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## Planning for all generations

Per una pianificazione multigenerazionale

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in questo numero  
in this issue

Topic/Tema >

## Planning for all generations

### Per una pianificazione multigenerazionale

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Viviana Andriola & Serena Muccitelli

Generazione Urbana\_p. 5

#### Framing a multigenerational approach to planning. The Italian context

Per una pianificazione multigenerazionale. Il caso italiano

Mildred E. Warner\_p. 17

#### Multigenerational Planning: Theory and Practice

La pianificazione multigenerazionale: teoria e pratica

Gregory Smith\_p. 25

#### The pedagogy of an urban studies workshop focused on age-friendliness in selected Rome neighborhoods

La pedagogia di un laboratorio di ricerca urbana sulla condizione  
di vita di giovani ed anziani in alcuni quartieri di Roma

Adam Bronfin, Rachel Liu, Kai Walcott\_p. 33

#### Can Regeneration be Multigenerational? A case study of Piazza Alessandria

La rigenerazione urbana può essere multigenerazionale?  
Il caso studio di Piazza Alessandria

G. Brakke, A. Visnauskas, E. C. Dañobeytia, R. Blandon, J. Glasser\_p. 43

#### Path Dependence and Social Reciprocity in an Unplanned Neighborhood

Path dependence e rapporti sociali  
in un quartiere non pianificato

Carlo Cellamare\_p. 53

#### “Epiphanic” peripheries , re-appropriation of the city and dwelling quality

Periferie epifaniche, riappropriazione della città e qualità dell'abitare

Nicola Vazzoler\_p. **63**

**TOD: un racconto fra sostenibilità e accessibilità**

**TOD: a tale between sustainability and accessibility**

Madeleine Galvin\_p. **71**

**Living Next to a Transit Node: A Livability Audit of Age-Friendliness**

**Abitare vicino a un nodo di trasporto:**

**valutare la qualità della vita per bambini e anziani**

Tishya Rao, Ehab Ebeid, Graham Murphy, Edna Samron\_p. **79**

**Exercising the 'Right to Tufello' by Local Institutional Actors**

**Esercitare il "Diritto al Tufello"**

Giovanni Attili\_p. **89**

**Pratiche informali e istituzioni. Per una politica dell'attenzione**

**Informal practices and institutions. Towards a politics of attention**

**Apparati/Others >**

Profilo autori/**Authors bio** p. **98**

Parole chiave/**Keywords** p. **101**

# Framing a multigenerational approach to planning. The Italian context

Per una pianificazione multigenerazionale. Il caso italiano

A cura di / Edited by GU | Generazione Urbana<sup>1</sup>

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.*

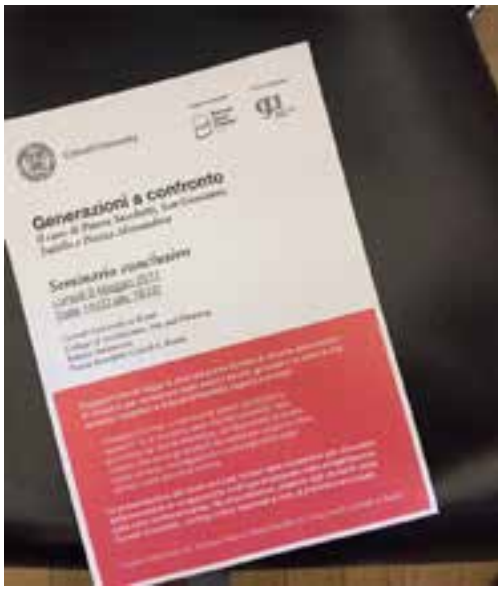
## Introduction

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 2060<sup>2</sup>. 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

<sup>1</sup> 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".

<sup>2</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/publications/european\\_economy/2014/pdf/ee8\\_en.pdf](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*<sup>3</sup>, 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 workshop<sup>4</sup> 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 communities<sup>5</sup>.

**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.

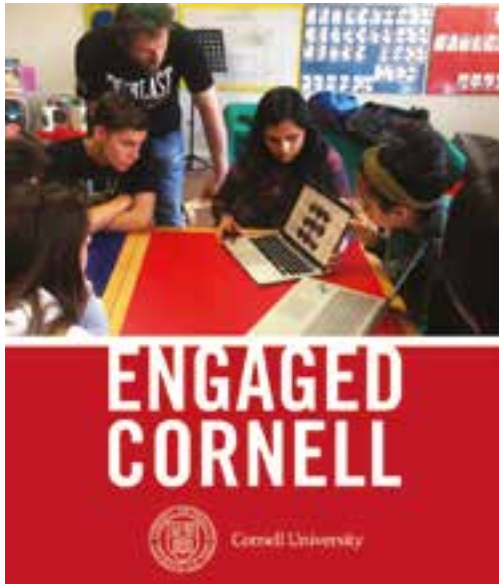
According to Italian statistics, in 2016 people over 65 are 22,3% of the total population, over 80 represent 6,8% and over 90 represent 2,2%. The high proportion of elderly in the total population depends on two main factors: longer life spans and lower fertility (Istat, 2017).

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/portfolio/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 areas<sup>6</sup>, 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.

<sup>6</sup> 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.

# TUFELLO... GENERAZIONI A CONFRONTO!

Un gruppo di studenti americani è in viaggio nei quartieri di Roma per leggere la città con gli occhi di diverse generazioni di cittadini e per conoscere i servizi, gli spazi e le attività che rendono i quartieri a misura di bambini, ragazzi e anziani.

