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## **(Re)-learning the city for intergenerational exchange**

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### **Abstract**

Two major international agendas are currently working to realign social, material and representational elements of the city in ways that are helpful for both children and older adults. The Age Friendly City movement (AFC) (led by the World Health Organisation) and the Child Friendly Cities (CFC) movement (led by UNICEF) aim to ensure that planners, policy makers and developers design cities that take account of the interests of age groups who are too often marginalised in current policy and design processes. These movements are valuable and important in themselves, however they also have significant implications for the future of a learning city in which intergenerational exchange is valued.

In this chapter, in order to understand better how the city might (re) learn to become intergenerational, we explore different intergenerational assemblages, looking at what is being aligned, and connected in the AFC and CFC movements. We then describe a performative, experimental project that sought to enable different alignments between these movements. A key element of this involved building new imaginative ideas about what might be possible in order to realign these generational assemblages for intergenerational, civic learning. Finally we explore what worked and didn't work, what resisted enrolment, what was easily aligned and what routines were disrupted.

**Keywords:** Intergenerational, civic learning, All-Age friendly city, Child friendly, Age friendly

### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the question of how cities might (re)-learn to be intergenerational. As in the introductory chapter cities are here seen as socio-material assemblages that produce different ways of living through routines, and through the articulating together of diverse elements including representations, social, human and material elements (McFarlane, 2011). This chapter explores the social, material and symbolic forces at work that shape and often currently militate against opportunities for intergenerational living and learning in the city.

Why does this matter? Stories that circulate through global media channels and into popular discourse are characterized by alarmist claims of conflict between generations. This is not simply a feature of wider economic and demographic change, but also a consequence of the way lives are organized and lived in cities today, of the design of public spaces and the work of our social institutions and services (Vanderbeck and Worth, 2015). In our growing cities we are increasingly seeing the planning decisions, policies and commercial drivers towards age segregated spaces, even 'gated' communities for those of different generations (Atkinson and Flint, 2004). For instance, increasingly tall fences 'protect' children in schools and play areas and children's lives, at least in the global North, are increasingly regulated and controlled by adults (Holloway, 2015; Bragg and Manchester, 2011). Older people meanwhile are offered the 'safety' of retirement communities for over 55s where they are able to live, shop, exercise and learn without going beyond the 'communities' gates (Biggs et al, 2001). In one such community in our own city, situated in the South West of the UK, older people can choose from a range of different housing offers – from an independent apartment to a care home for those with dementia – all situated within a gated complex with its own café and pub built around a quintessentially English cricket pitch. Intergenerational contact here comes largely through the staff employed to care for the older people.

The material construction of age segregated spaces and places combined with all pervasive symbolic frameworks of generational clash create intergenerational anxieties and fears of 'the other' (Hopkins and Pain, 2005). There are real risks here in these oppositional discourses: a time when increased solidarity is urgently needed to address environmental, social and technological challenges, the city is increasingly being aligned around generational divides. This may have profound effects on the future well-being of all.

Today, there are two major international agendas working to realign social, material and representational elements of the city to reconstitute the city in ways that are helpful for both children and older adults. The Age Friendly City movement (AFC) (led by the World Health Organisation) and the Child Friendly Cities (CFC) movement (led by UNICEF) aim to ensure that planners, policy makers and developers design cities that take account of the interests of age groups who are too often marginalised in current policy and design processes. These movements are valuable and important in themselves, however they also risk segregating adults and children. This has significant implications for the future of a learning city in which intergenerational exchange is valued. In advocating for children and older adults separately they ignore the fact that these groups often live alongside each other, occupy the same public spaces, and have interests and needs in common (Facer, Horner and Manchester, 2014).

Like others in this volume we understand the city to be dynamic and continually evolving. Cities are assemblages produce different ways of living through routines that articulate together diverse human, symbolic, material, technological elements in ways that are both provisional and reproduced over time. Such articulatory practices are dependent on cultural, material, political, economic elements that align over time to assemble and disassemble particular forms of practice and symbolic framings (McFarlane, 2011).

