
Urban Management in Terms of Improving Elderly People's Life Quality

Submitted 12/09/24, 1st revision 17/10/24, 2nd revision 28/10/24, accepted 15/11/24

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Abstract:

Purpose: The main objectives of the paper are to identify the challenges that cities have to cope with in the context of population ageing and how to create conditions for improving the elderly people's life quality through the diversification of the urban policy.

Project/Methodology/Approach: The desk research method was applied in the study. The subject literature, reports, documents of international organizations, Internet sources of information, Central Statistical Office and Eurostat statistical data were taken advantage of.

Findings: The analysis of the collected data has indicated that the problem of managing a city with an increasing share of elderly people is a serious challenge for local governments. In such circumstances, city management requires the involvement of all stakeholders, including, in particular, elderly people, in creating conditions influencing the city appropriate functioning.

Practical implications: The literature review and drawn conclusions may provide fundaments for broad discussions on city transformations that have to take into consideration numerous challenges related to the growing number of elderly people. Hence, a different approach is required. It is manifested in new forms of urban planning and management that are able to eliminate existing threats and to treat these threats as new challenges. This way, conditions contributing to the improvement of residents' life quality can be provided.

Originality/Value: The study broadly analyses solutions referring to the improvement of elderly people's quality of life.

Keywords: A city, elderly people, city management, quality of life.

JEL Code: I31, J11, L38.

Paper type: Research article.

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1. Introduction

Transformations in contemporary cities are taking place under the influence of a number of factors, among which demographic changes are becoming increasingly important. Depopulation occurring in the majority of Polish cities and the process of the urban population aging constitute a serious challenge for the city development. The global population aged 65 or older has grown from 6% in 1990 to 9% in 2019, and is estimated to reach 16% in 2050 (United Nations, 2019). Such rapid growth in the elderly population challenges governments to provide quality health care and social security, and greatly affects societies and caregivers in the community (Zin *et al.*, 2020). The aging growth rate is more rapid in developing countries than in more developed countries (Bloom *et al.*, 2011).

A city is associated with people, not with buildings and space. Therefore, all actions undertaken in cities should be connected with meeting the needs of their inhabitants. The research found links between elements of indoor facilities management and the quality of life of elderly people living in private residential buildings.

Therefore, it is recommended that architects, interior designers, building services engineers and facilities managers include adequate turning spaces in the design of flats for the elderly; and that they pay attention to the brightness and hue of lighting, consider the micro-climate in the orientation of new buildings, incorporate sound insulation materials in walls, install on doors and windows lever handles that require minimal force and increase the width of doors in flats for elderly residents (Meiyung, Ibukun, and Timothy, 2017).

This is not an easy task due to the fact that numerous global processes like: climate, economic, social, political, health crises, affect the functionality of world cities. The increased share of elderly people in the urban population, including the oldest people - 80+, is expected to become a main factor, which can determine the city development directions and methods of residents' quality of life improvement. According to the population projection for 2023-2060, the percentage of people aged 65 or more in large cities will have ranged from approximately 29% to 40%.

Unfavorable changes in the age structure of the urban population constitute one of the most important and the most difficult to solve socio-economic problems. Due to the natural course of biological processes resulting from the body ageing, elderly people require significant changes in public services, which are expected to provide: higher level of efficiency; easy access to public spaces; redesigned social and technical infrastructure; improved aspects of everyday life.

In view of the challenges connected with the ageing populations in the majority of European cities, changes in these cities management have been reflected in a number of initiatives and documents of the organizations as, UN, WHO and the European Union. Generally speaking, universal regulations regarding the provision of

economic and social security as well various solutions concerning the status and rights of elderly people are referred to. On one hand, these priorities impose basic objectives connected with respecting the dignity and improving the quality of life of elderly people. On the other hand, these documents include areas and types of activities aimed at creating a favorable and supportive living environment for this group of people.

2. Character of Modern Cities

Modern cities are being developed at an unprecedented pace. However, they are also struggling with many problems on a scale that has never been observed before. The problems concern demographic, social, economic, environmental, political and spatial issues. Demographic changes, including: population ageing, migration or depopulation; intensification of social and spatial segregation processes causing people's marginalization and exclusion; impoverishment of the poor; turbulences in economies and in public finances generating disruptions on labor markets; expansion of cities taking over their surrounding areas - urban sprawl; difficulties in implementing the sustainable urban development and political conflicts have become significant issues.

