

**TODS AND BIDS: TWO STRATEGIC TOOLS IN URBAN REGENERATION
INITIATIVES AS DRIVERS FOR A BALANCED REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT.**

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SUMMARY

The paper aims to show how economic localization processes, pushed forward by tools such as Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) and Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), could play a crucial role in determining new spatial configurations in the regional system.

Particularly, we assume that such tools if considered as nodes or hubs, connected through a dynamic system of networks, could be points of strength “to organize growth on a regional level to be compact”(Calthorpe, 1993), improving sustainable and equitable development.

The TODs and BIDs tools may be considered as implementation of the Smart Growth principles, born in United States and included in the new Agenda Europe 2020, even if with a different perspective (EC 2010). The paper aims to understand how business concentration contributes to spatial patterns giving rise to new urban centralities and supporting a mixed-use attitude, in the perspective to link smart specialization actions with smart cities focus, in order to conceptualize smart growth principles within European approach. Based on some insights coming from the CLUDs project under 7FP Irises 2010, the paper aims at highlighting findings from two USA case studies, Little Italy BID (CA) and Jacobs Market Street Village, San Diego (CA).

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1 Introduction

In a changing world of limited resources, the Smart Growth rational, since the early 1990s, claims for achieving a sustainable and equitable development in US cities (R.Mier,1980). Smart growth and Equitable Development are two connected issues: Smart growth has the main goal to create a “sustainable and equitable urban form through policies and practices that expand economic development opportunities” fostering community livability and preserving the natural environment (Eley, 2008: pag.4). Moreover, Equitable Development could be defined as “an approach for meeting the needs of underserved communities and individuals through projects, programs, and/or policies that reduce disparities while fostering places that are healthy, vibrant, and diverse” (Eley, 2008: pag.5).

Nowadays the Smart growth principles become also in Europe a paradigm to be followed (EC 2010) being included in the Europe “2020 strategy”: smart, sustainable and inclusive economy are three priorities of EU policies to help Member States in delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Thus, European Commission (2010) argues that Regional Policy contributes to Smart Growth toward Europe 2020 with the goal of implementing so called Smart Specialization Strategies. We might suggest that as key to improve private investments, enhancing Cluster ratio as driver to link local initiatives with regional growth.

Figura 1- Smart Growth rational in Europe 2020 strategy



Assuming that cities are “hubs of the global economy, are the focal points for this transformation”, the paper intends to show how business concentration contributes to spatial patterns, giving rise to new urban centralities, supporting a mixed-use attitude. Starting from the case studies analysis held under the CLUDs project - 7FP Irses 2010, the perspective considered aims at linking “smart specialization actions” with “smart cities” focus, in order to conceptualize smart growth principles within European approach.

1.1 TOD and BID tools for a smarter urban development

One of the greatest challenges in planning process, both in USA and in EU, is the need to push for local economic development: indeed governments are increasingly turning to innovative tools and techniques designed to encourage private sector to participate in urban regeneration projects.

As far the US context, Transit Oriented Development (TODs) and Business Improvement District (BIDs) under the Smart Growth rationale, are tools expected to stimulate “equitable development” through the Community Involvement, Public-Private Partnerships and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). Under the theoretical framework of the New Economic Geography – based on Krugmann’s “core-periphery model”, (Geography and Trade, 1991:100) we aim to match such vision: it can be stated that “The concentration is the most significant feature for the competitive development, and the forces of agglomeration originate in places where you will get more profits, by increasing demand for goods and user mobility. The dispersion instead finds its motivation in the increase in transport costs, and in the stillness of agricultural activities”. Further, the NEG theory emphasizes the role of clustering forces in generating an uneven distribution of economic activity and income across space.

Moreover, according to Porter (2000), clusters are geographic concentrations of business that increase economic development and could be considered the output of TODs and BIDs in urban regeneration initiative. Following that rationale, TODs and BIDs will be analyzed as drivers for new localization processes, as outcomes of interaction among forces fostering business concentration (Porter, 1982) and regional economic development. We might argue then that cooperation and networking among clusters could contribute to smart development of city regions at different scales in the long run.