Urban policies such as the 'Age Friendly Cities' and 'Child Friendly Cities' agendas we discuss here, are enacted through everyday materialities in council offices, through circulated documents and images and in relationships between people and between people and objects. A policy, therefore, is constantly being understood, contested and disrupted in new ways through multiple practices that are shaped by existing sedimented patterns of social relations – many of which are deeply unequal. Explicitly making visible these social and material practices of creation and recreation of particular assemblages may allow for a critical and creative space to open up in re-learning the city for intergenerational exchange.

In this chapter, in order to understand better how the city might (re) learn to become intergenerational, we explore how different generational assemblages are being aligned, and connected in the AFC and CFC movements, what different social, material and representational elements are being aligned, and how these movements act as coordinating devices for generational exchange in the city. We then describe a performative, experimental project that sought to enable different alignments between these movements. A key element of this involved building new imaginative ideas about what might be possible and designing new coordinating devices, with others in the city. Finally we explore what worked and didn't work, what resisted enrolment (Callon, 1986), what was easily aligned and what routines were disrupted.

### **Context**

Our work took place in Bristol, UK. Bristol is a port city with a population of around 500,000 people situated in the South West of England. In 2015 Bristol was European Green Capital and the city draws on certain types of policy discourses of urban development having developed a strong narrative characterised by a focus on green issues alongside creative industries, particularly digital creativity and innovation.

As academics working at the University of Bristol we have been involved in a variety of research projects in which they engaged directly with practitioners working with children, young people and older adults. Manchester has worked extensively with young people across the city, exploring their take on cultural value (Manchester and Pett, 2015) as well as with older adults living in care homes (Bennett et al, 2015). Facer has collaborated with schools across the city for the last decade, and more recently developed a project with informal learning and cultural organisations in the city, based on her previous Area Based Curriculum work (Facer & Thomas, 2014), to foreground the diversity of informal learning experiences available in the city. Through working with younger and older people and with those who work with them in the city we came to notice how separately different generations live and work in the city and how both groups are often ignored when it comes to city planning and having a voice in city decision making. We began to wonder about the possible benefits that might obtain in bringing these two groups together.

At the time our collaboration with city partners began, existing groups in the city were already working on the age and child friendly city agendas but were not connected. The AFC group hold particular economic and political power since winning a large grant from the National Lottery<sup>1</sup> to develop programmes across the city to tackle issues of social isolation and loneliness in older populations. The core team is led by a national charity 'Age UK', civil servants working for Bristol City Council are also involved and over 140 organisations across the city are signed up to their mailing list. The CFC group is currently made up of three small organisations in the city: the Architecture Centre, who champion 'better buildings and places for everyone'; Playing Out, a charity that organises resident led street closures to enable children to play out in their local neighbourhoods; and Room 13 Hareclive, an arts studio set in the grounds of a primary school that is democratically run by the young people that use it.

The problem identified involved working to overcome unhelpful binaries between generations and encouraging pluralisation of accounts of the city. Through bringing people together, partnering with them and providing space for possibility we aimed to make visible the coordinating devices that bring generational binaries into being and to encourage all of us to generate possibilities for new ideas to emerge and new things to happen around intergenerational encounter and learning the city (Gibson Graham, 2008).

### **Methodologies and methods**

Adopting a performative ontology our methods began with a process of 'ontological reframing' where we took what is seen as a symbolic/ structural given, in this case generational divides, and reframed this in order to provide room for manoeuvre (Gibson Graham, 2008). Conducting an analysis of the texts circulating around the CFC and AFC movements was therefore an important first step in our methodological approach. This focused on examining how the AFC and CFC 'texts' act as 'co-ordinating devices' that have brought into being particular sorts of relations, elements and alignments that help to teach the city how to be 'child' or 'age' friendly, and not 'all-age' friendly.

Next we engaged in 'excavating the possible' through making visible and offering alternatives to hegemonic experience (de Sousa Santos, 2001). We therefore worked 'on the ground' with those involved in the AFC and CFC movements in our city to make visible the symbolic frameworks in the AFC and CFC texts that work to construct particular ideas about age and childhood in the city. Our intentions here were to weaken fixed generational assemblages and to try to build connections across generations to allow for more flexible assemblages and allegiances that might serve both groups well (McFarlane, 2011). Workshops were held to bring together representatives of different interest groups (approx 50 people) to develop a set of future city scenarios. In order to encourage more imaginative approaches to generate 'actual possibilities' we used hands on methods to (literally) design

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<sup>1</sup> The Big Lottery company in the UK fund various charitable activities

and build future city scenarios (with models, flipchart paper and post-its) and then to develop an outline manifesto identifying shared interests and concerns, across the CFC and AFC communities.

