

Instytut Socjologii Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego



**Understanding Ageing
in Contemporary Poland:
Social and Cultural Perspectives**

eds Stella Grotowska, Iwona Taranowicz

**LOWER
SILESIA**



**DOLNY
ŚLĄSK**



Uniwersytet
Wrocławski

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Introduction

The topic of old age and ageing is currently being discussed by everyone from politicians, economists and journalists to ordinary people. It figures as a topic in political and media discourse, highlighting the multitude of problems that result from population ageing and that need to be addressed. These issues are being researched by specialists in a variety of disciplines, including demographics, medicine, social policy, economics, psychology and sociology.

This tome is a collection of texts by authors representing admittedly diverse academic fields, but with a shared conviction that the phenomenon of population ageing merits in-depth research, as this megatrend is shaping the future of contemporary society – and hence affects us all.

The book is subdivided into five parts.

The first part – *What is old age nowadays and how do we speak about it?* – explores the social construction of old age in rapidly changing societies, old people's place in social structure, and the language that is used to refer to old age not only in the media, but also in academic and scientific contexts.

The second part – *Privacy, intimacy and home* – consists of four texts that look at how senior citizens function in the private sphere, i.e. in the context of home and familial care, intimacy, sexuality (including non-heteronormative sexuality) and death.

The texts comprising the third part – *Images of old age in contemporary culture* – analyse television drama serials, school textbooks and the relationship between clothing/fashion and (old) age, to show how old age is presented in contemporary culture.

The fourth thematic subsection of the book – *Activity and lifestyles in old age* – is devoted to issues concerning the way senior citizens lead their lives, including the imposition of social restrictions, as well as changes in lifestyle and the emergence of new lifestyles.

The fifth and final part – entitled *Old age in social policy* – consists of four texts which present statistical data concerning old age in Poland, local support structures for senior citizens, the evolution of social care homes, and the activity of institutions that deal with old people.

As can be seen from the above overview of the issues touched upon in the respective articles collected here, this book is an interdisciplinary attempt to grasp and address selected aspects of old age and ageing, from a predominantly cultural perspective.

We trust that our book not only provides a range of interesting perspectives on old age and ageing, but that it will also inspire both reflection and extensive further research.

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