Solving problems connected with cities functioning requires to create a new approach towards these challenges and to develop innovative solutions in the field of the city management. These issues have been reflected in many documents of international organizations, the European Union, ministers responsible for the urban policy as well as urban planners and architects.

The United Nations has been working to create decent living conditions for all people for many years. Successive United Nations - Habitat declarations have led to significant changes in the perception of problems concerning human settlements. The first Habitat I Vancouver Declaration on Human Settlements of June 11, 1976 (Deklaracja Habitat, 2017) emphasized the need to improve the life quality of people living in their settlements.

The success of the Declaration was connected with targeting activities on the universal social participation in urban planning; involving social groups in the urban development; providing housing; raising awareness of the socially vulnerable group needs as well as developing the concept of sustainable development enabling a holistic approach to human settlements.

The Habitat II Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlements of 14 June, 1996 took into consideration issues connected with ensuring affordable housing in settlements that would be free from all forms of discrimination; that would provide the equal access to social infrastructure facilities and economic resources and that would help implement sustainable development of settlements in the process of urbanization. The necessity to implement these goals in cooperation with governments, local

governments, non-government organizations and the private sector was emphasized either (Konferencja Narodów Zjednoczonych, 1996).

From the point of view cities that are expected to provide good quality of life for their inhabitants, the important document was also the Resolution of the General Assembly of 25 September, 2015: "Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", which also contained goals of Sustainable Development. Goal no 11 defined the idea of modern cities. It indicated that the cities and settlements had to be safe, stable, sustainable and socially inclusive.

These objectives can be achieved by providing the access to adequate, safe and affordable housing; to safe affordable and sustainable transport systems. Taking into account the needs of vulnerable social groups such as women, children, people with disabilities and elderly people, the improvement of public transport is particularly crucial.

An important aspect of these transformations is inclusiveness; sustainable urbanization and participation in the integrated and sustainable planning and management of human settlements. Cities should support their inhabitants with easy and universal access to safe and inclusive green areas and public spaces, especially dedicated for women, children, the elderly and disabled people.

An important aspect of the city development is connected with the reduction of its negative impact on the natural environment. In a broader context, the Agenda for Sustainable Development in its 17 postulates indicated the most important challenges connected with the global social and economic development. Therefore, these challenges have been reflected in all development policies of the country, regions and cities. (*Przekształcamy nasz świat...*, 2015)

Multi-faceted crisis of European cities inspired the European Council of Urban Planners to develop a vision of the city of the future – the coherent city. The guidelines contained in the following document: *The New Athens Charter. A Vision of the 21st Century Cities* focused on creating a concept of a city that is socially, economically, environmentally and spatially coherent, a city that respects cultural traditions.

The vision of a socially coherent city referred to such aspects as: ensuring social balance; ensuring the implementation of individual citizens and the whole urban community's interests. Assumptions included: guaranteeing the social peace, prosperity and good quality of life involving users of urban space in new forms of social participation; strengthening bonds among generations, developing mobility mainly by means of the public transport and developing social services adapted to the changing needs of city residents (*Nowa Karta Lipska...*, 2020).

Initiatives of the European Union and governments of the European Union member countries play a huge role in shaping the future of European cities. As it has been said by Okome, “We live in an era of ‘cities’. Sometimes we defeat the city and transform it so that it matches our whims and fancies. We invent a city and another time it reinvents us” (Okome, 2003). European cities should become places of advanced social progress; platforms for the democratic process; areas of cultural dialogue and cultural diversity; places of natural, ecological and environmental revitalization; locations of attractions and economic growth (COM (2014) 490). So, a city facing such challenges needs to be “reinvented”.

Key documents, such as the Leipzig Charter of 2007, the Toledo Declaration of 2010; Cities of tomorrow – Challenges, Visions, Perspectives of 2011; the Amsterdam Pact the Urban Agenda of the European Union of 2015 and the New Leipzig Charter of 2020 clearly emphasized the necessity to transform cities on the basis of a strategy of coherent and sustainable development. This development is conducive to achieving greater economic competitiveness, environmental efficiency, social cohesion and civic participation. These documents also indicated the need for good management of urban areas. The Amsterdam Pact was the foundation for the EU Urban Agenda.