Our intention here was to engage in a hopeful experiment, to bring new ideas into being, and to build new symbolic frameworks and new designs for civic learning in the city with intergenerational exchange at its heart.

### **Ontological Reframing**

The CFC and AFC movements act as coordinating devices to configure relationships between heterogeneous elements in the city. But they are, themselves, articulated with complex global networks made up of representations, legal structures, international bodies and material interests.

The Child Friendly City movement<sup>2</sup>, for example, is led by UNICEF and is intimately connected with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). As such the CFC agenda is both global and take a rights based approach with advocacy for and on behalf of children encouraged. This includes in built mechanisms to monitor progress against children's rights as defined by the UN convention. The approach therefore stresses children and young people's participation in decision making, a child-friendly legal framework and rights strategy, a children's budget and a need for strong advocacy on behalf of children and young people by others. The movement seeks to configure new relationships, therefore, between children and the instruments and structures by which wealth, public decision-making and advocacy are produced. The World Health Organisation (WHO) Age Friendly City guidance<sup>3</sup> meanwhile comes from a perspective that stresses active ageing and health orientated outcomes, particularly in response to anxieties around the collapse of the welfare state and the additional pressures that increasingly ageing populations might place on city infrastructures and healthcare systems. As such the AFC framework stresses practical solutions and issues related to health in making the city a better place for older people. Here, the aim is often to articulate together the health industry, public space and transport. The two movements, therefore, are addressed to different social actors, but both bring the coordinating power of the international community to bear as a resource for mobilising and enrolling actors at a local level.

Given current global concerns around rapidly ageing populations the AFC movement is currently taking hold around the world and is often aligned with an 'all-age' friendly argument. The argument goes that if we design for older adults we also design well for anyone. In reality, however, as ageing societies remain central to the movement, any designs forthcoming tend to focus on older adults, whilst few allegiances have been built with those working on child friendly initiatives (Biggs and Carr, 2015).

Thinking about both the AFC and the CFC movements as seeking to enroll actors to reconfigure the city around particular ideas about childhood and older age and particular constructions of the city as a site for maturation we aimed to read the texts in order to foreground how social and material elements of the city are being aligned in these agendas to create new assemblages to reshape the city? Figure 1 presents our summaries of 1) the CFC Bristol 'take' on the UNICEF rights based 'big ideas' and 2) the WHO guidance that the AFC movement in Bristol use to inform their work.

### **Figure 1: Analysis of the CFC and AFC 'texts'**

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://childfriendlycities.org/>

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.who.int/ageing/age-friendly-world/en/>

Child Friendly City (UNICEF/Bristol)	Age Friendly City (WHO)
Children’s participation in decision making: Influence decisions about their city ‘that affect them’, actively engaged in discussions about their city	‘Civic Participation’: influencing decisions about the city and services for older people. ‘Regularly consulted by public, voluntary and commercial services’
Participation in family, community and social life	Social Participation: activities and events in the community are designed to actively reach out to and involve older adults
Children feel safe in the streets and public spaces in which they live.	Outdoor Spaces and Buildings: the city spaces and buildings are adapted to the vulnerabilities and capabilities of older adults
Meet friends and play	Social Participation but doesn’t mention the idea of ‘friends’ or play
Have green spaces for plants and animals	‘Green spaces and outdoor seating are sufficient in number, well maintained and safe’
Participate in cultural and social events: children have access to the city centre and the arts/cultural life of the city	Social Participation: activities and events in the community are designed to actively reach out to and involve older adults
Be an equal citizen of their city with access to every service, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability	Community and Health: older adults vulnerabilities and capacities are a primary consideration in the design and delivery of public services
Mobility – children have the freedom (relative to their age) to move about the city independently	Transport: the city is accessible by older adults through independent and public forms of travel
	Employment: the city does not discriminate against and recognizes talents of older adults in the workplace
	Recognition and Understanding: Representation, understanding and recognition of older adults in the city

