

## THE CITY AS A MULTI-PLACE SYSTEM: AN ANALYSIS OF PEOPLE–URBAN ENVIRONMENT TRANSACTIONS\*

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### Abstract

The aim of the study is to ascertain how a large and complex urban setting like the city of Rome becomes a 'place' for its inhabitants, with special reference to the kind of activities performed by the inhabitants within (intra-place analysis) and among (inter-place analysis) the following different 'sub-places': the neighbourhood, the city-centre and the periphery. In accordance with the place theory, which stresses the purposive and organized nature of the individual experience of place, an attempt has been made to demonstrate the greater explanatory potential of inter-place analysis, compared with intra-place analysis, for understanding the interdependence between persons and urban places. A sample of 434 inhabitants, all living in the same neighbourhood and differing in gender, age and sociocultural level, were considered. A multivariate analysis of the data, collected from the inhabitants' self-reports, showed the existence of (i) different patterns of activities, both inside and among the various urban places considered, and (ii) a different typology of inhabitants corresponding to these patterns of activities. By analysing the residents' 'inter-place urban pragmatics', several modalities were identified as means by which the city is built up as a multi-place system by the residents. This multi-place system was found to have various spatial extensions and complexities, which were a function of both the residents' urban pragmatics and their sociodemographic and cultural characteristics.

### Introduction

The concept of 'place' has taken on an increasingly central role in environmental psychology during the last decade (Canter, 1977, 1983, 1986, 1988; Stokols, 1981; Russell & Ward, 1982; Proshansky *et al.*, 1983; Holahan, 1985; Altman, 1986; Moore, 1987). Many of these authors have attempted to identify the use of this construct and acknowledge the place-specific nature of all human behaviour as the cornerstone of environmental psychology as a whole, as well as the specificity of the message implicitly transmitted by this branch of psychology to the other fields of psychological research.

D. Canter (1977), who was among the first to put this proposal on a theoretical footing, defines 'place' as an experiential unity referring to specific physical settings and having three main components: 'activities, evaluative conceptualizations and physical properties' (Canter, 1986, p. 9). Russell and Ward (1982), who likewise define 'place' as 'the psychological or perceived unity of the geographical environment' (p. 654), have repeatedly emphasized (Genereux *et al.*, 1983; Ward *et al.*, 1988) that, with the support

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of this construct, environmental psychology can hope to achieve that 'molar' approach to the study of human behaviour in relation to the physical characteristics of the environmental setting, which had already been envisaged by K. Craik (1970). In these authors' opinion, the use of the construct of place, on the one hand, allows the environment to be seen 'to be more than a single stimulus' and, on the other, to conceive of human behaviour as primarily 'cognitively active and goal oriented' (Russell & Ward, 1982, p. 654). The environment thus becomes 'a complex of immediate and distant places, psychologically arranged into a hierarchy such that each place is part of a larger place and can be subdivided into small places' (p. 654).

Despite the consensus of the various authors concerning (i) the central importance of the experience of places in understanding the individual/environment relationship and (ii) the organized form that this experience tends to take on for the individual, comparatively little research has been done on how the experience of a specific place is built up by the individual, with the emphasis on the 'molar' or organized nature of this construction. Implicit in this perspective is the fact that each place is 'constructed' at the psychological level in relation to other places and sub-places, which may vary in importance at the individual level, in view of a molar or 'ecological' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) construction of the place itself, when considered as a psycho-social unity. These organized relations between places may possibly consist of hierarchical supra-/sub-place relations, according to whether the latter are linked by spatial inclusion/exclusion relations. For instance, the city represents a supra-place with respect to the neighbourhood, which appears as a sub-place of the city. In the case of geographically extensive places, e.g. large cities, it appears necessary to assume that those using and living in them tend to break their experience down according to a set of smaller places or sub-places, which can however be reaggregated into large places according to patterns which vary with the characteristics of either the sub-places or the individuals concerned.

It would seem that our understanding of the place-specific character of human behaviour should be increased by extending the scope of the relevant research to cover also such interdependency, i.e. by progressing from intra-place analysis to inter-place analysis. The present study is intended as a step in this direction, taking the construct of place, as defined above, as the basis for studying the transactions between the inhabitants and the urban environment of a large Italian city such as Rome. By taking into consideration this construct, attention will be focused on the activities carried on in the places investigated, with reference to the fact that place theory considers this aspect to be one of the main components of the psychology of place (Canter, 1976; Parkes & Thrift, 1980), as is confirmed also by more recent research (Genereux *et al.*, 1983; Ward *et al.*, 1988).

The study of urban space and its various component parts, with reference to the inhabitants' activities carried on there, has been frequently treated in the literature both by planners (Chapins, 1957, 1968, 1971; Steinitz, 1968), geographers (Carlstein *et al.*, 1978; Parkes & Thrift, 1980) and sociologists (Meier, 1959, 1962; Michelson, 1976; Gutenschwager, 1973), as well as by psychologists, mainly the 'ecological psychologists', such as Barker and co-workers (Barker & Gump, 1964; Barker, 1968; Barker & Wright, 1971; Benchel, 1977). However, in our opinion, the focus of the above studies reveals a number of limitations:

(1) they mainly consist of a descriptive-taxonomic approach to the urban spaces considered, merely indicating the most frequently occurring aspects of the activities in

each single space unit investigated, i.e. the whole city or parts thereof (Chapins, 1968, 1971), 'places' (Parkes & Thrift, 1980) or 'behavioural settings' (Barker, 1968);

(2) the scope of the investigation is usually limited by the predominance of either (i) the intra-place point of view or (ii) that which we denote as a 'trans-place' point of view: (i) in the first case the scope of the analysis remains essentially intra-place and 'intra-setting', as for instance has been pointed out by Wicker (1987) in his recent critical review of 'ecological psychology'. In other words, the attention is focused more on the similarities in the behaviour of agents in the specific physical space units considered, rather than on their differences, thus tending to slant the explanation of the observed activities in a physico-spatial direction. In other words, the activities identified are treated as a by-product of the physico-spatial characteristics of the places themselves; (ii) in the second case, when the interest is focused on the differences between agents in the same places, the explanation tends to be given more in terms of certain functions of the latter, which are defined in generic or sociological terms, such as socio-economic level, race, age, sex (Chapins, 1957, 1971), or else in psychological terms, such as a personal tendency towards 'localism vs cosmopolitanism' (Michelson, 1976) or towards 'modern vs traditional' (Gutenschwager, 1973). Thus one tends basically to lose sight of the place-specific aspects of the behaviour observed.

What more than anything else seems to be missing in these studies is adequate scope for inter-place analysis. According to place-theory, such analysis should be the most appropriate for accounting for both shared and different behaviour related to the places investigated. The activities carried on by residents in specific urban places can be accounted for more satisfactorily in terms of the activities carried on by the same agents in the other places belonging to the same 'place-system'.

The aim of the present study is to point out the explanatory potential and usefulness of the inter-place perspective in studying the transactions between the inhabitants of a large city and their environment, with reference to the activities carried on by them in the various sub-places of the city. In accordance with the theory's predictions regarding the active and organized nature of the experience of place, the emphasis has been laid on the 'purposive' (Canter, 1983) nature of the behaviour of the individuals/agents inside the places: the agents carrying out the activities in the places are not only physically present in such places but by so doing actually 'construct' these places, both in the psychological and physico-spatial sense.

It will be attempted to show how, by adopting the inter-place approach with a view to grasping the organized nature of the experience of place, it is possible to identify specific features of what we would term here the inhabitants' 'urban pragmatics', which tends to be organized both as a function of the intra-place behaviour and of the psychosocial characteristics of the inhabitants themselves. The term 'urban pragmatics' is introduced here in order to stress the purposive and organized character, particularly in the inter-place sense, that the individual activities have in the socio-physical environment in general and in the urban environment in particular.

The units of place considered here are those referred to in our previous studies as orienting the residents' experience inside large Italian cities, such as Milan, Bologna, Rome (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1979, 1982, 1983; Bonnes *et al.*, 1988); they refer in particular to three main sub-places of the city: the neighbourhood (corresponding to the Italian 'quartiere (di residenza)'), the centre (in Italian 'il centro'), the periphery (in Italian 'la periferia').

However, it should be pointed out that the places considered here are not taken into

consideration from the point of view of their spatio-physical features referring to the geography of the city. The principal aim of this study is to investigate the perceived reality of those places, through their naming and not their spatio-physical identification.