“ *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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# Planning for all generations

Per una pianificazione multigenerazionale





**Roma,**  
**Piazza Alessandria**  
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# Multigenerational Planning: Theory and Practice

La pianificazione multigenerazionale: teoria e pratica

@ Mildred E. Warner |

# Multigenerational Planning |  
# Social and Physical Planning |  
# Cross Agency Partnerships |

# Pianificazione multigenerazionale |  
# Pianificazione sociale e fisica |  
# Cross Agency Partnership |

*Urban planners need to give greater attention to the needs of families with young children and to older adults. While planning has traditionally focused on working age adults, a broader view would give attention to the role of planning in creating communities that are good places to grow up, to work and to grow old. Demographic shifts toward an aging society have helped increase planners' attention to aging. But a focus on only one end of the life cycle is not enough. Planners need to address the needs of children as well as elders and their care givers. This article outlines the basic principles for a multigenerational planning approach. While planning has traditionally focused on physical design, a multigenerational planning requires planners also give attention to the social layer – and the importance of services and informal networks in ensuring access and social inclusion for all community members.*

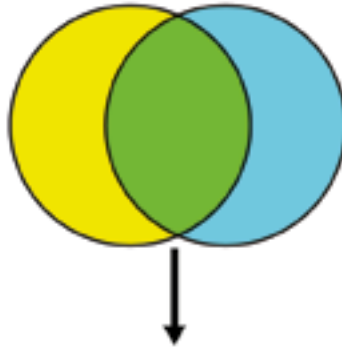
## Introduction

Advanced industrialized societies, like Italy, face the twin demographic challenges of an increasing percentage of older adults and a decline in the percentage of young children. This makes imperative the need for planning to give more attention to the needs of children and elders. While the World Health Organization (WHO) promotes age-friendly planning and UNICEF promotes child-friendly cities, there are many elements in common. WHO's eight domains include three focused on the traditional physical aspects of planning – housing, transportation and outdoor spaces. WHO's framework also includes five additional domains that are more focused on social



### Child-Friendly Cities

- Basic Services
- Safe Water
- Safe Streets
- Opportunity to Play
- Civic Participation
- Family Support
- Protection from Exploitation



Many Common Elements



### Age-Friendly Cities

- Housing
- Transportation
- Services (Health)
- Outdoor Spaces
- Communication
- Civic and Social Participation
- Respect

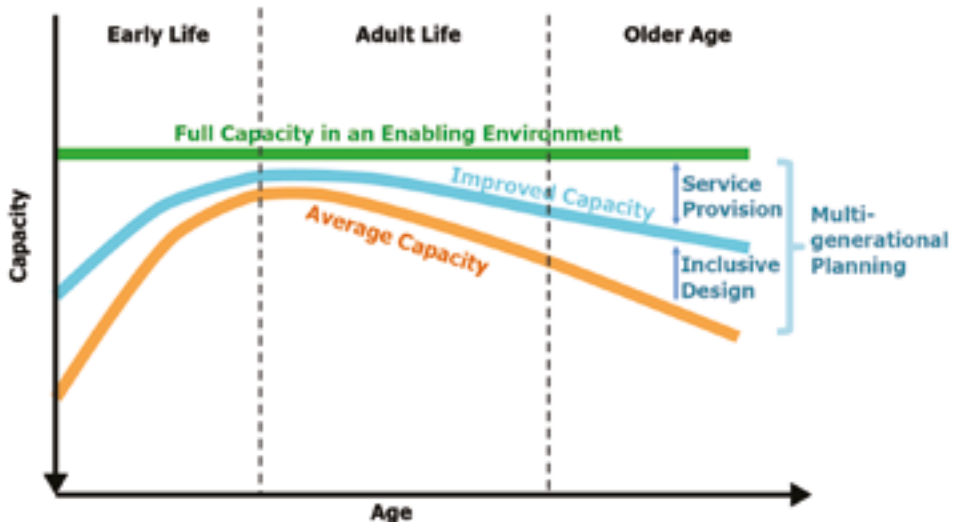
Fig.1 UNICEF and WHO – Domains and Common Elements.

aspects - services (especially health), communication, civic and social participation and respect for elders (WHO 2007). Likewise, UNICEF gives attention to both the physical aspects of planning - safe water, safe streets – as well as basic services, and the support needed for healthy child development - the opportunity to play, civic participation, family support and protection from exploitation (UNICEF 2004). While WHO and UNICEF promote separate initiatives in cities around the world, planners at the community level can build on the similarities to promote age-friendly planning that addresses the needs of all ages.

What these two frameworks argue and what the neighborhood case studies profiled later in this special issue make clear, is that planners need to give attention to both the physical and the social layers within a community. While physical planning and formal services are typically the primary focus of planners, equal attention also needs to be given to the social layer. Let’s look at each of these layers in turn.

#### Inclusive Design Promotes Access and Reduces Environmental Press

Environmental press occurs when the environment presents demands beyond a person’s ability (Murray 1938), and this is especially important for the very young and the very old (Lawton and Simon 1968). For example, if sidewalks are absent or in poor repair, this undermines walkability, especially for children and older adults, and it increases the environmental press they feel in their neighborhoods. As the neighborhood case studies in this special issue will show, environmental press is a significant problem in many Roman neighborhoods. For example, Pineta Sacchetti lacks sidewalks or transit within the hilly neighborhood (Blandon et al 2017) while in San Giovanni, pollution and congestion reduce access and undermine liveability for elders and children despite the transit oriented design of the neighborhood (Shin et al 2017). The literature shows that environmental press undermines



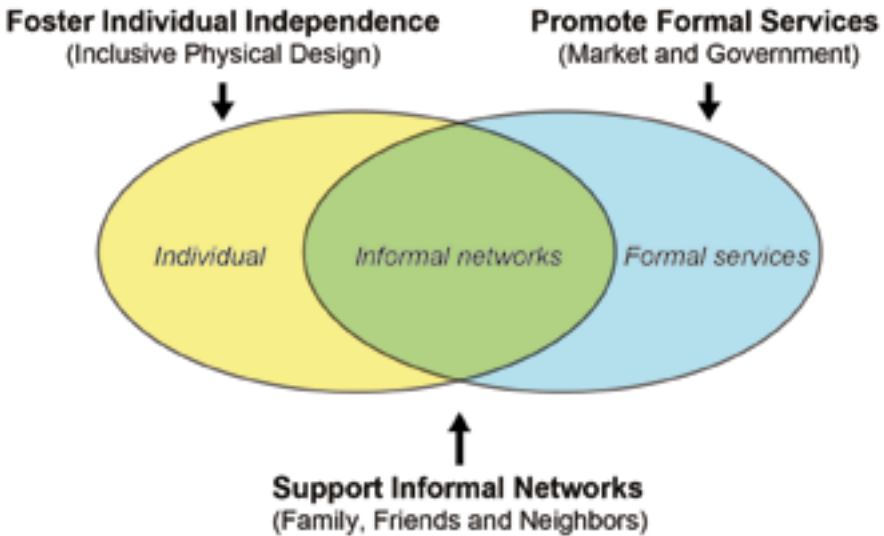
access of children and older adults to their neighborhoods and this can lead to chronic stress and negative physical and psychological health outcomes (Kerr et al 2012).

