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AGEING IN CITIES: CONTRIBUTING FACTORS AND CHALLENGES

ORCID ID: 0000-0001-5813-7892

Mariia Vynohradova

Ph.D. Student of Faculty of Economics
Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv

UKRAINE

Ageing in cities is comparatively a new area of research that focuses on the trends and prospects of ageing in the cities. The ageing of society is a challenging phenomenon, which characterizes the current stage of the global demographic transition. But this process should not be considered one-sided as a problem only. In general, longevity is the result of economic development and technological progress. By 2050, the percentage of the world's population that is aged 65 and older will grow from the current 9.4% to about 16.0%. The global number of people aged 80 years and older is assumed to more than double by 2030, with a projection of nearly 426 million in 2050, which is more than three times the relatively estimated number in 2019 of 143 million [1].

It matters to consider the role of urbanization at the current stage of demographic transition as well as old population needs. Urbanisation plays a principal role in the development of countries' socioeconomic profiles. It is a multi-dimensional process linked to rising income levels, expanding access to jobs, improving health and education systems, and changes in cultural and value-added orientations of society [2].

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) [3], cities in developed countries have the majority of older inhabitants. In the context of ageing, big cities and metropolitan areas are of greater importance than villages or towns in OECD member states. Its report concludes that ageing trends are different between rural and urban areas. In big cities, the older population is growing faster than the total population, which causes disproportions in sex and age structure.

Three key factors are deriving this transition: increasing longevity, particularly in older population cohorts, decreasing fertility, and internal and external migration flows.

Increased longevity and falling fertility rates are the principal determinants of population ageing. Thanks to effective birth control, increased child survival, and changing a woman's role in society, birth rates have dropped sharply in the XX century. According to the World Population Prospects report [1], by 2050, the total fertility rate is expected to fall to about 2.25 children per woman. In many countries, regardless of the level of their economic development, fertility rates are now below 2.15 children per woman, treated as a long-term replacement rate.

Increased longevity is another contributing factor to changes in sex and age population structure. Mortality rates have dropped dramatically in the past century due to improvements in medical care, hygiene, and nutrition, the invention of effective pharmaceuticals, and new treatment methods. The mortality rate, therefore, life expectancy varies among countries and depends on the socioeconomic factors of a particular region. The most significant surge in life expectancy was in the Asian countries. For example, today people born in Japan and Singapore can live on average up to 84 years. North America and Europe are characterized by the lowest growth in life expectancy, caused by the relatively older population structure and the exhaustion of potential for further demographic ageing. By 2050, life expectancy at birth is expected to increase to nearly 77.2 years [1].

Migration flows are another driver of population ageing, resulting in more evident variation in ageing at both regional and country levels with a correlation to differences in income level and economic development. Nowadays the world is experiencing the move from rural to urban areas within countries and across borders which causes deprivation of rural areas and redistribution of the working-age population. Regardless of this trend, both urban and rural areas are vulnerable to migration pressures.

There are several distinctive challenges in health, labour supply, and economic growth accompanied by rapid population aging. The economic and social consequences of increased shares of the elderly will be seen in both rich and poor countries [4].

The current demographic situation, caused by progressive ageing, generates many socioeconomic, medical, and humanitarian challenges:

- Reduction of labour supply as a result of changes in the age structure of the population - a decrease in the share of working-age people leads to an increase in the overall demographic burden.

- A reduction in the amount of total savings in the economy, which is associated with a relatively lower propensity for savings of the elderly - a decrease in free capital for investment leads to a slowdown in economic growth.

- Change in the consumption model and reduction in consumer spending affect the prices for goods and services, as well as inflation rates [5].

- The rise in expenses for pension provision, social protection, and health care, which, together with the reduction of the base for calculating insurance contributions, creates a significant burden on the country's budget; this can lead to an increase in the ratio of public debt to GDP and budget instability [6].

Conclusions. Thus, demographic aging creates challenges to ensuring sustainable and sustainable economic growth and social development of countries. First, older people face special needs related to access to health care, social services, increased vulnerability to diseases, limited mobility, etc. The COVID-19 pandemic has pointed out the weak points of social policy. Therefore, the above-mentioned weaknesses faced by the elderly population require a quick response from the state. Second, over the past few decades, there have been significant changes in the health status and causes of mortality, activity and productivity patterns, and socioeconomic characteristics of the elderly. Even though demographic forecasts are devised at the country level, cities are those areas where the majority of old people will live in the nearest future, and the processes that will shape the demographic profile of an individual state will mainly take place. That is, taking into account the level of urbanization and development prospects of metropolises is necessary to achieve the goals for sustainable development. Urban planning should complement the national government's effort to address the adverse impact of demographic ageing.

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