

**Doctoral dissertation: *The analyses of selected appraisal instruments for assessing the quality of life in city taking into account the socio-demographic context.***

Author: Agnieszka Ptak-Wojciechowska

**ABSTRACT**

The dissertation is aimed at studying the urban quality of life (QoL), as well as global and local tools for the QoL assessment. The main aim of the research is to develop recommendations for the appraisal instrument that takes into account the architectural and urban structure, concerns the socio-demographic context and local conditions, as well as responds to global challenges. The intermediate goal of the study is to analyse selected, current urban QoL assessment tools, in the context of ageing societies, environmental threats and spatial aspects.

The results of this part of the research indicate significant differences between the current instruments, both in terms of the purpose and scale of the study, contracting authorities, focus groups, as well as the methods themselves, including, for example, the importance of spatial, demographic and environmental aspects. Thus, the analysed and compared available instruments are reused in the form of a synthesis of them all to contribute to the development of local guidelines that will serve local municipalities and communities, including seniors, as well as future generations.

The result of the research is a new authorial tool for evaluating the urban QoL of seniors, taking into account functional and spatial aspects, included in the discipline of architecture and urban planning. The tool considers the importance of living conditions as well as satisfaction with these living conditions. Its efficiency was checked by evaluating five neighbourhoods of the city of Poznań with the largest number of seniors. The assessment was made by experts from the fields of architecture and urban planning, as well as by older residents of these areas.

The work has been extended by research conducted in the Netherlands. This part of the study concerned a more detailed assessment of architectural aspects, limited to the spatial scale of senior housing. As part of the exchange, workshops with experts, surveys among an international group of researchers, as well as interviews with stakeholders from a construction-services company were conducted.

The role of the healthy living environments, the universal design and the potential of new technologies in supporting ageing in place were verified. The latest research tools, such as AHP-OS, Atlas.ti, Miro, and Mentimeter were used for the tasks, and the results were presented at a world conference on gerontechnology.

The following thesis was established during the research work:

*The ageing societies in highly developed countries and global climate change set new requirements for the urban space, and instruments for the quality of life assessment should be a method for improving the quality of spatial structure of cities and their sustainability. Available instruments are poorly related to the current global challenges faced by cities in the 21st century. Furthermore, they neglect the significance of the scale of the area under assessment.*

My research has shown that:

- the challenges of the 21st century, related to the ageing of societies and the environmental crisis, set new requirements for the urban space quality,
- aspects related to the urban tissue and global challenges are not sufficiently addressed by current assessment instruments,
- instruments for the assessment of the urban quality of life can effectively support the diagnosis of the current state of the city, provided that the assessment area is adapted to the local scale,
- design recommendations for age-friendly cities can be developed based on the aforementioned instruments.

Thus, the validity of the thesis was confirmed.

The doctoral thesis introduces the tool along with its potential application, using the example of evaluating and ranking specific areas of the Poznań city. In addition, recommendations for architects and urban planners were developed regarding the design of cities friendly to everyone, with particular emphasis on the needs of ageing residents. The results of this study can provide support for municipalities, designers, local communities, and researchers interested in enhancing the urban QoL for seniors, as well as for seniors themselves who make housing decisions.

**Key words:** *urban quality of life, appraisal instruments, ageing societies, environmental risks, global challenges, universal and inclusive design, urban tissue, local context*