**Fig.2\_ Functionality Curve.**  
 Source: Warner et al. 2016,  
*Journal of Planning Education.*

Inclusive urban design reduces environmental stress and enhances the independence of all members of society (Farber et al 2011). Safe streets and sidewalks make it possible for young children and elders to navigate their neighborhoods independently. This independence promotes healthy child development and active aging, but it also relieves pressures of caregiving by other family members. So everyone benefits from an age-friendly planning approach. This is why age-friendly planning gives significant attention to physical design characteristics in the built environment – walkability, mixed use, nearby access to parks, healthy food and services, and a variety of housing types to meet the needs of young families and older adults (Israel & Warner 2006).

Figure 2 presents a functionality curve which shows how children increase their functionality and independence as they grow up (e.g. learn to walk, ride a bike, take public transit) (Warner et al. 2017). The figure also shows how functionality can be compromised among older adults who need more assistance with basic mobility as they age (Kalache & Kickbush 1997). Unsafe or inaccessible homes, transportation, businesses, public spaces, and neighborhoods present physical barriers that can keep elders isolated and more prone to depression, limit physical activity, and increase mobility problems. Inclusive design can enhance individual functionality and independence for both the young and the old – increasing the independence of both children, elders and their caregivers.

Figure 2 also shows a large gap exists in the ability of physical design to create fully enabled environments for children and older adults. Although good



**Fig.3\_** Three Roles of physical planning, which promotes inclusive design, helps meet demands of children and elders, good physical design alone is not sufficient. Services both complement inclusive design and ameliorate inadequate design as shown in the upper curve in Figure 2. This is why both the WHO and UNICEF frameworks give so much attention to services.

**Services and Informal Networks Can Overcome Deficiencies in Physical Design**

Planners typically give priority attention to transportation, housing, land use and economic development. However, human services are equally important. Neighborhoods must be good places to work, live and play. They must provide adequate caregiving support – through easy access to child care, elder care and the range of services children and elders needs for engagement in community life. Some of these services may be provided by government; but many are provided by the private market. “Third spaces” like cafes and local shops provide critical services for neighborhood residents who have limited geographical range. In addition to providing needed goods and services, such “third spaces” also provide places for social engagement and a sense of belonging. A study of services for elders in the US (Warner et al. 2016) found that market provision of services could be enhanced by planning for aging. This study, based on a survey of 1500 US communities in 2010, found public planning and engagement of elders in the planning process helps private entrepreneurs see new market possibilities in serving the needs of elders. A 2008 national US study of child friendly planning also found a critical role for participation of families with young children in explaining which communities were more likely to have family friendly planning and zoning codes (Warner & Rukus 2013).

Beyond formal market or government based services, planners need to give attention to informal family friend and neighbor networks. Access to

Are any of the following engaged in cross-agency partnership to serve children or seniors?

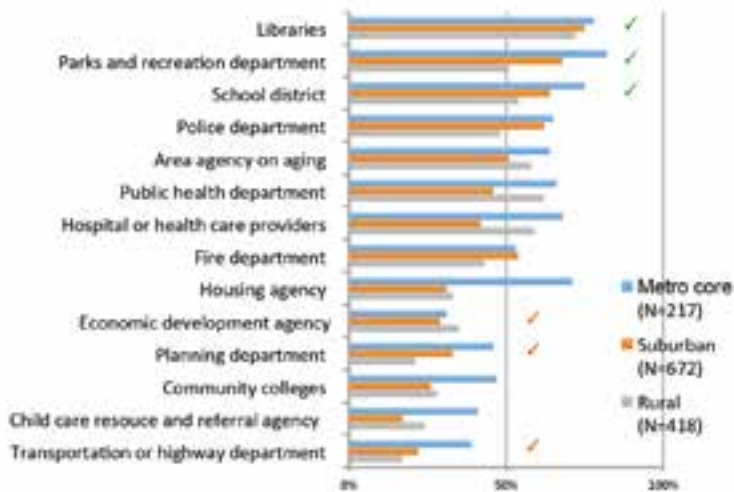


Fig.2 Cross Agency Partnerships. Source: Planning Across Generations Survey, 2013, 1478 city managers responding.

services for children and elders is heavily determined by their family friend and neighbor networks. A study in Sullivan County, NY found that elders and families with young children who did not have relatives living in the same community reported greater barriers to access (Tou & Stein 2017). Informal networks can provide many services that enable older adults to age in place – a neighbor helps with groceries or transport, or in watching over a child or elder. These networks are critical to building community and to enhancing individual independence. See Figure 3.

Planners typically give most attention to physical design, which promotes individual independence, and formal government or market-based services. Informal networks are often ignored. But they may be the most important layer in helping to create child and age friendly communities. Informal networks provide more than service support and access, they also help create neighborhood norms of sharing and caring. The case studies which follow illustrate how norms can enhance access, for example, slowing traffic flow to make streets walkable even in neighborhoods without sidewalks such as Pineta Sacchetti (Bandon et al 2017). This makes age friendly neighborhoods possible even where physical design is inadequate. But norms cut both ways. The case studies which follow also show how norms can undermine access, for example, when cars park in cross walks and block sidewalks as shown in the case study of Piazza Alessandria (Bronfin et al. 2017). Norms and informal networks are critical to promoting child and age friendly planning.

### Collaborative Planning is the Way Forward

While planners often focus primarily on the physical layer – transportation, land use, the built environment - multigenerational planning requires a broader view. Expanding planners’ remit from physical design to service delivery requires planning for a broader range of services in neighborhoods. Planners need to pay attention to services such as child care and elder care.

It also requires looking beyond planners' traditional focus on land use, transportation and economic development, and building partnerships with different types of neighborhood agencies. Collaboration is key. In a 2013 national survey of over 1500 communities in the US, Choi and Warner (2015) found that libraries and schools are key partners for cross agency partnerships to meet the needs of children and elders (see Figure 4).

