Regeneration of the Post-Socialist Inner City
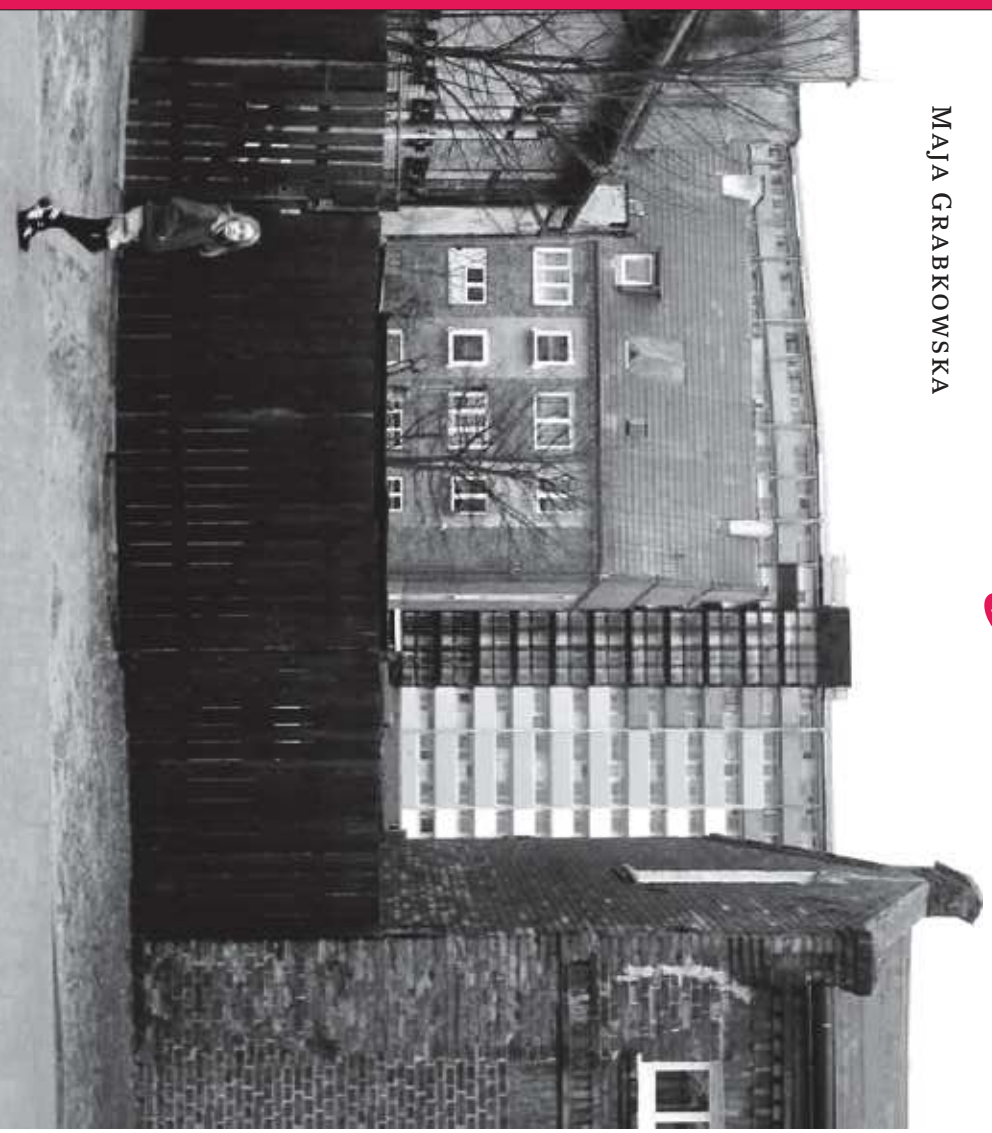
Social Change and Bottom-up Transformations in Gdańsk

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Gdańsk 2012

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Introduction

Nowadays in Europe inner-city development and urban regeneration are like inseparable conjoined twins, one simply cannot exist without another. This book explores the causes and consequences of current European inner-city transformations with the focus of attention directed to grass-root processes of urban regeneration. To begin with, it is evident that the socio-demographic shift articulated in such tendencies as individualisation, atomisation of society and rising heterogeneity of household arrangements translates into new patterns of residential behaviour. The concept of residential flexibility is therefore used to explain the increasing demand for adaptability to meet specific needs and preferences of various types of households following distinct urbanite lifestyles. According to the existing research results it is the inner city which, for a number of reasons, seems to offer the most suitable, or flexible, residential environment for the emerging category of urban dwellers. In turn, an influx of newcomers to the often socially and materially degraded inner-city neighbourhoods may contribute into their recovery, but also have unfavourable results, such as displacement of the original residents in the course of gentrification.

As much as the described mechanisms are recognised and researched in the old-capitalist countries of Western Europe, and especially in the United Kingdom (Couch et al., 2011), there has been so far only scarce information available regarding the former socialist bloc. Meanwhile, unlike many Western European inner cities which have experienced much selective out-migration and depopulation in the second half of the 20th century, inner-city neighbourhoods in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) still benefit from quite sound population structures representing socio-demographic mix. In Poland this is reflected in the heterogeneous tenure structure of dwellings which, however, started to change quite rapidly along with the process of privatisation of the municipal housing stock. Nonetheless, due to the deliberate disinvestment policy of the former establishments, post-socialist inner cities are far more neglected physically than their counterparts in the West. Inner-city regeneration has therefore turned out to be one of the biggest challenges facing municipal authorities after the systemic change in the CEE countries.

The fact that the old residential areas with pre-1945 tenement buildings, despite their severe dilapidation and stigmatisation during the socialist period, have recently been gaining increasing popularity as an attractive residential environment, serves as a point of departure for the analysis of possible effects of new immigration on inner-city renewal. Hence, the ongoing socio-demographic

transitions, and especially incipient reurbanisation, are investigated in terms of their impact on bottom-up regeneration in degraded inner neighbourhoods of the post-socialist city of Gdańsk.

Given that the book is situated at the conceptual intersection of human geography, household demography, urban sociology and cultural studies (cf. Blunt, 2005), it refers to publications from a wide variety of academic disciplines. Geographical writings are prevalent in this selection, especially with regard to literature on urban development, spatial aspects of demographic change and gentrification (Johnston, 2000). Yet, only in combination with references to other fields of urban research the theoretical background becomes complete.

Since both the subject matter and the applied interdisciplinary approach are relatively novel, there is still much need for deeper investigation. For instance, only recently research interest has only recently turned to non-traditional households as actors of residential change (Ogden and Hall, 2000, 2004; Faessen, 2002; Jarvis et al., 2001; Buzar et al., 2005). Nevertheless, scarcity of comparable studies on similar phenomena in the post-socialist context resulted in heavy reliance on the Western European research output, especially in the first two chapters which offer a theoretical introduction to the issues analysed in the book from a Western European perspective. Correspondingly, Chapter 3 is based mostly on Polish literature on inner-city transformations with occasional references to research results from other countries of the CEE.

Similarly, in Poland social aspects of inner-city regeneration have only recently been acknowledged and treated on a par with the economic and material spheres (Kipta, 2008; Zborowski, 2009), while gentrification-related concerns have been almost absent from the academic debate (Jadach-Sepioło, 2009; Grzeszczak, 2010). There is also a gap in existing research on the new socio-spatial processes in second-order Polish cities, with Cracow, Wrocław and Łódź standing out among the case studies and predominance of quantitative over qualitative methods applied.

The leading cognitive aim of the following study is to identify and analyse socio-demographic underpinnings of residential change in the post-socialist inner city and their possible impact on inner-city revitalisation[1]. Consequently, intermediate cognitive aims include:
- gaining knowledge on development of reurbanisation tendencies in the post-socialist city in comparison with analogous processes in Western European countries;

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1 Throughout the book, the term 'revitalisation' is used interchangeably with 'urban regeneration', especially in the Polish context, since *rewitalizacja* is the most commonly applied equivalent for 'urban regeneration'.

- identification and analysis of lifestyle and residential patterns of newcomers to the post-socialist inner city based on the case study example of Gdańsk;
- investigation of the potential for newcomers' contribution to bottom-up inner-city revitalisation under post-socialist conditions.

The accompanying methodical aim consists in application of qualitative approach in the empirical study, since methods used in this field of research in Poland are traditionally quantitative-oriented. Ethnographic interviews were selected as the key research method for two reasons. Firstly, in order to capture the ongoing processes at their initial stage, and secondly, to thoroughly explore the causal relationships between inner-city residential change and bottom-up regeneration, as well as to allow for interpretation of the involved socio-demographic mechanisms.

Finally, the intention of the author is to obtain practically applicable results which could serve as indications and recommendations for the local policy makers and other public institutions responsible for designing and implementation of top-down regeneration undertakings.

The main idea of the study is that, in comparison with other types of urban residential areas, pre-war inner-city neighbourhoods offer central location and greater flexibility of the housing structures which suit a broad range of highly individualised needs of urban dwellers. For this reason the inner city may attract a variety of household types, with those who value accessibility and adaptability in particular. In CEE, considering the specific post-socialist context, the associated inflow of new residents may translate into material and social renewal of the post-socialist inner city. Hence, three general assumptions or hypotheses are made:

1 Locational and architectural advantages of inner-city housing structures, allowing for residential flexibility, are significant pull factors to the inner city, especially for non-traditional households.
2 The influx of newcomers to the inner-city neighbourhoods may induce bottom-up regeneration.
3 Limited displacement of existing residents and activation of the local community guarantees sustainability of the upgrading processes.