In looking at the two lists together it becomes clear that the two movements are working to reconfigure the city and to enrol different actors into the assemblages that are ‘old age’ and ‘youth’. In so doing they construct specific ideas of childhood and adulthood. Below we foreground some of the elements that are enrolled and excluded from these processes:

- Housing is a primary concern for the AFC agenda but entirely missing from the discussions on CFCs. This assumes that children’s rights related to housing and homes are already met through families and parents which, as we know, may not necessarily be the case. In the UK alone it is estimated that in 2015 there were almost 100,000 children without a permanent home<sup>4</sup>. This surfaces a set of assumptions about how childhood and housing are articulated and aligned.
- Reciprocally while the CFC movement is globally founded on a rights based agenda new approaches to recognizing and representing children differently are missing from this local agenda. This suggests that symbolic and representational elements of the city are not seen as being important in aligning the city activities towards a child

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-34346908>

friendly city. This is despite the fact that dominant understandings and representations of children and young people often make assumptions about their lack of competence and capacity to engage with the city.

- Any consideration of children as workers is missing from the CFC metrics aligning children as economically inactive in relation to the city, despite the high numbers of children in work globally, currently standing at around **168 million children**<sup>5</sup>. Whereas in the Australian CFC movement a drift towards aligning children as future workers rather than citizens has been noted (Biggs and Carr, 2015) in the Bristol CFC movement this is not the case. This demonstrates the local variations in how these coordinating devices are taken up.
- In an AFC, the heterogeneity of the population is not explicitly recognized and issues related to differences between social groups are missing. For instance, there is no mention of equality of opportunity in reference to access to services regardless of ethnic origin, religion, income, gender or disability. This suggests that in aligning the city towards an AFC only certain kinds of older people are imagined. For instance, what of the older adults living in the UK over the age of 65 years old, half of whom say that they face problems getting outdoors, and people living in care homes who are three times less likely than the rest of the population to get outdoors for more than five hours a week (Handler, 2014).
- In the AFC agenda 'participation' focuses on public events and activities outside the home, particularly highlighting the 'risk' of social isolation rather than the rights to family life. This highlights the urban setting as 'unsafe' and 'unwelcoming' for older adults. This is echoed in the CFC text where children's lack of safety in streets and public spaces is highlighted.
- There is a focus on play and friends in the CFC agenda whereas these are not mentioned in the AFC approach reflecting alignments between play and playfulness and children, rather than seeing play as a lifelong pleasure.

These texts clearly circulate certain ideas about how the CFC and AFC agendas might be taken up in cities globally and locally. However, both movements stress the need to develop local agendas that make sense and work within existing practices and beliefs. Working with people already involved in the city of Bristol was therefore an important next step to make visible the way that these agendas coordinated particular assemblages, creating alignments between particular material and social elements in the city. In doing so we hoped to overcome some of the unhelpful binaries identified above, building opportunities for new alignments of children, older adults and their socio-material networks.

### **Excavating the possible**

Interest groups, including leaders of civil society organisations, key players in digital technology development, civil servants and community and charity workers, from across the city, working on the CFC and AFC agendas, were invited to several workshops to work with and explore ideas about the future city, focusing on intergenerational encounter and civic learning in the city. We started by introducing our analysis of the CFC and AFC texts in order to make visible the similarities and differences between the movements.

The workshop participants were then asked to map the city, making visible activities and spaces that they felt were particularly child or older adult 'friendly' as well as spaces where

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<sup>5</sup> ILO-IPEC, 2013, see <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang--en/index.htm>

they felt intergenerational activity flourished. The intention here was to disrupt the particular alignments foregrounded in the texts in order to highlight alternative intergenerational, or at least more fluid generational assemblages. Participants were also asked to consider 'ageing' and 'youth' as subject to radical change in different historical and cultural contexts; that digital, medical and transport technologies as well as economic and environmental drivers may bring significant changes in the next fifty years; and that there are a number of features that might be needed to create child and age friendly cities in these contexts. The focus on imagining future cities was intended to surface the fact that the constructions of childhood and age-related assemblages in the city are contingent upon changing socio-material factors, and as these factors change, so new possibilities for what it might mean to be 'young' and 'old' emerge.