The case studies in this special issue showcase the critical role played by schools and libraries in helping neighborhoods become more child and age friendly, especially in peripheral lower income neighborhoods like Tufello (Ebed et al. 2017). However, Choi and Warner also found that the Housing, Transportation and Economic Development agencies, which are the traditional focus of planning, are the least likely to engage in cross agency partnerships to meet the needs of children and families. This needs to change. The opportunity for planners to reach out to new partners at the community level offers the potential to develop a more responsive planning to the needs of an aging society (Lehning, Chun & Scharlach, 2007).

### **Conclusion**

Our communities are changing. An aging population and the need to provide more support to families with young children requires a broader planning approach. Traditional planning has been biased toward the needs of workers, typically assumed to be male. Planners can no longer adhere to an androcentric approach that fails to adequately address the needs of children or elders and the women who still bear the primary responsibility for their care (Micklows and Warner 2014). A primary focus on physical design is not enough. We must also address the social layer – public participation, community norms and services, especially care services for children and elders as noted in the editorial overview to this special issue (Andriola & Muccitelli 2017).

Planners must create communities for all ages – neighborhoods that are good places to grow up, to work and to age in place. 21<sup>st</sup> century planning requires an integrated approach that gives attention to all ages and those both working and living in the urban environment. A multigenerational approach is key to neighborhood vitality. To create communities livable for all ages, the needs of children and elders must be considered alongside the needs of working adults.

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**Roma,**  
**Parco Urbano**  
**del Pineto**  
*Gray Brakke*



# The pedagogy of an urban studies workshop focused on age-friendliness in selected Rome neighborhoods

@ Gregory Smith |

La pedagogia di un laboratorio di ricerca urbana sulla condizione di vita di giovani ed anziani in alcuni quartieri di Roma

# Urban research |  
# Neighborhood studies |  
# Pedagogy |  
# Rome |

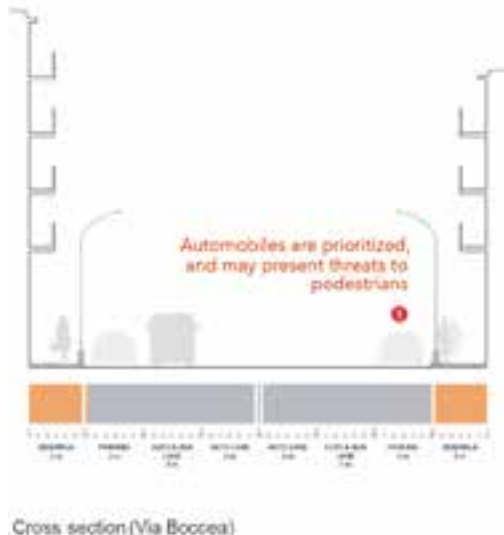
# Ricerca urbana |  
# Studi di quartiere |  
# Pedagogia |  
# Roma |

*This contribution sets out the methodological foundations of the research conducted in the 2017 undergraduate Rome Workshop. The approach started with a focus on age friendliness, articulated within a research framework taking into consideration the material and nonmaterial features of the urban environment. Systematic street surveys were combined with statistical research and ethnographic explorations in a multimethod approach capable of revealing the interplay between planning activities and spontaneous features of community organization. Theoretical insights were provided by such authors as Aldo Rossi and Colin Rowe. The first author outlines the importance of establishing a research area which reflects the organic growth of the city, and calls attention to primary urban elements capable of propelling the process of urban transformation. Colin Rowe insists that the city is a didactic instrument poised between utopian aspiration and locally grounded tradition. These and other theoretical frameworks allow student researchers to see their activities in broader perspective. In this particular edition of the workshop age friendliness was the predetermined focus, the exploration of which built on a specific literature review and drew attention to the special needs of children and elders as research subjects.*

.... One must think of the city as inherently a didactic instrument ...

Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter

Urban research is a critical skill for the urban studies professional. This discipline traces descent from the Chicago School in the 1920s, and over the decades has evolved in multiple ways built on diverse theoretical models concerning the city (Low 1999).



**Fig.1** From Blandon et al. (2017, p. 20) Pineta Sacchetti street analysis.

Colin Rowe's research seems particularly apt in our case. His writing derives largely from first-hand explorations of Rome, and is particularly revealing when he notes that the city is a didactic instrument aiming to communicate meaning to those experiencing it (1978, p. 121). Part of Rowe's concern is to explore the interface between the city as a utopia and the city as the expression of traditional practice.

Rome the Eternal City provides a unique opportunity to explore the shifting meanings of utopia and tradition, and explore how these forces have shaped the urban environment. Rome is the product of formal planning with presumed utopian aspirations, as well as informal citizen practice in a weakly regulated physical environment (Cellammare 2014). The encounter between ideal aspiration and actual citizen experience in Rome's vast physical territory gives rise to a range of urban settings affording unique pedagogical opportunities.

Aldo Rossi also provides significant support for our research. His idea of the study area (1982, p. 63) is fundamental to researchers operating in Rome. Our workshop always starts with provisional boundaries for what can be considered a neighborhood, and leaves room for later adjustments as the group gains familiarity with the social and physical processes which define the city.

A previous publication (Smith et al. 2014) described the pedagogical underpinnings of the Rome Workshop, an undergraduate urban studies course offered at Cornell in Rome over more than twenty years. The workshop takes advantage of Rome's diversity to create an environment in which student urbanists can develop skills in exploring the city using various methods, including a modified ethnographic approach (Duneier 2014). The 2014 publication described a research strategy starting with a methodologically grounded survey of the neighborhood as a physical site, and progressing to an analytical and prescriptive assessment of city planning. This open-ended approach accommodates any range of student interests.

During the spring 2017 edition of the Workshop we chose to reverse our modus operandi, and started with a strong thematic focus which was then fleshed out following techniques of investigation similar to those described in 2014. This choice presented unusual challenges, since available research material did not always facilitate empirical exploration of the chosen topic. Yet the experiment yielded a body of thematic material warranting the current publication. The theme was the age-friendly city, a concept which can be defined in abundant ways. For recent academic discussion of the topic consult Warner et al. 2017.

The usual Workshop setup involves the concomitant exploration of three

or four different neighborhoods by separate research groups. Situated in a single municipal authority, this approach allows insights into how the city admits different responses which often have little to do with physical design itself. The concept of loose space (Frank & Stevens 2007) is particularly relevant here. During this semester two groups of five students each were formed, along with two groups of four each. The groups were selected in such a way as to balance skills, especially language, writing, graphic representation, and statistical analysis.

