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## AGING IN A BIG TOWN

**Summary.** The subject of this article is a big city social Policy towards old people with an example of Warsaw. The author was inspired to write this text with her participation in a workgroup “Exclusion of elderly persons,” which prepared a diagnosis and formulated initial suggestions to the Social Strategy for Warsaw 2009–2020. It seems, that regardless the differences between big towns, basic goals and assumptions for the policy towards senior citizens are similar in the majority of metropolitan communities. Due to the fact that any proposal concerning social policy should be preceded by a diagnosis, the article begins with the description of demographic situation of big Polish towns (above half million population) and with a diagnosis of the situation of senior citizens in Warsaw. Demographic and socio-economic data were obtained from the Central Statistical Office publications.

**Key words:** old age, aging, Warsaw, social policy.

### 1. Introduction

Aging of population requires fundamental changes in social policy and this thesis is indisputable. Depending upon an applied model of social policy in a given country, its organizational structure, the task to adjust social policy to the needs of an aging society rests upon different bodies. In Poland it is a local self-government which is responsible for a substantial scope of state social policy. Self-governments in big cities combine the tasks of both gmina and powiat<sup>1</sup> whereas Warsaw is governed according to a specific law<sup>2</sup>. Big cities make a specific environment because of their multiple functions, their demographic potential and social and economic character of social links.

The topic of this article is social policy towards elderly people in big cities, Warsaw being an example. The inspiration for the author was her participation in a working group on the diagnosis and formulating suggestions to the Social

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<sup>1</sup> Gmina is the lowest administrative unit in Poland, powiat is the mid level; both gmina and powiat are self-government structures.

<sup>2</sup> The law of March 15th, 2002 on the administrative system of the Capital City of Warsaw makes Warsaw a specific type of structure, gmina with certain responsibilities of powiat. The city is divided into 18 auxiliary units, called quarters.

Strategy for Warsaw in the years 2009–2020, in the part which referred to preventing social exclusion of old people. It seems that, regardless the differences between big cities, the guidelines for policy towards seniors and its basic goals are similar in different municipal societies. As all proposals concerning social policy should be preceded with a diagnosis, the article opens with the demographic analysis of big towns (with 500 thousand and more inhabitants) in Poland and the diagnosis concerning the situation of Warsaw senior citizens. Demographic and social-economic data were taken from publications of the Central Statistical Office of Poland (GUS – Główny Urząd Statystyczny).

## 2. Demographic situation of big towns in Poland

In 2006 town population in Poland made 61.3 % (23,369,000) of the total. The same share of town residents was noted in the segment of population aged 65 years or more. Five biggest towns in Poland were inhabited by 714,000 elderly people (65 years or more) – 23 % of all seniors being residents of urban areas. [GUS, database]<sup>1</sup>.

The biggest towns in Poland are: Warsaw (1,708,000 inhabitants), Krakow (756,000), Lodz (750,000), Wroclaw (633,000) and Poznan (559,000). [GUS, November 2008]<sup>2</sup>. Demographic situation in these towns was differentiated. The population of Warsaw and Krakow slightly increased between 1999 and 2006, whereas the population of Lodz, Wroclaw and Poznań decreased (Fig. 1).

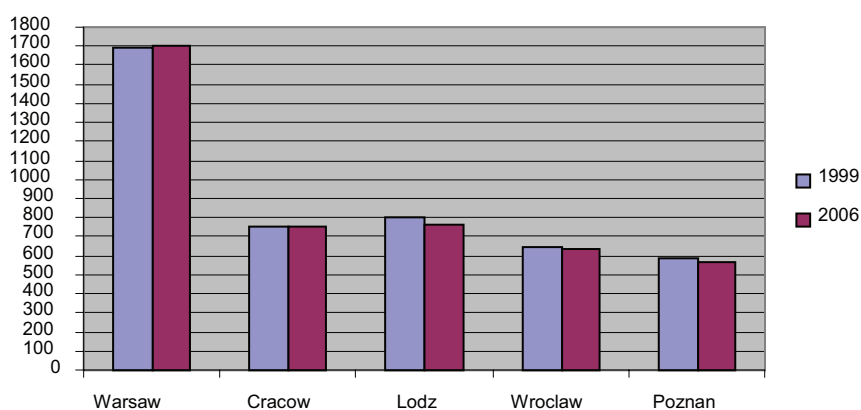


Fig. 1. Population of Big Towns

Source: Database. Demography; GUS; [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl), own study.