The study of the relationship between the inhabitants and the urban environment of the large city has so far extensively analysed the place 'neighbourhood' (cf. Altman & Wandesman, 1987), but no systematic research has been directed towards a simultaneous study of the other urban places (city-centre and periphery), which are undoubtedly of great importance to the inhabitants, particularly in Europe (Heinemeyer, 1967; Klein, 1967; Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1979, 1982, 1983; Bonnes *et al.*, 1987; Giuliano, 1987) as instead is the aim of the present work.

The work described here is also part of a broader multi-disciplinary ecological research programme under way for some years now in the city of Rome in the context of the UNESCO-MAB (Man and Biosphere) Programme, denoted as MAB-Rome Project (Giacomini, 1981; Bonnes, 1984, 1986, 1987).

### Aims of the Study

The study is aimed at ascertaining how a large and complex European urban setting like the city of Rome becomes a 'place' for the residents, with special reference to the kind of activities performed by them within (intra-place analysis) and among (inter-place analysis) the three sub-places mentioned above.

Specifically, the study will involve:

- (1) investigating residents' shared and different intra-place activities in order to understand the interdependence between persons' activities and urban places;
- (2) interpreting both intra-place and inter-place activities as an expression of a more general 'multi-place urban pragmatics' of the residents which is capable of accounting for the aspects of sharing and specificity of the persons-places relationship;
- (3) configuring the place-city as a 'multi-place system' whose characteristics may be explained in terms of the various types of resident-urban place interdependence as defined on the basis of both the type of 'urban pragmatics' experienced and of the socio-cultural characteristics of the residents involved.

### Method

The study was carried out on a sample of inhabitants, all of whom lived in the same neighbourhood of the city. This neighbourhood was located half-way between the central historical part of the city and the outskirts.

After an exploratory phase conducted by means of 30 free interviews with the inhabitants, a quota sample consisting of 434 residents (200 males and 234 females) was interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. The sample consisted of 100 subjects with only compulsory schooling (5 or 8 years), 262 with secondary school education and 72 with degrees. As far as socio-economical level is concerned there were 162 subjects from the upper class, 151 from the middle class and 121 from the working class. Age ranged from 18 to 75 with the following distribution: 104 subjects from 18 to 24 years, 84 subjects from 25 to 34, 150 subjects from 35 to 54 and 96 subjects from 55 to 75. Subjects were also different in terms of years of residence in the neighbourhood: 120

had lived there more than 20 years, 149 had been there from 10 to 20 years and 165 had been there less than 10 years.

Using a four-point scale, the subjects were asked to state how often they performed each of the activities indicated in the exploratory phase of the study as being personally performed in each of the three urban places considered. A principal component analysis of the activities pertaining to the three urban places, first considered separately (intra-place analysis) and then together (inter-place analysis), was applied using the SPAD package (cf. Lebart & Morineau, 1982). A cluster analysis of subjects was then developed on the basis of their coordinates on the space defined by the principal components obtained from the previous inter-place analysis. Cluster analysis was performed by SPAD package which adopts a two-step procedure, namely a partitioning technique (clustering around moving centres) and an agglomerative technique (hierarchical classification). The choice of the best partition was made based on the following: (a) inspection of the dendrogram; (b) inspection of the histogram of increasing indices of aggregation; (c) consideration of the number of iterations needed to stabilize each basic classification; (d) consideration of the percentage of variance explained by each partition.

TABLE 1  
*Intra-neighbourhood activities ordered according to the frequency of use*

|   | Subjects performing<br>'sometimes/often'<br>% |
|---|---|
| <i>Activities performed more frequently</i>                                   |   |
| Just staying at home in the evening   | 77.88   |
| Doing all his/her shopping there  | 67.74   |
| Spending his/her spare time at home   | 66.36   |
| Going for a walk  | 61.06   |
| Spending most of the time at home   | 60.37   |
| Going to the park   | 56.68   |
| Meeting friends and acquaintances at home                                     | 53.23   |
| Window-shopping   | 53.22   |
| <i>Activities performed less frequently</i>                                   |   |
| Daily shopping at the market  | 47.00   |
| Meeting his/her neighbours  | 46.08   |
| Staying there only to sleep   | 45.62   |
| Going to Villa Pamphili park at the weekend                                   | 35.48   |
| Working   | 28.11   |
| Going to a restaurant or 'pizzeria'   | 27.18   |
| Going to the pictures   | 23.93   |
| Playing sport   | 23.93   |
| Joining in parish activities  | 17.05   |
| Going to the 'bar' to talk with people  | 12.90   |
| Campaigning for more parks in the neighbourhood                               | 11.06   |
| Going to the swimming pool  | 8.75  |
| Going to the cultural centre  | 6.91  |
| Joining in political party activities   | 4.38  |
| Participating in the activities of the neighbourhood's<br>political committee | 3.22  |

## Results

### 1. Intra-place analysis: shared and different activities characterizing each place

1.1. *The neighbourhood.* Table 1 shows the activities characterizing the neighbourhood with regard to both the most frequent and the least frequent activities performed in this place.

The two most frequent activities are *home-centred activities* (staying home in the evening and spending one's spare time at home) and the two least frequent ones refer to *socially and politically committed activities* (sitting on the residential neighbourhood political committee or engaging in party activities).

Within these dominant trends, factor analysis has indicated the existence of four main dimensions of activities or uses inside the place (intra-place activity dimensions) (Table 2). The first factor points to a dimension of *physical and outdoor activities* often related to the green areas of the neighbourhood (playing sport and going to the swimming pool; going to parks and to Villa Pamphili); this is accompanied by a *limited use of the home environment*, specifically for social encounters alone (e.g. seeing friends at home) and not for entertainment (i.e. not spending one's spare time or the evening at home).

The second factor refers to a *dimension of highly home-centred activities* (spending most of one's time at home) accompanied by a widespread use in the acquisitive sense, i.e. doing all one's shopping, one's daily shopping at the market, window-shopping.

The third factor refers to a *socially committed and participative dimension of activities* (sitting on the neighbourhood political committee, agitating for more parks) which are

TABLE 2  
*Intra-places activities dimensions for the neighbourhood: principal component analysis*  
(only items with factor loadings higher than 0.400 are reported)

|  | 1*    | 2†    | 3‡    | 4§    |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Playing sports   | 0.59  |       |       |       |
| Doing all his/her shopping there   |       | -0.55 |       |       |
| Going to a restaurant/pizzeria   |       |       |       | -0.56 |
| Just staying at home in the evening  | -0.40 | -0.53 |       |       |
| Going to the pictures  | 0.44  |       |       | -0.52 |
| Going to the swimming pool   | 0.53  |       |       |       |
| Going to the park  | 0.59  |       | 0.43  |       |
| Spending most of the time at home  |       | -0.64 |       |       |
| Going to the Villa Pamphili park at the weekend                            | 0.41  |       | 0.51  |       |
| Meeting friends and acquaintances at home                                  | 0.52  |       |       |       |
| Participating in the activities of the neighbourhood's political committee |       |       | -0.59 |       |
| Daily shopping at the market   |       | -0.51 |       |       |
| Going for a walk   |       | -0.45 |       |       |
| Spending spare time at home  | -0.45 | -0.58 |       |       |
| Campaigning for more parks in the neighbourhood                            | 0.44  |       | -0.44 |       |
| Window-shopping  |       | -0.48 |       |       |

\*1 Component (explaining 14% of variance): *physical and outdoor green areas activities, limited home use dimension.*

†2 Component (explaining 12% of variance): *home centred and acquisitive dimension.*

‡3 Component (explaining 7% of variance): *socially committed dimension.*

§4 Component (explaining 6% of variance): *entertainment dimension.*

TABLE 3  
*City centre's activities ordered according to the frequency of use*

|   | Subjects performing<br>'sometimes/often'<br>% |
|---|---|
| <i>Activities performed more frequently</i>           |   |
| Shopping (general things)                             | 79.58   |
| Looking at beautiful things                           | 77.42   |
| Shopping (special things)                             | 70.05   |
| Window-shopping                                       | 66.82   |
| Going to the pictures                                 | 63.13   |
| Walking   | 62.67   |
| Going to the theatre                                  | 60.60   |
| Visiting churches and monuments                       | 58.99   |
| Visiting museums                                      | 55.53   |
| <i>Activities performed less frequently</i>           |   |
| Spending spare time                                   | 49.77   |
| Using facilities that are lacking in my neighbourhood | 49.77   |
| Discovering the old town                              | 49.77   |
| Visiting exhibitions                                  | 47.70   |
| Getting out of the house                              | 47.46   |
| Meeting friends                                       | 47.00   |
| Going to a restaurant                                 | 42.86   |
| Going in for no special reason                        | 42.63   |
| Working or studying                                   | 40.09   |
| Going to bookshops or libraries                       | 39.40   |
| Going to administrative offices                       | 38.48   |
| Visiting acquaintances                                | 37.79   |
| Passing through quickly                               | 35.02   |
| Looking for a link with the past                      | 33.18   |
| Visiting antique shops                                | 32.95   |
| Being together with other people                      | 31.80   |
| Going to public meeting places                        | 31.11   |
| Celebrating special days                              | 28.11   |
| Walking at night                                      | 20.51   |
| Meeting new people                                    | 16.82   |
| Going to cultural centres                             | 16.59   |
| Finding quiet places                                  | 16.59   |
| Joining in political demonstrations                   | 6.91  |

accompanied by the non-use of the green areas in the neighbourhood (not going to parks and to Villa Pamphili).