It is essential in all social science research that the process of investigation not put the subjects at risk (Ocejo 2012, p. 11). Investigations involving elders and children raise special ethical dilemmas. Research conducted in the Rome Workshop has indicative value alone, since it lacks the systematic character of professional research. Nonetheless every effort is made to reach out to the research subjects, especially children and their adult gatekeepers (Morrow 1996, p. 101), to ensure that the aims of our activities be fully disclosed. Disclosure involves not only data collection, but also the assessment and dissemination of findings. Community consent is sought during each stage of the research process.

Academic research necessarily flows from a literature review. In this particular edition of the Workshop students were exposed to a range of international studies concerning the age-friendly city, with a strong American component and a significant focus on Italy. The Italian context was explored not only through the literature, but through seminars with local experts from Rome and beyond.

The research areas were selected as a contrasting suite of experiences. The usual research progression is to start with a theoretical and historical consideration of the city, and a review of research techniques available for empirical exploration. From this start students take possession of their neighborhoods with the assistance of Rome-based professional urban researchers. The first step in the empirical process is to walk through all the publicly accessible portions of the research area. Using appropriate survey instruments, students document the physical features of the neighborhood, and begin to engage local citizens concerning insights that go beyond urban design.

Given the importance played by the research theme, from the outset students were invited to consider what physical features of the city can contribute to age-friendliness. This reflection was formalized as a checklist explored at the street level. The checklist was enriched as the research progressed, including informal practices promoting age friendliness.

The publicly available final reports contain the research findings organized as a cohesive assessment of age friendliness in four neighborhoods.



Fig.2\_ From Bronfin et al. (2017, p. 33) Piazza Alessandria figure ground study.



**Fig.3** From Shin et al. (2017, p. 55) *San Giovanni guide to the livability audit*.

The Piazza Alessandria report (Bronfin et al. 2017), for instance, starts out with a literature review which gives special importance to UN and UNICEF frameworks for assessing age friendliness. These frameworks reference both physical and non-physical features of the urban environment. Historical background to the neighborhood follows thematic and methodological considerations. Historical research is partly text based, but also relies on citizen accounts tracing more recent developments and those undocumented in written sources. In some neighborhoods, like self-built Pineta Sacchetti, the historical research is more complex owing to limited formal planning; the very name of the neighborhood as locally known finds no reference in the published literature (Blandon et al. 2017).

The neighborhood survey yields various products, including a street analysis (e.g., Figure 1) and a study of the urban layout (e.g., Figure 2) using figure ground maps (Trancik 1986). In a neighborhood like Piazza Alessandria, the figure ground maps illustrate the intentions

of the planners in realizing an organized environment bringing together public and private spaces. In self-designed neighborhoods these intentions are not clearly stated, and fleshing out the distinction between public and private requires detailed ethnographic exploration. Building typology studies tell the story of the neighborhood's historical evolution and reveal key parameters such as density (Reale 2011). Land use maps complete the survey of the physical environment.

A critical issue in Rome is car mobility and car storage. Piazza Alessandria was designed in the 1880s, taking into account the then-prevailing needs of foot and vehicle traffic. Traffic patterns have changed, and issues of maintenance and use today create hazards for local pedestrians who note that the neighborhood is dangerous to walk. Poor maintenance and improper use, especially owing to vehicle storage, was mapped in an exploration of the neighborhood bringing together design, maintenance and use in a detailed assessment of local urban quality of life. The quality of life concept is discussed in Ruggeri's study of livability (2013) from which some groups drew, while a now classic source is contained in the Manifesto formulated by Jacobs and Appleyard (1987).

A separate feature of the investigation concerns available statistical material. Neighborhood data are compared to Rome scale, to reveal population age, density, housing and family size, with inferences about the social and economic character of the neighborhood. These data are often incomplete, and must be supplemented with observations and citizen interviews. A fundamental feature of research is engaging community actors, a complex process owing to linguistic and cultural barriers, the problem of reaching out to key actors, and the logistics of organizing interviews in the short time afforded by a semester in Rome. A good example of interview methodology

is contained in the Piazza Alessandria report, adapted from a study comparing two European cities. The report describes methodology in relevant detail (page 79), including the interview strategy, the questions asked, and a discussion of the locations where the interviews were carried out. The contents of the interviews are tabulated in a detailed appendix. These intercept interviews focused on three groups: children with their parents, working age citizens, and elders. A total of twenty interviews were collected.

Having established the general framework in which age-friendliness can be assessed, all groups created forms of community engagement. The most ambitious form deployed this semester was in Pineta Sacchetti, where thanks to the support of a local public school, student researchers engaged local children in an exercise of participatory photography. The methodological foundation for this investigation borrowed from work published by Sancar and Severcan (2010). This exercise, along with a series of interviews concerning the memories of elders, revealed an unexpected level of age friendliness in this relatively unregulated environment. A well-designed and affluent neighborhood like Piazza Alessandria exhibited lower quality of life than underprivileged Pineta Sacchetti, questioning the value of design in predicting citizen experience.

Other neighborhood explorations also indicated the relativity of design in predicting quality of life. The San Giovanni group (Shin et al. 2017) borrowed from Deni Ruggeri’s methodology (2013) in a livability audit generating findings that revealed a strong livability contrast within a homogeneous built environment (Figure 3). The Tufello group (Ebeid et al. 2017) was explicit in describing how built form was not enough to understand local quality of life. This finding was achieved through an extensive series of exercises (e.g., Figure 4) engaging local citizens, associations and institutions.

As a whole these investigations demonstrated that a study of the physical forms of the city is a fundamental starting point for the investigation of an urban environment, but by itself is not enough. The city plan, when it exists, is a key force propelling the transformation of the city (Rossi 1982, p. 99). But so are non-material elements (ibid., p.87). This indicates that planning by itself does not predict the full range of responses to the city, a claim supported by our research.

This general finding resonates with the writings of Colin Rowe: utopian design is only one element in the urban experience (1978, p.121). Even in the absence of a utopian design, traditions, themselves a dynamic urban force, may encourage local practices which endow place with a positive aura. The empirical research described here confirms the importance of showing how theoretical abstractions play out on the ground. As Jacobs (1985, p.7) noted long ago, grappling with the effort to understand the city can only be mastered through first-hand experience.



