

#14

Planning for all generations

Per una pianificazione multigenerazionale

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Framing a multigenerational approach to planning. The Italian context

Per una pianificazione multigenerazionale. Il caso italiano

A cura di / Edited by GU | Generazione Urbana¹

Viviana Andriola & Serena Muccitelli

Demographic shift |
Age-friendly planning |
Multigenerationality |

Cambiamento
demografico |
pianificazione
age-friendly |
Multigenerazionalità |

Contemporary western societies are ageing, and together with them, cities are aging too. The current demographic shift is deeply impacting the social realm and the physical environment where people live, but it is also challenging planners and policy makers with a new set of needs, expectations and dispositions.

This issue of i Quaderni di UrbanisticaTre Planning for all generations aims at reviewing and discussing some aspects that are critical for a planning approach willing to assume a multigenerational and intergenerational perspective. To do so, this contribution opens the discussion on multigenerational planning exploring the Italian framework in its demographic dynamics, social policies on children and elderly and current planning themes and trends.

The case studies elaborated by the Cornell University's Rome Workshop are hence used as an access point for debating child and age friendly cities between theory and practice, and for lifting the emerging themes to a wider debate on planning. The pieces of the issue establish a continuous dialogue unraveling from the design challenges posed by the contemporary city, to governance and policy features to be acknowledged in order to deal with the challenges emerging from the field and from the current debate. The dialogue is enriched with historical hints, concepts and methodology, which all aim at adding needed complexity to the debate for multigenerational planning and policy making.

Introduction

Our societies are ageing. European countries, more than others, are experiencing a strong greying of their populations, not compensated by a growth of births. Eurostat projections estimate that the share of EU citizens aged over 65 will increase from 18% in 2013 to 28% in 2060². Italy in particular is the oldest European country with 20,3% of the population more than 65. On the other hand, the youngest part of the society (under 14) represents only the 14% of the Italian population. Although European countries are on average approximately five years ahead of the U.S. aging curve, in the U.S. as well, nearly 20 percent of the population will be over age 65 by 2030. Demographic projections confirm these dynamics in the next future, posing important questions to the sustainability of the current social asset.

These transformations will deeply impact not only on the social realm but also on the places where most of the population live: cities. Cities are still designed and planned for a specific human target type: a working age man in his full mental and physical abilities, who needs a place to live, easily accessible by car and equipped with the services required for a comfortable life. Poor attention is devoted to walkable accessibility of local services and to the quality and comfort of the pedestrian experience. These, together with many

¹ Viviana Andriola drafted the sections: "A greying Country with changing needs", "Social Policies: the unseen layer that affects family life", "Exploring multigenerationality: themes and places"; Serena Muccitelli drafted the sections: "Introduction", "Urban regeneration in the context of multigenerational planning".

² http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/european_economy/2014/pdf/ee8_en.pdf

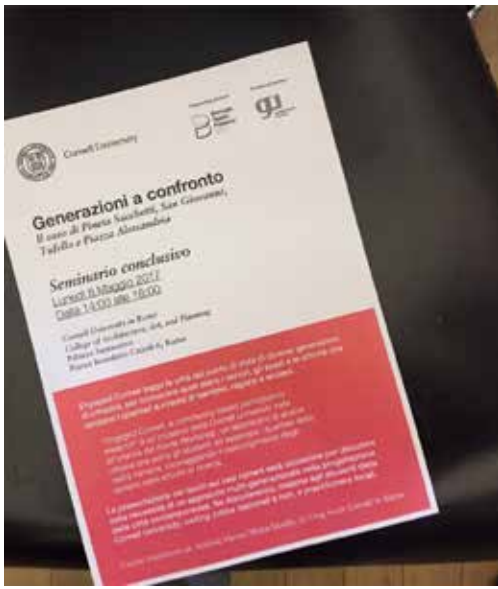


Fig.1 Locandina del seminario conclusivo “Generazioni a confronto”, foto di Nicola Vazzoler.

other aspects neglected in design and planning practice, have a core role in enhancing the quality of life of the weakest segments of population, such as children and elders.

The shifting demographics, together with the implied changing needs, calls for a new approach to rethink the way cities are planned and for whom. Older adults, children and young people share concerns about accessibility to safe public spaces and accessibility to public transport, they report high levels of fear of crime, but are also concerned with the provision of public space to socialize and develop cross community and intergenerational linkages. Families with young children bring issues related to service provision, local economics and long-term growth, too.

