Embodiment in the disabling built-environment: an experience of daily life
Antika Sawadsri
Lecturer, School of Architecture at KMITL, Thailand

Abstract The approach to the inaccessibility of the built environment for disabled people in academic research has been heavily focused on legislating for access requirements and providing technical solutions. The spatial experiences of disabled people tend to be disregarded or taken as a peripheral form of knowledge. This article draws on an in-depth study of the lived experience of one wheelchair-using volunteer. It reveals that the majority of the physical and psychological difficulties encountered by disabled people are the result of inaccessible environments rather than their impairment. There is a need to understand the built environments of disabled people by regarding different forms of negotiating with a disabling environment, acquiring capital, the social agency of disabled people as well as attitudes towards them and discriminatory constructions.

Keywords Spatial experience, disabling environment, lived experience, disabled people, agency for change

Introduction: embodiment disabled bodies

In Thailand, there have been studies heavily focused on the factors in translating the established access policy into practice (e.g. Kabinlikkawanit, 1998) and on evaluating the existing design guidelines (e.g. Kulachon and Dankittikul, 2005). However, the barriers in the physical environment remain, impeding disabled people’s experiences in public buildings and spaces. For Gleeson (1996:393), the built environment can be seen as ‘the phenomenal form of sub-structural processes which devalue physically impaired bodies’. In other words, prevailing attitudes towards disability and how it is understood in a society can be represented in the construction process and product of its built environments. These also act to reinforce, rather than simply passively causing, the social marginalisation faced by disabled people.

For Imrie (1996), the knowledge informing studies of accessibility and disability has been formally (re)produced by academia and government policy sectors. In this regard, what is problem is the absence of disabled people’s lived experience from research agendas. The lives of disabled people and their views have been shaped by the circumstances surrounding them (Kitchin and Law, 2001; Gleeson, 1999). Their individual bodies intermingle with broader socio-cultural relations to produce sites consisting of ‘contestation in a series of economic, political, sexual and intellectual struggles’ (Edwards and Imrie, 2003:240). Indeed, disabled people’s experiences of public places can be either facilitated or limited by the conditions of the constructed built environment. Imrie (2003:246) also highlights that inequality and struggle are everyday experiences for disabled people. Furthermore, their physical environments are significantly constructed through the
social processes. Hall and Imrie (1999:409) describe ‘obstacle courses characterised by a range of social, attitudinal, and physical environments’. An understanding of how disabled people become excluded within society cannot be understood without a comprehension of the experience of disability as well as recognition that life and society are situated, contextualised and reproduced in space (Kitchin, 1998:343-344). Therefore, to understand those socio-spatial factors that impact on disabled people’s lives is to understand their daily life experiences in the built environment.

The discussion here draws on the conception of the body as a bearer of value in society (Edwards and Imrie, 2003). That is, people with impairment have bodily functions that are influenced and compromised by broader entwined social, structural and practice issues rather than their limitations resulting directly from their impaired bodies. People as agents, either collectively or individually, ‘transform or reproduce their social structures but they do so within specific conditions, including those which are internalised as part of their habitus’ (ibid: 244). The concept of habitus relates to ‘the basic stock of knowledge that people carry around in their heads as a result of living in particular cultures or subcultures’ (ibid:243). Furthermore, Thibodaux (2005:507) based on Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of ‘habitus’ clarifies the daily life experienced by disabled people as being ‘shaped by constellations of personal, physical, social, and environmental factors’.

However, Freund (2001) contends that the social environment has a tendency to be over-emphasised as a key barrier to disabled people in the social model approach. In this regard, disability is not merely socially constructed, but, partly, resides in an ‘objective’ reality or biological bodies with impairments. Even when barriers contributed by social attitudes and temporal-spatial hindrances can be removed, for example, impaired bodies may still face difficulties in coping with chronic illness (ibid: 690). Barnes (2001:13) argues that careful consideration must be given to the implication of this approach that the social model precludes the lived experiences of disabled people. Furthermore, it does not remove the need for an awareness of the cultural context of their experiences, ‘in order to highlight the disabling consequences of a society that is increasingly organised around the needs of a mythical, affluent non-disabled majority’.

Methodology

The analysis presented here has benefited from a method which appropriates a phenomenological approach, in exploring the lived experience of a wheelchair user. This approach aims to understand the public built environment through the eyes of people who live with ‘disability’.