Fig.4\_ From Ebeid et al. (2017, p. 30) Tufello mapping exercise.  
on the following page:  
Fig.5\_ Rome Workshop methodology poster, Kay Walcott.



ROME NEIGHBORHOOD STUDIES

# METHODOLOGY

CRP 4160: ROME WORKSHOP

"The specific methodology has changed over the years, but the focus has remained that of a practically oriented experiential learning seminar. The experience is intended to provide a practical application to the text-based learning students have pursued in their undergraduate curriculum as planning students."



## Observation

The first steps of the project required students to observe the physical characteristics of their communities, considering building and street typologies in an effort to assess their child-and age-friendliness. This involved 4-6 hour site visits at least once a week.

## Engagement

Through engagement with local residents, community groups and institutions, students collected information to tell a story about the social dynamics and governance structures and agents that shape their neighborhoods. Engagement activities varied between groups, from intercept interviews to photography workshops.



## Studio Work

A series of pin-ups, presentations and drafts throughout the course helped to refine the text, maps and figures that comprise their final report. Students were also given the opportunity to contribute a journal article to *Urbanistica Tre* in collaboration with *Generazione Urbana*, a local group with aims of making discourse about urban planning more accessible and widespread.

Cornell in Rome  
Spring 2017  
Funded by Engaged Cornell



PIAZZA ALESSANDRIA

PINETA SACCHETTI

SAN GIOVANNI

TUFELLO

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# Can Regeneration be Multigenerational? A case study of Piazza Alessandria

## La rigenerazione urbana può essere multigenerazionale? Il caso studio di Piazza Alessandria

@ Adam Bronfin |  
@ Rachel Liu |  
@ Kai Walcott |

# Regeneration |  
# Multigenerational  
planning |  
# Public space |

# Rigenerazione |  
# Pianificazione  
multigenerazionale |  
# Spazio pubblico |

*This research proposes that regeneration, a process typically geared towards the working age population at the expense of the young and old, can be multigenerational. We rely on a case study of Piazza Alessandria, a wealthy neighborhood northeast of Rome's historical center. Over a period of four months, we studied the community's physical and social environment to assess its child- and age-friendliness. For our analysis of the physical environment, we considered pedestrian infrastructure and communal spaces for rest and play, comparing them to the literature's pre-established criteria for child- and age-friendly cities. To understand the social environment, we relied on intercept interviews to glean user perceptions and experiences of local regeneration projects. Although some regeneration interventions neglected to engage community members and were perceived to diminish the community's character, other interventions were much more inclusive and improved public spaces for both the young and the old. This was important in a neighborhood that, being wealthy, saw one of its major challenges to be the privileging of private space over public space. High connectivity via a range of transit options and a diversity of services for various needs were two other factors that, while attracting working age adults, also catered to the needs of children and the elderly. The regeneration efforts in Piazza Alessandria prove to have both positive and negative effects on the neighborhood for all ages. The community, thereby, serves as an example that regeneration can indeed be multigenerational, provided the concerns of each group are taken into consideration and every group is actively engaged in the planning process.*

### Considering Children and the Elderly in Regeneration

When urban areas deteriorate, or their decline is perceived to be imminent, cities often engage in a process of urban regeneration to avert or reverse the decline. This process — laden with connotations of top-down overhauls and eventual gentrification of blighted urban areas — has been defined as a comprehensive vision that attempts to introduce long-term solutions to economic, physical, social and environmental problem of a community (Roberts 2016). But these solutions are often not targeted at everyone. Cameron (1992) shows regeneration efforts on city centers favors young, single adults. By focusing on working-age adults, regeneration pushes out the retail needs



**Fig.1** Site map of Piazza Alessandria, Rome. Image: Google Maps edited by Rachel Liu.

of the poor and the elderly (Pascual-Molinas and Ribera-Fumaz 2009). Inadequate attention has been given to children even though well functioning neighborhoods are able to integrate young people into community life (Elsey 2004, Chawla and Malone 2003). Other regeneration initiatives have targeted outside users — students and tourists — effectively undermining social structures and disregarding the needs of residents (Murzyn 2006). These trends arise from the capitalistic approach to cities, which marginalizes the two age groups at the peripheries of the life course — children and the elderly — deemed to be dependents or burdens on the system (Warner et al. 2013).

Some scholars have responded to this bias by making an economic case for children and the elderly. Warner et al. (2013) argue that families with young children contribute to economic growth because of their large spending, their demand for child-targeted services, and the potential investment in a productive future workforce leading to long-term growth. The WHO (2015b) proposes that the elderly contribute to the economy through formal channels of taxation and consumer spending, and informal modes such as care provision to grandchildren that allow parents to participate more actively in the workforce. Others have defended the interests of children and the elderly more emphatically — they constitute significant segments of the urban population regardless of their economic utility to society. Biggs and Carr (2015) contend that recognizing peripheral demographic groups conceived to be less economically productive “implies that cities are more than simply rat-runs between centers of work, consumption and closed door domesticity” (p. 109). Buffel et al. (2012) posit a “paradox of neighborhood participation”, in which the elderly tend to spend the most time in their neighborhood while being among the last engaged in decision-making processes, a juxtaposition of de facto and de jure participation in the right to the city. Both economic and rights-based approaches highlight the necessity to address, if



not prioritize, the needs of the two peripheral age groups in planning.

The UN and the WHO have established prototypical frameworks to address these needs. UNICEF's (2004) Child-Friendly Cities model advocates a rights-based approach on the basis of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It defines a series of twelve rights "of every young citizen". The WHO's (2007) Age-Friendly Cities project lists eight topic areas that cover the "structures, environment, services and policies" of a city. The manifestos have been fundamental to the development of child- and age-friendly planning respectively. But while successive discourse has expanded the conceptualization of each field, there has been relatively limited literature consolidating the two; child- and age-friendly approaches have predominantly remained discrete in practice and in theory (Biggs & Carr 2015, p. 104).