The first three chapters are theoretical, based on literature studies and analysis of planning documents, while the empirical part of the book features a case study of inner-city transformations currently taking place in Gdańsk, a second-order post-socialist city in northern Poland. The main arguments for its choice were its large size, relatively high proportion of pre-1945 housing structures, strong suburbanisation tendencies and scarcity of pre-existing information on inner-city changes after 1989. Since the most recent census data on socio-demographic transformations at the level of districts in Gdańsk have been imprecise and

incomplete, their analysis has served only to provide a quantitative background and introduction to more in-depth qualitative methods (see also Mynarska and Bernardi, 2007). Detailed ethnographic interviews were thus applied as the main research method and conducted between July 2007 and May 2008 in two neighbourhoods with high shares of old tenement houses, Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port.

Accessed by snowball sampling, the interviewees were members of households inhabiting old tenement houses in the two case-study districts and having moved there after 1989 (see section 4.1 for a detailed description of the interviewed sample)[2]. The specified time threshold ensured that all of the interviewed newcomers had relocated to the inner city more or less voluntarily under the post-socialist conditions and not through the socialist flat-assignment procedures. In addition, the new residents' accounts were supplemented by expert interviews with local urban practitioners. All interview results were coded with the use of MAXQDA software for qualitative data analysis and interpreted hermeneutically. The subsequent cross-case analysis allowed for identification of specific patterns of lifestyle and residential behaviour of the newcomers' households, which elude the official statistics, and establishing the new residents' connection to the process of bottom-up inner-city revitalisation.

The author wishes to acknowledge the guidance and support from numerous people and institutions involved in the creation of this book. First of all, I would like to thank Professors Iwona Sagan and Stefan Buzar for their expert advice, and also show my appreciation to my irreplaceable colleagues from the Department of Economic Geography at University of Gdansk. Magda, Kamila, Mariusz, Wojtek, Grzes and Stach contributed immensely to the completion of my dissertation. My PhD could not have been undertaken without the financial support of the Volkswagen Foundation and intellectual assistance from the conDENSE project team, while valuable comments and suggestions were received from my reviewers, Professor Daniela Szymanska and Professor Andrzej Baranowski, who helped me to further develop my thesis. Lastly but most dearly, I wish to thank my friends and family for their extraordinary patience and unwavering faith. I dedicate this book to my Mum, the ultimate expert on residential flexibility.

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2   Pilot phase of the research which took place in spring 2006 featured an ethnographic study of 42 households in Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port regardless of duration of their residence (see Buzar and Grabkowska, 2006).

1. *Spatial and social dimensions of urban development*

1.1. Phases of urbanisation and the second demographic transition

Since the ancient times urban centres in Europe and across the world have interchangeably risen and fallen, boomed and doomed. In the fabled story-telling sessions of Marco Polo and Kublai Khan the latter eventually apprehends 'the invisible reasons which make cities live, through which perhaps, once dead, they will come to life again' (Calvino, 1974, p. 136). Although fictional, the metaphor aptly parallels the heterogenic nature of urban development which evades any definite schemes and classifications. Nonetheless, some general patterns have been observed and theorised by geographers, economists, sociologists and demographers.

One of the widely accepted paradigms is the cyclical urbanisation model which identifies urban expansion in time and space with consecutive stages of growth and decline in the core and ring of an urban region (Klaassen and Paelinck, 1979; Hall and Hay, 1980; van den Berg et al, 1982). In the classic approach of van den Berg et al. (1982) four phases of the development process are distinguished: urbanisation, suburbanisation, deurbanisation and reurbanisation (fig. 1.1). The first is typically linked with early industrialisation and consists largely in the intensive development of the core. It is next followed by suburbanisation, which brings forward expansion of the peripheries. The subsequent crisis of the congested and overpopulated core results in deurbanisation and the outflow from both the city core and its ring to the surrounding rural areas. Given that this entails highly unfavourable decline of the urban core, the anticipated fourth stage of reurbanisation is expected to take place either in the course of natural development or as a result of institutional measures against the undesirable consequences of deurbanisation, namely depopulation and degradation of the core.

The model assumes that transition between the stages is triggered by actions of different groups of urban actors, of which households, industries and governmental institutions are the most influential. It is presupposed that those actions are initiated and directed by the propensity for maximizing their spatial welfare, defined as urban space users' satisfaction. In the case of households such maximization translates into the choice of location of dwelling, conditioned by such criteria as type of housing or accessibility

Fig. 1.1 Phases of the urbanisation process
Source: Nyström, 1992, p. 134
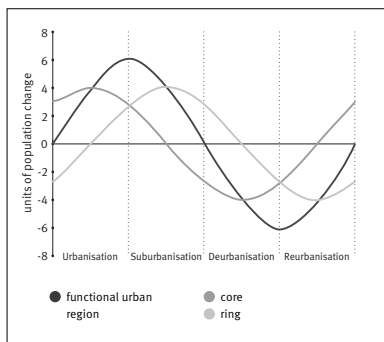
Verifying their theory with empirical data observed in fourteen European countries during the 1950-1975 period, the authors validate the assumptions of their model. According to the results, and quite predictably, spatial change is related to city size and level of socio-economic development of regions and countries. For instance, capital and first-order cities are found to be in later stages of the urbanisation process than lower-ordered urban units. Similarly, 'old' capitalist cities in the West outpace the relatively lagging behind cities of Central and Eastern Europe (table 1.1)[3]. It is also revealed that the majority of cities under investigation (63 per cent) reached the suburbanisation stage, while a fifth of them (18 per cent) were undergoing deurbanisation. Even though reurbanisation tendencies were not observed, they are outlined by the authors as the most probable scenario for future development of urban regions in Europe.

The hypothetical assumption of the fourth stage in the cyclical urbanisation process proposed by van den Berg et al. has yet to come in for criticism. As indicated by J. Nyström (1992, p. 136), 'reurbanisation in urban regions may be regarded as one among several possible processes of development'. This argument is supported by results of a study of population development during the 1980s in several Scandinavian and British cities, which display more diffused patterns of development than in the preceding decades and lead the author to a conclusion

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3   The dynamics of urbanisation processes in post-socialist cities of the CEE is moreover relatively distorted, as discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, with specifically intense suburbanisation as the most distinguishing feature.

that the reurbanisation stage is even likely to be omitted. At the same time the reasons for decreasing predictability of urban development are enumerated, including the shift towards a service and information society (p. 141), as well as the increasing integration and competition between European cities and the rest of the world (p. 143).

Table 1.1   Main differences between urbanisation processes in capitalist and (post)socialist cities

Stage of urbanisation process	External features	Capitalist (C) and socialist/post-socialist (S/PS) specifics
Urbanisation	Increase in the number of cities and urban populations	S: Marxist philosophy equates quality and quantity. In socialist countries in Europe the meaning of the first phase is extended to the whole urbanisation process.
Suburbanisation	Spatial growth of cities at the cost of development of suburbs (sites of production and upscale housing)	C: Initiated by the 19th century process of industrialisation. Capitalist socio-economic relations bring about lifestyle transformations (changes affecting division of labour, family patterns, etc.). Geographical distance gives way to economic and temporal distance. S: In socialist (European) countries production = industry = city. The category of chłoporobotnik (blue-collar workers owning farms) emerges. Rural lifestyle patterns are transferred to urban areas. PS: Most dominant trend of urban development, boosted by market mechanisms, diversifying housing preferences and spatial (non)policies of local governments.
Deurbanisation	Outflow of urban population to non-urban areas	C: The city centre depopulates and 'dies' after working hours. Crime rates rise. Number of traditional industries decreases. Urban population moves to non-urban areas transferring urban lifestyle patterns. Countryside (in the traditional sense) disappears. Geographical distance loses its significance even more, contrary to temporal distance and, to a lesser degree, economic. PS: Only begins to occur in post-socialist countries.
Reurbanisation	Return to the city	C: Particular population groups return to the city centre/inner city. Family patterns change radically. Temporal distance gains the greatest significance. PS: First signs of such tendencies.

Source: Adapted from Pirveli, 2002.

The latter observation is in line with a similar one made by A. Lisowski (2002). Discussing the 'new-old problem' of the contemporary city form, he acknowledges the coexistence of utterly contradicting tendencies of spatial change and points to the difficulties concerning their measurement. Examples presenting this diversification include concurrence of fragmentation and zoning as well as simultaneity of city core reurbanisation and urbanisation of peripheries. Nonetheless, it could be stated that in spite of the complexity of urban development at the beginning of the 21st century, the cyclical urbanisation model remains at least partly applicable.

A possible answer to J. Nyström's dilemma summarized as 'reurbanization or continued deurbanization?' (1992, p. 141) could be both. While deurbanisation and suburbanisation seem to have prevailed in the development of European cities in the second half of the last century (Kok, 1999; Summers et al., 1999; Sagan et al., 2006; Sýkora and Ouředníček, 2007), numerous authors have recognised clear signs of reurbanisation tendencies (Lever, 1993; Cheshire, 1995; Ogden and Hall, 2000; Seo, 2002; Bromley et al., 2007; Buzar et al., 2007). In addition, especially in the more recent studies, the spatial focus shifts from cores of urban regions to inner-city neighbourhoods alongside quantitative methodology applied to assess population change being supplemented with qualitative approach. For instance, S. Buzar et al. (2007, p. 652) 'understand reurbanisation as a process of populating and diversifying the inner city with a variety of residential strata'. Much attention is also devoted to consequences of household change, which seem to have wider implications for urban development (see section 1.2.2).

The 20th century has seen acceleration and intensification of transformations determining the process of urbanisation, such as introduction of the fordist model of production, industrial boom followed by a decline, post-fordism, globalisation, secularisation of society and emancipation of women, cultural shift towards destandardisation of lifestyles, changes of values and consumer preferences. Although the pace and scale of these processes varies between the European countries, urban regions and centres, not to mention the corollary of the Iron Curtain division (Turok and Mykhenko, 2007), their general uniformity allows for comparison under the common label of the contemporary European city.