The fourth factor is linked to an *entertainment dimension* associated with the use/non-use of specific entertainment features (i.e. cinemas, restaurants, pizzerias).

*1.2. The city centre.* The most characteristic activities associated with the city centre are shown in Table 3. The two most frequent activities refer, respectively, to a prevalent *visual use* of the place (e.g. looking at beautiful things) and to the *acquisitive use*; the least frequent activity is again *political commitment* (i.e. taking part in political demonstrations). Inside these prevalent trends, factor analysis has revealed the existence of one main dimension of use/non-use (factor 1), together with the other three minor dimensions of activities (factors 2–4, Table 4).

TABLE 4  
*Intra-places activities dimensions for the city-centre: principal component analysis*  
*(only items with factor loadings higher than 0.400 are reported)*

|   | 1*   | 2†    | 3‡    | 4§   |
|---|------|-------|-------|------|
| Looking at beautiful things                   | 0.63 |       |       |      |
| Shopping (general things)                     | 0.57 |       |       |      |
| Spending spare time there                     | 0.65 |       |       |      |
| Shopping (special things)                     | 0.56 |       |       | 0.41 |
| Going in for no special reason                | 0.63 |       |       |      |
| Going to a restaurant                         | 0.57 |       |       |      |
| Going to bookshops or libraries               | 0.62 | -0.40 |       |      |
| Visiting acquaintances                        | 0.40 |       |       |      |
| Going to cultural centres                     | 0.44 | -0.43 |       |      |
| Getting out of the house                      | 0.45 | 0.46  |       |      |
| Visiting museums                              | 0.58 | -0.42 |       |      |
| Celebrating special days                      | 0.48 |       |       |      |
| Window-shopping                               | 0.46 | 0.50  |       | 0.40 |
| Going to public meeting places                | 0.53 |       | -0.45 |      |
| Meeting new people                            | 0.45 |       |       |      |
| Discovering the old town                      | 0.57 |       | 0.52  |      |
| Going to the pictures                         | 0.59 |       | -0.43 |      |
| Using facilities lacking in the neighbourhood | 0.47 |       |       |      |
| Being together with other people              | 0.47 | 0.46  |       |      |
| Going to the theatre                          | 0.60 |       |       |      |
| Walking                                       | 0.60 | 0.41  |       |      |
| Visiting antique shops                        | 0.44 |       |       |      |
| Meeting friends                               | 0.66 |       |       |      |
| Visiting exhibitions                          | 0.65 | -0.46 |       |      |
| Walking at night                              | 0.56 |       |       |      |
| Visiting churches and monuments               | 0.47 | -0.47 |       |      |
| Finding quiet places                          | 0.43 |       |       |      |
| Looking for a link with the past              | 0.47 |       | 0.55  |      |

\*1 Component (explaining 26% of variance): *multi-use/non-use specific and non-specific* dimension.

†2 Component (explaining 9% of variance): *cultural* dimension with no escape perspective.

‡3 Component (explaining 6% of variance): *entertainment* dimension with no temporal perspective.

§4 Component (explaining 5% of variance): *acquisitive* dimension.

The first factor points to a dimension of *many activities involving both a 'specific' and a 'non-specific' use* of the place in accordance with our previous studies in other Italian cities (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1979, 1982, 1983). We distinguish specific vs non-specific use activities according to whether some specific functional features of the place are involved (instances of specific uses are: going to bookshops, to the theatre, cinema; instances of non-specific uses are: going there without any special reason, getting out of the house, walking).

With reference to the other three dimensions of activities the second factor points to a *cultural dimension* of activities focused on the historical, artistic and informative aspects of the place (visiting churches, monuments, museums, exhibitions) which are negatively related to use of the centre for the purpose of escape from everyday reality, as found in our previous studies (Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1979, 1982, 1983): getting out of the house, being with other people, walking, window-shopping.

The third factor refers to an *entertainment dimension* involving the use of some specific entertainment features (cinema, public meeting places) which is negatively



TABLE 5  
*Periphery activities ordered according to the frequency of use*

|   | Subjects performing<br>'sometimes/often'<br>% |
|---|---|
| Activities performed <i>more frequently</i> |   |
| Passing through to get to other places      | 78.57   |
| Activities performed <i>less frequently</i> |   |
| Visiting relatives or acquaintances         | 32.26   |
| Looking for parkland and green areas        | 23.27   |
| Meeting friends                             | 19.82   |
| Going for a picnic                          | 19.82   |
| Working                                     | 17.28   |
| Shopping in supermarkets                    | 15.21   |
| Going to public offices                     | 16.59   |
| Visiting little markets                     | 9.45  |
| Playing sport                               | 8.29  |
| Walking                                     | 5.76  |

related to the *temporal dimension*, i.e. the readiness to perceive the temporal dimension embedded in the physical surroundings (looking for a link with the past, discovering the old city).

The fourth factor is associated with the *acquisitive dimension* of use/non-use of the place (shopping for special things, window-shopping).

1.3. *The periphery*. The activities roughly characterizing the periphery are shown in Table 5. The *incidental use* of this place (i.e. going through it to get to some other place) is the dominant feature and is shared by nearly all members of the sample. Among all these activities considered, factor analysis has revealed the existence of one main dimension of use, as well as a further two minor activity dimensions (Table 6). The first main factor points to a general dimension of *discretionary use* of this place (by

TABLE 6  
*Intra-places activities dimensions for the periphery: principal component analysis  
 (only items with factor loading higher than 0.400 are reported)*

|                                       | 1*   | 2†    | 3‡    |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------|-------|
| Going for a picnic                    | 0.52 | -0.41 | -0.48 |
| Visiting relatives or acquaintances   | 0.62 |       |       |
| Shopping in supermarkets              | 0.50 |       |       |
| Working                               |      | 0.68  |       |
| Looking for parklands and green areas | 0.60 | -0.46 |       |
| Going to public offices               | 0.52 | 0.50  |       |
| Walking                               | 0.62 |       |       |
| Visiting little markets               | 0.55 |       |       |
| Playing sports                        | 0.41 |       | 0.48  |
| Meeting friends                       | 0.65 |       |       |

\* 1 Component (explaining 27% of variance): *many discretionary uses* dimension.

† 2 Component (explaining 13% of variance): *non-discretionary use (working)* dimension.

‡ 3 Component (explaining 9% of variance): *specific discretionary use (green open spaces)* dimension.

