and good service to citizens and

externally, generating drawing power and visitor potential, through a complete, attractive and competitive retail and leisure offering”.

The partners in the *platform* were the Eibar retailers' association, the Trade Federation of Gipuzkoa, *Debegesa* (society for the economic development of the region), *El Corte Inglés*, the Association of Catering Employers of Gipuzkoa, the Food Market Retailers' Association and Eibar Town Council.

Eibar's experience, the first of its kind in the Basque Country and a reference point for local head-towns⁷ and medium-sized municipalities, marked a milestone and was seen as a model for future developments (though obviously each individual case would be different).

In the first stages of the collaboration, the inevitable limitations resulting from lack of previous experience were made up for by the enthusiasm of both public and private participants, who showed a degree of commitment and involvement from the outset. The manager of the Retailers Association played an important role, providing the necessary leadership to start up the initiative. The project also had help from a commerce officer, financed by the Basque Government, who acted as a facilitator.

Over subsequent years, the result has been the consolidation of the collaboration structure, which has been working to achieve common aims such as:

- Promotion of *Eibar Centro Comercial Abierto* through publicity, Internet presence, etc.
- Promotion of the town through cultural and leisure activities and sports events.
- Organization of commercial events with specific campaigns such as Christmas, special stock-clearance markets, specific holidays, etc.
- Location and obtention of financial resources.
- Launch of urban-retail development measures, with a central role played by the town council: signposts, street furniture, lighting, cleaning, accessibility, etc.

Judging by their declarations, the level of satisfaction among participants is high. They feel involved in the project, which is gradually becoming more consolidated and is gaining a degree of maturity that allows an assessment of the results to be made. Aware that their experiences may be of use in paving the way for others setting out on such a course, they share their experience at any forums to which they are invited.

The Case of Galdakao: Absence of Coordination Among Agents as a Barrier Factor

Galdakao is a municipality in Bizkaia. Like Eibar, it has a population of around 29,000. Somewhat later than Eibar (coming precisely in the wake of the experience of other municipalities in setting up retail stimulation projects), the town commissioned a viability study for setting up an *open shopping centre* in 2007. The initiative came from the Jobs Centre of Galdakao Town Council acting on the demands of the local retailers' association operating in the municipal area, who were concerned by a drain in spending and a major deterioration in their market share and competitiveness. The purpose of the study was to determine the initial situation of the sector and the possibilities of implementing an action plan to correct weaknesses.

The viability study highlighted the need for intervention in different areas of work that required participation by all agents, public and private, to resolve the drain in spending and the town's lack of appeal as a shopping and leisure destination, even for local residents.

The difficulties in setting up a *platform* of collaboration became obvious from the outset, and no formal commitments were implemented between the different parties. The results of the viability study were not publicly notified to the sector and problems arose from a lack of a shared vision as to the steps required to promote the municipality commercially. This lack of agreement made any further

⁷ In Spain each province is subdivided into "comarcas", natural regions containing a number of municipalities that share some kind of services. Each *comarca* typically has one predominant urban center that is known as the "*cabecera de comarca*" or local head-town.

progress impossible, causing frustration among retailers, who concluded that the money invested in the viability study itself had been entirely wasted.

Despite enjoying funding and support through backing from the Basque regional government, as in the other municipalities, a lack of will and understanding and an absence of a clear leadership made it impossible to introduce initiatives to stimulate retail commerce to the benefit of all parties.

The Case of Getxo: the First Steps in an Incipient Experience

Getxo is located in the coastal area of the province of Bizkaia. It has a population of 81,254 inhabitants and a large retail sector, comprising 1,131 outlets.

Historically, the retail sector was important in the town, because of the strong purchasing power of local residents and the fact that it is a local head-town with a significant capacity to attract shoppers and visitors from nearby municipalities. Nonetheless, over the last ten years there has been a steady decline in the sector. The town has lost its capacity to retain the commercial spending of local inhabitants and to attract those from nearby municipalities. There are two primary reasons: an improvement in transport infrastructures that have enabled shoppers to travel to the centre of Bilbao in just a few minutes; and the creation of a suburban (indoor) shopping centre, *Artea*, nearby.

Nonetheless, the tourist projection of the town—which has considerable natural attractions and is promoted actively by the municipal authorities—has grown constantly. One of Getxo's most important and distinctive values is its complete and attractive cultural program.

A change in mayor in 2007 ushered in a new phase in the relationship between the town council and the retailers, represented by the only local retailer association in the area, known as GEYC. A new dynamic of collaboration began to emerge, backed by a solid commitment from the municipal area in charge of economic development, headed by the mayor.

The council commissioned a *Marketing Plan for Stimulation of the Tertiary Sector in Getxo: Commerce, Leisure and Tourism* to seek ways of improving and resolving the problems suffered by the retail sector and other sections of the services sector in the town.