The Agenda introduced the list of 12 themes that became the key factors for the cities development. The themes referred to workplaces; skills suitable for the local economy; urban poverty; housing; migrants and refugees’ integration; sustainable use of urban resources; circular economy; adaptation to climate changes, including green infrastructure solutions; energy transition; urban mobility; air quality; digital transformation and innovative and responsible public procurement (The Urban Agenda..., 2016).

The National Urban Policy plays an important role in the development of modern cities in Poland. It indicates current challenges related to sustainable development, quality of life improvement, resistance to city various challenges. In this context, the vision of Polish cities development emphasizes the fact that Polish cities should be resident-friendly and accessible to all people and that they should offer the high level of life quality.

Diversification of city concepts indicates the existence of many aspects of their functioning. It has been highlighted how various the expectations exist in terms of improving the city inhabitants life quality. As it has been also emphasized by J. Szołtysek, cities face the following dilemmas how cities should be managed; what development directions should be undertaken in order to provide opportunities for residents’ self-fulfillment, decent living conditions, high quality of life; how entrepreneurship should be developed taking into consideration specific conditions for every city (Szołtysek, 2015). It should be noted that all these documents focused on the overall vision of the city, in which one of the challenges was the demographic process.

However, the increasingly intensive course of population ageing, which is currently taking place in Europe, reveals new challenges connected with the policy that takes into consideration innovative solutions.

3. Demographic Conditions

Demographic transformations are one of the most important challenges that the modern world tries to cope with. Society ageing is the problem of the demographic transformation. With reference to the problem of ageing, it is required to define what the old age (Błądowski, 2002; Staręga-Piasek, 1988; Kowalewski and Majdziński, 2012) is and what are the boundaries characterizing this period of life. As the concept of the old age is featured in differently, it is difficult to determine the age when the old age starts.

Specialized literature does not provide any criteria based on which individual old age limits should be determined. Depending on the adopted context of considerations on the limits of the human old age, different approaches to this issue are applied. Szatur-Jaworska distinguishes 6 criteria determining an individual old age: biological, calendar (chronological), psychological, social, economic and legal (Szatur-Jaworska, 2006).

The most commonly used division concerns the *biological age*. This age defines the degree of human aging advancement, which significantly limits biological and adaptive processes (Suwiński, 2018). This stage is a determinant of the human body ability to function and it also indicates some cognitive limitations. The *economic age* concerns age limits appropriate for ending the professional activity. The *legal age* provides the threshold of the post-productive age limit. The *calendar (chronological) age* determines the number of years actually lived (Frąckiewicz and Wachelko-Żakowska, 1987; Zych, 2001).

The World Health Organization has adopted 60 years of age as the limit of the old age. The Organization has differentiated this limit into sub-periods such as: early old age (60-74 years of age), late old age (75-89 years of age) and longevity (more than 90 years of age) (Zych, 2007; Trzpiot and Szołtysek, 2015). According to this definition, the conventional age limit for the old age has been established at the level of 65 years of age. At the same time, it has been emphasized that there exists the diversity among elderly people in terms of their needs, opportunities, lifestyles, experiences and life choice preferences. These factors are shaped on the basis of these people's age, gender, health, income, education, ethnicity and other factors (Ageing..., 2017).

In the Polish legal system, a definition of an old person is included in the Act on Elderly People. According to the Article 4 of the Act, an old individual is a person who is 60 years of age (Ustawa ..., 2015). The adoption of the criterion regarding the old age limit is determined on an individual basis. In this sense, the issue of

progressive impairment of human vital functions is fundamental. This diversity of approaches with reference to the old age limit presents many difficulties in reaching a consensus in this respect. The period of the old age is not uniform. In the subject literature, there are distinguished several old age stages determining different needs. Generally speaking, people in the early old age have different needs in comparison to those in the advanced old age. These needs are determined by the individual course of aging.

Changes in the population age structure are important for the analysis of cities functioning and the demographic transformation. The increasing number of elderly people in the population leads to the process of ageing of the whole society. An extremely important phenomenon occurring in Poland is the process of depopulation. The actual population loss in the period of 2011-2022 amounted to 772.1 thousand people (Rozwój..., 2023). The population projection for 2023-2060 prepared by the Central Statistical Office has indicated that the depopulation process will be continued. Taking into consideration three assumed variants of changes in the size of the Polish population in 2023-2060, this decrease will range from 8% to 29% (Prognoza..., 2023).