TABLE 7

*Inter-places activities dimensions: principal component analysis with the activities in the three places considered together  
(only items with loadings higher than 0.400 are reported)*

| First component (14% of variance explained):<br>multi-uses of the centre and physical activities in the neighbourhood                 |                        |                 |
|---|------------------------|-----------------|
|   |                        | Factor loadings |
| Playing sports in the neighbourhood   |                        | 0.42            |
| Looking at beautiful things   | (in the centre)        | 0.61            |
| Shopping (general things)   | "                      | 0.53            |
| Spending spare time there   | "                      | 0.62            |
| Shopping (special things)   | "                      | 0.51            |
| Going in for no special reason  | "                      | 0.63            |
| Going to a restaurant   | "                      | 0.55            |
| Going to bookshops or libraries   | "                      | 0.62            |
| Visiting acquaintances  | "                      | 0.42            |
| Going to cultural centres   | "                      | 0.45            |
| Getting out of the house  | "                      | 0.41            |
| Visiting museums  | "                      | 0.56            |
| Celebrating special days  | "                      | 0.49            |
| Window-shopping   | "                      | 0.43            |
| Going to public meeting places  | "                      | 0.54            |
| Meeting new people  | "                      | 0.45            |
| Discovering the old town  | "                      | 0.51            |
| Going to the pictures   | "                      | 0.59            |
| Using facilities that are lacking in the neighbourhood  | "                      | 0.45            |
| Being together with other people  | "                      | 0.48            |
| Going to the theatre  | "                      | 0.58            |
| Walking   | "                      | 0.59            |
| Visiting antique shops  | "                      | 0.41            |
| Meeting friends   | "                      | 0.67            |
| Visiting exhibitions  | "                      | 0.65            |
| Walking at night  | "                      | 0.56            |
| Finding quiet places  | "                      | 0.43            |
| Looking for a link with the past  | "                      | 0.59            |
| Second component (5.7% of variance explained):<br>many discretionary uses in the periphery and social commitment in the neighbourhood |                        |                 |
| Participating in the activities of the neighbourhood  |                        |                 |
| political committee   |                        | -0.46           |
| Going for a picnic  | (in the periphery)     | -0.41           |
| Visiting relatives or acquaintances   | "                      | -0.43           |
| Looking for parkland and green areas  | "                      | -0.50           |
| Walking   | "                      | -0.53           |
| Meeting friends   | "                      | -0.43           |
| Third component (5.3% of variance explained):<br>home centered in the neighbourhood and escape use of the centre                      |                        |                 |
| Just staying at home in the evening   | (in the neighbourhood) | -0.49           |
| Spending most of the time at home   | "                      | -0.57           |
| Spending spare time at home   | "                      | -0.56           |
| Window-shopping   | "                      | -0.47           |
| Getting out of the house  | (in the centre)        | -0.43           |

TABLE 7—*continued*

| Fourth component (4.7% of variance explained):<br>cultural activities and no escape use in the centre |                 |                 |
|---|-----------------|-----------------|
|   |                 | Factor loadings |
| Visiting museums  | (in the centre) | 0.45            |
| Being together with other people  | "               | -0.40           |
| Visiting exhibitions  | "               | 0.47            |
| Visiting churches and monuments   | "               | 0.56            |

'discretionary use' is meant activities that do not have to be performed in this place, e.g. walking or shopping; Bonnes & Secchiaroli, 1979).

With regard to the other two dimensions, the second factor deals mainly with the *non-discretionary use of the place*, because it involves work, and the use of public offices located there.

The third factor refers to a *specific dimension of discretionary uses*, mainly related to the open and green space available (going for picnics or playing sport).

## 2. Inter-place analysis

2.1. *Dimensions of inter-place activities.* Inter-place analysis of the activities has shown the existence of four main dimensions of inter-place activities tending to link together the intra-place activities described above (Table 7).

None of these four dimensions includes activities pertaining to all three places considered. However, three of them include activities related to only two places (factors 1-3), while one involves activities related to only one place (factor 4). Most of these dimensions show a tendency to link one of the main dimensions of intra-place activities characterizing the neighbourhood with some of the dimensions of intra-place activity characterizing the city-centre (factors 1 and 3) or the periphery (factor 2).

In particular, factor 1 indicates that the numerous activities involving specific and non-specific uses performed in the course of multiple utilization of the centre (intra-place centre activity dimension 1) are positively related to the performance of *physical activity in the neighbourhood* (intra-place neighbourhood dimension 1). Factor 2 shows that the *discretionary activities in the periphery* (intra-place periphery dimensions 1 and 3) are associated with the participative and *socially committed activities in the neighbourhood* (intra-place neighbourhood dimension 3).

Factor 3 reveals that the *home-centred activities* in the neighbourhood (intra-place neighbourhood dimension 2) are associated with the use of the centre for the purpose of *escape* (intra-place centre dimension 2).

Factor 4 refers only to *cultural activities in the centre* (intra-place centre dimension 2) and points to this place as having a more independent status than the other two places.

2.2. *Inter-place activities and characteristics of the residents.* With reference to the four main inter-place dimensions of activities/uses illustrated above, the subsequent cluster analysis of the subjects indicates that the inhabitants could be divided into six main groups, explaining the 44% of the total variance. The positions of these six groups on the factorial plane defined by the first and second component are shown in Figure 1; for each group the position on the other two axes is also indicated when statistically significant.

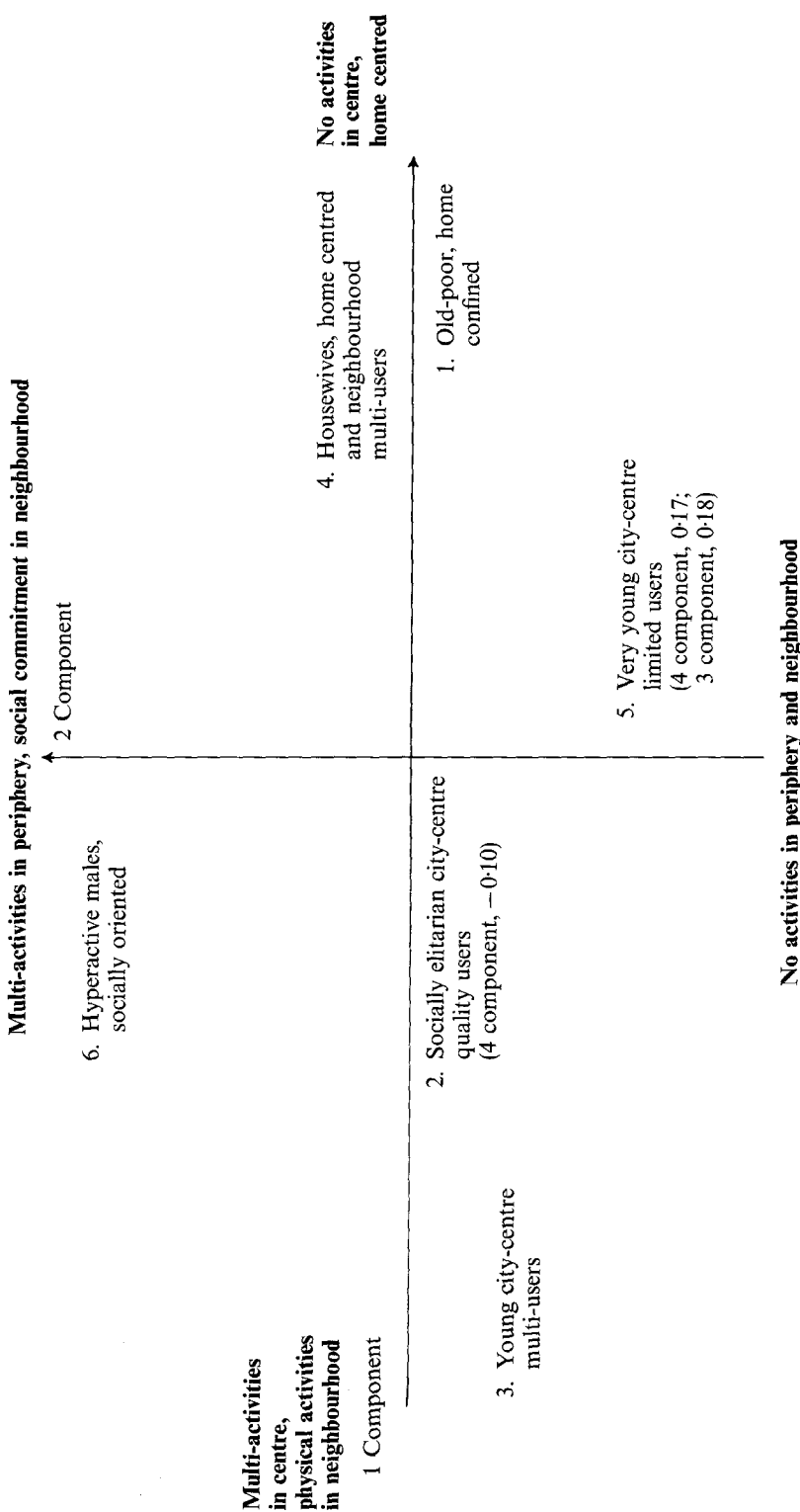


FIGURE 1. Position of the six groups of residents on the factorial plane of the two main inter-places activities dimensions.

