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Understanding transport-related social exclusion: a multidimensional approach

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Abstract: Transport-related social exclusion (TRSE) is a common problem across the globe. Despite TRSE has been identified to be a multifaceted concept, researchers often focus on a single dimension to identify individuals/groups facing exclusion, which leaves most of the at-risk groups unidentified—due to a lack of comprehensive empirical framework. This paper reports the development of a multidimensional framework through a review of the literature and based on a Delphi survey. A range of dimensions and indicators of TRSE were identified through the review. Their suitability was assessed by the experts through a two-round Delphi survey—involving 33 international experts. These experts reached a consensus that individuals are likely to face TRSE in physical, economic, temporal, spatial, psychological, and information dimensions, which can be measured by 15 key indicators consisting of 47 sub-indicators. The findings of this research serve as a guide for scholars and policymakers to understand what constitutes TRSE and act accordingly.

Keywords: transport-related social exclusion; transport disadvantage; social exclusion; urban policy; transport policy; Delphi method

1. Introduction

Establishing an inclusive transport system is a major challenge for cities all across the globe (Yigitcanlar & Kamruzzaman, 2014). A plethora of studies acknowledged the critical importance of transport accessibility for social inclusion (Loader & Stanley, 2009; Hine & Grieco, 2003; Blair et al., 2013). The literature on transport disadvantage highlighted that difficulties experienced in accessing transport limit an individual's abilities to participate in opportunities to perform essential activities (Farrington & Farrington, 2005; Preston & Raje, 2007; Stanley & Stanley, 2007; Delbosc & Currie, 2011). The lack of access options creates a barrier to people's rights to access basic needs (Kamruzzaman et al., 2016; Lucas et al., 2016).

During the last couple of decades, scholars investigated the 'transport-related social exclusion' (TRSE) issue as a major urban policy challenge (Currie et al., 2009; Piracha et al., 2014; Duvarci et al., 2015). In these studies, TRSE is identified as a critical problem impacting particularly disadvantaged groups that experience inaccessibility to social networks and services and face possible consequences of social exclusion. It is advocated that analysing the level and severity of TRSE in local communities is essential for the formulation of a better urban policy (Duvarci et al., 2011). The literature also acknowledged the prominence of accessibility and mobility in affecting individual's participation in socioeconomic activities (Kavanagh et al., 2015). Scholars indicated that the TRSE problem also leads to various social and environmental sustainability issues (Zhao, 2010; Mahbub et al., 2011; Dizdaroglu et al., 2012; Goonetilleke et al., 2014; Yigitcanlar & Dizdaroglu, 2015; Arbolino