One of such universal phenomena, profoundly influencing urbanisation processes, is the recently proclaimed demographic change, conceptualized as the second demographic transition theory. Its origins reach back to the end of the 1920s, when American demographer W. Thompson detected a clear pattern in population dynamics across the world (Thompson, 1929). Grouping selected countries into three types according to the birth rate and death rate levels, he managed to distinguish a linear trend of declining fertility and mortality. These observations were next used as a base of the demographic transition model in which changes in population development are related to the level of socio-economic development

and transition from pre-industrial to industrial economy. Thus, the first phase characterised by high and stable level of birth rates and death rates is attributed to pre-industrial and agrarian societies, the second marks the beginning of the Industrial Revolution with sharply declining death rates and mildly dropping birth rates, while the third, typical of highly industrialized countries, denotes a sharp birth-rate decline with stabilising death-rates. The fourth phase consists in a complete reversal of phase one[4].

Over a half century after the publication of Thompson's findings the classical demographic transition model was supplemented with the concept of the second demographic transition. This composite phenomenon of changing family patterns, characteristic of the post-modern societies, manifests itself in declining birth and fertility rates, postponement of marriage, rising divorce trend and increasing share of household arrangements alternative to the nuclear family model (Lesthaeghe and van de Kaa, 1986; van de Kaa, 1987, 1994, 1999; Lesthaeghe, 1995). Fertility change, and in particular the decline of birth rates occurring since mid-1960s, is recognized as the key component of population development during the SDT phase, just like mortality change was fundamental to the First Demographic Transition's population explosion (fig. 1.2).

Fig. 1.2 First and second demographic transitions in the natural population development
Source: van de Kaa, 1999
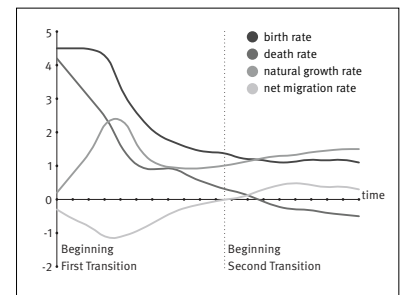
The authors of the SDT theory claim that the changing fertility and family patterns in Western societies are heavily dependent on the broader **structural processes**

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4 A fifth phase is sometimes distinguished in which the population drops below replacement levels as a consequence of a further decline of births.

like modernisation and development of post-industrial society, **cultural shifts** such as postmodernism and post-materialism (Inglehart, 1971, 1977), as well as **technological revolution** which altogether result in value reorientations and higher appreciation of issues connected to improving individual quality of life (van de Kaa, 2001; Surkyn and Lesthaeghe, 2004). However doubtful H. Le Bras may be about the extent of convergence of fertility patterns among European countries, he nevertheless admits that

> [s]elf-perpetuation was the central concern of the traditional European family and, beyond that, of all societies where descent has been held to be important, but in present-day Europe biological reproduction no longer seems to be a family imperative. The very notion of the reproduction of the family has become highly abstract in a world where geographical and social mobility is on the increase and where the limits of physical and social environment are no longer perceptible on a human scale (Le Bras, 1997, p. 32).

Similarly, A. Giddens (2004, p.29) remarks that while in the past children brought economic benefits as additional workforce, today in Western countries they impose a financial burden on the parents, which is why '[h]aving a child is more of a distinct and specific decision than it used to be, and it is a decision guided by psychological and emotional needs'.

Despite scepticism of several authors who question underpinnings of the SDT, its universality and/or even distinctiveness from the FDT, (Cliquet, 1991; Coleman, 2002, 2006), many other embrace it as a useful research framework (Lauster and Fransson, 2006; Lesthaeghe and Neidert, 2006; Caldwell, 2008; Hoem et al., 2009). Putting controversy aside, there is a general agreement about the part of the SDT concept regarding qualitative household transformations, which have been quite well documented in the relevant literature (Rindfuss and VandenHeuvel, 1990; Villeneuve-Gokalp, 1991; Kuijsten, 1996; Manting, 1996; Murphy, 2000; Seltzer, 2000). Specific importance is attached to pluralisation of living arrangements and prominence of the 'new' or 'non-traditional' household types.

Although the term 'new household types', used interchangeably with 'non-traditional households', suggests their novelty, it should rather be interpreted in the context of their fairly recent proliferation as more and more popular alternatives to the prevailing nuclear family model. Already at the beginning of the 1980s E.Macklin (1980), having investigated the issue of rising share of non-traditional families in the United States, identifies several types of non-conventional household forms, such as 'never married singlehood' (p. 906), 'nonmarital cohabitation' (p. 907), 'voluntary childlessness' (p. 908), 'same-sex intimate relationships' (p. 912) or 'multi-adult households' (p. 913). Consequently,

she calls for a 'revision of the traditional family-developmental framework which assumes that most individuals proceed through identifiable stages of preparation, work, marriage, children, and retirement.' (p. 916).

Currently the most common categories of non-traditional households include such living arrangements as **singles** (found in all age groups but especially prominent among youngsters and elderly women), cohabiting **couples**, childless working couples dubbed **DINKs** (acronym for Double Income, No Kids), **LAT couples** who live in two separate flats (Living Apart Together), **same-sex couples**, **one-parent families**, reconstituted households or **patchwork families**, consisting of cohabiting or married couples with child(ren) from previous relationships, and **flatshares**[5]. In addition to this profusion, non-traditional households tend to change quite often, which accounts for their relative fluidity and provisional character. Therefore, reflecting on U. Beck's notion of 'negotiated provisional family', D. H. Morgan remarks that it

> [...] is a family life which depends less on traditional or external prescriptions and more on the expectations and aspirations of the participants. One of his major themes is the overall shift from the 'standard to elective biography', or the development in late modern times of a 'do-it-yourself biography' (Beck, 1992, p. 135). In other words, one's life transitions are less frequently dominated by the stable regularities of courtship, marriage, parenthood and so on, regularities which, for the man at least, are, or were, woven into the orderliness of a career or a working life (Morgan, 1999, p. 24).

Macklin's appeal for acknowledgement of non-traditional households in the research agenda hence appears to be appropriate, not least because the changes in the number, size and structure of households have substantial socio-spatial effects, particularly manifested within urban areas. As found by linking the concepts of demographic and urban change, the outcomes of the SDT at the city level seem to have an impact on, *inter alia*, housing preferences and choices. Before taking these correlations under examination, it is however relevant to look into the housing-related issues underpinning the socio-spatial structure of contemporary cities in Europe.

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5   In a sense, a household consisting of both working parents with children (Double Income With Kids or DIWKs) also stands in opposition to the traditional model in which man is the only breadwinner in the family (Giddens, 2004).

1.2. Contemporary diversification of urban housing environment

1.2.1. Socio-spatial characteristics of housing areas

Despite the fact that the origins of urban settlements can be traced back to ancient history, it was not until the Industrial Revolution that cumulative processes of city development were instigated. Spatial changes triggered by progressing industrialisation, at first chaotic and conformed to the immediate interests of capitalist investors, towards the end of the 19th century and along with the advancing technology transformed the cities into orderly and coherent systems with crystallised functional districts, distinctive city centre and suburban zone (Lisowski, 2002, p. 36).

Cities in Europe usually developed round the historical, often mediaeval, core, thus bearing a certain resemblance to the classical concentric zone model of E. W. Burgess (1924). In later stages of growth, as the demographic and economic expansion proceeded and city boundaries were extended to the surrounding rural areas, the physical structure of cities evolved and became distorted[6]. Nevertheless, the dichotomy between inner city and suburbs tends to have persisted until the present day.

It may be regarded as a paradox that the accelerating urban development contributed to the revival of ruralist sentiments, once the accruing inconveniences of city life brought around idealistic visions of rural idyll. In England, the garden city movement inspired by E. Howard's (1902) utopian concept of combining the advantages of countryside and city life in urban planning, is a flagship example of such revaluation. No-traffic zones and ample green spaces were juxtaposed with the congestion and pollution of the industrialized city, an urban landscape of degradation and oppression:

Physical nature in the true sense no longer exists. It has become the foundation of apartment blocks, and the asphalt of pavements and streets. Physical nature is nothing but a memory, like a tale about something marvellous that has long since disappeared. The Factory-Town dominates everything (Shevchenko, 1913, in: Harrison and Wood, 1999, p. 100).

Such brightly contrasting visions partly explain the stereotyped views of suburban and inner-city areas. While the former have frequently been imagined as offering the potential to escape from inner-city 'intensity' (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001, p. 126), the poor reputation of the latter would ensue for the following decades.

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6 According to S. Kaczmarek (2001a), industrialisation of urbanised areas translated into a violent interference in the existing anthropogenic landscape on an unprecedented scale.

Growing disparities between the two environments contributed to the recognition of suburban housing estates as a haven for prosperous nuclear families, typically with father working in the city centre, mother caring for the hearth and home and their young offspring. Traditional suburban representations therefore comprise a cosy retreat spatially separated from work and an oasis of calm offering a healthful setting for the children's upbringing. As stated by A. Blunt and R. Dowling (2006, p. 101), 'within the frames of contemporary western domesticity, an ideal home is considered to be a suburban one'. On the other hand, suburbia may also be regarded as places of exclusion, leaving out the socially deprived and non-traditional households, such as the same-sex couples or singles (Blunt and Dowling, 2006, p. 114).

Fig. 1.3 The pros and cons of suburban living
Source: Chmielewski, 2001, p. 78

HOUSING CONDITIONS IN SUBURBAN ZONE OF EXTENSIVE DEVELOPMENT

ADVANTAGES
- relatively cheaper cost of land and construction works,
- absence of immediate neighbours,
- closer contact with nature

DISADVANTAGES
- limited access to services,
- insufficient technical infrastructure,
- anthropopression effects on natural environment,
- reduction of natural ecosystems,
- reduction of pedestrian traffic,
- increasing number of cars per family,
- insufficient public transport infrastructure,
- high running costs (in future)

Two bonding forces seem to sustain the image of the suburban ideal, longing for the lost sense of community and demonstration of socio-economic position. The former is connected to the weakening of social ties, described in Ferdinand

Tönnies' concept of *Gemeinschaft* (community) being replaced by *Gesellschaft* (society)[7]. The latter, in turn, stems from housing aspirations and perception of the house in the suburbs as a status symbol.