However, the number of people aged 65 and more has been growing steadily. In 2023, compared to 2022, this number increased by 197,000 people to over 7.5 million. The share of this age group in the total population is defined by the old age indicator, which in 2023 amounted to 20.1%, while in 1990 elderly people constituted only 10% of the population.

The population projection for 2023-2060 indicates that the trends of the decreasing number of people in pre-productive and productive age will be continued. A simultaneous increase in the post-productive age group will be observed. According to the adopted projection variant, the number of people aged 65 and more will range from 8.98 million to 11.09 million people.

The negative connotation of the population ageing is reflected not only in the subject literature but also it is mentioned in euphemisms such as "demographic bomb", "grey wave" or "senior epidemic" (Labus, 2013). The demographic structure of the Polish population is currently undergoing profound transformations and these changes are taking place in a particularly dynamic manner.

Currently, Poland is experiencing a phenomenon of double aging. It is predicted that this process will be intensified. It involves faster growth of the old population. As a result, the share of very old people, most often defined as people who are at least 80 or 85 years old, is growing (Szukalski, 2021; Sygulaska, 2020).

The increase in the percentage of the oldest people is important because age is most often associated with the risk of multiple diseases and limited independence. Those people have different needs than younger old people. Possibilities of meeting these

needs also differ. However, from the perspective of the city oldest residents, this problem requires designing the social and technical infrastructure and introducing innovative solutions in the broadly understood system of services and products.

4. Elderly People's Quality of Life

Considering the issue of elderly people's life quality, it is necessary to define the concept of the quality of life itself. However, in the subject literature there is no consensus concerning what the quality of life in fact means. The definition of this category is not unequivocal. Life quality concept is difficult to define precisely. Its definition depends on the perspective of an entity trying to deal with this issue, which is interpreted differently by representatives of many fields and scientific disciplines.

However, the scientists' definitions are not contradictory. They emphasize different aspects of this phenomenon; they characterize different spheres of reality; they select various factors; they focus on a man and their life problems. In the subject literature, the concept of "quality of life" is associated with many spheres of a society functioning.

Quality of life is considered in individual dimension and environmental dimension; it is considered in the aspect of human functioning in specific socioeconomic conditions and in the aspect of social communication (Suchodolska, 2017). Quality of life is the multi-faceted category of a complex and interdisciplinary nature (Lada, 2018; Osika, 2018).

Analyzing the conceptual scope of life quality, Woźniak, has pointed out the occurrence of huge discrepancies. Some definitions provide an imprecise term encompassing everything that is connected with the ability to lead a normal life. In turn, other definitions indicate detailed factors such as: sense of life; happiness; satisfaction; goals achievement; satisfaction level of meeting needs or the individual approach to well-being (Woźniak, 2015).

As it has been emphasized by Kałuża and Szukalski (Kałuża and Szukalski, 2010), such an approach allows to depict a wide spectrum of life spheres, by means of which it is possible to assess quality of life and to value life from the individual point of view. This also explains why a single appropriate definition has not been developed yet.

The lack of a universal definition of life quality generates multitude of attempts to define this concept. Borys tried to sort out the existing scientific definitions assuming that the quality of life is connected with a life image that is perceived on the basis of a specific system of values - axiological system. It can be expressed subjectively or objectively; one-dimensionally or multi-dimensionally, etc. Therefore, it is possible to talk about different types of life quality.

Analyzing the broad interest in the quality of life, it can be concluded that relatively little attention is paid to the issue of elderly people's life quality. This is important because the sense of good life quality changes under the influence of various factors. Undoubtedly, age is such a factor, which is influenced by life experiences, crisis events, illnesses, disabilities, etc. A crucial role is also played by the limitation of elderly people's expectations as well as the change of preferences, needs and values.

Therefore, assessing elderly people's quality of life, the concept of health-related quality of life (HRQL) introduced by H. Shipper, is more adequate to their situation. This approach takes into consideration the quality of life that is determined by diseases, disabilities and various limitations resulting from the aging process. The HRQL definition includes four basic aspects of life quality – physical condition and mobility; mental state; social and economic conditions as well as somatic experiences (de Walden-Gałuszko, 1994). In the context of aging, quality of life refers to the ability to lead an "ordinary" life, which is manifested by undertaking activities in various spheres of life.