### **Using creativity to generate actual possibilities**

Different approaches were taken in two workshops held with two different but equally diverse interest groups. In the first workshop, participants started from long-term trends and explored the role of contingency and radical novelty in shaping future trajectories for intergenerational relationships in an imaginary future Bristol of 2070. This generated two scenarios that disrupted contemporary assumptions about employment and the organisation of time, space and resources. In the second workshop, participants worked from a map of age-related patterns and practices in the city today, that they constructed together building on their shared knowledge, to create a new city map that reflected the desired practices and values of a future AFC, harnessing technological and social drivers. This generated two scenarios that built strongly on contemporary concerns and issues. While elements of all these scenarios, as purely imaginative constructs, could be extended to other cities, it is worth noting that they draw upon Bristol's strong 'green and digital' culture and reflect the features of the landscape of that city.

As participants worked together moments of translation and knowledge sharing occurred through these encounters. Many workshop participants expressed concern around the city centre as a focus given the lack of physical and social mobility of many of the older and younger people they worked with in the city. As they engaged together in building a new map of the city new coordinating devices were imagined and designed, such as the construction of a series of connected, neighbourhood hubs, designed to re-map the city to enable increased mobility and intergenerational exchange.

### **Analysis**

In our analysis of the workshops it is possible to identify what worked and what didn't seem to work in designing more fluid generational assemblages for the city. The next section of the chapter explores how our participants worked with two core concerns in creatively imagining the designs necessary for an all-age friendly city. These two concerns were:

1. Designing to build trust between different age groups by creating opportunities for social and spontaneous encounters; and
2. Designing for the shared mobility and living needs of children, young people and older adults, in particular, by developing new approaches to public transport and housing.

These issues of trust, of facilitating spontaneous encounters, of creating safe ways of moving around cities and of developing flexible ways of living that are capable of adapting to multi-generational living, came up again and again in discussions and in the scenarios. In the creative spaces we designed we explored what new routines were imagined for childhood and age, what new configurations of socio-material elements were envisaged and what new co-ordinating devices were imagined as potentially useful in facilitating these new configurations towards a city that could (re)-learn to be intergenerational.

### **Designs for trust and intergenerational exchange**

As participants engaged in knowledge sharing drawing on their own material and social knowledge and experiences of the city trust between generations became a key concern. The lack of trust between generations was seen as causal in the increasing drive to segregate and as exacerbated by the routines of exclusion and separation between generations in the social and material fabric of the city. Take the concerns expressed by older people in our workshops of how 'out of place' and uncomfortable they often felt in parks, which provide ample space for children to play, but where they worried about perceptions of the safety of younger people if they stopped to sit and watch the children playing.

Participants were keen to explore new co-ordinating devices that could facilitate intergenerational trust and to consider how a city's routines, infrastructure, services and technologies might be imagined differently in order to build trust between generations. The production of trust is something that also emerges through routines of encounter, through ties and networks. In tackling the issue of intergenerational trust then it is important to consider how the totality of interactions might lead to greater desire for and opportunity for social encounter which was seen as being at the root of the lack of trust and therefore intergenerational activity in the city. Walkerdine and Studdart (2015) suggest that if 'community' is produced through repeated acts of micro-sociality then arts based disruptions of everyday rituals might help in rethinking urban planning solutions. This thinking fed into our research design.

Our workshop participants engaged in discussion and built alternative cities together, making visible and also re-imagining the multiple locations and timescales of and for public, intergenerational encounter (Amin, 2015). Participants understood city spaces as complex and dependent on various interactions which became clear in their future city designs. In particular, building opportunities for trustful encounters through connecting digital and material spaces featured strongly in ideas that might help to foster an AAFC. One group, for example, imagined a digital system that enabled sharing of data and stories, making visible connections between people rather than highlighting differences. Imagine a digital daemon (an external companion/representation of the self inspired by the Philip Pullman novels) that would share peoples shared interests and concerns, mediating 'in the moment' between people in their everyday interactions. Such a daemon might play the role of the friendly 'sprites' imagined in Thrift's conception of a sentient city (Thrift, 2014). Another idea imagined public interfaces that would disrupt current presentations of social statistics that tend to encourage fear and anxiety. These new creative and playful public interfaces could collect and visualise data to actively build trust concerning, for example, how many people in the park had talked to strangers and began positive conversations in the last week.