In 2006, in all big towns, with an exception of Poznan, a negative birth rate was noted. One should add that, as compared to 2000 year, in all the above mentioned towns an increase of a birth rate was observed. In Warsaw the increase was relatively the highest whereas in Lodz it was the lowest. (Fig. 2)

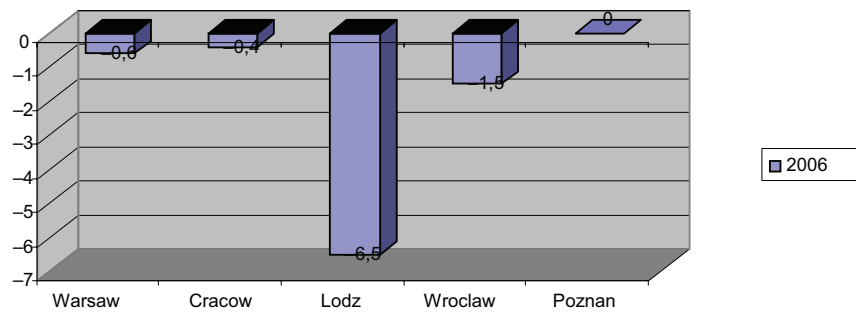


Fig. 2. Intensity of birth rate in big cities

Source: W. Obraniak, *Ludność Łodzi i innych wielkich miast w Polsce w latach 1984–2006*, Urząd Statystyczny w Łodzi, Łódź 2007 (Population of Lodz and other big towns in Poland in the years 1984–2006, Statistical Office in Lodz, Lodz 2007, p. 18, Table 4; own study).

There were differences as to migrations – the second (after the birth rate) factor affecting an increase (or a decrease) of population. According to W. Obraniak [2007, p. 34–35] in the years 1984–2006 Warsaw had a positive balance of migrations (both internal and foreign) in the whole discussed period. This phenomenon compensated a negative birth rate. A positive balance of migrations (despite a negative balance of foreign migrations) was also noted in Krakow, Wroclaw and Poznan, though in the case of the last two towns, migration did not compensate a negative birth rate and the population decreased. In Lodz the situation was even worse; a negative balance of migrations was observed in the last twenty-year period, which, along with a negative birth rate, contributed to the decrease of the town population.

In the years 1999–2006 the number of old people grew in all big towns, with an exception of Lodz. Relatively, the biggest increase was noted in Wroclaw and in Warsaw. (Tab. 1) In absolute numbers, in turn, the highest increase of the population of seniors was noted in Warsaw and Krakow. A parallel decrease of the number of children and youth was noted in all the discussed towns (Tab. 2).

Tab. 1. Population aged 65 or more (in thousands)

	1999	2006	Dynamics 1999 = 100
Poland	4644	5117	110
Warsaw	266	292	110
Cracow	100	113	103
Lodz	129	128	99
Wroclaw	89	99	111
Poznan	77	82	106

Source: Database. Demography; GUS; [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl), own study.

Tab. 2. Increase/decrease of the number of age groups in years 1999–2006.

	0–19 years old	Aged 65 and more
Warsaw	– 71.221	+ 25.724
Cracow	– 38.549	+ 12.849
Lodz	– 42.483	– 604
Wroclaw	– 38.937	+ 1.050
Poznan	– 37.414	+ 5.224

Source: Database Demography; GUS; [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl), own study.

In all big towns both in 1999 and in 2006, the share of old people was higher than the average for Poland. At the end of the last century, Lodz was demographically the oldest (16.0% of people aged 65 or more), while in 2006 the first place was taken by Warsaw (17.2 % of people aged 65 or more). The scale of demographic aging of population increased in all big towns (Tab. 3).