In December 2008 a study was concluded into the viability of creating an *open shopping centre* and formal establishment of the *platform*. 2009 will be a decisive year for consolidation of the project. Initially the platform had the direct support of the local council and judging from the field work included in the viability study, the response from the sector appears to be positive. Nonetheless, despite this predisposition, the success of the initiative cannot be guaranteed from the outset, given that membership of the retail association in the municipality is low (around 20%). A necessary precondition, therefore, within the framework of the new project to be implemented, will be to boost levels of participation in the initiative.

In short, there are many aspects left to resolve and, although it is still very early to predict the future of this platform, a new attitude can be observed, a predisposition to change and a new degree of coordination in the ways the various participants, public and private, are working together, with the opening of a new channel of interlocution. There is a desire to share opinions and as the initial contacts to present the project have shown, there is plenty of enthusiasm; although this may not be a subjective factor, it will be decisive in advancing the initiative.

Discussion and Conclusions

Based on our analysis of the different cases, we have drawn a number of conclusions, listed below.

Although financial support from the public institutions to promote and stimulate urban commerce may be decisive as a trigger for public-private collaboration initiatives, it is not a guarantee of success.

The key factor in these processes is a determination to achieve common goals benefitting of all parties and to share opinions. This requires a change in mentality, which takes time. This explains why many platforms, even in the most favorable cases, are slow to take off.

As well as good will, another important factor is a capacity to lead projects of this kind, which are by their nature complex and not free from operating difficulties. Capable people are required to bring together the interests of all parties, resolve conflicts and reach agreements; on many occasions these issues are not resolved because they are burdened by past experiences of failure which prevent participants from making progress.

Another key precondition is the existence of a well-organized professional group, with capacity for interlocution, backed by a large membership. This is one area which merits most work, seeking systems that will incentivize participation in retailers' associations and thus in the town management, since a collective vision makes it easier to propose advantageous solutions for all.

At the same time, the differences in the four cases analyzed can be explained not only by the way they have developed over time or by the different phases at which the initiative stands but by other factors specific to each environment and context. Tourist appeal, distance from provincial capitals and local head-towns, saturation of supply with nearby suburban (indoor) shopping centres, etc. can all play a determining role in the setting-up and development of the initiative. In addition, each specific town, environment and municipality is unique and development of any proposals for urban/retail stimulation will depend on the positioning sought, which will obviously include some differential feature of the town. Beyond the broad goal of seeking an improvement in competitiveness, therefore, development of a public-private collaboration model will not operate in the same form and will not achieve the same results in all cases.

Given the variety of *open shopping centre* schemes being developed not only in the Basque Country but throughout Spain, it would be useful to identify and compile a list of all schemes, classifying them according to different criteria, for subsequent comparison and analysis. We believe that this process could be undertaken in consecutive phases in the future.

Acknowledgments

This study has been carried out as part of the research project "The retail sector and the city. Strategic planning of the retail trade in urban environments. Urbanretail" Financed by *Feside*, Fundación Emilio Soldevilla para la Investigación y Desarrollo de la Economía de la Empresa.

References

- [1] Ágora (2008) *Guía de buenas prácticas. 118 Experiencias de Centros Urbanos*, I Foro del Comercio Urbano, Cámara de Comercio, Málaga. <http://descargas.fycma.com/publico/>
- [2] Aldeiturriaga, J (2000) *Bilbao Dendak' una experiencia de partenariado público-privado para la promoción comercial de la ciudad de Bilbao* Gestión y análisis de políticas publicas **19**, 79-90.
- [3] Bennison, D; Warnaby, G and Medway, D (2007) *The role of quarters in large city centres: a Mancunian case study* International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management **35** (8), 626-638.
- [4] Caruso, G, Weber, R (2006) *Getting the Max for the Tax: An Examination of BID Performance Measures* International Journal of Public Administration **29** (1-3) 187-219.
- [5] Coca-Stefaniak J A, Stasi F, Codato G, Franco E, and Roberts ,G (2008): "Reclaiming customers through a retailer-led TCM scheme in Italy", *Journal of Place Management and Development*, Vol. 1, n°. 1; p. 115-124.
- [6] Coca-Stefaniak, J A, Parker, C, Barnaby, A, Garrel X, and Segobia, E (2005) *Gran Centre Granollers - "city, culture and commerce*, International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management **33** (8/9), 685-697.