The current debate about multigenerational city planning tends to reduce the raised issues to the question of accessibility or openness of the physical space. But accessible cities are

not only about infrastructure and services. It is becoming more and more evident how an enabling social environment, capable of giving voice and visibility for citizens, regardless of age, is as important as material conditions in determining well-being in life. It is than clear that the issue of planning cities for multiple ages requires an integrated approach that includes different policies like economic, social, environmental and spatial and that promotes participation with multiple stakeholders and expertise. Architects, city planners, designers of city-wide services from health to energy supply are all engaged in the challenges posed by these demographic shifts. They need to be aware of current social and demographic trends and of the critical need to consider and respond to the demands of an aging population in their work.

This issue of *i Quaderni di UrbanisticaTre: Planning for all generations* aims at reviewing and discussing some critical aspects of multigenerational planning.

The issue uses, as a starting point, the theoretical framework and the case studies elaborated by the Cornell University’s *Rome Workshop*³, conducted within the Cornell in Rome program (Smith et al. 2014, 9). By focusing on the theme of the child and age friendly cities, the 2017 workshop⁴ explored four different neighborhoods in Rome - San Giovanni, Piazza Alessandria, Tufello and Pineta Sacchetti - through the lenses of their livability for child and elders. In addition, thanks to the support of *Engaged Cornell*, a special Cornell program promoting the engagement of the academic body in society, students developed a community based participatory research testing the utility of engagement techniques in a planning practice capable of embedding a multigenerational approach. *Generazione Urbana*, a research and consultancy group based in Rome, was involved in order to broaden the engagement process and the dissemination of results to local communities⁵.

3 Since 2004 a wide portfolio of neighborhood studies has been collected within the Rome Workshop, approaching urban context through quantitative and qualitative analysis. Studying Roman neighborhoods for Cornell planning students represents a great opportunity in terms of perceiving and understanding the layering of social, physical, historical and urban issues in a different context from the cultural and urban point of view. More details on the Cornell in Rome program and on the Rome workshop could be found at the following links: <http://aap.cornell.edu/academics/rome/programs>; <https://aap.cornell.edu/academics/crp/undergraduate/rome-neighborhood-studies>.

The issue is opened by two pieces by Mildred Warner and Gregory Smith, both professors at Cornell University's Rome workshop (Spring 2017). Warner gives a background on the theoretical basis of planning for all ages; Smith shows the methodology followed in the workshop in order to make students see and experience the different layers of multigenerationality in their case studies. Following articles are grouped in order to establish a dialogue between theory and practice. Each piece debating the four case studies has been matched with an Italian author whose contribution aims at lifting the emerging themes to a wider debate on planning. This structure helps open the discussion on multigenerational planning and set the agenda for future research.

In the next paragraphs the context and the background of the proposed debate will be outlined, drawing on the different levels of multigenerationality, and of the Italian framework, such as demographic dynamics, social policies on children and elderly care, and current planning themes.

A greying Country with changing needs

The Italian context poses significant challenges to the multigenerationality of its cities. In fact, Italian society is aging and, at the same time, birth rates are decreasing. The current trend has deep roots mainly in poor social policies supporting families and in the widespread improvement of health and social conditions. In the next years, the needs of elders will become more and more visible to the eyes of the public actor in charge of designing policies for this expanding population segment. For instance, in the urban context, access to services, walkability, availability of public space will be core issues to be tackled by policy makers, researchers and practitioners. Also children and their families, even if not so numerically important, will benefit from this change in point of view because both children and elderly express similar needs towards urban contexts.

According to Italian statistics, in 2016 people over 65 are 22,3% of the total population, over 80 represent 6,8% and over 90 represent 2,2%. The high proportion of elderly in the total population depends on two main factors: longer life spans and lower fertility (Istat, 2017).

The first is strictly linked to the increase of life expectancy at birth (80,6 years for male, 85,1 years for female) and to the death decrease in older age (life expectancy at 65 is 19,1 years for male, 22,4 years for female). The second is due to low fertility rates (1,34 child per woman) and to the advanced maternal age at delivery (31,7). On the other hand, the youngest part of the society (0-14 years) represents only 13,5% of the total population, confirming the strong decrease of birth rates: in 2016 the lowest of Italian history.