Tab. 3. The share of old people (aged 65 or more) in population

	1999 (in %)	2006 (in %)
Poland	12.1	13.4
Warsaw	15.7	17.2
Cracow	13.2	14.9
Lodz	16.0	16.8
Wroclaw	13.8	15.6
Poznan	13.2	14.5

Source: Database. Demography; GUS; [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl), own study

An old age index (calculated as the proportion of the number of persons aged 0 – 19 to the number of persons aged 65 and more) largely increased between 1999 and 2006 in all the discussed towns. Yet, only in Warsaw (102,6 person aged 65 and more for every 100 persons aged 0 – 19) and in Lodz (101,3 person aged 65 and more for every 100 persons aged 0 – 19) the number of old people exceeded the number of children and youth (Tab. 4).

Tab. 4. An old age index

	1999	2006
Warsaw	74.8	102.6
Cracow	55.8	80.3
Lodz	76.2	101.3
Wroclaw	65.8	89.9
Poznan	54.7	79.6

Source: Database. Demography; GUS; www.stat.gov.pl, own study.

In all big towns, same as in the whole country, life expectancy grows. In 2006 as compared to the years 1970 – 1972 the highest increase of life expectancy occurred among men living in Warsaw (by 5,9 years), the smallest among men – Lodz residents (by 1,8 years). As far as life expectancy is concerned, a higher spatial differentiation was observed in the case of men than women. In 2006 life expectancy for men was the highest in Warsaw and Cracow whereas in the case of women – in Lodz and in Warsaw (Tab. 5).

Tab. 5. Life expectancy (e=0) in big towns

Towns	1970–1972	2006	Increase between 1970–72 and 2006
Men			
Warsaw	67.8	73.7	+ 5.9 years
Cracow	68.1	73.5	+ 5.4 years
Lodz	65.7	67.5	+ 1.8 years
Wroclaw	67.8	72.0	+ 4.2 years
Poznan	68.5	72.2	+ 3.7 years
Women			
Warsaw	75.0	80.5	+ 5.5 years
Cracow	75.1	77.0	+ 5.5 years
Lodz	73.2	80.6	+ 3.8 years
Wroclaw	74.5	80.0	+ 5.5 years
Poznan	74.8	80.0	+ 5.2 years

Source: W. Obraniak, Ludność Łodzi i innych wielkich miast w Polsce w latach 1984–2006, Urząd Statystyczny w Łodzi, Łódź 2007 (Population of Lodz and other big towns in Poland in the years 1984–2006, Statistical Office in Lodz, Lodz 2007, p. 28–29).

### 3. Warsaw senior citizens

As it comes out from the presented data, Warsaw is demographically the oldest among big towns in Poland. She is characterised both by the highest share of old people as well as the highest old-age index. High is not only the percentage of persons aged 65 and more in the town population but also the percentage of people being in a late phase of old age; this phenomenon is called a double demographic aging. In 2000 year, persons aged 75 or more made 5.9% of the town population (98.8 thousand) whereas in 2006 their share grew to 8% (135.4 thousand). [www.stat.gov.pl] In comparison to the population of other Polish towns, Warsaw inhabitants live the longest. Besides, it seems that the very phase of old age lasts longer in Warsaw and in the Mazovia region as compared to the country average. In 2006 life expectancy for a 60 years old woman reached in Poland 22.84 years, whereas for a man it was 17.65 years. Life expectancy in the towns of the Mazovia voivodeship was even longer – a 60-years old woman could expect 23.32 years more to live, and a 60-years old man – 18.59 years [www.stat.gov.pl]

The population of Warsaw seniors is unevenly distributed in the town and old-age rate is not equal in all town districts. Żoliborz, Śródmieście (the town centre), Mokotów, Ochota and Wola are demographically the oldest (counted as the share of persons in retirement age). The youngest district is Białoleka (North-West outskirts with new housing estates). The share of persons in retirement age, considerably lower than the average for Warsaw, occurs in Ursynów, Wesoła and Bemowo (Tab. 6). Prognoses show that central districts of Warsaw will continue aging even though the pace of the process will slow down. An inflow of people in a working age to these districts is limited by a smaller scale of housing investments there, in comparison to more distant town areas. On the other hand, the number of younger people might grow, as they will take over flats after the late old inhabitants.