In agreement with our hypothesis, each of the six groups of residents identified is characterized both by the activities performed or not in each of the three sub-places (Tables 8a–f) and by a number of characteristic sociodemographic patterns (Table 9). Following the groups plotted against the first two dimensions of inter-place activity (Figure 1), group 3 is found to lie at the left end of the first axis. This group (Table 8c) is found to be the most active in the use of the city-centre, particularly in the ‘non-specific’ sense (visual, leisure and social activity), but even a considerable number of specific activities are observed (bookshops, cinema, restaurants); comparatively few activities are performed in the neighbourhood, the use of which is restricted to sporting and open-air activities, as well as with scanty use of domestic space, which is used only for social purposes. Overall this group may be said to have a definite general interest in socializing, either in the interpersonal forms (‘meeting/visiting friends’, ‘acquaintances’) or as community participation (‘political demonstrations’, ‘parish activities’); these social activities are carried on in all the three places considered.

Young age coupled with high socio-cultural level (university degree) characterize this group from the sociodemographic standpoint (Table 9). They may be defined as *‘young city-centre multi-users, with physical activities in the neighbourhood, not home centred’*.

Going from left to right along the first axis, the next group found is group 2. This group is the largest (number = 126) and is also very active in the city-centre (Table 8b), although in a much more specific sense, particularly as far as the cultural dimension is concerned. Indeed, it is found to be placed significantly ( $-0.10$ ) also with respect to the fourth dimension of inter-place activity (Figure 1) which is relative to this use of the city-centre.

Further activities carried out in the city-centre includes shopping and quality entertainment (bookshops, theatre, antique shops), accompanied by a number of non-specific uses, particularly those of an aesthetic, visual or historical nature. Also in this case practically no use is made of the neighbourhood, except for that made of parks and green areas. Here too there is a tendency to spend considerable time at home. Moreover, this group is characterized not only by the general absence of any socializing activities of an interpersonal nature but is distinctive in its definite tendency to avoid any such activities, particularly in the neighbourhood. The tendency is to avoid both interpersonal intercourse (‘not going to the bar to talk’) and community participation (‘not sitting on the neighbourhood political committee’).

From the sociodemographic standpoint this group is characterized by a high cultural and socioeconomic level. This type of behaviour, particularly at the neighbourhood level, resembles the life-style often believed to be typical of the middle-upper bourgeoisie, which is characterized by lack of interest in the life of the neighbourhood and the urban community, with a preference for staying at home when in the neighbourhood and of living one’s urban life solely in the city centre. This group has been defined as *‘socially elitarian, quality users of the centre, home centred in the neighbourhood’*.

The next group found along the same first axis is group 4 (Table 8d) characterized by no use of the centre with a parallel intense use of the neighbourhood, whether in the ‘acquisitive’ sense, for ‘entertainment’, or for social activities. An intense use is made also of the home environment, where a considerable amount of time is spent, also for social purposes (‘meeting friends at home’).

In connection with this intense activity centred in the home area and in the neighbourhood, there seems to emerge the only use that this group makes of the centre,

TABLE 8

*Inter-places activities of different groups of residents: description of the six groups by means of the activities performed in the three urban places  
(only items with significant differences between the whole sample and the group are provided)*

| (8a) Group 1: Old-poor, home confined: N = 60 |   |
|---|---|
| Activities performed <i>more frequently</i>   |   |
| Neighbourhood:                                | Just staying at home in the evening working<br>Spending my spare time at home<br>Spending most of the time at home  |
| Centre:                                       | -----   |
| Periphery:                                    | -----   |
| Activities performed <i>less frequently</i>   |   |
| Neighbourhood:                                | Meeting friends and acquaintances at home<br>Going for a walk<br>Window-shopping<br>Going to the Villa Pamphili park<br>Going to a restaurant or 'pizzeria'<br>Playing sport<br>Going to the park<br>Campaigning for more park areas in the neighbourhood<br>Joining in political party activities<br>Joining in parish activities  |
| Centre:                                       | Looking at beautiful things<br>Walking<br>Spending spare time there<br>Going to the pictures<br>Window-shopping<br>Shopping (general things)<br>Meeting friends<br>Getting out of the house<br>Visiting exhibitions<br>Going to the theatre<br>Being together with other people<br>Visiting museums<br>Going to bookshops or libraries<br>Discovering the old town<br>Going to public meeting places<br>Using facilities that are lacking in his/her neighbourhood<br>Going to a restaurant<br>Celebrating special days<br>Walking at night<br>Meeting new people<br>Visiting antique shops<br>Going to cultural centres<br>Finding quiet places<br>Visiting acquaintances<br>Looking for a link with the past<br>Visiting churches and museums<br>Joining in political demonstrations<br>Walking or studying |

TABLE 8—*continued*(8a)—*continued*

Periphery: Meeting friends  
 Passing through to get to other places  
 Visiting relatives or acquaintances  
 Going there for a picnic  
 Looking for parkland and green areas  
 Shopping in the supermarkets  
 Visiting little markets  
 Playing sports  
 Walking

(8b) Group 2: Socially elitarian, quality users in the centre, home centred in the neighbourhood:  
 N = 126

Activities performed *more frequently*

Neighbourhood: Going to the Villa Pamphili park  
 Just staying at home in the evening  
 Spending my spare time at home

Centre: Visiting museums  
 Visiting churches and monuments  
 Visiting exhibitions  
 Going to bookshops or libraries  
 Going to the theatre  
 Shopping (special things)  
 Shopping (general things)  
 Passing through quickly  
 Visiting antique shops  
 Discovering the old town  
 Working or studying  
 Going to administrative offices  
 Going to the pictures  
 Looking at beautiful things  
 Looking for a link with the past

Periphery: Going through to get to other places

Activities performed *less frequently*

Neighbourhood: Going to the bar to talk  
 Participating in the activities of the neighbourhood's political committee  
 Working  
 Campaigning for more parks in the neighbourhood

Centre: -----

Periphery: -----

(8c) Group 3: Young city-centre multi-users, physical activities in the neighbourhood: N = 63

Activities performed *more frequently*

Neighbourhood: Joining in parish activities  
 Going to the park  
 Going to the Villa Pamphili park  
 Going for a walk  
 Going to the swimming pool

*continued on next page*

TABLE 8—*continued*(8c)—*continued*

Centre: Going there for no special reason  
 Finding quiet places  
 Spending spare time there  
 Meeting friends  
 Looking at beautiful things  
 Being together with other people  
 Walking  
 Going to bookshops or libraries  
 Meeting new people  
 Going to public meeting places  
 Walking at night  
 Going to a restaurant  
 Looking for a link with the past  
 Visiting exhibitions  
 Celebrating special days  
 Discovering the old town  
 Getting out of the house  
 Going to the pictures  
 Using facilities that are lacking in the neighbourhood  
 Going to the theatre  
 Shopping (special things)  
 Shopping (general things)  
 Visiting antique shops  
 Going to cultural centres  
 Visiting churches and monuments  
 Working and studying  
 Window-shopping  
 Visiting acquaintances  
 Joining in political demonstrations

Periphery: Meeting friends

---

*Activities performed less frequently*

---

Neighbourhood: Just staying at home in the evening  
 Spending my spare time at home  
 Daily shopping in the market  
 Doing all his/her shopping there  
 Spending most of the time at home

Centre: -----

Periphery: -----

---

(8d) Group 4: Housewives, home centred and neighbourhood multi-users, no centre activities  
 (escape users): N = 95

---

*Activities performed more frequently*

---

Neighbourhood: Daily shopping at the market  
 Doing all his/her shopping there  
 Spending most of the time at home  
 Spending my spare time at home  
 Going for a walk  
 Window-shopping  
 Just staying at home in the evening  
 Meeting neighbours



TABLE 8—*continued**(8d)—continued*

Staying there only to sleep  
 Going to a restaurant  
 Going to the pictures  
 Meeting friends and acquaintances at home  
 Centre: Getting out of the house  
 Periphery: Walking  
 Looking for parklands and green areas

*Activities performed less frequently*

Neighbourhood: Joining in parish activities  
 Going to the swimming pool  
 Centre: Going to bookshops or libraries  
 Visiting exhibitions  
 Visiting museums  
 Going to public meeting places  
 Walking at night  
 Going to a restaurant  
 Meeting friends  
 Visiting churches and monuments  
 Working or studying  
 Going to the pictures  
 Going there for no special reason  
 Using facilities that are lacking in the neighbourhood  
 Going to cultural centres  
 Shopping (general things)  
 Spending spare time there  
 Joining in political demonstrations  
 Going to administrative offices  
 Meeting new people  
 Visiting acquaintances  
 Shopping (special things)  
 Finding quiet places  
 Looking for a link with the past  
 Visiting antique shops  
 Discovering the old town  
 Celebrating special days  
 Going through quickly  
 Being together with other people  
 Periphery: Playing sports