Future tendencies go in the same direction, confirming a progressive ageing of the Italian population. Comparing demographic data trends such as fertility, death and migration rates, the future population structure will be quite different from the paradigmatic age pyramid, presenting an imbalance in favour of the oldest population groups. According to this data, Italy is facing - and will face in the future - a "demographic debt" towards future generations in terms of social security, health expenditure and welfare state sustainability. In fact, the elderly dependency ratio has been growing in the last ten years passing from 30,5% (2007) to 34,8% (2017), together with the

4_ Spring 2017 students: Steven Switzer, Adam Bronfin, Kai Walcott, Rachel Liu, Ehab Ebeid, Edna Samron, Tishya Rao, Graham Murphy, Lan Luo, Raphael Paul Laude, Madeline Galvin, Brooke Shin, Shariff Hussam, Amelia Visnauskas, Raquel Blandon, Joshua Glaser, Eduardo Carmelo, Gray Brakke.

5_ Final Spring 2017 materials can be downloaded here <https://aap.cornell.edu/academics/crp/undergraduate/rome-neighborhood-studies/>; issue briefs on neighborhoods engagement available here <http://www.generazioneurbana.it/portfoliio/engaged-cornell/>

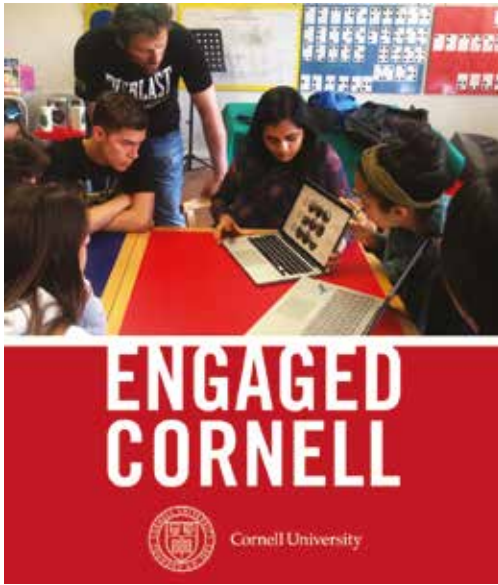


Fig.2 Gli studenti del Rome Workshop durante un focus group con degli studenti liceali nell'ambito delle attività di coinvolgimento della popolazione locale sostenute da Engaged Cornell, foto di Serena Muccitelli.

ageing index, from 142,3% in 2007 to 165,3% in 2017.

The demographic shift toward ageing societies has significant consequences for the well-being of society and for its economic development. These need to be reminded as:

- economic implications: shrinking working population and change in local revenue, ageing workforce, rising public spending in health and social care, and urban infrastructure and form not always fitted for an ageing society.
- social implications: risk of social isolation, possible limited accessibility to employment, healthcare, social care services, housing and community and housing affordability.

The challenges presented by the ageing trend will be particularly pronounced in metropolitan areas, where the increase in the number of older people is critical (OECD 2015) as well as in rural areas (see the Italian National Strategy for Inner areas⁶, where growing ageing population is identified as a critical factor for the regional development) .

Social Policies: the unseen layer that affects family life

An ageing society, as here depicted, asks for consistent answers to policy makers. Also the youngest part of the population, children, requires similar attention. These two ends of lifecycle (or age spectrum), one increasing, the other decreasing, need to be accompanied and supported by a puzzle of actors: state, market and families.

Historically, countries set up different assets to meet the care needs of children and elderly, combining a different mix of state, market and family participation (Ferrera 2007).

Italy has a peculiar path in care policy design and development: in the past, care issues were quite totally passed on to families, in particular to women. In the current context of a growing need for care services, of a reduced ability of families to fulfill these needs (also due to increasing female employment) and of demographic challenges, the absence of public support is utterly evident as families are forced to look to market solutions to their care issues. In Italy the demand for care services did not find solution in the expansion of public provision nor in the public regulation and support to care arrangements. On the contrary, what happened was the rise of a hybrid combination of informal care and loosely regulated and little supported care market. A framework of the Italian trajectory in early childhood and education (ECEC) policies and on long term care (LTC) policies will help to understand the impact of social policies - often not perceived in their core role - on family life.