The number of population in Warsaw districts varies – from 226 thousand people in Mokotów to little less than 17 thousand in Wilanów. The number of population in retirement age varies considerably too – from 57.5 thousand in Mokotów to 2.6 thousand in Wesoła. (Table No. 6) Absolute numbers even more distinctively than the percentage show the scale of needs of old people, which have to be met by local societies and their authorities.

Ageing of Warsaw population will progress. The threshold of old age will be crossed soon by cohorts of post-war baby boom. It should be reminded that in 2002 Warsaw was inhabited by close to 422 thousand persons in a so called immobile working age (men being 45–64, women 45–59 years old) making 25% of the town population. [GUS, 2003] The number of this population grew up to 427 thousand in 2008, still making one forth of the total Warsaw population. [Przegląd *The Review*, 2009]

Tab. 6. Persons in retirement age in Warsaw districts in 2007

	Total	Persons in retirement age	In %
Warsaw	1 706 624	345 480	20,2%
1. Bemowo	109 714	14 709	13,4%
2. Bialoleka	82 815	5 704	6,9%
3. Bielany	134 600	30 862	22,9%
4. Mokotow	226 064	57 458	25,4%
5. Ochota	90 830	22 974	25,3%
6. Praga-North	72 481	12 400	17,1%
7. Praga-South	183 763	37 150	20,2%
8. Rembertow	22 882	3 485	15,2%
9. City centre	130 866	35 625	27,2%
10. Targowek	122 945	24 866	20,2%
11. Ursus	48 897	8 519	17,4%
12. Ursynow	146 471	16 697	11,4%
13. Wawer	67 763	12 615	18,6%
14. Wesola	21 887	2 754	12,6%
15. Wilanow	16 687	3 003	18,0%
16. Wlochy	39 695	8 079	20,4%
17. Wola	139 578	35 189	25,2%
18. Zoliborz	48 686	13 391	27,5%

Source: Panorama dzielnic Warszawy w roku 2007 (Panorama of Warsaw Districts) in 2007, Statistical Office in Warsaw, Warsaw 2008, own study.

Demographic prognoses point out that, as compared to 2008, in 2020 the number of people aged 60 and more will increase in Warsaw by some 20% (from 400 to some 500 thousand). The highest dynamics of the population increase is expected in the age group of 60–65 years old. The growth in the population of people aged 85 and more will be noticeable too. It is expected that the number of population in the age group 75–84 years old will stabilise. The biggest increase in the number of persons aged 60 and more will be observed in districts of mass settlement in the years 70. and 80. of the last century. It refers to Ursynow and Bemowo. [Vojvodeship's Bureau of Statistics, 2008]. The generation of post-war demographic baby boom from the 50. will enter into the phase of aging. Thus in these areas the population of a so called third age will grow. Simultaneously, the oldest districts will note a growth in the number of population of very old people, being in a so called fourth age.

In Warsaw in 2007, women in a post-working age made 69% of the total. The older the age group is, the bigger surplus of women over men (in the age group aged 85 and more women constituted 74%). Women in an earlier old-age phase must often take care of their aged parents – first of all their mothers and mothers-in-law. The rate of nursing potential (calculated as the proportion of the

number of women between 45 and 69 years old to the number of persons aged 70 or more) was for Warsaw in 2000 year 1.71 and in 2007 it turned to 1.42. [Panorama, 2009] It means that the ability of families to take care of their eldest decreases. In 2007 in Warsaw lived over 218 thousand people aged 70 and more including over 26 thousand of these, who were 85 and older. [Panorama, 2009].

Solitude and an associated loneliness are a growing problem of elderly people – it refers to Warsaw inhabitants as well. In 2002, within the population of men aged 60 and more who lived in Warsaw, 77% were married or in partnership (in the group of aged 80 and more – 59%), whereas among elderly women in Warsaw only 38% were married (in the group of 80 and older – only 10%). [GUS, 2003].

