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C6 - INEQUALITIES MOBILITY MANAGEMENT AS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION

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Short Description

We are witnessing two demographic phenomena on an international scale: population aging and urbanization. Neither the urban public space nor the transport system are adequate to the mobility needs of the elderly. This study focusses on the adequacy of the urban space and transportation system to create age-friendly cities.

Main part

Given the growth of ageing populations in cities, debate on how to promote and design urban spaces that facilitate or enable active lifestyles for the elderly is definitely a challenge for planning, more important than ever.

MOBI-AGE is an exploratory research project that aims to contribute to the promotion of sustainable urban mobility for the aged population. In this study, a methodology was developed for the classification of historical public spaces, based on the literature review of the characteristics of given public urban spaces and, also, collective public transport systems that better contribute to more age-friendly cities. Especially, this study is driven regarding the level of urban design and transport systems of these spaces, as regards the routes and the pedestrian accesses.

Two case studies, one in Coimbra and another in Porto were studied in relation to the characteristics of their elderly population, residential areas and public space, in order to identify needs and failures. Interviews with the elderly were conducted for a better understanding of their concerns, both elderly residents and tourists.

A methodology for the classification of historical public spaces was elaborated from the literature review and from the critical analysis of two study areas (in Porto and Coimbra), regarding their suitability in terms of elderly mobility. These study areas are typically deprived territories, subject to recent tourism pressures accentuating spatial unevenness and affecting social justice.

This study should inform future developments on interactive information platforms, aimed at space users, allowing them to find solutions to their travel needs.

What is new?

This study had as aim to investigate and understand what are the main challenges that older people face when moving in public space or in the transportation system. This study went beyond desk work, to create social innovation, by holding participatory and dynamic collaboration sessions with the elderly as a complement to the information provided by the literature review. Then, an Age-friendly Accessibility and Mobility Index was developed and involved the fields of urban design, transport system and mobility, focusing on the needs and characteristics of older people.

What is transferable to other cities and regions?

An indicator of classification of public spaces as to its suitability to the mobility needs of the elderly was developed. This methodology is adaptable to any city, regardless of specific characteristics, and should inform future developments on interactive information platforms, aimed at space users, allowing them to find solutions to their travel needs and supporting the city councils in the urban space and transport system management.

What are outcomes and conclusions?

Elderly population, with some restrictions in terms of personal mobility, do not always have easy access to urban spaces and to the components of the transport system. A methodology is purposed for the diagnosis and classification of historical central spaces, particularly those that are the target of urban rehabilitation operations.