⁶ For further details see the official website <http://www.agenziacoesione.gov.it/it/arint/>

ECEC policies followed in Italy two directions, depending on the child's age. Under age 3 *crèches* are provided both by public and private actors: municipalities are in charge of implementing them even if major territorial disparities still remain, due to a lack of national and regional standards and adequate funding. *Crèches* fees are decided by municipalities and can depend on family income; often they can be unsustainable for families, especially if they are forced to apply in the private market. On the other hand, childcare for children from 3 to 6 years, is free of charge because its provision is a national responsibility (since 1968), reaching almost full coverage through state, municipal, private publicly recognized facilities.

LTC policies are weak and fragmented among different administrative levels. The municipal level is in charge of providing care services and means tested financial support to families, but it suffers from limited national and regional guidelines and funding to be sustainable. Furthermore, municipalities offer home care services, but these are poorly developed and available only limited hours per week. The regional level offers only a limited availability of home and residential health care services, forcing a large number of dependent adults to live at home. The national level provides a cash allowance for disabled adults: although it is the most important intervention for older dependent people, it was not designed as a care policy.

These two policy fields had an intense request of review in the 1990s and 2000s as a consequence of the decline of family care availability due to growing female employment. While childcare witnessed an increased use of non municipal and private facilities (not income related and often difficult for most families to afford), for elderly there was primary reliance on the private care market based on domestic work and female immigration. This is the Italian well known phenomenon of *badanti*, migrant women, often undocumented, working in the gray market and living with the older dependent person. What happened was a policy freeze: weak care arrangements and new social demands were not considered by policy makers as a social problem warranting a structural reform. As a consequence, a market shift took place. This happened for a combination of structural and institutional factors:

- strong budget constraints, an inefficient, particularistic and clientelistic public administration, an opaque political system and a structure of inter-institutional relationships that inhibits the construction of national policy fields are responsible for the limited mobilization of social and political actors claiming structural reforms;
- extensive gray market, labor force deregulation, availability and tolerance of undocumented migrants and monetary transfers for elderly people led to the creation of little regulated care markets and to a pressure reduction for substantial reform.

Short-term interests of different social actors (families, state, local welfare agencies, migrant care workers) converged on the reproduction of the basic features of the system: overload of family responsibilities, limited citizenship rights, minimization of the costs of care and transfer of these costs into the care labor force.

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“ *Engaged Cornell, a community based participatory research* è un'iniziativa della Cornell

University, nata all'interno del *Rome Workshop*, un laboratorio di analisi urbana che ogni anno porta un gruppo di studenti di urbanistica ad esplorare i quartieri della realtà Romana.

I risultati dei workshop con i cittadini contribuiranno a costruire il discorso sulla città multigenerazionale, con il supporto della Biennale dello Spazio pubblico e di GU | Generazione Urbana

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Urban regeneration in the context of multigenerational planning

Urban planning has clearly a pivotal role in ensuring the multigenerational and intergenerational development of cities: it affects different dimensions of city life through a wide set of policies and interventions. Mobility, for instance, is one of the main fields of action of multigenerational planning, as well as one of the more discussed. The aim is to widen mobility, reduce congestion and traffic - with positive effects on air quality, develop and integrate policies on public, private and shared transport, promote the enhancement of safe walkability. Planning can influence multigenerational livability in cities when designing public green spaces or natural parks as well. Finally, urban renewal and urban regeneration interventions have a high potential to impact on urban multigenerationality.

Urban regeneration is particularly important in the Italian context, which is affected by an extended economic crisis that, combined with austerity policies, is impacting the real estate market and urban economics at large. The crisis has already produced a significant shift in the urban development framework, causing the end of the expansionist approach that has characterized planning practice and urban regulation in the last decades. In search for alternative measures, the planning discourse is now concentrated on urban regeneration as a more sustainable approach.

Regeneration can be considered an urban strategic policy, very effective in integrating environmental concerns with social and economic standards, thus capable of fostering a more attractive, cohesive and economically dynamic city. It concerns features opposing the consumption of both peri-urban and urban natural and agricultural land, and promoting the transformation of the existing city, such as:

- reducing sprawl;
- the renaturalization of a portion of unoccupied ground and natural systems;
- the selection of areas already inserted in the built environment for urban transformation;
- the renewal of existing buildings (dismissed or not energetically performative);
- the functional integration of facilities;
- the densification of neighborhoods and infill development.

As a consequence, Italian planning is currently more focused on modeling transformation processes than on new developments (interventions, models) suitable for multigenerational urbanism.