The projected appealing picture of the suburbs is yet far from consistent as they can be also associated with monotony and dullness (Holloway and Hubbard, 2001, p. 127). Blocks of similar detached and semi-detached houses form a repetitive pattern which may evoke a sense of alienation[8], while the necessity to conform to the unwritten rules and regulations suppresses individuality and self-expression. Furthermore, the uncontrolled growth of suburbia raises environmental concerns and further questions the effective quality of life (fig. 1.3).

It may also be noted that the idea of the suburbs acquired a substantial body of representation in popular culture, especially in films (Blunt and Dowling, 2006), but also literature, TV programmes and music. L. Holloway and P. Hubbard (2001, p. 128) write of a 'long tradition of rebellion against suburban conformity and drabness, emerging in particular styles of music'[9]. The most often cited distinctions between the suburbs and the inner city were quite exhaustively enumerated by H. Gans at the end of the 1960s (1995, p. 179)[10]:

1 Suburbs are more likely to be dormitories.
2 They are further away from the work and play facilities of the central business districts.
3 They are newer and more modern than city residential areas and are designed for the automobile rather than for pedestrian and mass-transit forms of movement.
4 They are built up with single-family rather than multi-family structures and are therefore less dense.
5 Their populations are more homogenous.
6 Their populations differ demographically: they are younger; more of them are married; they have higher incomes; and they hold proportionately more white-collar jobs.

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7   Commenting on the two concepts, R. Sennett (1992, p. 24) emphasises that Tönnies 'made them contrasts between villages and cities, and within cities between homes and streets, little cafés and large cafés, a knot of neighbours and a large crowd' and remarks that 'the more enclosed and inward in each is supposedly the more sociable'.
8   Typical suburban areas in the United States are for example compared to an 'alphabet without sentences', understood as non-communicative 'abstract individual units' standing in the street-outlined order 'that offers no coherence' (Prigge, 2006, p. 228).
9   One of such examples can be found in the mid-1990s hit single 'Country House' performed by a Britpop band Blur, illustrating the case of a middle-class middle-aged man who breaks out from the city life naively hoping to find relief in the countryside (He takes all manner of pills/And piles up analyst bills/In the country/Oh, its like an animal farm/That's the rural charm/in the country; 'Country House', Blur, 1995).
10 The publication first appeared in print in 1968 in a collection of H. Gans' essays entitled 'People and Plans'.

Despite the author's claim of the opposite, many of them have been and remain true and thus Gans' criticism of such overly derogatory vision of suburbia seems to be refutable. Nonetheless, the notion of inner city tends to be similarly uncomplimentary. The common understanding of the term corresponds with the definition given in the Longman Dictionary of English Language and Culture, depicting inner city as 'the central part of a city, especially an area with a high (usually poor) population, old buildings in bad condition etc' (*Longman Dictionary*..., 2006, p. 717). This rather pejorative connotation is further strengthened by an example of the expression in use: 'The government plans an extensive building programme to revitalize the inner cities'.

Indeed, a number of inner neighbourhoods of European cities dominated by pre-war housing were prone to turn into neglected areas of urban and social decay during the second half of the 20th century. Apparently, such processes were not typical of all inner-city districts, as some of them have managed to retain their attractiveness, especially those with long-standing 'good reputation' (Kesteloot, 2005). Nevertheless, material dilapidation and neglect paired with social deprivation is the key reason for the uncomplimentary and at times stereotypical reputation of many inner-city neighbourhoods. As summed up by J. Short (1991, p. 50, in: Holloway and Hubbard, 2001, p. 128), 'in the nineteenth century it was a place of the working classes, the source of disease and crime, the home of the crowd. In the twentieth it has become the locale of the underclass, a black hole of contemporary civilisation'.

Yet, it needs to be underlined that the Western perspective may be slightly biased and, as such, not fully representative of the European city. The following passage discussing the negative response to modernist slab housing blocks and specificity of housing preference in Britain demonstrates this discrepancy:

> British insularity, suspicion of new ideas, and preference for domestic scale dwellings modelled on a mythical rural quality. In Europe, by contrast, there was an already established tradition of urbanity, together with a normalised acceptance of the flatted dwellings as an appropriate residential form for all classes (Franklin, 2006, p. 31).

Despite the reigning depreciatory image of the centrally located districts, there exist advantages of inner-city living which attract certain groups of urban dwellers, as will be proved in Chapter 2. Nevertheless, if not only because of its focal location, the inner city is considered to be a space of conflict. Three categories of potential inner-city conflicts are distinguished by J. Chmielewski (2001, p. 261), the functional, the social and the cultural. The first group concerns the competition between various uses of space, the second – between its users and the

third is connected to its changing symbolic value. Quality of inner-city housing, for example, stands in contradiction to the external costs of transport and communication, such as congestion and noise, while the needs of local residents may have to compete with those of the visiting tourists and the old tenement houses face the growing pressure for new construction in the city centre.

Social characteristics of the inner city are usually less homogenous than in the suburbs and gravitate towards a relative social mix. The Chicago School theory attributes this to the nature of inner-city development which takes place in stages via a mechanism of successional invasion of newcomers who partially replace the socially mobile earlier immigrants (Kabisch and Sagan, manuscript). However, just as the suburbs are associated with nuclear families with young children, the inner city has been traditionally considered to be inhabited by large proportions of the elderly and single. It has been argued that such 'clear patterns of the geo-demographics of cities' result from 'the tendency for certain household types to occupy particular niches within the urban fabric' (Knox and Pinch, 2000, p. 101). They therefore indicate strong relationship between household composition and housing preferences, an issue amplified in the following section.

The introduced 'inner city vs. suburbs' duality is by no means all-embracing, but serves to provide a contextual background for the subsequent discussion of the changing residential needs and criteria of housing choice. Although the clear-cut binary division is currently subject to distortions, as observed by D. Harvey (1996, p. 405), who claims that the evidence suggests

> 'a dissolution of that simple 'doughnut' urban form of inner-city decay sur-rounded by suburban affluence …, and its replacement by a complex check-erboard of segregated and protected wealth in an urban soup of equally segregated impoverishment and decay',

from the geographical point of view it is still appropriate to differentiate between the two when taking housing conditions under investigation. A generic delimita-tion of the two areas is nonetheless problematic (Johnston et al., 2000, p. 396 and 805). For the use of this book, 'inner city' will be understood as areas adjacent to the historic city centre and/or central business district (CBD), with residen-tial and mixed-use neighbourhoods characterised by dense development and predomination of old housing structures of which pre-1945 tenement house is considered to be the most typical. The term 'suburbs' will in turn relate to mono-functional residential areas both on the city peripheries and immediately outside the municipal boundaries, with relatively new development typically consisting of detached and semi-detached housing. Such interpretation also proves to be appropriate in the case of post-socialist cities of the CEE, whose specifics and

particular aspects of the inner city – suburbs dichotomy are discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

1.2.2. Impact of demographic and social transitions on residential behaviour

Housing preferences of urban dwellers seem to have key influence on development of both the city as a whole and its neighbourhoods, since one of the most signifi-cant social spaces is home. Its multiple functions, ranging from protection against the elements, through provision of places for rest, entertainment, study, work and plenty other activities, to serving as a space for self-expression and identity formation, can be classified as biological, mental, cultural and economical (Wallis, 1977, p. 8). These functions and/or their hierarchy keep altering throughout the lifespan of the household. As B. Jałowiecki (1980, p. 26) points out, the substance of 'home' equals the capacity for ceaseless adaptations of a dwelling, accordingly to the number, age and changing requirements of household members. This adapt-ability has gained even more importance in the current age of flexibility, or liquid modernity (Bauman, 2000), determined by the post-industrial work environment transformations, a remodelling of lifestyle patterns and demographic change (table 1.2).

Table 1.2 Fordist modernity versus flexible postmodernity

Fordist modernity	Flexible postmodernity
economies of scale/master code/hierarchy homogeneity/detail division of labour	economies of scope/idiolect/anarchy diversity/social division of labour
paranoia/alienation/symptom public housing/monopoly capital	schizophrenia/decentering/desire homelessness/entrepreneurialism
purpose/design/mastery/determinacy production capital/universalism	play/chance/exhaustion/indeterminacy fictitious capital/localism
state power/trade unions state welfarism/metropolis	financial power/individualism neo-conservatism/counterurbanization
ethics/money/commodity God the Father/materiality	aesthetics/moneys of account The Holy Ghost/immateriality
production/originality/authority blue collar/avant-gardism interest group politics/semantics	reproduction/pastiche/eclectism white collar/commercialism charismatic politics/rhetoric
centralization/totalization synthesis/collective bargaining	decentralization/deconstruction antithesis/local contracts
operational management/master code phallic/single task/origin	strategic management/idiolect androgynous/multiple tasks/trace

Fordist modernity	Flexible postmodernity
metatheory/narrative/depth mass production/class politics technical-scientific rationality	language games/image/surface small-batch production/social movements pluralistic otherness
utopia/redemptive art/concentration specialized work/collective consumption	heterotopias/spectacle/dispersal flexible worker/symbolic capital
function/representation/signified industry/protestant work ethic mechanical reproduction	fiction/self-reference/signifier services/temporary contract electronic reproduction
becoming/epistemology/regulation urban renewal/relative space	being/ontology/deregulation urban revitalization/place
state interventionism/industrialization internationalism/permanence/time	laissez-faire/deindustrialization geopolitics/ephemerality/space

Source: Harvey, 1990, p. 340-341.

Looking at the rapidly evolving modes of work in the 20th century, it is important to acknowledge the tremendous civilisation leap from the assembly-line shift work organisation and '9 to 5' time-clock punching to less rigid schedules like flexitime plan and work at home or from home. Especially the latter, enabled by the progress of information technology, is becoming increasingly widespread, which is well illustrated by the following passage from the IKEA catalogue:

> You can adapt almost every spot in your home in order to concentrate and create, in company or all by yourself. Where you feel comfortable, all work is performed the best (IKEA 2009, 2008, p. 229).

