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# CREATIVE AGEING POLICY IN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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*The shaping of creative economy is particularly important for development of cities and regions. This process can be analyzed in conjunction with changes in work and leisure time and their place in the human life cycle. This article aims to approximate the main features of: contemporary position of elderly people, creative ageing policy, benefits from seniors creativity and controversies linked to this concept. This essay also indicates the patterns of recommendations and activities in development of services for older people which may be the subject of further in-depth research. These examples exist in: (1) documents and strategic programs, (2) the activities of network organizations and (3) the activities of urban cultural and artistic institutions.*

*creative capital; creative economy; silver economy; arts and ageing; cultural and artistic institutions; creative ageing policy; intergenerational policy*

## 1. Introduction

The article draws attention to the relationship between ageing process and the evolution of the organizational changes in cultural and artistic institutions in cities that provide services for older people. Study shows that the main features of work and leisure time transition at the beginning of the 21st century and the phenomenon of creative economy correspond with new social stratification. It also describes creative ageing paradigm, benefits and barriers of senior creative capital building and the examples of solutions used in this field which are also areas for further research.

## 2. Relations between work and free time transition with social status of old people

Interventions in the field of ageing population need for the development of strategic management and cross-sector cooperation between local governments, businesses and non-governmental organizations at the regional level (Klimczuk 2011). In this paper it is assumed that the contemporary regional development is linked to the emergence of the creative economy. This type of economy includes two processes: economization of culture – economic use of artistic creation potential and the culturisation of economy – the application of artistic creation in industry and services in order to obtain innovations, increase in added value and turnover of enterprises (Klasik 2010: 48-49, 62). Creative capital is a key concept defined by the R. Florida (2010: 276-292) as derivative from human capital in connection with weak ties between people (thin social capital), which would not stand the creative activity of individuals and simultaneously would be open to

immigrants and people with different characteristics and beliefs. In this way it would be possible to eliminate the negative effects of human and social capital such as deepening of differences, exclusion and limitation by traditions. R. Florida states that (2010:256-275) regional development model contains also three factors of urban development and therefore creative regions and countries: technology, talent and tolerance. Concentration of them in one place and time determines formation of centers that shape the competitive advantage on the markets of goods and services as well as the sites of manufacture and purchase of innovation. This requires the development of integrated urban institutions systems, including the cultural and artistic infrastructure, which will be able to attract representatives of the creative class.

Creative class comprises scientists, engineers, teachers, artists, graphic designers, writers, consultants, specialists in media and advertising, designers, architects. Other members of the society in this model are called service class – the labor force without the choice of work time and continuously exposed to loss of their work and social status. This new social stratification also applies to changes in the position of old people – individuals over 60 years of age according to the World Health Organization criteria (UNDP 1999: 7). At the beginning of 21st century change in older people position is significantly affected by at least three types of dependences between work and leisure time. Firstly, "retirement shock." It is considered that the old person is the one who ended the economic activity and exceeded the statutory retirement age. This transition is associated with the sudden feeling of the excess of leisure time after end of career, disappointment by the lack of opportunity to fulfill the earlier plans, as well as the loss of economic security, meaning and purpose of life, identity and status and a sense of social bonding. Secondly, seniors' recreation and leisure time in industrial societies is sometimes considered "wasted time". Consequently, the non-working senior citizens are exposed to age discrimination and marginalization. Thirdly, creative work is an opportunity for the continuation of older people's work and economic activity. Not only does the use of new technologies, including computerization, automation and robotics, lead to a reduction in the number of jobs, but it also creates new, more flexible jobs that require originality and creativity. These changes give reasons for maintaining senior citizens in the labor market in order to limit the burden on pension systems, health care and social care and adapt businesses to the shrinking workforce and new consumer groups.

Therefore indicated factors stimulate the division of two classes: "creative seniors" and "service seniors". In the first case there will be pensioners who undertake activity in the various fields of culture, art, science, who accept the roles of animators, artists and researchers, as well as voluntary co-manage of educational and cultural institutions. These older people probably will use gerontechnologies, "rejuvenate themselves", undermine the existence of the retirement age, continue working, start new careers or establish new businesses as well as migrate to areas equipped with infrastructure and services for the elderly. While "service seniors" will be the primarily passive recipients of mass culture, people who support by pensions their families, religious communities or old people self-help groups. They are also seniors who work in the black economy, the

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recipients of worse quality goods and services. Those persons will also provide activities for doctors, carers, teachers, social workers, as well as creative seniors.

#### **4. Creative ageing policy – opportunities and barriers**

Literature on the subject distinguishes three concepts of policies towards ageing societies: a productive, active and creative ageing. In this paper only the latter type will be described. This paradigm applies to the involvement of seniors into the creative activities. The main goal is to move away from highlighting of their problems to indicate their potentials (Misey Boyer 2007). Creative ageing policy are programs combining cultural and artistic actions with lifelong learning, community integration as well as rehabilitation.

O. Moloney shows typology of benefits from the seniors creativity (2006: 19-24). She identifies four groups of benefits: (1) participants, (2) the arts sector, (3) the health sector and (4) society as a whole. First group includes: personal fulfilment, creation of meaning, lifelong learning, social linkages, celebration, improvement of communication, dignity and self-esteem, empowerment, maintaining and improving health. Benefits of art sector are: alternative perspectives, older artists engagement, using of other skills, new audiences, economic and political benefits like the stimulation of consumption among seniors, their political activity and changes in cultural funding programs. Benefits for health sector are: health benefits for older people, quality of life for staff, retention of staff, points of communication for visitors to care settings, greater integration in the community. Society as a whole can obtain alternative perspectives of development, improved communication and intergenerational understanding.