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significant element of this approach is that research subjects are experts about their own experience and can offer the researcher an understanding of their thoughts and feelings through their own words (Reid et al., 2005:20). By doing so, the voices of disabled participant are raised and have a role to play in research on the built environment. By accompanying a wheelchair user with a voice recorder, taking photos, and note taking in and around public places, the researcher has gained a deeper understanding of the relations between societal values, the impaired body, and its requirements of the built environment.

The participant is Miss Tum, who uses a wheelchair independently without any assistance. Tum 28 years old lives with the consequences of polio and started using a wheelchair when she was in her teenage years. She lives in a peripheral area of Bangkok and regularly travels to work at an office in the city centre. She works as the Regional Activities Assistant and Independent Living Project Coordinator for a disabled people-run organisation. She has been trained to articulate disabled people’s needs in the built environment. Therefore, I found her to be both motivated and expert in articulating the difficulties encountered in the built environment.

The manageable environment and self internalization

A place considered as ‘home’ is where the disabled dweller assigns meanings of self-efficacy, in particular in comparison with public places. Having a residence where the disabled individual is able to perform and complete their desired daily activities by themselves can be a way of creating self-efficacy - a feeling that relates to their capability in managing their chosen activities in a manageable environment (Twiigger-Ross and Uzzell, 1996:208). Furthermore, for some people with mobility difficulties, a private place considered as ‘home’ tends to have a value that goes beyond the level of the individual. For Gilroy (2005:144-145), it rather has meanings to do with wider cultural accounts such as family, self identity, independence and ways of interacting with the society outside the home. As Tum lives alone, her home is an important place where she can perform daily activities with control and independence. Her house has two storeys, with two flights of stairs, so she performs all her daily activities on the ground floor. She has allowed a non-disabled colleague to rent a space on the second floor. The key point is that the disabled dweller is able to manage her dwelling through her own decisions. Independence is not necessarily merely associated with the ability to live alone, but also with meanings about one’s authority in life. As Tum reflected:

I can hire someone to do and fix things as I want... I can pay people for those jobs... making my own decisions... deciding how my life will be. [...] Although I’ve experienced many difficulties, I’m happy living like this. This is what I call an independent life.
The open-plan configuration in the 4x8 m house enables its owner to circulate freely indoors. All of the interior functions are connected, which alleviates the need to expend unnecessary energy in performing daily activities, such as moving from the bed to the bathroom and through the kitchen area. The kitchen sink has been modified and attached to the wall at a height of 60 cm, without needing to rest on lower supports, so that Tum is able to move her wheelchair close up to it, to gain access to the sink and water tap. The bathroom door has been widened up to 85 cm, allowing better access than the 70 cm typical bathroom door. Although the width of the new door has only increased by 15 cm, this has made it much easier to access by wheelchair. As this bathroom is normally used only by Tum herself, she has opted to use a plastic curtain in place of the usual wooden door. Apparently, the sliding-action style door is more convenient than the swing one (Figure 2, centre image). The author’s own earlier research (Sawadtri, 2007:152-153) reveals that in a living space, wheelchair users prefer to modify existing furniture rather than paying for specially designed features as, in part, the latter can be read as a sign of stigma that detracts from the appearance of the house. In this regard, Tum is aware of her needs, and often buys new furniture with mobile features. The tables and storage units on castors reduce the energy needed to relocate furniture while sitting in a wheelchair; as she said, “it’s very easy to move this table when I want to plug in those cords behind the computer” (Figure 2, right). Thus, even when alone in the house, Tum is able to manage everything by herself.

The controllable space in the house empowers the way the disabled individual negotiates with the world outside, that is, in public spaces. Disabled people tend to have more creativity in adapting or expressing their requirements regarding public space. Tum always comes up with ideas for solutions about the barriers that impede her in public places. A place that one can manage and exercise control over builds self confidence. “There should be a gap at the end of each hump, to the left and right (alternately), then at least I can zigzag through those gaps”, Tum observed, expressing her idea about how the street humps should be built when she was going around her village in her wheelchair. And regarding the inaccessible features in the wider public realm, “this ramp should be placed..."
alongside, and in the same direction as the traffic, not cross through the lanes like this”, was Tum’s view when using a ramp on the street.