Home-based work is on the one hand valued for the individual free-hand time management opportunities and reconciling the professional and family affairs, while on the other, one of its main drawbacks consists in permeability of the work and home spheres which may potentially lead to distraction-induced stress or foster workaholism (Mirchandani, 2000). Yet, regardless of type of occupation and employment, the arranging of homework spaces has become standard practice in contemporary dwellings.

The rise of individualism also has a considerable impact on the domestic behaviour and lifestyle. Home is thus portrayed as 'space which does not reflect or express the changes taking place within the culture of individualism, but which is the very site of those changes' (Jacyno, 2007, p. 32). The symptoms of this evolution are the most legible in the use of dwelling space, its layout and interior design. Unlike several decades ago, open-plan kitchen or multifunctional rooms

are now commonplace, while the furnishings and decoration items tend to be often replaced according to altering fashion trends and fads.

Moreover, homes, formerly mainly perceived as family nests, have become increasingly sociability oriented, especially among the younger generations. The weakening of kin ties is offset by new forms of social bonding, in which friendship plays a crucial binding role (Watters, 2004; Spencer and Pahl, 2006, Allan, 2008). An illustrative example of this phenomenon in the household domain is the flatshare arrangement, recently gaining popularity among young adults, students' graduates and working professionals, who tend to substitute family living with social life (Steinführer and Haase, 2009).

Flatsharers are at the same time one of the many types of non-traditional households brought to the fore by the second demographic transition. In view of the fact that the 'new' types of households appear to be particularly susceptible to instability and operate in a relative state of flux, it is clear that their residential preferences do not necessarily conform to those of the traditional family. As stated by L. Michałowski (2005, p. 92), family and dwelling, the two once inseparable elements, are now disconnecting. Consequently, many of the norms and functional divisions of residential space intended for traditional families may no longer address the requirements of other types of households. Michałowski argues that recently the important and much-desired target group of estate agencies and architecture offices consists of young singles, childless and working couples, or DINKs, as well as unrelated flatsharers. Their specific housing needs and preferences in a way reflect the optional character of their household arrangements as well as lifestyle inclinations.

For instance, it is expected that a young childless cohabiting couple who are freelance workers are more likely to appreciate living in a converted loft within walking distance of the city centre rather than enjoy life in an attractive, though far-off, suburban housing estate. Thus, the old inner-city built-up areas seemingly have the potential to offer flexible environment for those urban dwellers who value and seek after accessibility, versatility, functionalism, as well as the special ambiance and appeal of historic architecture.

As previously mentioned, several recent studies hint at interrelations between the demographic change and reurbanisation tendencies, a few of their authors suggesting that non-traditional households seem to have a distinct inclination towards inner-city living (Ogden and Hall, 2000, 2004; Haase et al., 2005; Bromley et al., 2007; Buzar et al., 2007). For instance, it has been ascertained that

> a number of European cities are approaching reurbanisation ...linked to a diversity of factors... these new trends are not simply a reversal of flows associated with the counter-urbanisation of the 1970s, nor indeed are they

limited only to gentrification, but may involve new population groups (Ogden and Hall, 2000, p. 369).

It seems, therefore, worth investigating the factors underpinning the attraction of this particular group of urban dwellers to the inner city and exploring how they take advantage of the benefits of inner-city living on a daily basis. A possible explanation is that there is a link between the individualism, fluctuation and instability of the non-traditional households and their quest for **residential flexibility**, understood as the degree of facility with which a household is able to change its use of, or movement through, the built environment, in response to altered social, economic, or political circumstances (Buzar, Grabkowska, 2006, p. 161; Bouzarovski 2009a; Bouzarovski 2009b).

The notion of residential flexibility understood in such way, even if not named explicitly, appears as early as in the 1940s. S. Riemer, author of *Sociological Theory of Home Adjustment* (1943), recognizes composition of the family as 'a fundamental determinant of housing needs' (p. 276) and develops his line of reasoning that

> neither the housing needs of the family nor the technical means of the ar-
> chitect can be formulated in terms of fixed standards or quantities. Housing
> needs are relative. … [Meanwhile, the] satisfactory home adjustment can
> be achieved in two ways: 1) via the tangible, objective part of the physical
> shelter, and 2) via the more subjective part of individual attitudes and fam-
> ily behavior (p. 277).

Elaborating on this idea J. Turowski proceeds to argue for the 'creation of 'flexible' dwellings, allowing their inhabitants for adjustment to the diversifying and chang-ing needs over time' (1979, p. 9). Other followers of Riemer's theory, E. W. Morris and M. Winter (1975), present three strategies for coping when housing needs of a family can no longer be supplied. These include: residential mobility (moving to a more suitable dwelling), residential adaptation (introduction of functional and other changes in the structure of the current dwelling) and family adaptation (conforming to the existing housing situation). The choice of strategy is expected to be based on 'a process of weighing alternatives' (p. 84) and, although moving is expected to be the typical 'first choice', it is underlined that 'individual families and classes of families may order the behavior preferences differently' (p. 85).

Since the 1970s there has been an abundance of literature on residential mobility and/or housing adjustments of traditional families (Clark et al., 1984; Deane, 1990; McAuley and Nutty, 1982; Speare, 1970). Despite the unquestion-able cognitive value of those studies they seem to totally neglect non-traditional

household, as the approach they adopt is based on linear life-cycle and housing career, with successive stages preceding, coincident with and following marriage (fig. 1.4).

Fig. 1.4 The 'traditional' housing career ladder
Source: Paris, 1993, p. 52
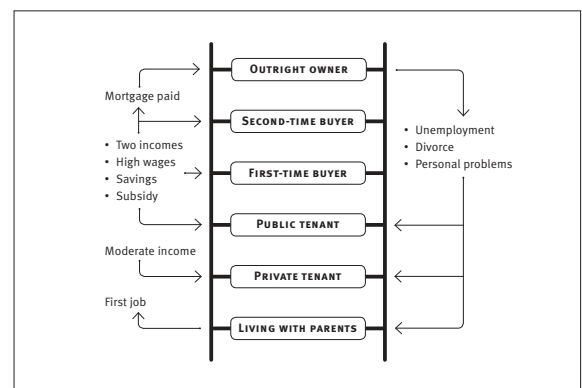
An attempt to differentiate between the residential behaviour of various household types was made by W. Frey and F. Kobrin (1982), who demonstrated that married couples with children tended to be more attracted to the suburbs than central cities of American large metropolitan areas than 'other families and primary individual households' and showing that the latter 'represent the greatest potential source of city household increase' (p. 270).

The rise of living alone, cohabitation and flatsharing, as well as the fluid character of the contemporary household structures and their non-linear trans-formations introduce multiple challenges to housing issues which are however seldom studied in detail (McRae, 1999; Heath and Cleaver, 2004). Furthermore, even though non-traditional households have gradually entered the scope of research on residential rationales and conditions, few of the studies explicitly cover the issue of the motive power behind non-traditional households' attraction to the inner city.

The following chapters are intended to bridge this research gap by uncovering the logics of non-traditional households' attraction to inner-city living and further socio-spatial consequences of this influx. Thereby, the presented synthetic review of the cyclical urbanisation model and the second demographic transition theory may be treated as an introduction to the subsequent analysis of the links between reurbanisation tendencies and household change. Focus on the inner city and its residential flexibility qualities provided in the next chapter will serve to present the underpinnings of both processes in the context of advanced capitalist European cities and pave the way for a case-study investigating similar tendencies in a post-socialist city of Gdańsk.

2. *Residential flexibility and potential for regeneration of inner-city neighbourhoods*

2.1. Residential flexibility as a quality of living in the inner city

Housing preferences of city dwellers are an important factor in explaining the changing urban geodemographics. Whilst Chapter 1 introduced the main concepts of the present-day growing diversification of residential needs and inclinations, the following part of the book is devoted to a discussion of its implications for the inner city. The presented stereotyped vision of run-down and unattractive inner-city neighbourhoods will be challenged, and reasons for the influx of newcomers investigated in the context of residential flexibility. Subsequently, the socio-spatial consequences of new populations' immigration will be examined and the potential for the 'rebirth' of the inner city scrutinised through a review of revitalisation strategies.

There are many various advantages and disadvantages of living in the inner city. Apart from numerous flaws outlined in the previous chapter, the inner city also offers a wide variety of upsides. It depends largely on individual needs and preferences with positive as well as negative features, and their hierarchical order. Yet, four general categories of the inner-city advantages may be distinguished, including location, function, architecture and meaning.

What once may have appeared to be its thorny problem, the inner city's **hub location**, has become more and more appreciated by different groups of urban dwellers. Owing to its central position, the inner city boasts a number of strong points, such as easy access to public transportation or multiplicity of urban amenities. The significance of the proximity in the context of quality of urban life is not to be underestimated. Despite the rapidly developing information and transport technology and the overall globalising tendencies, the local environment remains the microcosm of daily living:

> Although the world is increasingly well connected, we must hold this in balance with the observation that most people lead intensely local lives: their homes, workplaces, recreation, shopping, friends and other family are all located within a relatively small orbit. The simple and obvious point that

overcoming distance requires time and money means that the everyday events of daily life are well grounded within a circumscribed arena (Pratt and Hanson, 1994 in: Holloway and Hubbard, 2001, p. 27).

The importance of central location therefore links up with the issue of **functional mix**. It is commonly claimed that the combination of residential and commercial uses provides the most beneficial urban milieu. Availability of urban services and amenities within walking distance and/or easy access to a dense public transportation network acquires particular weight in comparison with the suburban reliance on individual car transport (Sheller and Urry, 2000). Furthermore, some of the services are to be found only in the urban core, with their spatial assignment resulting from high level of specialisation or particular groups of users. For instance, the night-time culture shaping the urban playscapes and consumed mostly by young urban dwellers is rather inherent to the city centre (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002).