The convergence of child- and age-specific interests has been termed 'multigenerational' or 'intergenerational' planning, which recognizes potentially complementary and synergistic overlaps in the needs of these two age groups. This can include the physical environment (e.g. safe and walkable neighborhoods, access to public spaces, availability of fresh food and reliable public transport to support independent mobility), social elements (e.g. welfare services, civic engagement), or a combination of both. For example, schools that serve as community centers and senior centers might also offer childcare and afterschool programs, and can thereby simultaneously provide for the physical and social needs of both elders and children (Rowles & Bernard 2013, pp. 227-8). Lui et al. (2009) have also suggested that bottom-up efforts tend to be more successful than top-down ones. A synthesis of criteria from the WHO (2007), UNICEF (2004) and Haikkola & Horelli (2002) yielded eight general domains: transportation, public spaces, housing, services, environmental quality, communication and information, respect and social inclusion, and civic participation. This list establishes a comprehensive pic-

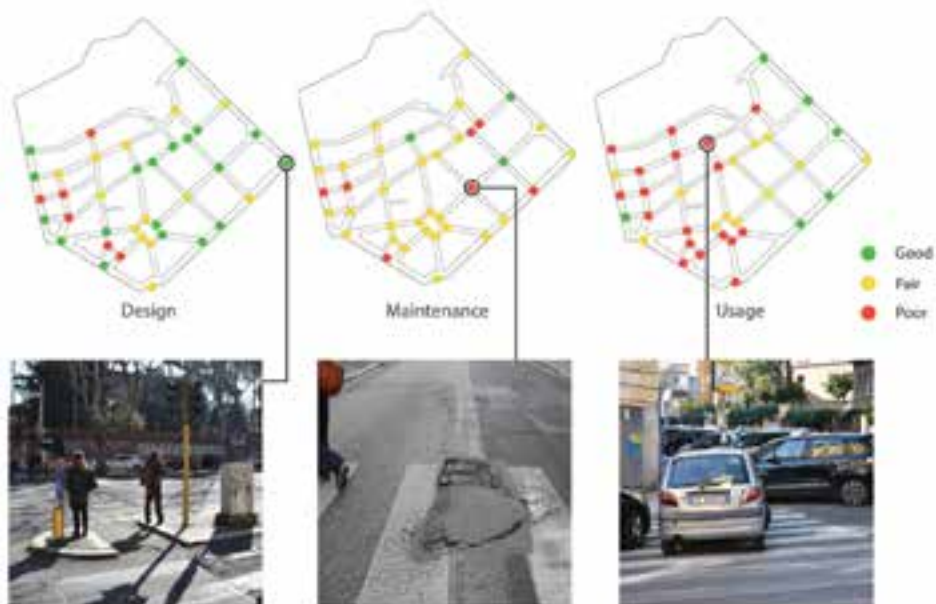
**Fig.2** The Peroni courtyard is occupied by older residents in the morning but is then overrun by working-age professionals by the 1 pm lunch hour. Image: Adam Bronfin.

# WALKABILITY

## SIDEWALKS



## INTERSECTIONS



ture of a community, holistically addressing child- and age-friendly qualities.

The utility of this multigenerational planning approach is still indeterminate. Some scholars warn that it could be problematic because: “a rhetorical shift towards environments for all ages may indicate the use of the term as a trope, to advance the cause of design that takes specifically older adults into account while hitching it to the wagon of a universal good.” (Biggs & Carr 2015, pp.104-5). Our research tests the concept on the neighborhood of Piazza Alessandria. In this study, we try to understand where the needs and interests of children and the elderly in the neighborhood converge or diverge, according to the listed criteria.

### Methods & Limitations

We used an interview methodology adapted from Haikkola et al. (2007), targeting three different groups of people: children and their parents (eight interviews), the elderly and their caregivers (10 interviews) and working adults (seven interviews). Participation was split evenly between residents and commuters, with the latter tending to be working-age adults. The interviews took place at six different public spaces within the neighborhood, where members of the public might be inclined to engage with us. We also prepared attractive A5-sized bulletins with a more formal description of our project and contact information. Since many elderly we attempted to engage on our trial sessions were hard of hearing, we printed versions of the interview questions translated into Italian.

Since we were largely dependent on our Italian-speaking teaching assistants and professor for translation, our interviews were limited to Monday and Thursday mornings and early afternoons. This inadvertently marginalized the viewpoints of students and workers who commute out of the neighborhood during that time. However, we tried to address this bias by conducting field visits during weekday evenings and on the weekends, although interviews conducted on those occasions were less effective without a translator. We were also only able to capture the perspectives of individuals who agreed to talk with us, which was a minority compared to those who rejected our attempts to engage in conversation. This self-selection bias results in a limited sampling of people who are willing and able to speak with a group of strangers. This partiality potentially leaves a considerable section of the population voiceless in our research.

Additionally, the element of translation may leave out important parts of interviews. While our translators were certainly fluent in both Italian and English, it is important to bear in mind a perfect translation from Italian to English for every word or phrase does not exist. The idiosyncrasies of Italian may have been lost when our translators relayed the subject’s message to us.

### Piazza Alessandria, a neighborhood in Regeneration

Piazza Alessandria is a mixed-use neighborhood located northwest of the historical center of Rome, just outside of the Aurelian Wall. The neighborhood has a population of 5,040 people within 0.37 square kilometers (92 acres)<sup>1</sup>, giving it a density more than eight times greater than Rome’s average. The Villa Albani, a private estate, occupies the northern end. The rest of the neighborhood is relatively built-up in a gradient of *villini*<sup>2</sup>, condominiums and blocks, and these structures include a variety of residential, office, institutional and mixed-use functions. Major landmarks include a covered

**Fig.3\_** Walkability Analysis: While most intersections and sidewalks are well designed, they are usually poorly maintained and often blocked by cars and motorcycles. Image: Piazza Alessandria Team.

1\_ The calculated density of 18,622 persons/km<sup>2</sup> in Piazza Alessandria excludes the land area of the Villa Albani. The average density within Rome is 2,232 persons/km<sup>2</sup>.

2\_ Villini are a freestanding low-rise building typology on a smaller lot than a villa, without an attached sprawling garden estate.



# RESULTS

## LEGEND

- Good for children
- Good for the elderly
- Good for working-age adults
- Bad for children
- Bad for the elderly
- Bad for working-age adults
- Outcomes of regeneration

## transportation

- **Public transit** makes the neighborhood well-connected
- Car traffic makes **walking and biking** unsafe on some roads
- **Parking** is expensive
- Roads are **perpetually congested**

## services

- Plenty of services are within walking distance, **more than before**
- Most **retail** is expensive
- **Fresh produce** in grocery stores and some dining options are affordable
- **Too many new lunch places** oversaturate the local market
- Many **schools and daycares** are available nearby
- **Recreation** options are better found outside the neighborhood
- **Activities** provide **cultural vibrancy**

## housing

- Living spaces are large
- Is too expensive for new families — **offices occupy residential space** and large companies lease **apartments for transient employees**

## communication information

Fig.4\_ A conceptual diagram detailing users' perceptions of the neighborhood's social and physical environment. Image: Piazza Alessandria Team.