In the context of this debate, the regeneration approach is particularly valuable since it can contribute to restore social cohesion and the fundamental rights of citizens of all ages. Features such as labour, education, health, housing, public participation and recognition of cultural diversity can indeed successfully be addressed when working within the existing city. For instance, infill or densification can be paired with social objectives such as providing a good degree of *mixité* to urban context, in terms of social and age diversification, or providing local integrated services for all ages, fostering participation of elders and families and community engagement at large. Many examples can be found, to show how innovative social policies and interventions can be integrated into the strategic framework of urban

Fig.3_ Locandina distribuita nei quartieri oggetto del Rome Workshop per coinvolgere gli abitanti nelle iniziative organizzate nel territorio, realizzata da Serena Muccitelli.

regeneration. Nevertheless, although regeneration offers the possibility to be a multigenerational approach, it does not always succeed in fulfilling this objective. In order to avoid regeneration becoming a “missed opportunity”, planners must help the public body provide clearer and stronger indications capable of addressing the provision of multigenerational features in cities’ redevelopment.

Exploring urban multigenerationality: themes and places

This thematic issue of *iQuaderni di UrbanisticaTre* has to be read as a dialogue around the key themes that emerged from the students’ field work on in four Roman neighborhoods. These differ by their localization within the city, their physical and design characteristics, and their social and economic features. More specifically the neighborhoods of Piazza Alessandria and San Giovanni are located in the first belt outside the historical center defined by the Aurelian Walls; the first was designed as a bourgeois neighborhood in the Twenties, the latter as a middle-labour class from the Thirties to the Fifties. The other two neighborhoods are born as working class settlements, but while Tufello was realised by the Fascist Regime during the 1920’s as a public housing complex, Pineta Sacchetti developed informally after the Second World War.

The conducted research found its richness within this diversity, and each neighborhood was illustrative of a relevant theme for multigenerational planning, as discussed in the following pieces. The articles establish a continuous dialogue unraveling from the design challenges posed by the contemporary city, to governance and policy features to be acknowledged in order to deal with the challenges of a multigenerational approach. The dialogue gets then enriched with historical hints, concepts and methodology, which all aim at adding the needed complexity to the debate for multigenerational planning and policy making.

The publication is opened by the article on Piazza Alessandria, a central wealthy neighborhood at the core of a regeneration project that marginalized the weakest part of the local population, leaving poor public space and no facility for the youngest or the oldest residents, who are not engaged, nor targeted by the regeneration programme. In the domain of physical environment challenges, this case revealed that, despite its good design, the neighborhood is highly unfriendly to elderly and children due to its poor norms of use and maintenance, which negatively affect walkability in the neighborhood.

From central Rome the issue moves to its periphery: Pineta Sacchetti is an unplanned neighborhood where poor urban design and maintenance - that make it totally child and elder -unfriendly - is overcome by an invisible asset of placemaking represented by slow flow, shared history, sense of place and norms of reciprocity. Cellamare dialogues with these features, widening the discussion on Rome peripheries and their peculiarities both from an urban and social point of view. Great space is devoted to depict the protagonism of local citizens in their neighborhoods’ development.

Vazzoler’s article on the model of TOD (Transit oriented development), its history and key concepts, investigates one of the core aspects composing a multigenerational approach to planning: urban mobility. The piece introduces the criticalities that emerged in the field, in the San Giovanni neighborhood. Very central and connected, it depicts the example of the “dark side”

of a TOD from a multigenerational point of view, where the working age and transient population interests are predominant in comparison to those of children and elders, who suffer from the congestion, poor maintenance of public space and service mix oriented to non residents, all features that appear to threaten their “right to stay”.

The dialogue proceeds from the “right to stay” to exploring “the right to the city”, a concept applied in the last low-income, public housing case study: Tufello. Here, thanks to strong grassroots institutions and to the support of city authorities, an inclusive community was created, especially for children and elders. The institutional challenges highlighted that a cross-sectoral involvement with both top-down and bottom-up input helped develop a child and age-friendly environment.

The final article, by Giovanni Attili, opens a wide reflection on the policy shift able to recognize the power and importance of grassroots organizations in city development, starting a new care policy.

In this understanding, this last contribution can be read as a theoretical framework for the issue, which aims at eliciting the debate on urban child and age friendliness to move from mere physical aspects to also social and immaterial ones: an enabling social environment, capable of giving voice and visibility for citizens, regardless of age, appears indeed to be as important as material conditions in determining well-being in life. Hence, social and physical facilities and services should also be integrated and mutually enhancing to support children to grow and people to age.

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