Architectural benefits relate to both form and functionality. On the one hand, pre-war housing structures in European cities often exhibit historical value, whether representing Art Nouveau, eclectic or even earlier styles. Many old buildings in the inner urban areas are listed and regarded as significant constituents of the local cultural heritage. On the other hand, however, they display high flexibility of structural design. Although the state of preservation of old residential buildings very often entails sizeable investment, the equitable trade-off is their extraordinary convertibility. Their large size, well-designed, yet adjustable, division of living space and endless possibilities for rearrangements by means of erecting and demolishing partition walls, adding mezzanines, annexing adjacent flats, attics or basements, may be regarded as prerequisites for adaptability. Spacious interiors indeed do allow for and facilitate work-at-home or flatshare arrangements – a matter of importance for young urban professionals, single parents with pre-school children, students and the like.

Furthermore, the **symbolic and sentimental values** of old architecture are also of a great importance. Results of a survey examining public perception and evaluation of the new-built and pre-1945 housing structures in Poland reveal a remarkable level of liking among the younger generations for the latter (Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska, 2004). In response to the question about the most appropriate way to treat old historical buildings in very bad technical condition, a quarter of respondents opted for their renovation regardless of cost[11]. This supportive attitude, however, appears to distinctly correlate with the age of the respondent,

since the in the share rises to 36 per cent in the cohort under 25 years old[12]. Even if this kind of differentiation can be partly explained by the pragmatism of older age groups as opposed to the younger age groups' idealism and romantic assessment of old buildings, it is rather evident that the stereotype of older neighbourhoods as slums suitable only for demolition is gradually disappearing[13].

The discussed issues add up to the conception of residential flexibility of inner-city dwellings which highlights the synergy of central location and the unique adaptability of flats in old buildings, resulting in manifold possibilities of use for housing, work and everyday life. Accordingly, households inhabiting inner-city dwellings are offered and can profit from an infrastructural richness of the immediate surroundings as well as take advantage of the elastic capacity for as-the-need-arises housing adjustments.

Flexibility as a feature of older buildings is raised by R. Sennett (1992), who confronts the adaptability of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century built structures with the modern skyscrapers' rigidity:

> Buildings now are much less flexible in form than the rows, crescents, and blocks of the past. The life span of a modern skyscraper is meant to be forty or fifty years, though steel skeletons could stand much longer; service stacks, wiring and plumbing are planned so that a building is serviceable only in terms of what it was originally intended for. It is much harder to convert a modern office tower to mixed uses of offices and apartments than it is to convert a nineteenth-century factory or eighteenth-century row-block to these uses (Sennett, 1992, p. 98).

By the same token N. Altaş, and A. Özsoy (1998) use the term 'flexibility' in relation to 'the adaptability for changes and alterations to adapt environment to the changing needs of the occupants in time' (p. 316) and claim that 'user's positive evaluations of satisfaction with the dwelling size can be determined by its potential to create new uses' (p. 319)[14].

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11 The remaining options included: 'renew only when the costs are not higher than costs of construction of a new building of similar character' (37 per cent of all answers), 'renew only such historical monuments

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like churches, town halls, palaces, but not the housing stock, unless one has money for it' (28 per cent), 'destroy old buildings and build modern houses instead' (7 per cent) and 'I have no opinion' (3 per cent).

12 Among the oldest group of respondents (aged 65 and more) only 15 per cent are in favour of this option.

13 B. Jalowiecki (2005, p. 30) refers to a bourgeois tenement house as an example of changing stereotypes by which architecture is perceived: 'rejected in the modern period … [recently] it has regained favour as the typical element of urbanity which, owing to its individualistic decoration, endows the city street with rich aesthetic and symbolic content'.

14 Similarly, Littlewood and Munro (1997, p. 1785) describe how choices of moving households are guided by the preference for 'a set of housing services which closely – but not completely – meets their current housing needs, but which has the potential to meet their future housing needs, in relation to current perceptions of future income levels and household changes'.

Further developement of the concept of flexibility by linking its qualities with specific housing preferences under the SDT leads to the essence of the first of the three hypotheses formulated in the introductory chapter, mainly that it is assumed that the old housing structures' flexibility and potential for change greatly respond to the specific, highly individualised preferences and perpetually shifting needs of various types of households who value accessibility, universality and functionalism. As Bauman puts it, '[i]n a life ruled by the precept of flexibility, life strategies and plans can be but short-term' (2000, p. 138).

It is repeatedly pointed out in Chapter 1 that old-built inner-city housing may have a particular appeal to the representatives of non-traditional households. One of the given examples involves flatsharers, who appear to be the new 'urban tribe' (Watters, 2004) among typical inner-city residents. The 'flexibility' they represent is acknowledged by C. Mulder and D. Manting (1994) as a growingly popular housing strategy of young nest-leavers, alternative to entering marriage and homeownership. Investigation into household and residential decisions of young Dutch adults' on leaving their parental home indicates the postponement of 'settling down', which allows an individual for 'keeping all options open' and at the same time gives temporary priority to his or her educational and/or occupational career over the household and housing career (p. 157)[15]. Accordingly, the related lifestyle patterns of the youth denote a strong determinant in choosing to dwell in the inner city.

A partial explanation of this phenomenon is provided by R. Bromley et al. (2007) who explore the attitudes and opinions towards inner-city living among inhabitants of centrally located neighbourhoods in Birmingham, Bristol, Cardiff and Swansea, differentiating between newcomers and long-time residents to trace the dynamics of the change. According to the results, a large proportion of the newly arrived are young adult one-person households, which is only partially associated with the growth of student populations. Quite unsurprisingly, the mundane location advantages of city centre dwelling, such as proximity to facilities and services or convenience of living in general, appear to be most valued by young adults and older residents alike. The differences, which can be found in the domains of work and social life, perceptions of stylishness of the city centre as well as in the commitment to living in the current accommodation, are generally attributed to a generational lifestyle transformation. Nevertheless, the description of the 'new populations' (p. 150) is limited and no further analysis of the household change implications is provided. Neither are the newcomers' housing preferences apart from a short discussion of property tenure issues and recognition of the

importance of renting, none of the newcomers' housing preferences are taken into account.

The already multifarious portrait of inner-city households seems to get even more complicated as the student flatshares, singles-by-choice, unmarried/cohabiting couples and 'childfree' DINKs have been increasingly accompanied by yupps, translated as young urban professional parents. Double-income-*with*-kids inner-city dwellers therefore seem to undermine the myth of suburbs as the family haven, even if the dual-career lifestyle and children upbringing are revealed to be a compromise rather than a free choice (Brun and Fagnani, 1994; Karsten, 2003). To them living in the inner city, close to work, child-care and cultural facilities, is often found to be the only viable option for reconciling their pre-family urban lifestyle with having children. In this case it is apparent how lifestyle priorities of young urban dwellers shape their residential preferences and choices.

The notion of residential flexibility thus appears to have a promising explanatory potential, as it connects the geographic, demographic and social dimensions of inner-city living. It may be assumed that flexible inner-city housing is sought after by flexible urbanites, i.e. unsettled urban households operating in a constant state of flux. Singles and student flatshares are prime examples of such households; the former easily (and not necessarily lastingly) changing into other types like cohabitation or LAT, and the latter being 'transient' by definition (Kenyon, 1999). However, as the example of yupps indicates, the term 'flexible households' does not only apply to non-traditional household arrangements, since flexibility may also refer to the specific urban lifestyles characterised by elastic study/work schedules, individualised leisure patterns and extended social networks. Non-traditional households, nevertheless, seem to play the leading role in the inner city reurbanisation process[16]. All the above considerations lead to the conclusion that housing preferences leaning towards flexibility reflect flexible socio-demographic distinctiveness of the given type of residents. Furthermore, residential flexibility presumably allows flexible households to accomplish their high standards concerning utilitarian aspects of home, as well as ensures consistency between their image of a home and their own self-concept, namely, the functional congruity of a dwelling and self-congruity (Sirgy and Grzeskowiak, 2005).

From yet another perspective, residential flexibility could be treated not only as a pull factor to the inner city, but also as a hold-in-place factor. It should be underlined that the reasons for moving to the inner city, or the advantages of inner-city living as perceived before moving there, are often complemented with

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15   There is much evidence that similar patterns of household formation are found throughout all European countries, even if showing considerable regional differences (Heath and Cleaver, 2004).

16   As a matter of fact, yupps are likely to be represented as former nontraditional households who eventually have decided to start a family (Brun and Fagnani, 1994).

ex-post advantages, revealed after moving in. In the context of reurbanisation, this would mean that one set of factors is important to attract people to the inner city, while the other one is important in sustaining their presence (Seo, 2002, p. 119)[17].

The arrival of new residents to the inner city, driven by the discussed flexibility-related, or any other, criteria has substantial socio-spatial consequences. Considering the fact that the inflowing populations are usually quite socio-demographically distant from the existing local communities, and that the receiving neighbourhoods are typically in distress, the question of inner-city revitalisation comes to the fore. Hence, the following section is devoted to this issue and discusses different approaches to the problem.

2.2. Problems of inner-city regeneration

2.2.1. Gentrification-related issues

Recognition of the inner city areas across Europe, many of them formerly or still socially and/or materially deprived, as attractive residential neighbourhoods and the resulting influx of new residents are often associated with the process of gentrification. First used by sociologist R. Glass in 1964 (Glass, 1964), the term originally referred to the arrival of a relatively well-to-do population, the allusive 'gentry', into typically working-class neighbourhoods in London, which caused the displacement of the original inhabitants. Since then, both the process and the debate on gentrification-related issues have gained momentum engendering a large body of research and literature[18]. Even though the basic meaning of the term has remained unchanged, the causes, courses and consequences of the gentrification process, are being heatedly discussed. For the purpose of this book only a brief overview of the phenomenon will be provided in order to situate gentrification within the context of the study.

