

DEMOGRAPHIC AGING AND THE URBAN FABRIC IN VIENNA

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INTENTION

The aim of the study „Demographic Ageing and the Urban Fabric in Vienna” was to contribute, particularly in times of limited funding resources, to goal-oriented action and supplies planning-relevant information about the special environmental conditions, which are required for an Independent Living of elderly people. Residential areas with an increasing population in the age-group 75+ in the coming decades are also identified.

The present survey shows the process of demographic aging of the Viennese population, documents the types of existing services for elderly people in Vienna, identifies the from the demographic change most strongly affected urban areas and describes the structure of their housing stock. The specific needs in the living situation of elderly people and resulting spatial and building-related requirements for neighbourhoods are described in part two.

Based on the analysed and presented planning recommendations the study comes to the conclusion that efforts focussed on neighbourhood-based assistance for elderly people as a model of integrative urban district development (although involving other population groups) is a trendsetting approach.

SUMMARY

Demographic Aging in Vienna: The Demographic population development shows regional distinctions. There are not only differences between the federal states of Austria, there are although differences within urban districts, for example in Vienna.

The study “Demographic Aging and the Urban Fabric in Vienna” shows the different development between the districts of the city of Vienna based on the survey “Bevölkerungsvorausschätzung 2000 bis 2030 nach Teilgebieten der Wiener Stadtregion” published by the City of Vienna’s Municipal Department for Urban Development and Planning (MA18).

According to this survey the share of population in the age-group 75+ will be increased by the end of 2030 mainly in the districts Favoriten, Simmering, Fünfhaus, Liesing, Floridsdorf and Donaustadt. In all

other districts will be a minor increase and in the three districts - Innere Stadt (city centre), Hietzing and Wieden – will be decrease in the aged population.

Based on the same survey the present study could prove the difference in the demographic population development in Vienna not only on the level of districts, but although within the districts.

Assistance for elderly people in Vienna: In Vienna a range of different institutions already assists elderly people in their daily life, including in-patient facilities and other institutions belonging to the city's infrastructure of social and health services. While nursing homes as in-patient (long-term care) facilities are concentrated in the outlying western districts, retirement homes (assisted living) are located throughout the city. In Vienna in recent years has been a trend to establish facilities for day patients. Although the scope of services offered has grown on the whole, an expansion of facilities organised at the level of small-scale urban areas (cf. "Spatial and building-related requirements for the residential neighbourhood") is absolutely necessary for an on neighbourhood needs oriented planning approach.

No or almost no in-patient facilities for elderly people are in the seven residential areas with more than 2.000 residents in the age-group 75+ by the year 2030. The structure of the urban fabric in these areas was analyzed.

Building stocks in the residential areas: It turned out that nearly all seven residential areas were settled within a period of only a few years and now the residents are growing old as a group. Especially effected are the developments built in the sixties and seventies among them the large-scale housing estates "Großfeldsiedlung" and "Rennbahnweg". These estates were built -- first by the City of Vienna and later by non-profit housing associations – using prefabricated modules.

Initially the buildings were built in row construction, usually parallel to one another. Later the types had been varied and housing complexes were constructed in terrace and around large courtyards such as in the "Rennbahnweg" estate.

These large panel-constructed housing estates built in the seventies in Vienna and elsewhere were planned with the nuclear family above all in mind. As the initial residents were families with young children, not only the social and health services and the infrastructures but also the landscape had been planned according to their needs.

The wide open spaces characteristic for these developments are often uninvitingly designed and offer few, often inadequate, uses, which are oriented to the needs of children.

In innumerable aspects the buildings don't meet the criteria of the "Universal design for all", although many of the buildings have elevators. Also the individual housing units, particular WCs and bathrooms, must be adapted.

The existing commercial infrastructures, as well as the social and health services do not meet the needs of elderly people in these areas. An in-depth site analysis is required for each development so that infrastructures can be augmented or expanded appropriately.

This development assigns the housing industry new challenges. Considerable synergy effects are possible if building restoration and modernisation are undertaken simultaneously with accessible design (cf. "Spatial and building-related requirements for the residential neighbourhood").

Living situation of elderly people: A living situation tailored to the specific requirements of elderly people ensures security of supply and encourages social contacts and community integration. The design of the individual apartment and the neighbourhood should encourage independent living.

In recent decades new models of living for elderly people have emerged, offering a variety of levels of assistance and community life. But nearly all of them require a relocation of the residence.

For this reason, neighbourhood-oriented models with a variety of offerings on a small scale appear as a viable alternative for the future. Small-scale facilities encourage the independent living of elderly people help and provide security and quality of life by meeting specific requirements. Integrative planning methods combine existing and expanded social and health services with accessible design. In order to achieve these various goals, planning recommendations in the present study were systematised according to different scales.

Spatial and building-related requirements for the residential neighbourhood: Planning recommendations based on literature research were assigned to different structural elements supporting the opportunities of independent living of elderly people, as for example bathroom design, access structures, landscape design and amenities belonging to the social and health services. These structural elements were assigned to four spatial scales: the individual housing

unit, the micro level (the building), the meso level (the housing estate) and the macro level (the residential area).

A successful demand-actuated planning has to consider regional factors such as existing assistance services, housing standards and the specific social structures of the particular neighbourhood or housing estate. This is a quite ambitious approach, because neighbourhood management concepts demand a high level of interdisciplinary and the ability of all players to coordinate their efforts and cooperate with one another.

The approach of a comprehensive, innovative planning on a neighbourhood-level could be implemented in a pilot project to reach concrete conclusions in a manageable timeframe. These conclusions could be adapted for the other districts identified by this study.

The city of Vienna seems to be qualified for this approach, because it already has a differentiated system of services and facilities for elderly people. Although the city of Vienna has not only a strong tradition in social and public housing, it is also internationally reputed for its “soft” urban renewal efforts in renovating the housing stock of the city. This experience could be helpful by implementing the proposed pilot project “Neighbourhood-level assistance as a model of integrative urban district development”.

**CONCLUSION
NEIGHBOURHOOD
LEVEL ASSISTANCE
AS A MODEL OF
INTEGRATIVE URBAN
DISTRICT
DEVELOPMENT
IN VIENNA?**