



Determining the Role of Pedestrian-Orientation, Concerning the Public Places: Improvement of Urban Social Capital Quality

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Abstract

Studying the status of urban social capital indicates that it is declining in contemporary cities. The experts in the field of social science have seriously warned on the consequences of this decline, by examining the components of social capital which is the result of forming norms of collective life and social interaction. In this regard, urbanization knowledge seeks to strengthen social capital through targeted interventions and efforts to improve the quality of urban life. Social interactions are significantly important factors contributing to the social capital and one of the most effective ways of realizing social interactions is making and developing of "public urban places". Regarding the previous studies which show that public places are created for people's presence and social mobility, this study seeks the ways for strengthening social capital by interventions in public places and increasing their quality by determining the role of urban spaces in improving the status of social capital. For a better study of the subject, using a desk research method, field observation and scrolling through a questionnaire, the market pedestrian located in the central area of Tehran was studied. The collected data were analyzed by SPSS software and the results showed that interventions with the aim of pedestrianizing and attempts to make a high quality place increase presence of people and cause a high tendency to establish social interactions. In fact pedestrian-orientation of urban areas has facilitated face-to-face and collective communication by influencing the social trust and solidarity, also it has helped with strengthening the tendency to participate and cooperate. Hence, adoption of the pedestrian-orientation policy and efforts to improve the quality of public places, have enhanced the social capital of city.

Keywords: Social Capital; Quality of Place; Public Place; Pedestrian.

1. Introduction

In the modernization era, due to the rate of urban population growth, efforts to meet quantitative needs, strengthening machine attitude towards man, too much inclination towards using vehicles, neglecting planning for walking, gradually have eliminated people from the city, and caused emergence of social insecurity anomalies, reduced safety, uncertain social interactions, public health threats, lack of identity, lack of belonging, and finally reduced quality of the area [1, 2]. This led many experts to focus on other human needs such as "psychological and social needs" and strengthening the "social capital" in addition to putting emphasis on providing quantitative needs. Thus, from 1980s the concept of social capital has achieved a definite position in social theories through the efforts of prominent experts like James Coleman, Pierre Bourdieu, Robert Putnam, and Francis Fukuyama, also it has involved the urbanization field and has influenced it so that nowadays, one of the main concerns of planners and priorities of urban designers is achieving a human-centered and social type city [4, 5]. In this regard public urban spaces as effective areas in the formation of civil life, while

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