The majority of Warsaw seniors were born outside the capital. In 2002 – according to the National Census – only 32% of the total population aged 60 and more have lived in Warsaw since they were born, whereas 68% were born outside the capital, though 61% was settled in Warsaw a long time ago, it is before 1989. It might be expected that old inhabitants of Warsaw have children and grandchildren, who live in Warsaw whereas a considerable part of their siblings and aged parents live outside the town. [GUS, 2003]

Old and aging Warsaw inhabitants show little activeness at the labour market. As we lack recent data, the below presented refer to information from the last National Census. In 2002 an employment rate of persons in a post-working age amounted to 9% (11.8 % for men and 7.7% for women). Warsaw residents in a pre-retirement age have often taken advantage of the possibility of early retirement or disability pensions. E.g., in 2002, an employment rate for men 60–64 years old amounted to 42.8% only, while in the case of women aged 55–59 it was 44.3%. [GUS, 2003] Giving up vocational activity negatively influences financial situation of seniors, limits their inter-generation contacts and causes the loss of at least a part of town's human capital.

As it is in the case of vocational activity, we lack statistical data allowing for a precise calculation of the income level of elderly Warsaw inhabitants. It might be calculated only indirectly by making reference to the voievodeship data, which are a bit outdated either. According to ZUS<sup>3</sup>, in 2005 the Mazovia voievodeship was the second in the country (immediately after Silesia) with regard to the average value of a retirement pension, paid by ZUS. In the case of an average value of disability pensions paid to persons incapable to work, the position of Mazovia voievodeship was significantly lower – it took the seventh position in the country<sup>4</sup>. The standard of living of old-age pensioners in the region – Warsaw included – was therefore relatively high in comparison to the

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<sup>3</sup> Zakład Ubezpieczeń Społecznych – Social Insurance Agency.

<sup>4</sup> (RSUS) Statistical Yearbook of Social Insurance.



country average, while disability pensioners were in a much worse condition. Disability pensioners – as it comes out of long-lasting studies of household budgets in Poland – are much more exposed to poverty than persons getting retirement pensions. The National Census (2002) data show that an overwhelming majority of elderly people living in Warsaw were retirement pensioners (71% of men and 73% of women). Other sources were less significant: work was the source of income for 14% of men and 6% of women and disability pensions for 9% of men and 17% of women. It may be interesting to add, that close to 8 thousand of Warsaw inhabitants aged 60 and more were members of agricultural households. [GUS, 2003]

Along with the source of income, the size of a household is the factor influencing the living standard of seniors. According to data from the National Census (2002) there were 289 thousand of a single person households in Warsaw, which made 38% of all households in the town. Besides, for 115 thousand (39.6 %) single households the main source of income were retirement or disability pensions. [GUS, 2003] Living in a single household, particularly in the case of non-working elderly people, is the factor increasing the risk of poverty. It may also cause social exclusion in the case of the eldest or persons having health problems.

Due to the lack of representative research, it is impossible to determine either the average living standards of Warsaw senior citizens or the scale of poverty threat.

Living conditions are one of very important factors determining the level and the quality of satisfying needs. Housing situation of Warsaw seniors (the standard and size of flats) is – like the situation of younger dwellers – very differentiated. It is generally known that – like in other towns – seniors occupy older housing resources. Yet, these older dwellings are differentiated too – they include both city centre tenements and modest small houses built in the outskirts before World War II, houses built in the 50., low quality blocks from the 60. and so called concrete slabs blocks from the 70. and 80. of the 20th century. The average usable floor space of older flats is in Warsaw distinctly smaller than in the case of flats constructed after 1978 (e.g. the area of flats from years 1945–70 comes to 45 square meters and these built in the years 1996–2000 to 84.2 square meters). [GUS, 2005] The standard of older flats is lower too. Seniors' flats, however, are inhabited by a smaller number of dwellers which means that they rather do not suffer from an excessive density.

Progressive ageing of population (double ageing included) causes an increase of health care needs of seniors living in the town. Besides, this group of inhabitants want and have to be treated in public health centres, where the demand for geriatric medicine will grow. The incidence of diseases is specific in old age: old people are more endangered with chronic and multiple diseases, the diseases specific for old age and with an old age. Disability is much more com-

mon in older age groups. National Census from 2002 revealed that in Warsaw lived 181.1 thousand disabled persons, including 98.1 thousand people a retirement age (54.2%. [www.stat.gov.pl] Thus, all undertakings addressed to disabled persons should consider the fact, that the majority of them are in retirement age.

