



Challenging Boundaries

The role of ICT in the creation of a European higher Education Area

November 15th / 16th • 2007

Title of paper: Urban mobility, accessibility and social equity.
A study on mobility and social equity in Barcelona, Bologna, La Coruna, Lyon, Wien

Author: Matteo Colleoni
Affiliation: University of Milan Bicocca, Milan, Italy
Contact: matteo.colleoni@unimib.it

Abstract

The studies which have focused on the theme of the interactions between the spatial and morphological features of towns and cities, the social and economic structure of the communities which inhabit them and the mobility of the populations have become more and more numerous over the last two decades. Many of these studies have concluded that mobility is more and more substantial in the urban communities, with differences which are less and less marked among genders, professions and income brackets, and above all it is the sub-urban areas and the populations which live there that are involved (Mogridge 1985, Newman and Kenworthy 1989, Naess et al. 1995, Fouchier 1998, Mo.Ve 2005).

The explanations refer to the changes which have taken place in the labour market, in the more general social and economic system and in the urban morphology, in particular to the progressive concentration in the places where the work is found (in particular, referred to the managerial and operational functions) and the opportunities (human resources, services and goods) in the central areas of the towns and cities and to the location of residences in sub-urban areas which are more and more distant and scattered (Martinotti 1999, Schwanen et al. 2001, Stead and Marshall 2001, Naess and Jensen 2004, Naess 2006). The spatial and social distribution of the resultant mobility has been described as the result of the gradual acquisition of the right to travel by an ever increasing number of social groups, and in turn, the condition for their improved accessibility to the urban spaces and opportunities.

However, even though mobility represents an inalienable condition to access urban amenities and services and an inescapable factor to achieve social and urban integration, it is not distributed equally among the individuals and the social groups and, above all, does not reflect the same quality everywhere in relation to the resources used and the constraints which limit their use. The disparities refer to both the different social distribution of the access resources (urban, social and economic, cultural and time-related access resources) and to the existence of constraints (space-time and social access restraints) which hinder their use.

The study presented aims to analyse the way:

- the urban structure of the residential areas influences the presence and the availability of opportunities;
- the location of residential areas and opportunities, combined with the different mobility capital possessed by the residents, influences the styles of mobility and accessibility to the urban amenities and services.

The theoretical part of the study aims to explain the meaning of the concepts of mobility capital, mobility style and accessibility, while the empirical part aims to describe the relationship between residential location, styles of mobility and access to the opportunities.

More in detail, the empirical part of the study refers to an European comparative research which focus on mobility, accessibility to urban amenities and services and social equity in five conurbations, Barcelona, Bologna, La Coruna, Lyon and Wien, conducted by Mo.Ve (International Forum on Sustainable Mobility in European Metropolitan Areas) and its partners in 2005-2006.

PARTNER UNIVERSITIES