The fact that the first mention of gentrification concerned London-based examples does not come as a surprise, considering the city's size, economics, social and cultural dynamics, as well as its position within the global urban hierarchy. Accordingly, the earliest signs of gentrification may be traced back in large old cities throughout the advanced capitalist world (Johnston, 2000, p. 295). For this reason, the most well documented case studies involve British and North American cites. It is from these geographical perspectives that the initial two main strands of explanation, the consumption-based and the production-based, were developed.

According to the former, the key motive behind gentrification is the changing housing demand articulated by new residential needs and preferences. Similarly, D. Ley ascribes the role of agents of gentrification to the 'new middle class' (1996) employed in the highly-paid jobs in the service sector. The whole process is therefore intrinsically connected with the shift to a post-industrial and knowledge-based economy. Proximity to work together with cultural and aesthetic values of old neighbourhoods are named among the most important pull factors appealing to the gentrifiers.

On the contrary, the production-based approach focuses on the supply-side of the gentrification process. For instance, the rent-gap theory of N. Smith (1979) assumes that succeeding disinvestment and plummeting land prices in the inner-city areas eventually open opportunities for profit-making on account of the difference between the actual and potential levels of ground rent. In his early publications Smith categorically depreciates the role of the consumer preferences in favour of land market mechanisms, namely land prices and urban speculation. Only in his later works his position evolves to acknowledge the share of individual actors in the gentrification process, however, still on a relatively less significant scale (Smith, 1996).

The two seemingly contradicting, yet complementary, approaches have been brought together by a number of researchers. C. Hamnett, for example, calls the theses of Ley and Smith 'partial attempts to explain gentrification' (Hamnett, 1991, p. 185) and himself proposes the 'four requirements for gentrification to occur on a significant scale' i.e. the supply of suitable areas for gentrification, the supply of potential gentrifiers, the existence of attractive central and inner-city environments and a cultural preference for inner-city residence by a certain segment of the service class (p. 186). His arguments seem to provide a more comprehensive picture of the initial causes of the process and are quite widely accepted among researchers in the field of gentrification (Lees, 2000).

On the contrary, the outcome of gentrification seems to cause far more disagreement. Some researchers perceive it as a relief to the deprived inner-city neighbourhoods, while others criticise its damaging effect upon the existing local communities (Atkinson, 2003). The seemingly dominant view in the Western literature gravitates towards animadversion. Rising property prices and the resulting displacement of long-term residents of the inner city induced by the newcomers are regarded as particularly evil consequences of gentrification. Atkinson refers to the displacement as the 'hidden cost' of gentrification threatening the sustainability of existing community networks (2000a) and points to the methodological difficulties concerned with 'measuring the invisible' (2000b, p. 163). Other possible negative aspects of gentrification may include frictions between the old residents and the newcomers and/or social isolation of the latter

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17 In addition, the strongest inclination of dwelling in the inner city usually pertains to long-sitting inhabitants.

18 For a compendium on gentrification see Lees et al. (2011).

(Butler, 2003). On the contrary, proponents of gentrification argue that the rising prices and increasing share of homeownership contribute to revitalisation of the gentrified neighbourhoods, by generating residential stability and a relative sense of security.

A comprehensive classification of gentrification indicators proposed by A. Warde (1991, p. 225) includes four types of change which may differ in intensity, but usually take place concurrently. The first category involves resettlement and social concentration, a process of **displacement of one group of residents with another of higher social status**, entailing influx of new populations and new patterns of social segregation. The second grouping pertains to **transformation in the built environment** exhibiting some common distinctive aesthetic features and the emergence of the new local services. Subsequently, there is the gathering together of persons with a putatively shared culture and lifestyle, or at least with **shared, class-related, consumer preferences**. Last but not least, gentrification brings about an **economic reordering of property values**, a commercial opportunity for the construction industry, and often an extension of the system of private ownership of domestic property. In order to avoid any ambiguities, gentrification is hereinafter to be understood as simultaneous occurrence of all the four symptoms.

At this point, it needs to be emphasised that while gentrification was first observed in London and other global cities, more recently it has become a universal trend across the world. In spite of a noticeable slow-down of the process in the early 1990s, afterwards not only has it gathered speed in already pioneered locations, but also developed in previously unaffected areas (Lees, 2000, p. 389). Again, the most documented cases include British provincial cities, such as Bristol (Bridge, 2003), Newcastle upon Tyne (Cameron, 2003), Leeds (Dutton, 2003), although there is growing evidence of similar processes taking place in other urban centres of Europe and other continents (Brun and Fagnani,1994; Badcock, 2001; van Criekingen and Decroly, 2003; Atkinson and Bridge, 2005). In Central and Eastern Europe, so far, gentrification has been found to occur only in the largest cities, and even there it is usually limited to small, isolated 'pockets' and which, when compared, show certain divergence (Matlovič et al., 2001; Sýkora, 2005), which is explained in more detail in Chapter 3. However, the widespread occurrence of gentrification allows for a generalisation, that seems to remain valid notwithstanding the lapse of almost two decades:

> Just as suburbanization and inner city decline comprised the leading edges of urban restructuring in the 1950s and 1960s, so gentrification is argued to represent one of the leading edges of urban restructuring in the 1970s and 1980s (Hamnett, 1991, p. 174).

Nevertheless, the local context should not be disregarded since 'gentrification is not the same everywhere' (Lees, 2000, p. 397). For this reason, Lees calls for a recognition of geographical scale and contextual differences, through appreciation of 'geography of gentrification' embracing several spatial levels, such as the international, intranational and citywide (p. 405)[19].

A non-disputably universal result of gentrification is the presence of new, distinctly different populations in the formerly homogenised neighbourhoods. From the demographic point of view, the arrivals are considered to be mostly young, often single and/or childless, which brings resemblance of gentrification to reurbanisation tendencies discussed in the previous chapter. The occupational structure of gentrifiers follows from the shift from industrial to service society, but furthermore a large part of the newcomers typically hold high positions in well-paid jobs or work as freelancers. Hence, throughout the 1980s gentrification was, at least to some extent, synonymous with yuppification (Short, 1989). In later decades, mainly because of gender shifts in the labour market and the increasing proportion of women entering professional career paths, yuppies have been joined by yupps, or 'family gentrifiers' (Karsten, 2003).

Some researchers have argued that young non-traditional households and family gentrifiers are often preceded by urban pioneers – squatters, artists and other representatives of the creative class, attracted by relatively low cost of housing, but driven by specific aesthetical preferences and philosophy-of-life implications as well (Zukin, 1989; Florida, 2002; Ley, 2003). Their impact may be dubbed space-taming, as they tend to diversify and domesticate the degraded, but also socially uniform and hermetic, neighbourhoods, paving the way for more affluent newcomers and setting new lifestyle trends. This approach, otherwise known as the stage model of gentrification, assumes that the inflow of new population groups to the neighbourhood occurs in successive stages or waves (Wyly and Hammel, 1999; Bounds, 2006)[20]. Others, arguing in a quite similar vein, introduce the term super-gentrification to denote the influx of extremely rich newcomers who replace the not-so-rich urban pioneers in already gentrified neighbourhoods, which results in further transformation of these areas into even more expensive and luxurious enclaves (Lees, 2003; Butler and Lees, 2006). Central actors in the super-gentrification process, otherwise called financiers or regentrifiers,

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19 Indeed, the discrepancies within a single city may be striking, as proven on the example of three London neighbourhoods by T. Butler and G. Robson (2001), who attribute the registered diversification to varying proportions of social, economic and cultural capital invested in the areas by the incoming gentrifiers. On the other hand, J. Brun and J. Fagnani (1994) in their study of gentrification processes in the Ile-de-France region replace the term 'gentrification' with 'embourgeoisement' which they find 'more adequate to the French context' (p. 932).

20 It also conforms to the idea of invasion-succession model of inner-city change (see section 1.2.1).

are members of the global finance and corporate service industries elites, and thus the process is only to be found in global cities such as New York and London.

To complicate matters further, M. van Criekingen and J.-M. Decroly (2003) challenge the wave theory by asserting that gentrification 'is only one—and often not the major—process of neighbourhood renewal in contemporary Western cities' (p. 2465). In order to prove their point, the authors put forward a four-fold typology which includes 'alternative' types of gentrification. Apart from the pure or complete gentrification, as defined by Warde, marginal gentrification, upgrading and incumbent upgrading are distinguished (table 2.1). The latter three processes do not meet all the gentrification criteria and may take place autonomously, not necessarily leading to eventual gentrification. Characteristic of marginal gentrification is that it involves less prosperous newcomers, such as the aforementioned artists and young households attracted by low rents. Therefore, neighbourhoods affected by marginal gentrification 'are becoming trendy rather than affluent areas' (p. 2463). Upgrading relates to only modestly degraded and attractive neighbourhoods which can easily raise their status as a result of population inflow. In turn, incumbent upgrading follows from the improvements of the built environment undertaken by the existing residents, and so it does neither entail social status growth nor population change.

The presented classification is acclaimed as the most reasonable, and is hence employed in the following parts of the book, with special attention given to the incumbent upgrading in section 2.2.3. Meanwhile, it is also worth to note that the seemingly all-embracing conception of gentrification entices application of similar labels to name other types of socio-demographic change triggered by the newcomers to the inner city. Such terminological spill-over is concerned, for instance, with the impact of students appropriating inner-city space, as described by P. Chatterton (1999), which by many authors is often referred to as 'studentification (Tallon and Bromley, 2004; Smith, 2005; Smith and Holt, 2007; Steinführer and Haase, 2009).