The material world and in particular public spaces in the city were discussed particularly in relation to mobility across the city and the routines of inclusion and exclusion of particular older and younger groups from these spaces. Our participants discussed how poor transport links, parks and town squares being aligned as sites of tension between generations, combined with lack of social experience of the city centre, fear and therefore a lack of experience of 'dwelling' in these spaces for some, inhibited many older and younger people from inhabiting these largely city centre located spaces. Participants felt that there was a need to redesign public spaces for all-age use to facilitate new intergenerational encounters. This focus on the role of urban planning in altering the materiality of the city in order to encourage healthy ageing and childhoods has been much discussed (Buffel et al, 2014; Holloway, 2014). However, it was clear in our workshop discussions that any new instrumentation of such spaces, in Bristol at least, would need to account for the multiple social and material actants influencing intergenerational encounters in these spaces and to consider playful, artful ways of disrupting current everyday routines. Participants were keen

to imagine, for instance how sociomaterial space might be altered through dropping new mediating structures into these spaces - possibly through reclaiming/shutting streets to cars or through introducing shared objects such as table tennis tables or street pianos. They also acknowledged that there was a need to rethink 'less glamorous' spaces, for example, focusing on the design of pavements, the availability of toilets, and to think about and map the effects of topography on different groups. These material interventions in the city were identified as essential in re-shaping current generational routines. Other projects have highlighted how the provision of safe, accessible toilets can have a much wider impact on social and spatial freedom in the city<sup>6</sup> and the democratic value of benches<sup>7</sup>.

### **Designs for mobility and housing**

Participants were also clear that new routines in relation to mobility around the city were needed for both generations. Good, desirable public transport systems are vital in ensuring mobility of older and younger people as both groups are more likely to rely on public transport. Mobility is also a social justice issue as it raises questions around access to the city's cultural, political and social opportunities, as well as economic ones. This was seen as particularly relevant to younger and older people who lived on the urban fringes and those who were less mobile and more reliant on public transport (Manchester and Pett, 2015). Our participants felt that a new mapping of public transport in the city was necessary to include these geographically excluded communities in any future transport designs of the city.

However, new routines were also called for in relation to mobility around the city, in particular to create a walkable or 'liveable' city. Our participants felt this must involve redesigning the urban environment to make it more appealing to walk through creative, digital interventions in the city such as the Hello Lamppost project Bristol<sup>8</sup>, part of the wider Playable Cities initiative, where lampposts became part of a city wide platform for play in the city. They also suggested that re-imagining public transport systems as sites for collective encounter, for instance, redesigning buses as collective public spaces and pleasurable places to be (rather than just about getting from A to B) might encourage different (intergenerational) routines in relation to mobility in the city. Here the city as a whole is appropriated for playful encounter across all generations. The intention being to develop new everyday routines around mobility in the city.

Our group's concern around opportunities for intergenerational encounter in the city partly stems from the increasingly physical segregation of older and younger people through the infrastructures and institutions of the city as described at the start of this chapter. New housing developments are often constructed to enable certain generational groups to feel 'in' or 'out of' place through construction company branding of particular developments in the city, and housing policies that place families and older people in different parts of a city. These devices align to construct non porous places which work together with other aspects in the city to discourage intergenerational encounter. Our participants were keen to explore and consider new material configurations to encourage more flexible ways of living and housing that could be adapted to intergenerational living. Two ideas in particular emerged from discussions. Firstly, creative ways to rethink existing housing stock to take account of changing demographics and secondly the design and building of new flexible housing solutions that could adapt to changing lifestyle and occupancy needs. Modular housing that could adapt over the lifecourse, rooms added and taken away as needed and the creation of vertical communities, formed of shipping container like spaces, as well as re-purposing current housing for shared living, were discussed. Our participants acknowledged that changing material structures alone might not change current routines around intergenerational relationships and that there would be potential for tensions to arise in these

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<sup>6</sup> <https://aroundthetoilet.wordpress.com/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://the-bench-project.weebly.com/>

<sup>8</sup> See <http://www.hellolamppost.co.uk/>

living arrangements. New, radical legal arrangements and governance structures around shared housing would be necessary in addition to changing cultural practices. Current global north traditions of 'privacy' for instance, would require careful consideration. However, through designing new opportunities for dwelling with the city in these new arrangements it was acknowledged that shifts of perception were more likely to happen, both socially and politically.