Tum’s personal testimonial about her home significantly reveals that a disabled person is not necessarily oppressed by disabling facilities. Rather, by adapting, removing or managing such barriers, she has the ability to cope as a more active agent. In this regard, Imrie (2010:35) contends that through the ways in which they are able to overcome their disabling domestic space by creating a usable space, impaired people are not ‘passive victims’.

Mobility in the neighbourhood: removing attitudinal and physical barriers

Performing the activities of daily life can be a means of presenting the existence and needs of the disabled members of society to a wider public. Living in an urbanised city environment like Bangkok demands a high degree of self-reliance. Additionally, personal safety and security potentially gain from good relationships within the community. Tum always keeps up good relations with her neighbours, greeting and chatting with them when the situation offers. Once we arrived at Tum’s house at around 8pm and noticed that there was an absence of street lighting in front of her house, so it was quite dark at night. One neighbour asked if we had come with Tum and inquired who we were. The middle-aged man who lives a couple of houses along from Tum’s always keeps a watchful eye on her security. When any cars parked at the front of the house, this man stepped out and asked if anyone was accompanying Tum. “He often carries my wheelchair out from the taxi”, remarked Tum.

Embracing and removing physical barriers

When disabled people perform daily activities outside the home, this not only has an impact on people’s mindset about disability, but another significant consequence can be the removal of physical barriers. Over two years have passed since Tum moved to this housing estate. Besides propelling herself in her wheelchair to the exit of the village where the office minibus stops, she is often out and about performing other day-to-day activities in her neighbourhood. From her house, it is about 2 km to the bank or to commute back home after buying dinner at the market nearby. Familiarity with a disabled community member supports the neighbours in developing an understanding about the needs of disabled people in the built environment. Furthermore, witnessing such requirements not only overcomes the wall of fixed attitudes, it also effectively creates a way to remove physical barriers. Once, when we were on the way to a noodle shop near her house, Tum raised the issue of why the street humps were disappeared at some points (Figure 3).

I usually walk pass the garage out there. Passing those street humps is so difficult. People there always ask if I can make it. One day, there’s a mechanic told me he’d knock them away. Another morning I found those humps were removed to the width of my wheelchair.
It is clear that the presence of disabled bodies in a community has considerable importance. As many people have never had either direct or indirect experience with disability, attitudinal and physical barriers still impede the equal participation of disabled people within their society. We have learnt from the daily life experience of Tum that only if disabled people are able to gain some exposure in their neighbourhoods, the negative attitudes toward their differences can be removed. Such acceptance effectively transfers recognition of disabled people’s actual needs in the built environment, to their non-disabled neighbours. By contrast, a lack of experience of disabled people’s needs in public spaces can magnify and perpetuate the problems. As Matthews and Vujakovic (1995:1070) note, although there is a recognition of the difficulties of the disabled population in most societies, ‘none seems to have made significant progress in integrating them across a full range of social goals’. Consequently, the understanding of non-disabled people about accessibility issues is relatively little changed. Conversely, if the members of a society have experienced the use of the built environment by disabled people as part of their daily lives, this will undoubtedly deliver a more positive reaction by able-bodied people, as well as giving them a deeper understanding of the spatial needs of their disabled counterparts. Following on from this, it can be expected that physical barriers will be excluded from the public built environment, rather than the people with impairments.

**Coping with disabling environments: body as agent**

Peters et al. critique the social model that requires understandings of the experiences of disabled bodies by noting that:

> in this way the disabled body ‘becomes a metaphor for culture, where culture is created from whole body experiences and the disabled body is the interactive force for cultural identity and change’ (Peters et al., 2009: 548).

Disabled people seek different strategies to complete day-to-day activities within the disabling environment (e.g. places where they are reacted to as different or inferior, where they are confronted with flights of steps in order to access a building, uneven or broken paving, and the absence of accessible transport in the majority of cases). In a regular week, Tum spends most of her time outside the home. She normally travels to work in an office, explores disability-related cases in different places around Bangkok, and eats out in shopping malls or in the market near her village. In her residential space, Tum is able to manage most daily activities independently, albeit requiring some support from her neighbours. In contrast, going out and about in public spaces, the products of prevailing social attitudes present a greater challenge to her capacities and opportunities for an equal life within the broader society. Living with impairment in inaccessible environments, Tum opts to adapt herself. On the one hand, she adjusts her way of interacting...
with physical facilities. On the other hand, she also tries to accommodate her mindset in overcoming the personal impact of disabling social attitudes and built environments.

