**Disabled Individual’s Accessibility to Urban Areas – Inclusive Places**

**1 Introduction**

According to the United Nations (UN 2004, p.1), the majority of people in the world will be physically disabled at some time in their lives, either as a child, a person with a broken leg or an elderly person, and there are some individuals who will be physically disabled for their entire lives. It is therefore important that the built-up environment is barrier-free and where necessary adapted to fulfil the needs of all people equally. The Construction Industry Council (CIC 2016, p.3) make the point that an inclusive environment is one that recognizes and accommodates differences in the way people use the urban environment, facilitating “dignified, equal and intuitive use by everyone”. In other words, an accessible environment does not physically or socially separate people because of a disability, nor does it discriminate or isolate any section of the community. An accessible environment, should be designed to accommodate and welcomes diverse user needs, where buildings can be used with ease, with dignity and safety.

It is conceded that there are planning and development regulations supporting and reinforcing the need for an accessible urban environment as evidenced by legislation in the United Kingdom, where accessibility is implemented through legislation (Prideaux 2006, pp.17-18), including the Equality Act 2010 and the National Planning Policy Framework (House of Commons 2017, p.3). However, the reality is that disabled people often find their lives restricted by features of the built environment, with many workplaces and service premises inaccessible, and restricted choices with respect to living spaces and public spaces which prohibit easy movement and accessibility. These “factors constitute an unacceptable diminution of quality of life and equality” (House of Commons 2017, p.3). It is argued that the burden of ensuring that an accessible environment generally falls on individual disabled people, when the reality is that the burden should lie with the bodies who create and manage the built urban environment (House of Commons 2017, p.3). This project seeks to assess the severity of accessibility problems for physically disabled people in the UK. The intention is to use this data to offer solutions to this problem, to create sustainable space that is accessible for all sections of the community, as set out in planning objectives.

**2 Aim and Objectives**

The aim of this research is to assess accessibility of the physically disabled in the contemporary built environment. The objectives of the research are to:

• Understand legislation regarding accessibility in the urban environment

• Consider how this legislation is implemented in practical terms

• Explore the impact of accessibility on physically disabled people

• Determine ways of improving accessibility

**3 Methodology**

The key to providing reliable research outcomes is to develop a robust research methodology that is developed in a logical manner, taking account of the time constraints and practical issues such as access to data associated with the study. This research could be conducted using the survey or case study strategy, as it will allow me to tailor the data collection to the research objectives, whereas there is a risk that a single case study may not be representative of wider accessibility issues in an urban area.

The next stage of the research design is deciding on the method of data collection, with the aim of gathering a sufficient volume of reliable data for analysis to address the research question and objectives. Two methods could include starting with a case study of access to a shopping centre in Cardiff. This data will then be used to develop a questionnaire with a combination of open and closed style questions to investigate attitudes to accessibility in the urban environment. The data will then be analysed using statistical analysis for the quantitative data and thematic analysis for the qualitative data.

**4 Limitations and Ethics**

This research gathers data from human subjects; as such it must adhere to appropriate ethical standards and data protection legislation. Therefore, informing all participants in the survey of the purpose of the data collection and the way in which the data will be used will be done. In addition, the survey will not collect any personal or confidential information and the participants will be informed that participation is voluntary.

There are limitations to the research design including the fact that the survey sample may be small compared to the wider population and there is a risk of bias in the survey sample and the researcher’s questions. These risks can be reduced by developing an effective questionnaire, with questions specific to the issues of accessibility in the urban environment.

**Points to consider:**

1. Accessibility as a social right and an inclusive society
2. The inaccessible built environment, therefore, can be understood as a key element which constitutes social exclusion to the population with disabilities.

**Literature Review:**

Discuss three main points and key themes instead of having several points in your literature review.

* Start broad introduce the subject area
* Identify specific issues/concepts in this literature: what are the key arguments and gap?
* Critically discuss the ideas/frameworks/concepts used to date: what are their strengths and weaknesses
* What ideas/concepts are you taking forward?