#### **4. Assumptions for social policy towards old people in a big city**

##### Subject scope: What are the problems and what are the needs?

The key goal of social policy in towns is to provide the residents with a proper quality of life. According to the proposal of E. Allard, popular in social sciences and in statistics, it may be understood both as standards of living and their subjective perception. [Kordos, 1991]. When talking about social policy as the responsibility of town authorities, it should be remembered that only some of these standards and the quality of life as such, depend upon their activities. E.g., standards of living depend, to a considerable degree, on current incomes and the wealth of households. In this respect, the role of local social policy is limited to social assistance (e.g. welfare and family allowances) which has a limited significance for the level of incomes of town inhabitants.

With this limitation, lets us ask, what elements of the quality of life of old people should become the point of interests of town authorities. E.g., in 2003, the Council of the City of Poznan adopted the resolution on social policy, which made the activities in favour of senior citizens one of the priorities. [www.poznan.pl] The document stated, that the policy should include the following elements:

- creation of programmes to facilitate seniors independent living in their social environment;
- increasing housing resources for senior citizens;
- monitoring their social and health condition;
- protection of social security of the eldest town residents;
- increasing the access of seniors to cultural institutions;
- encouraging actions to make the oldest generation active in such fields as education, culture, recreation, tourism and sports;
- increasing an access to a specialist health care, creating the system of geriatric and gerontological care in Poznan;
- increasing an access to diagnostics and specialist care, broadening of prophylactics (particularly in reference to circulatory and respiratory system diseases, malignant neoplasms, diabetes and osteoporosis);

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- adjusting the town structures and institutions to an increased number of elderly people (stationary care homes, day care centres and clubs for seniors);
  - increasing an access to municipal system of palliative care;
  - introducing programmes of home-based care for seniors;
  - supporting programmes stimulating social activeness of elderly people”.

Professor Zbigniew Wozniak, the author of an analytical study enclosed to the discussed resolution, pointed to the following domains of social policy activities in favour of old people:

- 1) functioning of households and families;
- 2) financial situation;
- 3) education;
- 4) participation / social activeness;
- 5) participation in culture;
- 6) sports, recreation and active leisure;
- 7) health and fitness;
- 8) safety, deviations and pathologies.

Another example are the works on the Social Strategy for Warsaw carried on in 2008. The working team for social policy in favour of seniors<sup>5</sup> proposed the following strategic goals:

- Adjusting the standards of living of senior citizens and the offer of social services to their changing needs and abilities.
- Providing the aging and the old with the support in crisis situations.
- Encouraging different forms of seniors’ activities, alternative to vocational and family activeness.
- Supporting seniors in their family roles.
- Educating middle-aged generation for aging.

Finally, in the resolution adopted in December 2008 by the Council of the Capital City of Warsaw (XLVI/1427/2008), entitled “Social Strategy for Warsaw. The Strategy of Solving Social Problems for the years 2009 – 2020” the decision-makers planned the realization of an interdisciplinary city programme “Seniors” with the following goals:

- 1) “mobilization and social integration of elderly Warsaw residents, including building of inter- and intra-generation solidarity as well as offering seniors the available Warsaw resources in the sphere of education, culture, sports, recreation, and so forth;
- 2) preventing the deprivation of needs and adjusting life conditions to the changing needs and abilities of seniors, in particular, to ensure:

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<sup>5</sup> The team drew up a working study for the Strategy 2008. The members were: B. Szatur-Jaworska (chairwoman), A. Wiśniewska-Mucha, R. Kadej and J. Mielczarek.

- an extended offer of social services: care, attendance, specialist care, medical care, rehabilitation, financial aid etc.;
  - support in crisis situations, especially protection against misuse and violence, as well as financial help for seniors living in poverty;
  - an ability of self-reliance and safe functioning in a private (flats, houses) and a public space (public transport, universal design, and so forth);
- 3) an improvement of social perception of old people and educating middle-aged generation for activeness in old-age, healthy and rich in social contacts.”