*(8e) Group 5: Very young limited users of the centre, absent from home and neighbourhood:*  
 N = 55

*Activities performed more frequently*

Neighbourhood: Staying there only to sleep  
 Centre: Going to public meeting places  
 Going to the pictures  
 Shopping (general things)  
 Meeting friends  
 Window-shopping  
 Periphery: -----

*continued on next page*

TABLE 8—*continued*

| (8e)— <i>continued</i>   | Activities performed <i>less frequently</i>  |
|--|--|
| Neighbourhood:   | Spending most of the time at home<br>Spending spare time at home<br>Just staying at home in the evening<br>Going for a walk<br>Daily shopping at the market<br>Joining in activities<br>Doing all his/her shopping there<br>Going to the Villa Pamphili park<br>Meeting my neighbours<br>Going to the park<br>Window-shopping  |
| Centre:  | Visiting churches and museums<br>Looking for a link with the past<br>Discovering the old town<br>Visiting museums<br>Going to administrative offices<br>Visiting art exhibitions<br>Visiting antique shops<br>Celebrating special days<br>Finding quiet places<br>Joining in political demonstrations<br>Working or studying<br>Going to bookshops or libraries  |
| Periphery:   | Looking for parkland and green areas<br>Visiting relatives or acquaintances<br>Visiting little markets<br>Walking<br>Going to public offices<br>Going for a picnic<br>Meeting friends  |
| (8f) Group 6: Hyperactive males, socially oriented, fully integrated in the city: N = 35 |  |
|  | Activities performed <i>more frequently</i>  |
| Neighbourhood:   | Campaigning for more parks in the neighbourhood<br>Participating in the activities of the neighbourhood's political committee<br>Playing sports<br>Going to the 'bar' to talk with people<br>Joining in parish activities<br>Going to the park<br>Going to cultural centres<br>Going to the swimming pool<br>Meeting friends and acquaintances at home<br>Going to a restaurant<br>Joining in political party activities<br>Meeting his/her neighbours<br>Going to the pictures<br>Going to the Villa Pamphili park<br>Working |
| Centre:  | Visiting exhibitions<br>Going to cultural centres  |

TABLE 8—*continued*(8f)—*continued*


---

|   |
|---|
| Visiting museums                        |
| Joining in political demonstrations     |
| Going to administrative offices         |
| Visiting churches and monuments         |
| Walking at night                        |
| Going to bookshops or libraries         |
| Being together with other people        |
| Meeting new people                      |
| Discovering the old town                |
| Working or studying                     |
| Visiting acquaintances                  |
| Celebrating special days                |
| Meeting friends                         |
| Spending my spare time                  |
| Going to the pictures                   |
| Periphery: Meeting friends              |
| Visiting little markets                 |
| Walking                                 |
| Looking for parklands and green areas   |
| Visiting relatives or acquaintances     |
| Going for a picnic                      |
| Playing sports                          |
| Going to public offices                 |
| Working                                 |
| Shopping in supermarkets                |
| Going through it to get to other places |

---

*Activities performed less frequently*


---

|   |
|---|
| Neighbourhood: Spending my spare time at home |
| Spending most of the time at home             |
| Just staying at home in the evening           |
| Centre: Shopping (general things)             |
| Shopping (special things)                     |
| Periphery: -----                              |

---

namely a totally non-specific use, limited to a physical presence for the sole purpose of entertainment/escape with respect to the familiar domestic places ('getting out of the house'). The sociodemographic features of this group (Table 9) are characterized by low cultural (5–8 years of school) and socioeconomic levels, elderliness (over 55 years) or in any case no longer young (over 35 years) and of female sex. The group has been defined as '*housewives of low socioeconomic level (S.E.L.), home centred and neighbourhood multi-users, escape users of the centre*'.

At the right end of the same first axis lies group 1, which is characterized above all by the absence of activities (negative activity orientation) in each of the three urban places investigated (Table 8a), except for the neighbourhood. Here, however, the only activities observed are those involving spending practically all one's time at home, or else working. Sociodemographically, this group is found to be the oldest (over 55 years) with low S.E.L. and educational level. It has been defined as '*old, poor, home confined*'.

The next two groups of residents identified (groups 5 and 6) are the smallest

TABLE 9  
*Socio-demographic features characterizing the six groups of residents ( $p < 0.05$ )*

|   | % in the<br>whole sample | % in this<br>group |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Group 1: (n = 60)—old-poor, home confined   |                          |                    |
| 55 years old and older  | 22.0                     | 43.8               |
| 5–8 years of education  | 23.0                     | 28.3               |
| Low socio-economical level  | 27.9                     | 36.7               |
| Group 2: (n = 126)—socially elitarian, quality users of the centre,<br>home centred in the neighbourhood  |                          |                    |
| High socio-economical level   | 37.3                     | 46.8               |
| 13 years of education   | 60.4                     | 69.0               |
| Group 3: (n = 63)—young city-centre multi-users, physical activities<br>in the neighbourhood, not home centred                                    |                          |                    |
| 18–24 years old   | 24.0                     | 49.2               |
| 25–34 years old   | 19.4                     | 28.6               |
| Education at degree level   | 16.6                     | 20.8               |
| Group 4: (n = 95)—housewives of low socio-economical level, home<br>centred and neighbourhood multi-users, no<br>centre activities (escape users) |                          |                    |
| 5–8 years of education  | 23.0                     | 40.0               |
| 55 years old and older  | 22.1                     | 33.7               |
| Low socio-economical level  | 27.9                     | 37.9               |
| 35–54 years old   | 34.6                     | 42.1               |
| Group 5: (n = 55)—very young limited users of the centre, absent<br>from home and neighbourhood   |                          |                    |
| 18–24 years old   | 24.0                     | 47.3               |
| 13 years of education   | 60.4                     | 74.5               |
| Group 6: (n = 35)—males, hyperactive, socially oriented, fully<br>integrated in the city  |                          |                    |
| Males   | 46.1                     | 65.7               |
| Education at degree level   | 16.6                     | 31.4               |

(number = 55 and 35, respectively) and are both located closer to the second inter-place activities axis. The positive pole of this axis is defined by the discretionary multi-use of the periphery accompanied by a use of the neighbourhood limited to activities involving sociopolitical participation. However, the two groups show opposite trends along the same axis: group 6 tends towards the positive pole and group 5 towards the negative pole. The two groups differ considerably in both their activities and their sociodemographic characteristics.

Group 6 is the most active in the absolute sense (Table 8f), displaying intense activity in the several dimensions investigated in all three places considered. It shows a marked interest in socializing activities involving, on the one hand, political and participatory commitment in community affairs in the neighbourhood and in the city-centre and, on the other, many occasions of interpersonal encounters.

This group also carried on numerous discretionary activities both in the periphery (social, acquisitive and outdoors) and in the centre. In the neighbourhood the less frequent activities are those of staying at home. In this sense group 6 seems to be symmetrical but opposite to group 1, with respect to which it is more hyperactive and

mobile in the various places considered. The main sociodemographic characteristics of this group are that it consists of highly educated males. It has been defined as *'hyperactive males, socially oriented, fully integrated in the city'*.

Group 5, like group 1, shows a tendency to be characterized more by activities not performed than by those actually carried on (Table 8e). This lack of activity is reflected, first of all, in the neighbourhood, where it is accompanied by actual physical absence from the neighbourhood and the home, which is used only for sleeping in. Unlike the case of group 1, where the lack of activities in the neighbourhood and in the other urban places considered leads to confinement in the home, this lack of activity in and absence from the neighbourhood seems in this case to act as a stimulus for mobility towards the centre, accompanied, however, by scanty generic activities, which are limited to uses involving social meeting and entertainment. These residents show a persistent lack of interest in the more specific use of this place as represented by its historic-cultural dimension; indeed, it is noteworthy that this group correlates negatively with the fourth inter-place dimension. The sociodemographic characteristics of this group consist of very young age (18–25 years) and medium-high educational level (many are probably still studying). This group has been defined as *'very young, limited users of the centre, absent from home and neighbourhood'*.