## public space

**Parks** allow for social participation and are mostly accessible, pleasant and clean ●●●

Dirt and gravel paths of Villa Torlonia are not stroller-friendly ○●

**Sidewalks** are safe from crime, but are dirty and not well-maintained ○○○

**Mercato Nomentano** is a good place to meet friends and socialize ●



## respect & social inclusion

**Community identity** is diminishing ○○○

**MACRO** gives the community prestige, but is not inclusive of local residents ○●

Residents **trust** local vendors ●

**New users add life** to the community ●

Convenient to meet up with friends ●

## multigenerational planning

minimizing the complementarities between child- and age-friendly planning principles

## civic participation

Unengaged with **community improvement projects** ○○

&

## environmental quality

Wealthy and high-class reputation ●●●

General tranquility and quiet ●

market that stands on Piazza Alessandria and Museo d'Arte Contemporanea di Roma (MACRO), a contemporary art museum in the center of the neighborhood.

The community is relatively wealthy and diverse. It is populated throughout the day by a mixture of residents, working commuters and visiting users. The residents of the community are on average older than the residents of Rome, with one in four inhabitants older than 65. In addition, there has been an increase in the number of families with children aged 5 to 19 (ISTAT 2001, 2011). Given the financial, legal and professional services located in the community and its environs, thousands of workers commute to the neighborhood daily. Its proximity to the historic center, network of major arterials and range of public transport options make it highly connected to the center of Rome, and thus Piazza Alessandria is also frequented by transient users who patronize the myriad retail and food and beverage options, or consult the professional services in the neighborhood.

The wealth of the neighborhood plays a role in the neighborhood's privileging of private space at the expense of public space. This preference is reflected by the dearth of quality and accessible public space. The community also disrespects sidewalks and intersections in the neighborhood, demonstrated by the poor use and maintenance of pedestrian areas despite the relatively well-designed sidewalk infrastructure. The abuse of public space and lack of civic pride is typical of many of Rome's wealthier neighborhoods: "Sin and be pardoned... Everyone washes their hands off it" (Cellamare 2014).

Several projects in recent years have been driven by an agenda of regeneration of the community. We define the process to be: attracting working-age adults in order to avert decline, potentially at the expense of children and the elderly. These projects have had varying degrees of success. Large-scale interventions like the redevelopment of the Peroni Beer factory into a contemporary art museum demonstrate the city's interest to attract a new audience to the neighborhood. Parallel to this, smaller scale grassroots interventions — like the Amici di Porta Pia, an organization composed of residents and shop owners — have also attempted to renew Piazza Alessandria, although a lack of community engagement and ineffective government support have limited these groups' effectiveness.

We posited that the nature of the neighborhood could have two potential effects on the experiences of children and the elderly. On one hand, wealthy residents seem to have private access to amenities for a comfortable quality of life without being affected by changes in the neighborhood due to regeneration. On the other hand, transformations in the neighborhood could be targeted at the working-age population and marginalize children and the elderly — having observed, for example, the displacement of elderly users of public space by workers particularly during the weekday lunch hour. We carried forward our investigation of the effects of regeneration on the neighborhood based on this dilemma.

### **Regeneration for all Generations in Piazza Alessandria**

To assess Piazza Alessandria's child- and age-friendliness, we began with a thorough neighborhood analysis, examining the history, users, buildings, streets and circulation, public services and community actors of the neighborhood. With this preliminary research completed, we moved towards a



more rigorous stage of engagement, using the literature to shape our research approach. Based on Haikkola et al. (2007), we conducted a series of intercept interviews with children and their parents, working-age adults, and the elderly and their caretakers. We engaged in five interviews per category, most of which involved multiple participants such as a group of senior citizens at the market, or a mother with her child. These took place at six public locations in the neighborhood. Our questions focused on patterns of activity to elicit users' interactions with and perceptions of the neighborhood. By providing interviewees with baseline maps, we oriented users of the community and allowed them to better talk through the types of places they like or dislike. We were particularly interested in, for example, how users socialized because of our observed theme of disparity between public and private space. Therefore, questions had a spatial dimension — where activities occur — and a social dimension — why these activities occur in that specific space.

We categorized their responses into the aforementioned eight domains of child- and age-friendliness, as well as identified their responses that related to changes due to regeneration interventions. Firstly, all age groups appreciated the connectivity and range of services available in Piazza Alessandria. However, there was ambivalence about the quality of public space available. While the neighborhood is in close proximity to large public parks like the Villa Borghese or the Villa Torlonia, a unique asset particularly appreciated by children and elderly residents, public space within the neighborhood was perceived to be “boring” and inadequate. Other common concerns were shared regarding the pedestrian experience and the lack of community identity. Top-down regeneration projects like the MACRO were perceived to have negligible or even malignant effects on the community, by increasing visitor and vehicular traffic without engaging or contributing to local needs.

It is apparent that all groups shared both physical and social concerns — and while physical criteria were largely met, the social layer consisting of methods of governance and community-enforced behavioral norms seemed to have fallen short. This imbalance may be particular to the history and privilege of Piazza Alessandria, but it also serves as a clarion call for more inclusive regeneration efforts to pay attention to social methods and impact. We can be optimistic that children, working-age adults and the elderly alike shared these concerns, which provides strong motivation to address them. In fact, there were no domains that concerned both children and the elderly, but did not concern working-age adults — which demonstrates that meeting the needs of children and the elderly does not have to contradict the regeneration agenda.

## **Conclusion**

We contend that yes: regeneration can indeed be multigenerational. In our study of Piazza Alessandria, we found that children, working adults and the elderly shared many complementary needs and interests. Planners should prioritize these areas within the agenda of regeneration — improve the pedestrian experience through better maintenance and the cultivation of positive norms of use, and build stronger community identity — in order to make regeneration a more inclusive, multigenerational process.

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