Educating the public

When navigating around public places, disabled people are often faced with being the objects of unwelcome public scrutiny, or experience embarrassment when negotiating inaccessible facilities. Communicating with others about disability issues can be a strategy to cope with such unfriendly circumstances. Furthermore, having conversations with strangers in public can be seen as a way that disabled people take advantage of opportunities that avail themselves to 'educate the public' (Cahill and Eggleston, 1995:685). This way of communicating with non-disabled people effectively alters disabled people from a situation experienced as passive objects, to one in which they take part as more active actors.

Whenever people with impairments, either as individuals or as a group, are exposed in the public sphere, they are often framed by social 'norms' in the character of a stranger (Imrie, 2001). The undesirable and unacceptable public reactions faced by disabled people have a significant relationship with the (re)production of the cultural encoding of the city. The modernised city in which prioritised the needs of able-bodied people, for Imrie (ibid.:233), it tends to be preserved for the independent bodies of health, fitness and youth, while individuals who deviate from such ideals have often been regarded as 'object things'; 'objects of disdain' and are in danger of being distanced from society or seen as a stranger in the city. In this regard, making a journey in a public place can be a means to promote the acknowledgement by their society of disabled people's existence and requirements.

During her journeys through public spaces, Tum often has conversations with others. For example, she once travelled with five friends (also wheelchairs users) by the bus service. The bus stopped for some minutes until the six passengers in wheelchairs were lifted on board by the people who milled around the bus stop. "There's one passenger who said 'why are you coming out, it's so difficult, you shouldn't do this", Tum recalled. The bus ticket collector was also curious about their presence and offered her a free ticket. Tum recounted:

I immediately started a long explanation and spoke out loud. We normally want to go out more often, but these buses are unusable. We need a bus that we can get on, not a free ride [...] she replied “ah...okay, I'll count how many of you” [...] those people on the bus smiled with me.

Besides the fact that being with a wheelchair user can deliver insights and experience about the ways disabled people interact with their built environments, there is also the opportunity to gain an understanding about the strategies disabled people use to enhance their social capital. The evidence above helps to reveal key factors, such as communication between disabled and non-disabled people in certain circumstances. In this regard, the more disabled people are seen in public places, and the greater the population of impaired bodies who use built environments, the more their impact can be expanded. Once disabled people are able to use ordinary facilities, the enabling built environment can further stimulate positive perceptions toward disabled people 'and more positive attitudes
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should encourage more positive physical planning’ (Butler and Bowlby, 1997:412).

Positive thinking, talking, and laughing

When leaving the house, the foremost disabling process that an individual is likely to confront relates to less civil forms of attention, such as gazing, staring, or unwelcome conversations. Having conversations in the course of navigating public places can in one sense be a means of alleviating the uncomfortable feeling of passivity that can be experienced by disabled people. However, exposing their bodies in the public arena, wheelchair users are often faced with a different level of uninvited interaction, ranging from the explicit curiosity expressed by children, to the implicit curiosity that was described by Cahill and Eggleston (1995:684), drawing on Goffman, as the “civil inattention” of adults. This consists in a glance followed by the immediate withdrawal of visual attention. Consequently, the wheelchair user often feels in an awkward position. Even though Tum manages to carry out activities in public places alone, being frequently stared at reduces her confidence. As she said “getting out together in a group [with others who are wheelchair users] not having to bear embarrassment on my own, which is much more fun”.

Going out and about with Tum in public spaces thus generated a great deal of lively conversation along the trip. Tum frequently shared her experiences in having to cope every so often with disabling barriers. The many techniques she used to overcome and negotiate with social and physical barriers emerged when we revisited similar situations in public places. Discussing the way disabled individuals handle such circumstances aims to elicit alternative perspectives toward the emotions and sensations behind an individual’s strategy. Disabled people do not necessary feel oppressed or react aggressively when faced with disapproving encounters. Furthermore, it aims to provide evidence about how those with disabled bodies seek to restructure and acquire social value through particular behaviours in public built environments.