Therefore, defining the quality of life of elderly people, three elements should be taken into account: functional capabilities i.e., ability to be involved in everyday life activities; ability to meet needs; ability to participate in social life; ability to continue or take on new social roles, ability to perceive life situation positively; ability to overcome diseases symptoms; ability to maintain good physical condition despite illnesses resulting from the aging processes (Tobiasz-Adamczyk, 2000). Considerations referring to quality of life at the local level are extremely important. A modern city has a greater influence on lives of its inhabitants.

The city can create better living standards for all social groups. On the other hand, the city is chaotic. It is a place where basic services are limited; where housing resources are not properly taken care of; where public spaces are poorly managed. All these factors contribute to the phenomenon of some residents' exclusion. With reference to elderly people's life quality, the environment in which they live is particularly important. Decreased mobility means that elderly people spend most of their time in one place. That is why, they assess their quality of life through the prism of local experiences or various aspects of functioning in the local reality. Hence, elderly people's opinion may be changed over time (Myers, 1987).

Providing the residents' with better life quality is one of the fundamental goals of local government at every level. Undoubtedly, the local government has an impact on the quality of life of all residents. It is obliged to perform tasks for communes (Ustawa o samorządzie gminnym, 2024) and districts (Ustawa o samorządzie powiatowym, 2024), tasks that are imposed by law. The primary task of the local government units is to function in order to meet the needs and aspirations of inhabitants of a given territory. It results from the fact that the tasks of local government include, the development of social services, construction of appropriate

social infrastructure, provision of residents' social security. These mentioned factors influence and contribute to the population quality of life improvement.

5. Management of an Age-Friendly City

Interest in urban issues is constantly growing due to the fact that our globe population is becoming an urbanized society. Characterizing the essence of a city, Loegler states that "In its own way, a city is becoming a space to live in and a value for a community. It is a place, where people meet, work, benefit from cultural assets, education or purchases etc. A city is also a place of interpersonal communication thanks to which a social effort is made in order to achieve mutual consensus for a given group of people. It is a place that protects against chaos and anarchy.

A city is a space – a territory, where complicated processes of human existence occur. Such space is organized and divided on the basis of rationalized city life rules like: mobility, public transport, services, housing, recreation and leisure" (Loegler, 2011). The city description shows that it provides a value for all residents and therefore, it has to eliminate all forms of discrimination. It has to become a resident-friendly place.

Nowadays, European cities, including Polish ones, cope with many problems. Demographic, social, cultural, economic, spatial, infrastructural and environmental transformations in cities have become challenges that require new solutions and perspectives. Considering the growing role of cities, The European Union has developed a vision of the European city of the future (Cities of tomorrow, 2011).

This vision has indicated both: areas of threat and development opportunities. Modern cities must respond to challenges related to the quality of life and health of their inhabitants. It requires a comprehensive approach to urban planning and management. Existing problems concern demographic transformations, in particular societies ageing, cities depopulation, overcrowding or excessive population concentration.

These factors cause worsening of living standards and quality of life. Growing income disparities; deepening impoverishment of the poor and intensification of socio-spatial segregation processes result in the emergence of "difficult" city zones, which are inhabited by marginalized and excluded people. Another serious problem is connected with the urban sprawl. It generates many unfavorable phenomena, including: increased costs of technical and social infrastructure; irrational use of land; degradation of the natural environment; higher costs of public services and transport difficulties.(Szymańska, 2008; Szymańska and Korolko, 2015; Jeż R. 2018.). Technological revolution; health and climate crises have become challenges for many cities. A city is a "long-term"(Karwińska, 2007) structure.

However, dynamic changes generating very complex social and spatial structures occur there simultaneously. This accumulation of problems referring to a city functioning requires a different approach. New forms of urban planning and management that are expected to eliminate existing threats and to transform these threats into challenges belong to determinants of this innovative approach. These factors can contribute to the creation of conditions conducive to improving the quality of life of residents.

Effective city management means both breaking down sector barriers and not allowing a "single-sector" to determine the city life style. Hence, applying a variety of tools that can provide better living standards for all entities is crucial. City management must become forward-looking because the population ageing process is an inevitable but predictable phenomenon. Therefore, cities must be prepared to meet the needs of their inhabitants. They also must develop the appropriate urban policy in order to provide better life quality for all generations. Cities do not always guarantee a safe and comfortable life for elderly people.

Polish cities structure is still burdened with the consequences of the cities development during the post-war period. Those days the cities' infrastructure was arranged in such a way that would mainly meet the requirements of young families with children. Nowadays, these people are considered as the Baby Boomer generation. Their expectations connected with city functions have changed radically.