### Discussion

Intra-place analysis has allowed a range of types of use to be identified for each place, although as is understandable a more differentiated use is found for the neighbourhood, because unlike the other places considered it is also the place of residence.

The analysis of both the shared (Table 1) and the different intra-neighbourhood activities (Table 2) points to the importance of the role played by the home in directing the residents' activities in the neighbourhood. In particular, in each of the first two intra-place activities dimensions, different ways of using the domestic environment emerge in connection with equally diversified activities involving the other aspects of the neighbourhood. On the one hand (first factor), we find a highly limited use of the home involving solely socializing functions (meeting friends at home), associated with a multi-use of the neighbourhood facilities, in particular the green areas, or which allow physical and sports activities; on the other hand (second factor), we find an almost exclusive use of the home: the home as a place of withdrawal, confinement, accompanied by an almost exclusive activity of shopping in the neighbourhood.

Intra-place activities in the neighbourhood seem mainly to be organized into a dimension that could be denoted as residential 'openness/closedness', in this case in the meaning proposed by Altman and Gauvain (1981). On the other hand, it appears as a further organization of inter-place activities and it actually involves not one but two different residential places: the home and the neighbourhood.

In any case, our data seem to indicate the existence, in addition to the three urban places considered at the outset, also to a fourth 'urban sub-place', itself included in the residential place of 'neighbourhood' and represented by the home.

Subsequent inter-place analysis will afford us further insight into the links between the dimensions of intra-place activities and will reveal the close interdependence between the various dimensions of activities referring to the various places considered. By means of this inter-place analysis it would be possible to gain a better 'molar'

understanding of individual intra-place activities and to identify more general modalities through which the experience of the place 'city' is configured to residents with reference to the various sub-places.

On the whole, the places of residence neighbourhood/home seem to play a crucial role in the organization of the inter-place activities performed by residents inside the city. Our data seem to indicate that each of the main intra-place dimensions of the centre and the periphery tend to be regulated in accordance with the specific dimensions of activities carried on in the places of residence: the inhabitants apparently do or do not carry out certain specific activities in non-residential urban places, in accordance with the type of activity preferentially carried on in their places of residence. An intensive and widespread use of the centre thus appears to accompany 'residential openness' displayed at home and in the neighbourhood; the tendency to frequent the periphery for various discretionary reasons (firstly, to keep up relationships with family and friends) accompanies the activity of socio-political commitment in the neighbourhood: the latter two activity patterns, which then merge with inter-place dimension 2, could conceivably be interpreted as the manifestation of an underlying specific membership or choice of 'class' by the residents concerned and thus account for the behavioural peculiarities of the residents. In any case it should be noted that such an inter-place interpretation provides a more convincing explanation of the pattern found for dimension 3 of intra-place activity in the neighbourhood, in which a negative correlation is found between political commitment/participation in neighbourhood life and the use of the green areas in the neighbourhood (Table 2). The results of the inter-place analysis seem to indicate that it is the use of the periphery, including the relative green areas, which accompanies socio-political commitment in the neighbourhood, which apparently accounts for the lack of interest in using the green areas of the neighbourhood. Likewise, inter-place analysis also affords us a better understanding of other intra-place dimensions, in particular intra-centre 'escape dimension' (factor 2) and intra-neighbourhood 'home-centred dimension' (factor 2). Inter-place analysis shows how these two intra-place dimensions tend to be linked together and highlight the last two inter-place dimensions (3 and 4), both of which are related to use of the centre.

The activities related to 'residential closedness' in the neighbourhood/home seem to encourage the same residents to 'compensate', by carrying on non-specific escape and 'culturally' non-directed activities in the centre (inter-place dimension 3). This dimension and, in particular, this use of the centre seem to involve an implicit intention to use this place in order to re-establish a kind of 'urban sociability' which is 'threatened' by undue residential closedness. The mere fact of being physically in and of looking around an environment containing so many 'social' elements such as the centre is apparently enough to satisfy this need.

It is interesting to note how this escape use of the centre correlates negatively with the 'cultural' use, which emerges as a specific inter-place activity dimension 4. On the one hand, it may seem that this inter-place dimension is the one most specifically related to the peculiarity of the city in question (Rome). The significance of the artistic and monumental aspects of this city are without doubt an essential part of the very identity of the place 'centre', as we have pointed out specifically elsewhere (Bonnes *et al.*, 1987).

On the other hand, both this 'cultural use' dimension of the centre and the other inter-place dimension (factor 3), which focus on the use of the centre with special reference to the aspects of community and symbolic life carried on in it, could be

interpreted as an expression of a way of pursuing a special kind of 'urban sociability' in such a place. This sociability could be defined as 'indirect', to distinguish it from the more 'direct' type based on interpersonal intercourse, which is found to be carried on in the other places and appears in both of the first two inter-place dimensions: 'meeting friends, new people, visiting acquaintances, relatives, participating in neighbourhood committee activities'.

In view of the fact that social intercourse/communication is considered by many authors (Maier, 1959, 1962) to be one of the main characteristics of urban life itself, the various dimensions of inter-place activity we have found could conceivably be thought of as also differing according to the different ways in which such social intercourse takes place in the urban environment and the various urban places: i.e. the more 'direct' and 'reciprocal' social intercourse in the various urban places (inter-places factors 1 and 2), the more the 'indirect' form, based either on mere proximity to/observation of 'social' or 'cultural' activity especially in the centre.

As a place, the centre appears to be different from the other places considered: the 'urban sociability' behaviour that can be carried out there seems to be specific to it and different from that possible in the other urban places. The varying importance of the different places considered in building up the residents' urban experience, whether in absolute terms or as a function of the different types of activity performed, emerges in greater detail from the analysis of the different sociodemographic characteristics of the residents. The close interrelationship between persons and urban places thus becomes evident.

On the whole, by analysing the various types of inter-place activity referring to the six different groups of residents (Tables 8a-f), it would seem possible to identify different modalities of activities characterizing, on one hand, what we term the residents' 'multi-place urban pragmatics'; on the other, through this urban pragmatics, the city tends to be constructed in the residents' experience as a place or, better, as a multi-place system.

This urban pragmatics seems to distinguish the various groups of residents according to two main modalities, variously distributed in the space of Figure 1 and corresponding to different orientations towards *integration* or *withdrawal/confinement* in the socio-physical environment of the city: the pragmatics oriented towards *integration* on the left side of the figure and, in particular, in the top-left sector where the *full-urban integration* is localized; the pragmatics oriented towards the *confinement* on the right side of the figure and, in particular, in the bottom-right sector where the pragmatics of *full-urban confinement* is localized.

On the left side of the diagram the urban pragmatics is characterized by multi-place activities, thus having a high degree of intra-urban mobility, and by prevalence of activities performed over those not performed (positive vs negative orientation of the activities), oriented specifically over those generically oriented (high vs low specificity) and socio-interactively (high vs low social exchange), including the active and specific use of the centre, as well as the other places.

On the right side of the same diagram the pragmatics is characterized by activities mainly related to the residential places, thus having low intra-urban mobility, with more non-specific and negative activities, with relatively few socializing activities of the interactive type and no active and specific activities performed in the centre. Here we seem to have further confirmation of the crucial role played by both the residential places and the centre in building up the experience of urban integration: the possibility

| Type of urban pragmatics   | Multi-place system features  |   |  |
|--|--|---|--|
|  | High Multi-place   | Medium Bi-place   | Low Mono-place   |
| <b>Towards Integration</b><br>Activity with:<br>—positive orientation<br>—high specificity<br>—high mobility<br>—high social interchange | <b>Full-integration</b><br>Four places involved:<br>home + neighbourhood + centre + periphery:<br><i>group 6 = 'hyperactive males'</i> | <b>Semi-integration</b><br>Two places involved:<br>neighbourhood + centre:<br><i>group 3 = 'young'</i><br>home + centre:<br><i>group 2 = 'social elite'</i> |  |
| <b>Towards Confinement</b><br>Activity with:<br>—negative orientation<br>—low specificity<br>—low mobility<br>—low social interchange    |  | <b>Semi-confinement</b><br>Two places involved:<br>neighbourhood + home:<br><i>group 4 = 'housewives'</i>   | <b>Full-confinement</b><br>One place involved:<br>home:<br><i>group 1 = 'old-poor'</i><br>centre:<br><i>group 5 = 'very young'</i> |

FIGURE 2. The city as a multi-place system according to the residents' urban pragmatics.

of actively, but not exclusively, using both the residential places and, in particular, the centre seems to be decisive.