### **Towards an All-Age Friendly City Manifesto**

Following our initial workshops we brought together our participants for a final time to consider how we might work together across the AFC and CFC movements to create a new coordinating device as a basis for civic intergenerational learning. Together we designed a manifesto of our own, to be taken up by people in the city as a basis for (re)-learning the city as intergenerational. The following manifesto was designed to address the complex of representational devices, material resources, practices and routines of mobility that construct age-related divisions in the city.

[This in a box]

The Bristol All Age Friendly City working group believes that an All Age Friendly City will be characterized by:

- A commitment to challenging assumptions about people based on age
- Representation and voice of children, young people and senior citizens in democratic processes and citizenship while recognising the heterogeneity of these groups
- The experience and perception of safety in the city, including physical, economic and psychological safety, for children, young people and senior citizens
- A sense of ownership of the city, in particular its public spaces and buildings, and feelings of belonging, being considered and being welcome in these spaces
- A liveable city, that encourages independent mobility and positive, pleasurable participation in public and cultural life
- Planning processes and advocates who encourage beneficial opportunities for interactions between children, young people and older adults in all areas of education, health, family and civic life
- Recognition that poverty and inequality have significant negative impacts upon people of all ages

### **Conclusion**

We want to conclude by reflecting on where our work has been challenging and how it is and might develop. In doing so we hope to illuminate the way that strong assemblages can align to influence how a city is constructed in relation to different generational groups/childhood and age and the work of symbolic frameworks, such as the CFC and AFC movements, in structuring the possibilities for citizens. We want to come back to the understanding of civic learning expressed in the introductory chapter of this volume as a kind of 'wayfinding', that interrupts the relationship between the individual and the society, through the process of assembling the social, the material and the symbolic.' We have designed our manifesto as a new coordinating device around generational exchange. In doing so we have attempted to interrupt or redesign the symbolic frameworks used to construct children and older people in the city and sought to encourage more thinking about generations together.

Our work has not always gone smoothly and it has become clear that a myriad of different symbolic frameworks interact in the city to keep generations apart. In trying to align different interests in the city we have come across some opposition. Proponents of both movements have expressed worry about the 'dilution' of their message if expanded beyond a particular group, partly based on the social and material configurations of how generational groups are catered for politically in the city around for instance, 'adult' social care services and

'children's services'. However, we have found that civil servants in the City Council are particularly strong allies for an AAFC as they recognize the opportunities created through this new coordinating device for the city to bring groups together to tackle difficult problems appreciating the focus on interdependency rather than difference.

Different priorities at a local level have also made alignment between the two movements difficult. The AFC movement in Bristol is co-ordinated by Bristol Ageing Better who are funded by the National Lottery to design and measure high profile, city wide interventions to reduce social isolation and loneliness in the city. The CFC movement meanwhile is led by three small cultural organisations in the city and is committed to bottom up approaches to play, citizenship and voice for younger people in the city. The AFC focus on social isolation and loneliness does also not sit well with the agendas of the CFC which are focused on the material environment, a rights based agenda and play.

We now need to consider practical next steps working closely with our partners in the city to begin to experiment with some of our design ideas and consider how our manifesto might interact with existing symbolic frameworks and ways of knowing and being in the city. Bringing older and younger people together to re-map the city public transport systems and re-design the routines around these systems might be a good place to start. This would involve bringing a wide range of stakeholders into collaborative groups, fostering relationships between civil servants and urban planners in the city, with intergenerational citizen groups from different socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds, representing a good geographical spread across the city, with academics interested in mapping transport systems and designing new systems and with bus companies and other commercial outfits such as technologists and designers able to bring our ideas into fruition. These practices would involve working as co-learners and citizens of the city to re-learn the city and building new generational practices together.

This is not going to be easy but our work has illuminated the risk in age-focussed approaches and the possible benefits of developing new intergenerational routines, new configurations of social and material elements of the city and new coordinating devices to support the city to (re)learn to foster intergenerational exchange. This appears especially pertinent given our rapidly changing cities – materially in ever more complex digital infrastructure projects, and socially in the increasing diversity of our cities. We believe that much is at stake here for a future city that enables the well being of all.

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