For instance, when Tum encountered the inconvenience of the express train service, she repeatedly raised the example of using the train system in Japan. In the majority of cases, laughter was provoked when the design of the facilities and the nature of the service failed to meet her requirements. One day, in the course of commuting by train, the story of an impractical lift service emerged. The lift to the elevated train platform was installed in the middle of the road and its entry ramp pointed directly onto the traffic. Tum was chuckling while telling this story:

when leaving the lift, we bend down and contract while trying to break our wheels downward on the ramp. The builder might want us to slide speedily through, just to cross the road immediately, as quick as possible, before those fast cars can hit us [laughter].

Likewise, when Tum found that some of the other lift services were seldom operated for disabled customers, she asked to take a picture: “it will be a good shot. This lift has hardly been used so those ants are able to get on with building their houses [laughter]”. By using the public transport service, the disabled traveller is regularly requested to display their disability registration card. For Tum, it symbolises a way of reinforcing the disabled identity, though she nevertheless responded with smile while asking ironically, pointing at her wheelchair: “is this not disabled enough for you?” While waiting for support with using

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the lift from the train security guard, Tum noticed a sign reading: “Passengers who prefers to use an elevator please contact station staff or Tel. [phone number] (during daily service hours). We apologise for the inconvenience caused.” Tum reacted: “wait a minute, what if I don’t have mobile with me? No problem, I’ve waited all my life anyway [laughter]”. Similarly when struggling with getting on and off a bus with a high level access, she made a joke about it: “next time, I’ll carry a plank with me to cross over to the bus [laughter]”.

A sense of humour and laughter in a situation of struggle was discussed in Macpherson’s (2007) idea of the landscape of laughter of the blind, as being an act of condemnation or reflection when comfort is threatened, as well as helping to alleviate pain. In this sense, laughter is used by disabled people ‘to redefine a seemingly tragic situation into something amusing’ (ibid: 203). Furthermore, defining the situation as laughable also eases the individual’s ‘disease’ concerns about themselves (Cahill and Eggleston, 1994:303).

The dearth of accessible facilities for disabled people severely constrains their opportunities for public life. As a consequence, able-bodied people seldom have direct experience of the presence of their disabled counterparts. The most common reactions to disabled people by the able-bodied public has a relationship with unconscious reactions such as starring or gazing. As well as adapting ones behaviour pattern to the environment, pretending not to notice the unintended looks by continuing with a conversation can be a means to cope with unwelcome public reactions. For instance, through choosing to travel by train, Tum was able to sit in her wheelchair without having to transfer to a seat. Therefore, her appearance caught the eyes of other passengers. At every stop, newcomers in the cabin avoided subjecting her to their direct gaze by taking a quick glance before moving their eyes away. In the meantime, while other passengers came and went, we experienced that we were the object of others’ attention. The trip took about 40 minutes, during which stories about her life were continuously recounted, from her childhood experiences through to her future life plans. Even though this kind of conversation seems partly helpful in blotting out those uninvited public reactions, the increasing number of people in the train as well as the greater number of eyes looking at her in her wheelchair to a certain extent provoked her to respond by falling silent. Although ‘tactful blindness’ (Goffman cited in Cahill and Eggleston, 1994:303) served well in coping with being stared, wheelchair users often do not find it easy to completely ignore ‘uncivil attention’.

This is clearly the case when a wheelchair user overcomes a situation of passive powerlessness while negotiating with or removing the obstacles they face. Bodily reactions to the public have a relationship with the observation that disabled people face a great challenge in concealing their emotions when in public. It is crucial for a great deal of emotional work to be invested in maintaining their resistance to having their anger roused. Otherwise, this can potentially create interpersonal risks which lead to guilt and embarrassment (Cahill and Eggleston, 1994:305). Nonetheless, the use of the sense of humour and a lighter tone as a means to cope with difficulties encountered requires careful consideration. In one respect, it varies depending on the individual’s personality. In the majority of cases, when accompanying a wheelchair-using
In sum, the experience of an impaired body interacting with the built environment can be interpreted as a reciprocal process of building one's knowledge of both the self and the world out there. The disabled individual assigns value meanings to the self in responding to the social process. At the same time, when the impaired body sets a value in interaction with the outside world, it simultaneously internalises a self image. In the case of Tum, who is able to manage her residential space to live independently, her acknowledgment of her own needs is increased. This constitutes a strategy for coping with the socially constructed physical and attitudinal environments. The strategy to overcome those difficulties in the public realm is attached with the meaning that Tum assigns to the way disabled people interact with the built environment to result in another way of acquiring capital. Such practices consist of adapting environmental behaviour patterns, planning daily activities ahead, communicating with the public, as well as her way of responding mentally to public encounters. Those elements are reciprocally accomplished between an impaired body and concrete and abstract social creations, such as built environments and the public attitude toward disabled people. The discussion above can be described in the following diagram.