From case studies analyzed, TODs and BIDs improve the mixing use of the areas, considered as HUB interacting at different levels, from global to local ones, playing the role of places that enhance both new business and social services. If connected through a dynamic system of networks, they could be points of strength “to organize growth on a regional level to be compact” (Calthorpe, 1993), improving sustainable development.

Considering BIDs (Business Improvement Districts), in USA such tools are mostly used to rebuild declining urban centers, “seen as a minimally invasive renewal strategy that mimics Jane Jacobs’ pedestrian-oriented, mixed-use vision” (Lewis, 2010:180), to pursue a sort of livable- walkable urban environment. “BIDs are lauded as a flexible, efficient marriage of public needs and interests with private-sector energy” (Lewis, 2010:181), to cope with the “out of the center” commercial attitude of the big sprawled American cities and the consequent declining of downtowns. So that the claiming for business concentration allow people and merchants to stay and maintain their activities, attracting services and functions, otherwise delocalized and less accessible, improving new urban centralities making.

As far as for TODs (Transit Oriented Development), used as tools for implementing a more sustainable transportation choice system that enhance to develop villages in the proximity of the transit stations, according to the principle of densification of sprawled urban contexts, claiming for a mixing in the use of space, becoming as they expand important polarities makers at regional levels. By definition, the TOD is “A compact, mixed-use community, centered around a transit station that, by design, invites residents, workers, and shoppers to

drive their cars less and ride mass transit more. Indeed from TOD planning born Transit Village, where the centerpiece is the transit station itself, that connect village residents to the rest of the region.

From the first insights held in two US cities investigated, this strong attitude toward concentration, according to the “compact city” rational as main action to face the space consumption, increase the spatial infill and the densification of the urban areas involved, becoming physical outcomes of the Smart Growth principles. Consequently, the urban regeneration initiatives success is measured with the tangible change not only in space but also in meaning acquired after the tools implementation: outdoor life improvement, walkable urban environment, streets amelioration (sidewalks and bicycle lines), mixité fonctionale. Then, the main quantitative indicators considered (per capita income, instruction levels, business concentration, urban security, private investments) allow to say that sort of positive gentrification took place in those once blighted areas, reaching public benefits from the affordable housing policy of the local government.

We might suggest a strong relation to what extend the EU “smart specialization strategies” for the main objectives of:

- supporting “the creation of knowledge-based jobs and growth not only in leading research and
- innovation (R&I) hubs but also in less developed and rural regions”
- giving “grants, loans and other support – is effective in reaching the overall policy goals, helps businesses, and leverages private investments”
- improving a process that “⁴must be interactive, regionally-driven and consensus-based”

Tabella 1- Case Study Analysis

Case Studies Based On Cluds' Model	Jacobs Market Street Village SAN DIEGO(CALIFORNIA)	LITTLE ITALY, SAN DIEGO (CALIFORNIA)	Discussions
Brief Description of the case studies	The Jacobs market street village is a vibrant community, residential, commercial, and cultural district. The case study is Planned, and operated by community stakeholders, having the goal to provide residents a direct economic stake in neighborhood change.	Little Italy San Diego, (CA), has been the point of entry for Italian immigrants in the city and the favorite place for the international tuna fishing industry. Now it is Historical District in San Diego County.	The paper highlights that the case studies, are linked from Smart Growth Rationale, and are balanced by a strong Public Private Partnership with the goal to obtain a distribution more equitable benefits for the whole community.