Corresponding to these different modalities of inter-place urban pragmatics the various ways in which the city itself tends to be constructed in the residents' experience as an 'integrated multi-place system' can be outlined as in Figure 2. Such a multi-place system is configured with different spatial extension, multi-place differentiation and complexity, according to the various forms of *integration vs confinement* of the urban pragmatics used by the different resident groups. The spatial extension, multi-place differentiation and complexity of this multi-place system are greatest in the case of pragmatics involving maximum socio-urban integration, as seems to apply solely to group 6. For the latter, the experience of the city seems to consist of an integrated system comprising four places: home, neighbourhood, centre and periphery.

Minimum spatial extension, multi-place differentiation and complexity are found in the practice of complete confinement adopted by groups 5 and 1; in this case, experience of the city seems to correspond to those of a single place: the centre, for group 5 and the home for group 1.

There seems to be a greater variety of conditions of urban experience in the case in which the multi-place city system has medium spatial extension, multi-place differentiation and complexity, and is configured as a 'bi-place' system, i.e. based on pragmatic experience related to two places. For pragmatics of *semi-integration* the two places involved are the centre and one of the residential places: the neighbourhood for group 3 and the home for group 2; for the pragmatics of *semi-confinement* the two places are only residential places: the neighbourhood and the home for group 4.

On the whole, the most frequent condition associated with the construction of the residents' experience of the place 'city' seems to be that of the bi-place system, which happens for more than 50% of the residents interviewed; for only a small minority, less than 10%, the city appears as a spatially extensive place which is differentiated into the places of home, neighbourhood, centre, periphery.

At any rate, both the urban pragmatics adopted and the corresponding construction



of the place 'city' as a multi-place system are found to be strongly influenced by the social-demographic and cultural features of the residents or, to be more precise, by particular combinations of these features (Table 9). The greater/lesser spatial extension and multi-place differentiation and complexity of the place 'city', corresponding to the pragmatics of urban integration/confinement that have emerged so far, appear to be particularly affected by age and educational background, tendentially in combination with the residents' socio-economic level and gender. The pragmatics of urban multi-place integration tends to develop in inverse proportion to age, excluding the very young age bracket (as in groups 3, 6 and 2), and in proportion to the educational and socio-economic levels (as in groups 2, 3 and 6). It is also more frequent among males (group 6). On the one hand, the urban pragmatics of partial or complete withdrawal/confinement, with activities that are either mono-place or concentrated exclusively in the residential places (groups 4 and 1), tend to develop concomitantly with low educational and socio-economic levels, further associated with advanced (group 1) or, at any rate, no longer young age and female sex (group 4). On the other hand, very young age (18–24 years) appears to be yet another factor generating urban pragmatics of withdrawal/isolation, here observed mainly in the form of withdrawal/escape from the residential places and exclusive but non-specific use of the centre.

Therefore, we find confirmation of the plurality of the urban experience of residents in the same city in relation to particular patterns of social-demographic features; nevertheless, the evidence implies possible directions in which these experiential patterns may change. These changes could occur in relation to changes in the socio-demographic patterns and may well be associated, for example, with the advancing age of residents. This would conform to the increasing importance environmental psychology is attaching to the temporal aspect of environmental experience (Werner *et al.*, 1985) and to the viewpoint of life-span psychology (Stokols, 1981, 1987). In fact, our data suggest that the advancing age of residents may point to a possible path for changes in urban pragmatics and the parallel construction of the city as a multi-place system.

Both at the beginning, in very early age (group 5) and at the end, in advanced age (group 1), this path appears to take the form of urban withdrawal/confinement (negative, exclusively mono-place pragmatics). In youth-mature age, however, the path seems to lead to phases of greater integration and urban involvement (groups 2 and 3), which may even be rather intense (e.g. group 6), especially when this phase occurs concomitantly with higher education and socio-economic levels (groups 2 and 3) and involves male subjects.

It thus appears possible to trace the typical path of inter-place urban pragmatics in relation to residents' ages: it begins in post-adolescence with a phase of urban withdrawal/confinement characterized by escape from the residential places while at the same time interest concentrates on the centre. In turn, the centre is frequented for general, non-specific reasons (more 'spatial-physical occupation' than active use) (group 5) until subsequently, at a later age (up to 35 years), greater urban integration is achieved (bi-place pragmatics) through more intense, diversified exploitation of the various aspects of the centre, while at the same time there is a partial return to the residential places (the neighbourhood only for sporting and physical activity facilities, the home only to meet friends in). If the socio-economic level is sufficiently high (group 2) there is an increase in the tendency to use the centre for certain aims (i.e. specific use) of a more complex order (cultural use) and to appreciate the time spent at home. With

advancing age, however, this regained interest in the residential places entails the risk of new urban withdrawal/confinement, especially for women (group 4), and can lead to complete domestic mono-place withdrawal in old age. Again, this is especially true in the case of the lower educational and socio-economic levels.

It is still necessary to verify and examine the actual development of urban multi-place pragmatics associated with age, and also make comparisons with other neighbourhoods in the same city and with different cities.

What we wish to stress here is the close interdependence our data reveal between people and urban places, not only at the level of specific places (i.e. from the intra-place viewpoint) but even more so at the inter-place level. Thus the city as a multi-place system tends to take on features defined and modified according to the features assumed by its residents/agents. The place-specific nature of human behaviour appears with its distinctive features of purposive, goal-directed activity above all at the inter-place level, as indeed place theories generally point out (Russell & Ward, 1982; Canter, 1983; Ward *et al.*, 1988). Thus it is not only human behaviour that shows adaptability, accommodating itself to the specific features of the place it occupies—as the intra- (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) which is above all designed to reconstruct the place-specific features according to the features of the agents moving within them; these agents plan and pursue their actions, not only in them but above all ‘among them’.

### Conclusions

The aim of our work, based on the assumption of environmental psychology about the place-specific nature of human behaviour, was to demonstrate how, in order to appreciate such specificity, it is necessary to abandon a molecular intra-place conception. The analysis must be set in a wider, more ‘ecological’ perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) which is above all designed to reconstruct the place-specific nature of human behaviour at an inter-place level, i.e. as a system of places.

On the basis of these assumptions, the study addressed the persons/urban places transactions with reference to a large city (Rome), with the emphasis on the experience of activities performed in the city by the residents at both the intra- and inter-place levels. The starting focal point was the neighbourhood—a place shared by all the residents, although their activities were investigated not only here but also in two other places initially considered typical of the city in question: the centre and the periphery.

The shift from intra-place to inter-place analysis seems to allow a clearer understanding of the place-specific nature of the inhabitants’ behaviour in the city. In particular, we have attempted to surpass the mere observation that certain activities are prevalent with respect to others in the various places. From the outset it has been demonstrated that an internal connection exists between the various intra-place activities, in addition to the greater or lesser degree of sharing which exists among them (identification of the dimensions of intra-place activity). In the inter-place analysis it was subsequently demonstrated that each of these intra-place dimensions tend either to appear in an integrated form with corresponding intra-place dimensions of the other places considered or to be associated with certain socio-demographic and cultural features specific to the residents.

In this way, emphasis has been laid on the crucial role played by both the residential places, i.e. not only the neighbourhood but also the home, and the city centre, in building up multi-place experience of the city.

Analysis of 'urban inter-place pragmatics' of the various residents, which tends to varying degrees either towards integration or towards urban confinement, has revealed different modalities by which the city tends to be built up in the multi-place sense in the residents' experience, also as a function of the different characteristics of the latter. The spatial extension, differentiation and complexity of this multi-place system, corresponding to an urban pragmatics which is more or less oriented towards the integration—in the sense of positive, specific and socially oriented activities—varies in accordance with the socio-demographic and cultural typology of the residents involved.

Our study shows how the city of Rome appears to be variously viewed as a wide or restricted urban place according to the inhabitants' different characteristics. Only for a minority, mostly highly educated and socially oriented males, does the city seem to be an integrated multi-place system, composed of home, neighbourhood, city-centre and periphery. Further, by demonstrating the interdependence between persons and places, not only at the level of specific places but also at the system level, it has been possible to define modalities through which not only can the city be defined in the residents' experience but it can if necessary be modified, as a place system, in relation to the characteristics of inter-place urban pragmatics adopted by the residents.

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