With reference to the concept of a society based on a new structure, the necessity to reorganize and adapt Polish cities to the needs and capabilities of older residents and other users seems to be inevitable. Among the urban population groups, these are the elderly people who need special attention. Living standards of this population group is said to be at risk. The group of elderly people is not homogeneous. Their needs determining their sense of good life quality are varied.

These needs are individualized by deteriorating health; personality type; habits and customs; ability to adapt to changes; lifestyle; family as well as economic and living conditions. These factors significantly shape the sense of life quality. Therefore, the quality of life in a city is determined by numerous factors of different nature. One of them is the city management.

The local government is the factor that has significantly changed the situation in cities. Delegating some competences to local governments has created appropriate conditions for the implementation of urban policy. This policy is considered as "the planned and organized activity of local government entities and other subordinated public units. They have been given the power of coordination, coercion, control, repression, etc. The delegated power refers to the selection of goals and means for the benefit of the local community interests" (Markowski, 1999; Łobejko, 2014).

At present, in the Polish legal system and in the applicable strategic documents, a single coherent definition of urban policy is not existent. Urban policy is conducted in two dimensions: the state's policy referring to cities and the urban policy referring to a city space and inhabitants residing in this space. The second approach concerning the urban policy results from legal regulations connected with the local government system. In this system the urban policy is focused on the local community. The scope of these activities includes all public matters that are significant locally.

Such approach to urban policy means that it covers the relationships between the city authorities and all other users of urban space. Therefore, this urban policy should become a basic urban management tool. It should possess the authority to select goals for the benefit of the local community and to gather appropriate means in order to implement these goals (Zrałek, 2015) .

In this context, it is obvious that the main entity in charge of providing good living conditions for elderly people and for improving their quality of life is the local government. However, it is worth emphasizing that not only the city authorities but also entrepreneurs and residents are responsible for the level of city adaptation to the needs of elderly people (Kubicki, 2014). There is a high risk of marginalization and exclusion of the population oldest group. It results from the local government's lack of inappropriate assessment of elderly people's needs and even the lack or little interest in this issue.

The holistic approach and increased awareness concerning elderly people's problems should become priorities for the urban policy. The idea of the World Health Organization's program "Age-friendly cities" (Global age-friendly..., 2007) can be an inspiration for the local government. This idea defines optimal solutions for improving the life quality of elderly city residents. The Age-Friendly Cities concept is based on the assumption that creating such a city is the most effective strategy responsible for supporting elderly people. In addition, public and commercial services should function in such a way that they can be more accessible and adapted to these people's various levels of physical capacity, their interests and financial capabilities.

Basic areas influencing this group's life quality in cities refer to:

1. outdoor spaces and buildings;
2. transportation;
3. housing;
4. social participation;
5. respect and social inclusion;
6. civic participation and employment;
7. communication and information;
8. community support and healthcare services.

These areas constitute a kind of matrix for decision-makers who are responsible for the urban management focused on needs of elderly people. With regard to those needs, the areas are considered in three aspects. The first aspect concerns the public space, public transport and housing. It focuses on elderly people's mobility within the city territory. The second aspect concerns the social environment intended for this population group. Thanks to this factor, elderly people are provided with the opportunity of social participation through their involvement in the city life. Thus, maintaining other people's respect towards the old, social integration, employment and active citizenship are the key priorities.

The third aspect concerns the possibilities of interpersonal communication in order to obtain important information and appropriate support (Ziomek-Michalak, 2022; Kubicki, 2014; Sołtysek, 2013). Such priorities of senior-friendly cities emphasize their subjectivity and they increase independence and freedom. Implementing these simple and obvious solutions significantly make elderly people's life easier. In the document titled: *Global Age-Friendly Cities Guide*, WHO suggested the development of the network of cities that support cooperation and exchange of experiences.

The regulations impose on network members a formal commitment that the city administration entities are obliged to work for the benefit of the continuous improvement of a city (*Global age-friendly...*, 2007). This provides local governments with the opportunity to implement good practices and introduce new solutions into the city management. However, it is worth considering that proposed solutions cannot become a simple implementation of activities based on simple duplication but an inspiration aimed at improving the quality of life. It is due to the fact that every city has its own specific nature; its own community and expectations connected with achieving and improving elderly people's life quality.