The areas which might be specified in the strategy for Warsaw social policy towards seniors are:

- 1) education, culture, recreation and sports – treated as main fields of inter-generation integration and activeness of senior citizens;
- 2) health and care – treated as areas at the highest risk of basic needs being unfulfilled;
- 3) financial situation of persons at the risk of poverty, who require additional (apart from retirement and disability pensions) social protection;
- 4) public space – demanding adjustment to the needs of old people;
- 5) crisis situations in old age, in particular resulting from their being victims of violence;
- 6) symbolic space and social consciousness which should be shaped to improve the perception of old-age and make a middle-aged generation aware of the need to get ready for an old-age.

In both discussed cases, the subject scope of social policy towards old people who live in big towns was broadly treated. It means that – at least at the stage of planning and declarations – decision-makers are aware of internal diversity of this population, a diversity of their situation, a different scope of their needs and their own potential. It is hard to assess how stable is the change in their perceiving old age and old people, breaking with negative stereotypes (an old age means inability). It is worthwhile to remind, that in the Strategy of Development for the Capital City of Warsaw, adopted in 2005, the needs of old people were mentioned mainly in reference to social and medical care and in preparatory works on the Social Strategy, elderly people and their situation were referred to only in the context of social exclusion.

It seems that the specificity of a big-town aging requires special attention being paid to the problem of solitude and loneliness of old people. There is a need for “a system of quick reaction”, social rescue in the case the important needs of people, living alone and not maintaining regular contacts with their families are endangered. Also, in the case of worsening of their mental and / or physical condition, difficulties to go outside because of bad weather conditions, difficulties in household duties etc. Simultaneously, a psychological and social support system

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should be developed for single elderly people who lack company of other people and the possibility to talk over their problems and joys.

Subject scope: Who should be responsible for social policy?

Big town is a specific local community. One of its features is a highly advanced institutionalisation of satisfying the needs. Frequent, though shallow contacts between inhabitants, do not make a good background for a local support system. Thus, we need specialised organisations as the most important subjects of social policy in a big town.

The key subject of local social policy in Poland is a self-government with its bodies and structures. In the case of Warsaw, there is another question as to how to divide competences and responsibilities of districts of the town and the town as the unit in the realisation of social policy towards seniors. Some tasks should undoubtedly be carried out within districts. They are, for example, care services, geriatric care, day care centres, organisation of recreation or hobbies and counselling. There are many tasks and initiatives that should be undertaken at the town level, as e.g. social campaigns, public transport, stationary homes of social care, institutions of a so called high culture. While working out programmes of social policy in a big town, it should be decided at which level of the town to organise an offer for seniors. Space differentiation of the city age structure should be taken under consideration as well. An example of Warsaw shows well how significant the differences between districts are as to the old-age rate and the number of old people, thus how different is the scale of needs resulting from the aging of population in different districts of the town.

The experience gained during the works on the Social Strategy for Warsaw convinces, that we need to re-organise self-government structures. The Municipal Warsaw Government Office includes numerous offices responsible for social policy but only one incorporates this task in its name (the Office of Social Policy). The activities of the town, addressed to elderly persons, should not be divided according to administrative structures. This in turn requires modification of the way, the Office is managed. A department-project structure should be created to fulfil the tasks beyond the competence of each separate unit in the organizational structure of the Office. Another solution is to set up a new unit in Warsaw, accomplishing all the tasks addressed to seniors. Regardless what organizational solutions within the Municipal Office are introduced, there is a need to set up a town uniform information system concerning the activities of the town in favour of elderly citizens.

Both Warsaw and Poznan strategies stress the need to involve non-governmental organisations if we want to turn them into practice. In the first turn we should involve the organisations of old people to make them the forum of

their social activeness and the body offering seniors a support. The experience of the town clerks cooperating with the organisations of senior citizens are ambiguous. On the one hand, within the framework of the programme “Warsaw – seniors friendly”, the Office of Social Policy of the Municipal Office subsidizes numerous civic initiatives undertaken in favour of old people (e.g. in 2007 such initiatives were subsidized for an amount of 600 thousand zloty; in 2008 long term agreements were signed with non-governmental organisations running the University of the Third Age for an amount of 1.2 million zloty). On the other hand while monitoring Warsaw NGO’s one can come to the conclusion, that the level of seniors’ activeness is far from being satisfactory. Younger people more often become volunteers than seniors. If they appear, they are mostly active in organisations acting in favour of their own communities and even then, the level of activeness of seniors should not be overestimated. In many organisations of seniors, key roles are played by persons belonging to younger generation. The lack of true engagement of seniors in civic activities for their own generation is noticeable. In contacts with local self-governments they often show claiming attitudes and expect, that these are the officials who should present initiatives and propose actions in favour of seniors. It is worthwhile to add that in Warsaw, unlike in Poznan, there is no representation of old people (the Council of Seniors). Seniors seldom work together, they more often compete for an access to public funds being at the disposal of self-government authorities.