⁴ European Commission, “Research and innovation strategies for smart specialization”, Cohesion Policy 2014-2020

<p>The mixed use as outcomes of TOD and BID</p>	<p>Transit Oriented Developments (TODs) offer opportunities to create parks and open space for quality of live improvement at local level: especially designed around public spaces, they provide neighborhoods urban identity. Indeed, is recognized the TOD potential as catalyst for investment which, through PPPs, becomes the real force of change that raises property values by encouraging the transformation of the existing. In this context, local government gets benefits, both in raising revenues related to direct taxes, but also on subsequent choices for the community by strengthening the suburban districts, facilitating direct contacts between people, and creating more diverse social and cultural public spaces(Duaney et al. 2001; Calthorpe and Fulton 2001).</p>	<p>BIDs in USA are mostly used to rebuild declining urban centers, they are «seen as a minimally invasive renewal strategy that mimics Jane Jacobs’ pedestrian-oriented» (Lewis, 2010:181), mixed-use vision” to pursue a sort of livable- walkable urban environment. «BIDs are lauded as a flexible, efficient marriage of public needs and interests with private-sector energy» (Lewis, 2010:181), to cope with the “out of the center” commercial attitude of the big sprawled American cities and the consequent declining of downtown. Little Italy gives particular opportunity to understand the role of BID and CBD (Community Benefit Districts) as tools for local economic development enhancement. Thus from evidences, San Diego County BIDs are playing an important and widely recognized role to improve economic growth in all San Diego County, through public benefits enhancement, important tool of governance to implement urban regeneration initiatives. The BID/CBD overall strategy, managed by a no profit organization (Little Italy Ass.), is about retail retention, business attraction, beautification and, above all, a brand that implies quality and reliance on the neighborhood as desirable place to live and work in San Diego.</p>	<p>The main output from case study comparison, is that a strong partnership between public and the private community - led, could generate mixed use of space. Urban contexts assuming a new meaning with the role of catalyst for business and social services, fostering higher quality standards of life.</p>
<p>The role of the</p>	<p>The community has played a key role in the processes of</p>	<p>Nowadays Little Italy is considered a San Diego’s</p>	<p>Case studies comparison shows</p>

<p>communities in urban regeneration tools</p>	<p>urban regeneration, indeed the case study could be considered as "pilot case study" for community participation. JsMSV shows the ability of individuals to cooperate with the planning forces for a strategic Joint Action. In this area local community represents the real driver of change, under a strong dynamic network that crates a virtual bridge of exchange with other communities. In order to support "community leaders", workshop and charette meetings made people working together on common goals, involving residents under common visions, solving problems, and developing action plans. A shared decision-making process to create new opportunities, following a consensus based approach, make residents critical mass in drawing, implementing, and evaluating work, preserving the community identity.</p>	<p>Model Community, indeed in 2010 community was the honoree of two distinguished awards in the world of redevelopment and planning; one was by the Urban Land Institute (ULI) - "Smart Growth Award of the Decade; the APA recognized the Little Italy Association with a Community Recognition Award for the great use of public space in the neighborhood. Most of community members are property owners: that give strength to the participation processes, actively community led. So that the sense of belonging is particularly preserved.</p>	<p>that in urban regeneration projects the involvement of the community has been crucial for the final outcome. The two case studies appear to be peculiar approaches, in both technical and sociological terms. The technical approach related with the charrette meeting tool, means to support "community leaders" to work together on common goals, with the challenge to create new opportunities and functions, for the master plan implementation; the sociological one consists in to bringing new economic opportunities, improving quality of lifestyle by creating livable neighborhoods, walkable and friendly with improved health, education and community safety environment.</p>
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2 Conclusions

Case study analysis shows as the implementation of Transit Oriented Development and Business Improvement Districts models can support significantly community benefits. Among them, a livable urban environment and a right balance among functions and services that allow for a sustainability improvement of lifestyles, coping with the sprawl attitude of such big American city analyzed. Indeed, as far as the spatial outcomes, a mixed use area may produce:

- Conservation of open spaces
- Cleaner air
- Minimization of increased traffic congestion
- Walkable environment
- Healthier lifestyles
- More “eyes on the street”, safety perception

The evidences demonstrate as TODs and BIDs tools of urban regeneration, improving economic growth and local development, are symbols of success of the built environment and economic revitalizations. They may act as promoters for public-private partnerships, attracting investments while enhancing public benefits. Moreover, from evidences we may suggest a strong relation between the Smart Growth principles and the EU Smart Specialization Strategies, since such kind of tools, if community- led, could be drivers for sustainable urban regeneration initiatives and equitable development opportunities.

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