Barriers to implementation creative ageing policy are associated with at least three controversies. Firstly, despite its widespread use creativity can still be associated with the activities proper only for scientific, artistic and technical elites. Secondly, creative activities can be confused with those of recreation and entertainment. Nevertheless, the investigation into the new and useful solutions may in fact include fun and games which stimulate creative thinking. Thirdly, creativity can be mistaken with wisdom. Among seniors pragmatic and transcendental wisdom can be observed. Creativity is similar to the first type, which is considered common and is associated with participation in social life.

#### **5. Building of seniors creative capital**

Recommendations and actions for seniors creative capital building are reflected in: (A) documents and strategic programs; (B) network organizations; and (C) urban cultural and artistic institutions. Those aspects are also potential areas for further research.

##### **5.1 Documents and strategic programs**

Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing guided by the United Nations (2002) should be considered a fundamental document of creative policy. Basic recommendation for national governments associated with creativity is Objective 1. in Priority direction I. of Issue 1. "Recognition of the social, cultural, economic and political contribution of older

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persons". More specific instructions and examples of good practice were presented in policy briefs series written by United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (2012). The idea of "society for all ages," has been developed since the 1990s and now it is the basis for UN actions. It is also the most optimistic scenario in terms of population ageing whose implementation requires the involvement of creative class (Inayatullah 2003). In the European Union the stimulation of seniors' creativity is a part of social inclusion and digital divide reducing programs (*Opinion...* 2011; Frąckiewicz 2009). In the United States creativity is invariably one of the topics at the White House Conference on Aging which is held once a decade since the 1960s. (Misey Boyer 2007; WHCA 2005). A document prepared in Northern Ireland which includes the diagnosis of barriers and benefits to participating with the arts, SWOT analysis, engagement themes, objectives and performance indicators (ACNI 2010) can serve as an example at the regional level. In Poland the government intends to promote media competences of "50+ individuals," increase their role in the enhancement of intergenerational identity and the popularization of cultural heritage (Smoleń 2011). The strategy papers also drew attention to the promotion of goods and services for an ageing population, the "silver economy" (ZWWM 2008; Golinowska 2010; Klimczuk 2011).

## **5.2 Network organizations**

A significant initiative is the *Global Network of Age-friendly Cities* established in 2010 by WHO (2012). It was the result of the project devoted to the shaping of standards of cities' adjustments to the needs of older people which was led since 2005. Membership in network requires development and implementation of reform programs in eight dimensions: (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; as well as (8) community and health services. Programs are evaluated and supported by WHO. The main measure is the involvement of seniors in all stages of program operations – not only as for example the members of consulting boards, but also as the animators of detailed projects. Seniors creativity is more directly supported by *Silver Economy Network of European Regions* (2012) and *European Network for Ageing and Culture* (2012) established in 2005 by Nordrhein-Westfalen government from Germany. In the first organization there are groups operating on active employment, entrepreneurship and cultural participation of older people which undertake projects using the elderly creativity. Second network supports education and seniors' culture. In 2008-2010 these network organizations conducted the project *Intercultural Creativity of Seniors: A Travelling European Academy* that served for exchange of good practices in stimulating creativity from eight EU countries (Ehlert, Fricke, Marley 2010).

## **5.3 Urban cultural and artistic institutions**

As modern facilities oriented to local and regional actions towards seniors one may consider primarily Third Age Universities, senior clubs as well as non-governmental organizations (Leszczyńska-Rejchert 2007: 157-200). Cultural and creative engagement in nursing homes, day care homes, libraries and during the summer holiday on allotment gardens

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or urban day camps is also worth mentioning. The examples of institutions committed directly to creative ageing policy are provided by the established in the United States in 2001 *National Center for Creative Aging* (2012). This center examines programs of institutions, brings together and trains entertainers, conducts research, conferences, competitions and grant programs. Center coordinates the work of more than 70 institutions such as: research and training resorts, religious organizations, associations promoting multiculturalism, hobby clubs, theaters, museums, rehabilitation centers, nursing and health services, self-help groups, tourism organizations. Moreover, in recent years several sets of good practices, guidelines for cultural and artistic institutions in adapting infrastructure and events for seniors were made (Cutler 2009). Furthermore, an important challenge is to build medialabs - interdisciplinary cultural institutions open to the public activity, which would add recipients to the co-management of those institutions, as well as build the links between business, science and social activity while taking into account contemporary Internet culture and mitigating prone to conflicts changes in intergenerational relationships (Klimczuk 2010).

## 6. Conclusions

We may risk a statement that creative ageing policy is a relatively poorly widespread idea. However, this concept is particularly important at the beginning of the 21st century when regional development is associated with the promotion of factors that generate creative capital. Regional management should take into account this policy while shaping a positive responses to demographic changes which are accompanied by the transformation of work and free time. Public authorities should consider recommendations of international organizations, to develop urban cultural and artistic institutions for senior citizens as well as involve these centers into regional and international network organizations.

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