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Space and Things in the Context of Old Age¹

Dana Sýkorová

Abstract

The article is focused on meanings acquired by space and things in the context of ageing and old age. The author derives from the research “Seniors in Society. Strategies of Maintaining Personal Autonomy” carried out in years 2002-5. The project was originally inspired by the objective to understand the importance of autonomy in old age and processes through which the elderly try to keep their autonomy. The data from this research underwent a repeated quantitative analysis, rooted in the newly formulated research question: *“What is the role of space and things in the life of seniors as persons of a certain age, in a certain life period”*. The outcomes of the analysis are presented in the third part of the article. It follows the chapters where the attention is paid to the issue of space and things in the context of gerontology and the description of the methodology of the said research. The data analysis shows that space and things are significant elements of the life in old age. Seniors set them into three main frames: physical self-sufficiency, or personal autonomy and safety; integration in informal social networks; and home as a subjective centre of the neighbourhood. It is clear that space and things become a substantial part of the strategies of “coping with old age”.

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