

The City of Images: Urban Mobility Policies and Extra-Small Tactical Projects for Promoting the Quality of Urban Life of People with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the Everyday City

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Abstract : Current researches and applications aimed at exploring the role of spatial configuration as a means for improving the autonomy of people with ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder), almost exclusively focus on the definition of criteria for the design of closed, separated, private spaces devoted only to people - mainly children - with ASD. In fact, very few researches specifically investigate the relation between the city and people with autism, focusing on their sensory experiences related to the interaction with the urban environment. The growing incidence of ASD and the need to guarantee during adulthood the actual opportunity to exercise the achieved level of autonomy and independency, emphasizes the necessity to 'broaden' the research perspective by investigating also the specific contribution of urban mobility policies and urban design to the enhancement of the quality of life of people with ASD. Starting from these considerations, the paper describes an ongoing research focused on the relation between the city and people with autism spectrum disorder, with the specific aim of promoting their possibility of walking across the city at the neighborhood scale, thus making the access to relevant urban spaces and services possible. In the first part, the paper proposes a framework for illustrating the commonly recurring problems that people with ASD face in their daily life when they interact with the urban environment (with reference to the capability approach). Subsequently, with the support of an in depth analysis of existing contributions (researches and projects) and an exchange with different experts (neuropsychiatrists, teachers, parents), are identified two urban requirements, then 'translated' into an integrated system of urban mobility policies and extra-small tactical project aimed at enhancing the actual possibility for people with ASD of walking through the city autonomously and safely. According to this vision, the promotion of the autonomy of people with ASD through the adoption of mobility policies and micro tactical urban projects can represent an opportunity for promoting and improving the overall quality of urban life.

Keywords : city and people with ASD, quality of urban life of disadvantaged people, urban capabilities, urban design

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