The development of the age-friendly city concept and the growing interest in these solutions have resulted in the fact that more and more cities and communities are being involved in creating places providing graceful aging. In 2023, WHO issued the *National programmes for age-friendly cities and communities A guide 2023 (National programmes...2023)*. This way this organization provided the assistance in implementing national programmes for age-friendly cities and communities that are able to adapt local activities to the continuous improvement of the aging people life quality improvement.

City management improvement in terms of projecting the consequences of the population ageing process growth and new challenges related to this phenomenon have become inevitable. Dynamics of transformations has imposed a new perspective connected with the urban populations ageing. Planning adequate and appropriate actions is essential. Cities must not only create conditions to improve the elderly people's life quality standards but also they should be prepared to provide a better life for all generations. The scope of the city management, which has been

included in the World Bank Report *Silver Hues: Building Age-Ready Cities* and which has been modified on the basis of the Age-Friendly Cities framework, is the confirmation of this modern trend.

The necessity to invest in cities planning and designing; social transformations focusing on the population aging process have been strongly emphasized. Six areas have been taken into consideration:

1. Universal design toward agereadiness,
2. Housing solutions for age-readiness,
3. Creating multigenerational "spaces" toward age-readiness,
4. Age-readiness through improved transportation,
5. Making technology work for agereadiness,
6. Efficient spatial forms (Das *et al.*, 2022).

Meeting the needs of elderly people by city authorities is difficult and does not provide sufficient results. Therefore, it is necessary to change the local authorities' attitude. An important step forward in developing an age-friendly city is to create chances for elderly people to participate in discussions about their real situation and needs. Modern city management should consist in developing city communities. These social groups ought to be involved in preparing and implementing activities in accordance with the principle of "nothing about us without us".

This idea indicates a broader socialization of the city management process - participatory management (Domaradzka and Maśloch, 2019). As it has been emphasized by Jacobs, "Cities have the capability for providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody" (Jacobs, 1961). In the case of elderly people, this statement has the fundamental meaning. It is due to the fact that elderly people are experts who are able to identify their specific needs and to indicate how to solve their problems as best as they can (Lewenstein, 2010).

Age-friendly cities are subjected to constant changes. They must be *adaptive, productive and inclusive*. An *adaptive* city can take advantage of its resources. Such a city is able to adjust its infrastructure and services so that they are more accessible to the needs of this population group. A *productive city* can invest in solutions aimed at meeting elderly people requirements. Elderly people belong to the increasingly large group of city consumers of both material goods and social services.

The "silver economy" can provide new products and services in order to improve the quality of life of elderly people. It increases the demand for new workplaces and it strengthens competitiveness of the city management which is beneficial for all residents. An *inclusive city* can create mechanisms enabling elderly people to run leadership roles in their communities. Aging people can express their opinions and influence the development of the space they live in (Das *et al.*, 2022).

City management is a part of public management. It is a process carried out in the public interest. It corresponds with the policy aimed at development (Łobejko, 2014). As it has been emphasized by Szoltysek, "The purpose of city management is (...) to achieve development goals. The method of management and the impact of residents on the city management are assessed by both the authorities and city residents. The effectiveness of the city management is reflected not only in achieving the city's development goals but also in the sense of urban life quality (Szoltysek, 2015).

6. Conclusions

The range of challenges that the city has to cope with is related to the intensive growth of the percentage of elderly people. These circumstances require a significant change in the city management. Formal actions the city authorities are responsible for have been included in the Act on commune and district self-government. However, the distinctiveness of cities determines their individual development on the basis of the endogenous potential, including the social capital.

These diversifications force the city decision makers on creating the urban policy differently. Creating new forms of partnership; involving residents, including seniors, in co-deciding and co-managing the city; reinvigorating transformations; improving relationships with the social environment and introducing effective regulatory changes are important aspects.

Cities are not appropriately prepared for these transformations. In numerous broad discussions, it is worth considering why should cities be prepared for the increasing share of elderly people in the city functioning; how should these city transformations be managed and, despite unfavorable demographic changes, what should be done in order to create an age-friendly city? Awareness of the fact that elderly people have become a large group of city consumers, not only of material goods but also social services has been increasing.

It should be accepted that the so-called "silver economy" can create new products and services in order to improve the elderly people's life quality. In turn, this fact can contribute to the increase of demands for new workplaces; can strengthen the competitiveness of the city's economy, which is beneficial for all city residents.

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