- [7] Coca-Stefaniak, J A, Parker, C, Quin, S, Rinalde, R and Byrom, J (2009) *Town Centre Management: A European perspective* Cities, doi: 10.1016/j.cities. 2008.12.001.
- [8] Criado, C y Rubio, A (2000) *La revitalización económica de los centros históricos como logro de la confluencia de las políticas municipales y los intereses privados: La ciudad de Málaga: una vía hacia la gestión mancomunada del espacio* Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas **19**, 91-100.
- [9] De Nisco, A, Riviezzo, A and Napolitano, M R (2008) *The role of stakeholders in town centre Management: guidelines for identification and analysis* Journal of Place Management and Development **1** (2), 166 – 176.
- [10] Emery, J (2006) *Bullring: A case study of retail-led urban renewal and its contribution to city centre regeneration* Journal of Retail & Leisure Property **5** (2), 121-134.
- [11] Gómez, R (2000) *El papel del comercio y en la revitalización de los centros urbanos en Europa: las declaraciones de Málaga y Lille* Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas **19**, 71-78.
- [12] Guy, C M (1998) *Controlling new retail spaces: the impress of planning policies in Western Europe*, Urban Studies **36** (5-6), 953-979.
- [13] Hernandez, T and Jones, K (2005) *Downtowns in transition: Emerging business improvement area strategies* International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management **33** (11/12), 789-806.
- [14] Llarch, E y Matéu, J (2000) *Fomento del Comercio Urbano: Experiencias en materia de dinamización en centros urbanos de barrios y ciudades medias del área de Barcelona*, Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas **19**, 109-117.
- [15] Llorens, V (2000) *La actuación en el centro histórico de Gandía: urbanismo, comercio y colaboración pública-privada* Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas **19**, pp. 101-108.
- [16] Lloyd, D P and Pell D (2007) *In search of a small city's élan vital: Inverness: towards progressive change?* The Town Planning Review **78** (6), 749-774.
- [17] Lopes, C J (2000) *City centre revitalization in Portugal. Lessons for two medium size cities* Cities **17** (1), 19-31.
- [18] Lowe, M (2007) *Rethinking Southampton and town centre futures*”, International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management **35** (8), 639-646.
- [19] Ministerio de Industria, Comercio y Turismo (2008) *Centros Comerciales Abiertos: tipificación y diagnóstico* Servicio editorial del Ministerio, Madrid.
- [20] Mitchell, A and Kirkup, M (2003) *Retail development and urban regeneration: A case study of Castle Vale* International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management **31** (8/9), 451-459.
- [21] Molinillo, S (2002) *Centros comerciales del área urbana*, ESIC Editorial, Madrid.
- [22] Paddison, A (2003) *Town centre management (TCM): A case study of Achmore* International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management **31** (11/12), 618-628.
- [23] Rovira, A (2000) *Propuesta y modelos para la gestión estratégica de los centros urbanos desde la cooperación pública y privada* Gestión y Análisis de Políticas Públicas **19**, 19-34.
- [24] Stake R. E (1994) *Case Studies* in Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 236-247.
- [25] Stokes, R (2006) *Business Improvement Districts and Inner City Revitalization: The Case Of Philadelphia's Frankford Special Services District* International Journal of Public Administration **29** (1-3), 173-186.
- [26] Stokes, R (2007) *Business Improvement Districts and Small Business Advocacy: The Case of San Diego's Citywide BID Program* Economic Development Quarterly **21** (3), 278-291.
- [27] Villarreal, O y Landeta, J (2007) *El estudio de casos como metodología de investigación científica en la Economía de la Empresa*. In: Mercado Idoeta (Coord.), *XXI Congreso Anual AEDEM*. ESIC Editorial Madri, PP. 116- 134.
- [28] Warnaby, G (1998) *Marketing UK cities as shopping destinations: problems and prospects* Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services **18**, 55-59.

- [29] Warnaby, G (2000) *Process, Content and Context Considerations Influencing the Marketing Urban Areas as Shopping destinations* Working Paper, ISSN 1471-857X, 1- 27.
- [30] Warnaby, G (2006) *Marketing retail provision in UK towns and cities: present practice and future prospects* *Place Branding* **2** (3), 195-209.
- [31] Warnaby, G, Bennison, D, Davies, B J and Hughes, H (2004) *People and partnerships:marketing urban retailing* *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management* **32** (11), 545-556.
- [32] Yin, R K (1989) *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*, Applied Social Research Methods Series **5**, Sage Publications, London.
- [33] Yin, R K (1993) *Applications of case study research*, Sage Publications, London.
- [34] Yin, R K (1994) *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*, Applied Social Research Methods Series **5**, Second Edition, Sage Publications, London.
- [35] Zárate, J A (2008) *Una experiencia madura de partenariado público-privado*, I Foro del Comercio Urbano, Málaga.
<http://descargas.fycma.com/publico/Ponencias%20del%20AULA%20INTERACTIVA/06-05/18.00%20a%2019.00%20h/Bilbao%20Dendak.%20J.%20Z%C3%A1rate.pdf>