EM24

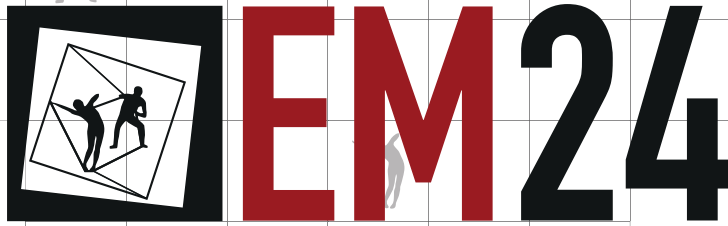**EURAU – EUROPEAN RESEARCH ON ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

IN-PRESENCE / THE BODY AND THE SPACE

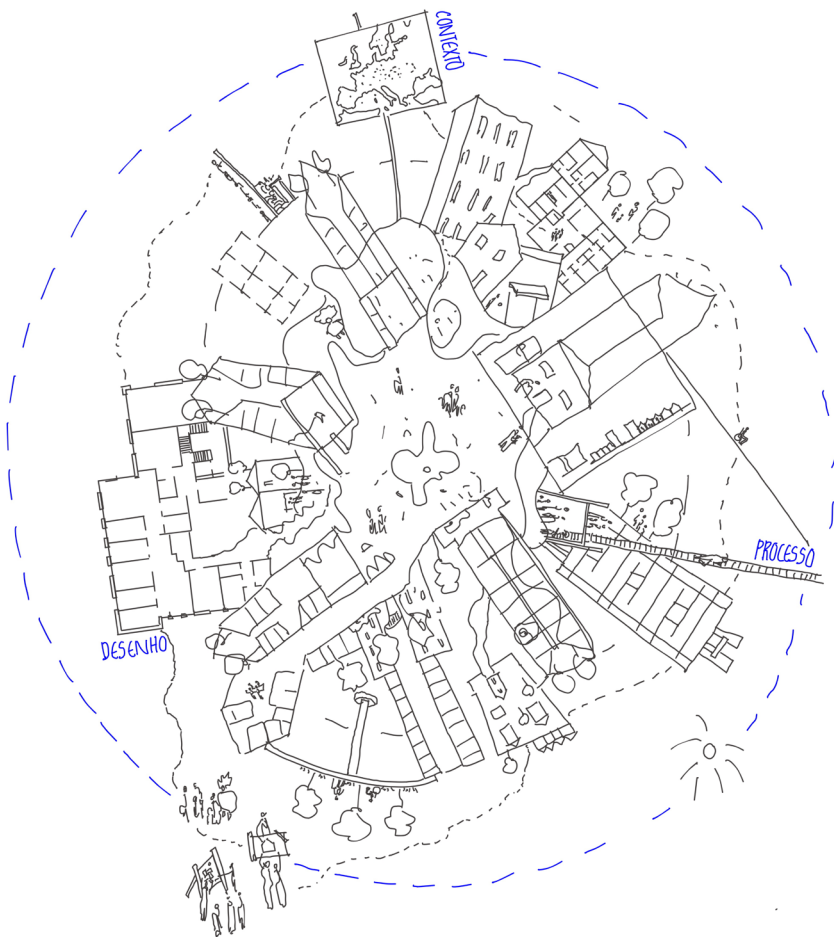**The role of corporeity in the era of virtualization**

Edited by: Marco Bovati, Anna Moro, Daniele Villa

PVBLICA

CONTEXTO

PROCESSO

DESENHO

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Everyone and everywhere.
Intergenerational practice as evidence of the bodies in the space

Key Words

Intergenerational Practice, Contemporary Vulnerabilities, Context, Process, Architectural Design

Introduction

The present essay proposes a critical analysis of intergenerational practices as evidence of bodily interaction in living spaces, addressing contemporary housing and urban vulnerabilities, resulting from recently finished research on the subject [1].

Acknowledging the new challenges resulting from global demographic changes, urban transformations, or the evolution of practices regarding housing [Scott 2010, p. 458], the relevance of this study lies in addressing the growing ageing population and lack of affordable housing, especially in European countries. Thus, the research question of this article is defined: how do we design a space that, in its general organization and inhabitancy, contributes to a better life through intergenerational dynamics?

To understand the conceptual corpus of intergenerationality, a qualitative methodology [2] was defined to collect, interpret, and systematize data from digital archives, libraries, interviews, or conferences. This critical strategy of rethinking and reorganizing questions, concepts, and experiences represented an indispensable opportunity to structure and enhance the research narrative.

In this paper, the main objective is to share the principles of the context, process and design of intergenerational spaces observed in the literature review and case studies assessment. Additionally, the secondary objective includes presenting the inventory [3] developed during the underlying research, with a corpus of 155 architectural projects. This resource has a crucial operational value, as it enhances the reliability and support for the current analysis of the principles that promote mutual interaction, dialogue, and cooperation among multiple bodies with distinct needs and demands, in shared environments.