**Conclusion: enabling a life to flourish**

[...] disabled women can build the strength and determination to continue to fight for spaces of everyday life in which differences such as disability are viewed 'not [emphasis added]' as something to be 'corrected' and avoided, but as part of the spectrum of human experiences that enrich all of our
The portrayal of the experience of disabled bodies in built environments, from one perspective, has been regarded as giving a certain account of a particular sector of the population. Within such views, this group has been taken to be one which is marginalised. In fact, vulnerability and frailty of the body are the common lot of everyone’s life course (Breckenridge and Vogler, 2001). In other words, ‘able body’ is only a temporarily part of our lives. This way of understanding leads to a determination about the concept of flourishing life as a basic human feature of impaired bodies.

We have seen that Tum is often forced to keep actively thinking all day long about organising her journey through hostile environments. Although it seems there is less stress deriving from routine activities, her experience in public places is one of limitations. Such limitations are reinforced by both the physical and mental struggles she undergoes. Physically, the way she adapts her behaviour pattern could affect her health. Psychologically, by investing enormous concentration on planning for mobility, making trips and managing her time, her limited capacities must become substantially internalised. All such constraints have lessened and marred her conduct of everyday activities as part of a flourishing human life.

We have also learnt that the majority of those difficulties faced by one wheelchair user are the result of inaccessible environments rather than her impairment. It is a helpful stance to explore the links between structural conditions and the individual’s lived experience of the process of disablement. An impaired person is not disabled by her physical conditions. On the contrary, the disabling built environments around the impaired body perpetuate and reproduce health problems and social exclusion. Furthermore, the built environment, which responds to heterogeneous human capacities, plays a crucial role in human life. As Asch (1998) points out, realising that disability is caused by both physical and social environments is a key factor for an individual with impairment, in deciding whether to live or die. An individual comprehends that their struggle in life is not linked to their condition but rather imposed by the society they live in. Therefore:

people may still choose to end life-sustaining treatments or to forgo extensive rehabilitation rather than undergo life in a world not truly hospitable and well-designed for those with disabilities (Asch, 1998:9).

To study disabled bodies in built environments, both consideration and understanding of the lived experience of disabled people are required. The socio-spatial experience of disabled people can be an interpretation in itself and of its environment. The lives of disabled people have been observed, written about as well as regulated by normative society. Disabled people’s lived experiences are often devalued, and so, as Overboe contends:

[The lived experience of disabled people is] reduced to a classification which demands that the able-bodied take some sort of action that implicitly or explicitly controls our lives. (Overboe, 1999:18)

We have also seen the feelings, opinions, thoughts and reactions of disabled individuals to the society surrounding the self. A pivotal finding reveals that the
spatial needs of disabled people have nothing to do merely with a speciality or difference of design or construction. In fact, the physical realm—which is constructed through the social process in a range of attitudinal barriers—limits the capacity of impaired bodies to flourish in their lives. Research on the built environment that validates the lived experience of disabled people can ascertain the existence of their needs and experiences as conveyed through their own words. Furthermore, Siebers (2008:121) contends that using experience as evidence can be a way to define the dominant theoretical position towards historical and cultural aspects of the “difference” and “identities” of [those] whose experience is being documented, and “reproduces” rather than contests given ideological systems. For Corker (1999), the lived experience of disabled people has often been simplified, in particular by those failing to differentiate between disability and impairment. Therefore, there is a need to understand the built environments of disabled people by emphasising different forms of acquiring capital, disabled people’s social agency, as well as the attitudes and discriminatory production they encounter.

Finally, this paper contends that the information supplied by a wheelchair user will offer a valuable insight into the experiences of people with other disabilities in public built environments, where the individual can share their broader social life experiences within their society. A theory of human agency or action requires an account of the body, that is, ‘acting people are acting bodies’ (Edwards and Imrie, 2003:242). This article has articulated the role of the body as an agent that interrelates with, and is influenced by, the surrounding social and physical environment. For Hughes and Paterson (1997:338) understanding disabled individuals’ requirements is an essential approach because it constitutes a sense of diversity and sensitivity to differences in encouraging the disability movement.

References


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