Being aware of barriers of social activeness one has no doubt that we should involve non-governmental organisations as bodies realising municipal policy for old people. The church should not be forgotten, as the number of persons, who believe in God and regularly practice, is high. Their contacts with clergymen – in the case of lonely persons in particular – are even more intense than with their own family members. City authorities could also encourage entrepreneurs, aware of social responsibility of business, to undertake initiatives in favour of the older generation.

#### Instruments: How to carry out social policy in favour of senior citizens?

Crucial for answering this question is the decision if it is better to initiate specific “senior” programmes or else to incorporate the needs of old people into different fields of social policy. It seems that the two solutions should not be considered as alternatives. Special programmes are the first choice while introducing innovative solutions, diverging from earlier practices. Such emphasizing of interesting, valuable initiatives makes it easier to introduce them to mass media and to build coalitions of different bodies around them. Specific, “dedicated to seniors” programmes, are therefore useful and necessary from the point of view of social marketing and the ability to mobilize partners for their realization.

Yet simultaneously – and not instead – there is a need to introduce the issues of old age and old people into all initiatives undertaken within municipal social policy – such as housing, public transport, labour market, education, health care, social rehabilitation of disabled persons and so forth. The review of such branch programmes of social policy does not allow for optimism. It is amazing how difficult it is for decision-makers, for the authors of different programmes actually aimed at solving a given problem and not at a real improvement of the situation of a certain community, to remember, that one in every five Warsaw resident, and in older districts of the town – one in every four, is in a retirement age. The result is, that different initiatives do not take into consideration the fact, that their beneficiaries are – or should be – old people.

It is a truism to state, that planning social policy requires the diagnosis of needs, requires the evaluation of what is a current offer of different bodies involved, requires the identification of the potential of human capital and social capital of a given local community. Meanwhile, as it was proved during the works on the Social Strategy, there is an information gap about Warsaw residents, their standards of living and even about all resources that might be utilized by municipal social policy. For example, if we ask a questions about town institutions which might be used for acting in favour of seniors, we receive almost exclusively the information about welfare institutions (day care and stationary) and about self-government's cultural institutions. Therefore, the instruments of information on social policy require strengthening, both these which serve collecting information on residents and their needs, on rendered services and benefits (monitoring the whole town supplemented with profound analyses of the situation in selected areas), and these which are addressed directly to city inhabitants – to begin with individual counselling and ending with social campaigns. Programme documents, worked out by Warsaw authorities prove, that there is a need to develop such instruments.

To allow for good aging in a big city we also need activities which may be called prophylactics. This idea includes both initiatives addressed to younger generations and cross-generation, understood as a so called education for old age. Universities of the Third Age, for example, rapidly develop (in Warsaw either). They might as well become Universities of All Ages and be incorporated into a permanent education system. In Warsaw, like in other regions of Poland, interesting cross-generation initiatives appear (e.g., engaging the young and the old in common works to record the newest history of their town districts). Health promotion could not be overestimated.

Municipal social policy demands money and social infrastructure. In Warsaw we need to work out of the map of old peoples' needs and the map of social institutions satisfying these needs. Besides, in my opinion, the effect of the analysis should be the establishment of new institutions. Shortages are numerous



and these institutions would serve not only old people but realize cross-generation programmes as well. Such might be in the case of cultural and educational institutions which, working all day and all week long, might be an offer for pensioners, for school pupils and for all vocationally active persons. Besides, Warsaw needs multi-functional social centres for elderly people, where they could have a cheap meal, spend free time in a pleasant way, take advantage of medical or a nursing consultations, get useful information and so forth. Such centres do exist, the Centre “Nowolipie” is the oldest, but their number is not sufficient.

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