

Transit-Oriented Development as a Tool for Building Social Capital

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Abstract : Rapid urbanization has resulted in informal settlements on the periphery of nearly all big cities in the developing world due to lack of affordable housing options in the city. Residents of these communities have to travel long distances to get to work or search for jobs in these cities, and women, children and elderly people are excluded from urban opportunities. Affordable and safe public transport facilities can help them expand their possibilities. The aim of this research is to identify social capital as another important element of livable cities that can be protected and nurtured through transit-oriented development, as a tool to provide real resources that can help these transit-oriented communities become self-sustainable. Social capital has been referred to the collective value of all social networks and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other. It is one of the key component responsible to build and maintain democracy. Public spaces, pedestrian amenities and social equity are the other essential part of Transit Oriented Development models that will be analyzed in this research. The data has been collected through the analysis of several case studies, the urban design strategies implemented and their impact on the perception and on the community's experience, and, finally, how these focused on the social capital. Case studies have been evaluated on several metrics, namely ecological, financial, energy consumption, etc. A questionnaire and other tools were designed to collect data to analyze the research objective and reflect the dimension of social capital. The results of the questionnaire indicated that almost all the participants have a positive attitude towards this dimensions of building a social capital with the aid of transit-oriented development. Statistical data of the identified key motivators against against demographic characteristics have been generated based on the case studies used for the paper. The findings suggested that there is a direct relation between urbanization, transit-oriented developments, and social capital.

Keywords : better opportunities, low-income settlements, social capital, social inclusion, transit oriented development

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