Although, due to the size of the original inventory, it was established four reduction criteria

to manage the analysis of each case study. Therefore, this essay focuses only on 64 collective housing projects in Europe, constructed between 2000 and 2020, intentionally designed to promote intergenerational dialogues.

Intergenerational Evidence
The reduced dataset proved that, as new modes of sharing and engagement in non-familial spheres were introduced during the last century [Ramos 2010, p. 71], there is a significant plurality of architectural narratives and experiences related to intergenerational practices [Dove 2020, pp. XI-XII]. Indeed, emphasizing the geographical context, 53% of the case studies selected are concentrated in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland, while only 13% are situated in Portugal, Spain, and Italy. It was also noted that 41 are inclusive for all life stages, likewise the *Giesserei* project (2013, Switzerland) conceived to integrate diverse spaces of living for everyone. Similarly, 23 cases are designed for specific generations, such as the *Senior Cohabitation* (2020, Spain), exclusively for older people.

This apparent disparity shapes the implementation and dissemination of intergenerational practices. Specifically, in Nordic countries, where factors like family and domestic groups emancipation [Afonso 2000, pp. 153-162] [4], or isolation prevail, the intergenerational concept is operational in cohabitation thinking. In contrast, in Southern countries, possibly influenced by dynamics such as full property ownership coupled with economic and societal contexts, these principles are more inherent in family life, resulting in more age-inclusive space solutions and mixed-use programs that support social networks.

Based on the produced dataset, several insights also emerge regarding the methodological process of the projects that actively engage generations and space. Collaboration, participation, and social inclusion can be identified as transversal strategies that contribute to the success and resilience of the diverse case studies. Through the integration of multiple agents, the practices can foster the commitment of future inhabitants to both the space and the community itself. The articulation between different programs (e.g. homes and schools or housing and commerce) was also an important tool founded in the intergenerational processes, due to the spontaneous design of new opportunities and adjust actions to the local interaction between bodies.

In terms of architecture design, it was clear that "though space and interstices, architecture can be simultaneously determinative and deliberative in its expression – and can therefore promote specific types of behavior among the people who use it" [Schoble 2017, p. 306]. In this logic, (un)tangible systems emerged and shaped the body-space experience, on different scales: the place, the form, and the unit. In fact, notions of flexibility, appropriation, sharing, and accessibility were decisive in the *development durable* (sustainability) between people, architecture, and the surroundings. "After all, it is about creating a space for living that not only allows intergenerational contacts but also establishes sustainable supports to integrate these relationships into the residents' everyday life in the long term" [Métrailler 2021, p. 189].

Final Notes
In summary, this essay aims, through the flagship of the dialogue between generations, to promote awareness and recognition among architects, builders, residents, researchers, and students regarding how the design of spaces is intrinsic to people's lives and, consequently, to their challenges and successes over time. Moreover, the conflicts and interactions between multiple bodies in spaces demand a holistic approach, not only among practical and theoretical experiences, but also an integral and complete perspective of space conception, considering its context, process, and design. The role of the architect emerges in experimenting and innovating within the physical, and political context of intergenerational materializations. Undoubtedly significant, the attitude in the context, process, and design of intergenerational practices represents a noteworthy opportunity to encourage dialogues, inclusion, and values of well-being in society. Thus, the meeting between different generation evidences the responsibility and virtue of every architectural space in contributing to and implementing good practices for the inhabitancy of all.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ENDNOTES

[1] This paper was developed following the research that resulted in the master's degree dissertation *Intergenerational Housing. Contributions to Good Practices* (2023), within the research project *HoTT: Housing Think Tank: Knowledge Integration on Multi-Family Residential Buildings* (CEAU, FAUP, Portugal). This academic and research context was essential in framing the study and defining Intergenerational Housing as its subject.

[2] A qualitative methodology was adopted during the literature revision and study cases analysis. Using an inductive approach, a set of empirical data and materials related to human behavior were recorded. This process led to several questions that were recorded and systematized in a *Reflective Portfolio*. This method led to three categories of analysis – Context, Process, and Design – that structure the narrative of the current investigation.

[3] The inventory. For each study case, a datasheet was developed to analyze its context, process, and design, considering the multiple operative concepts related to ageing [Lameira et al, 2023]. Redrawing and sketching were fundamental tools for recognizing and interpreting the diverse materializations of intergenerational practices.

[4] In the present article, as Ana Isabel Afonso (2020) states, the terms family and domestic group, although referring to a formal definition, reveal in most situations two distinct organizational aspects: the first linked to kinship and the last to the residence. The connection to a residential criterion is not enough to define a domestic group: the set of activities shared in a common space (the domestic space) must also be considered.

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FIGURES

Fig. 1 - Inês Guilherme, *Everyone and Everywhere*, 2024. Sketch developed by the author about contemporary transformations inherent to the diversity of inhabited space, in a holistic logic of sharing and coexistence.