Table 2.1 Processes of neighbourhood renewal (✔ – criterion fulfilled, ✗ – criterion unfulfilled)

	Initially	Transformations			Outcome
	Decayed and impoverished neighbourhood	Improvements to the built environment[a]	Social status growth	Population change	Wealthy neighbourhood
Gentrification	✔	✔	✔	✔	✔
Marginal gentrification	✔	✔	✔	✔	✗

	Initially	Transformations			Outcome
	Decayed and impoverished neighbourhood	Improvements to the built environment[a]	Social status growth	Population change	Wealthy neighbourhood
Upgrading	✗	✔	✔	✔	✔
Incumbent upgrading	✔	✔	✗	✗	✗

[a] Through rehabilitation or recycling of old decayed buildings or through construction of new buildings on previously vacant land (redevelopment).

Source: van Criekingen and Decroly, 2003, p. 2454.

An important conclusion that derives from the discussion of gentrification-related issues is that gentrification should not be identified with reurbanisation, but rather regarded as its possible concomitant or by-product:

> reurbanisation has a wider socio-spatial extent than gentrification, because it involves a variety of multidirectional flows and socio-demographic strata, rather than the concentrated spatial agency of a specific social class. Unlike gentrification, which affects only selected parts of the urban tissue and is associated with specific social groups and economic processes, reurbanisation is taking place throughout the inner city and is mobilising a much broader range of populations (Buzar et al., 2007, p. 673).

Neither is gentrification heralding the complete reversal of the suburbanisation trend, since it is found to involve declared urban dwellers rather than converted suburbanites (Brun and Fagnani, 1994; Storper and Manville, 2006). It is, nevertheless, a relevant and powerful process which should definitely be taken into consideration in any study of the inner-city transformations.

To sum up, if only the rising social and demographic diversity is taken into account, both gentrification and its alternatives indeed may produce beneficial reurbanising effects on run-down inner-city neighbourhoods. Provided that all conditions of social cohesion and sustainability of the process are fulfilled, it certainly creates the potential for positive change. Nonetheless, the risk of displacement makes it debatable whether the benefits are not outreached by losses. This is why any top-down attempts to introduce gentrification as a revitalisation strategy meet with scepticism, as it is argued in the following section.

2.2.2. Effectiveness of top-down regeneration programmes

Revaluation of the inner city as potentially attractive residential areas has coincided with effects of a range of urban planning policies implemented in order to address social, economic and material degradation of old neighbourhoods. After the inner-city downturn assumed considerable proportions in Western Europe by the end of the 1960s, the need for inner-city rehabilitation became a matter of political concern (Billert et al., 2003, p.102). Even though the scale of distress varied between the countries, urban regions and within particular cities, being highly dependent on the extent of war damage, economic viability and after-effects of the crisis of industrialism, as well as determined by local conditions, the need for regeneration proved to be quite universal.

Regeneration has many definitions and synonyms (table 2.2), but for the use of this study it shall be understood simply as any intended actions aimed at improving socio-material conditions in degraded urban areas. In the European context the most pressing issues to be attended to in troubled inner-city neighbourhoods concern equally the economic and social as well as spatial-functional spheres. The first two categories may include such indicators as concentration of the economically and socially deprived, high structural unemployment and lack of opportunities for vocational training, social tensions, high share of ethnic minorities, high number of social aid recipients, above-average levels of vandalism and crime, social apathy and indifference.

As for the spatial-functional dimension, the most common problems are related to the inner city's overly negative image, extreme neglect and devastation of residential buildings and their immediate surroundings, degradation of public space and deficiency of recreational areas, negative effects of deindustrialisation, lack of green spaces, road traffic and noise pollution (Billert et al., 2003, p. 115-116).

Table 2.2 Regeneration-related nomenclature in selected European languages

English	French	Polish
Regeneration	Régéneration	Regeneracja
Revitalisation	Révitalisation	Rewitalizacja
Restructuring	Réstructuration	Restrukturyzacja
Rehabilitation	Réhabilitation	Rehabilitacja
Renewal	Rénovation	Odnowa
Redevelopment	Réaménagement	Przebudowa
Revaluation	Réévaluation	Rewaloryzacja
Recycling	Récyclage	Recykling
Gentrification	Gentrification	Gentryfikacja

Source: author's own elaboration based on Kaczmarek, 2001a, p. 18.

It needs to be underscored that the significance of inner-city revitalisation reaches beyond spatial boundaries of the inner city. Redirecting urban development towards city cores and increasing their compactness is a common policy to control and limit suburban sprawl (Jenks et al., 1996; de Roo and Miller, 2000; Williams et al., 2000). Moreover, under conditions of globalisation and increasing competition between urban centres vying for the released investment capital and human resources, an image of an attractive and developing city is among the key elements to gain the competitive advantage.

Given the complexity of factors which raise the need for revitalisation, it is usually expected from local authorities that they provide effective remedies to inner-city ills. Approaches to public intervention in degenerated inner-city neighbourhoods have varied greatly in time and space. N. Carmon (1999) provides a historic overview of three subsequently dominating trends of urban regeneration policy applied in the United States and Europe. The first, typical after the Second World War, is called 'the era of the bulldozer' and is characterised by demolition of degraded buildings in the run-down parts of the inner city and replacing them with shopping centers, office buildings and cultural and entertainment centers, all under the auspices of municipal government. Due to the criticism relating to high social costs of such policy, namely the displacement and disintegration of the local communities, it was discarded, and around the 1960s followed by the 'neighbourhood rehabilitation' approach. This generation of urban renewal policy focused on the social dimension, as it was designed to secure the well-being of underprivileged inhabitants of the inner city. The main tools for the intervention thus combined welfare programs with renovation of the existing housing structures, as well as stimulation of local communities' engagement in the decision-making process.

Although this type of policy had some success in terms of the residents' well being, it often failed to improve the condition of inner-city neighbourhoods and, moreover, it was quickly hampered by the economic downturn of the 1970s. It was next replaced with 'revitalisation' which represented a complete departure from social programmes in favour of 'business-like approach emphasizing economic development' (Carmon, 1999, p. 147)[21]. Here Carmon makes a distinction between

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21   The policy change in the United Kingdom coincided with the shift on the political scene, which was taken over by the conservatives.

public-private and public-individual partnerships, where 'individual' encompasses individual people, households and small entrepreneurs who both participate financially in the regeneration programmes and are entitled to receive more or less direct assistance from the local authorities. This category is also subdivided into three types of processes: gentrification, upgrading by incumbent residents and upgrading by immigrants. While the mechanisms of gentrification are discussed in the previous section, it seems necessary to look into it once again, this time focusing on its role as a (more or less) intentional instrument of public intervention. A prime example of such policy in the 1980s was the regeneration of the London Docklands, where absolute primacy of the economic interest caused gross negligence in the social and cultural spheres (Church, 1988; Smith, 1991; Hall, 1996; Hinsley, 1999). The activity of the Urban Development Corporation, an administrative body set up in 1981 with the aim to revitalise the area, focused mainly on the construction of a representative quarter of jet-set residential buildings and glazed office towers, along with a complete disregard of historical context and needs of the local community. In consequence, such effects as manhattanisation of space and triggering of gentrification almost entirely overshadowed positive results of the undertaking[22].

Similar mistakes were committed repeatedly in other cities whose authorities uncritically copied the Docklands revitalisation scheme, resulting in appearance of another 'islands of renewal in seas of decay' (Berry, 1985). Furthermore, gentrification became erroneously recognized as 'a strategy of regeneration' (Atkinson, 2003). According to N. Bailey and D. Robertson (1997) two distinct contradictory approaches can be found within the literature of the subject. The first, which is regarded by the authors as the traditional British perspective, views gentrification as a negative outcome of housing renewal or urban policy[23]. The second, more common outside the United Kingdom, concentrates on any positive aspects of gentrification, especially by glorification of the expected trickle down effect. This is in line with the opinion of R. Atkinson (2003, p. 2347) who claims that

> [i]n the European context, the impact of gentrification has not generally been portrayed in negative terms and it remains a debatable point as to whether the urban renaissance and array of area-based initiatives represent an explicit strategy of gentrification even if the unintended consequences may yet be similar.

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22   Although T. Butler (2007) questions the appropriateness of use of the term gentrification in relation to the London Docklands case study, pointing to residential preferences of newcomers inclined towards suburban ways of life, the essence of the process remains the same.

23   Anti-gentrification protest movements were common in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but dissolved at the end of 1980s as national economies moved into recession (Johnston et al., 2000, p. 295).

So far no universal panacea for the inner-city ills has been found, and it is highly probable that it does not exist considering the intricacies of regeneration, not least because of conflicts of interests between the involved actors. There are, however, several guidelines which may support the inner-city recovery in a way that lowers the risk of the local residents suffering from the side effects. Drawing conclusions from the presented analysis of three types of renewal policies, N. Carmon (1999, p. 154-155) singles out the following principles: preventing the segregation of the lower classes, working simultaneously for economic development and social equity, regeneration through trilateral partnerships, a gradual, soft approach and differential treatment of different deteriorated residential areas[24].

The first two are called strategic, as they may serve as precautionary measures and should be applied in a long-term perspective through preservation/protection of the social mix and balancing social and economic benefits of any undertakings planned in the given inner-city area[25]. Correspondingly, the next three principles are identified as tactical, since they relate to the immediate renewal procedures. The author points out that, although none of the ideas translated into the five principles are new, it is their combination which holds potential for any effective urban renewal policy.

The revitalisation approach, as recommended by Carmon S. Kaczmarek (1998, 2001b) labels 'integration(al)', which stands in contradiction to the 'implant revitalisation', as it is aimed at the improvement of the quality of life of both existent residents and the newcomers. Characteristic of the latter is 'the assumption, that the users of the new, upgraded space will be new people while the local community will benefit only indirectly' (Kaczmarek, 1998, p. 123). The fallacy of such argument is shown by the example of London Docklands.

Similar issues are raised by R. Bromley et al. (2005), who emphasise the role of sustainable 'residentialisation' in regeneration of the inner city. Defined as 'regeneration through residential development' (p. 2411), residentialisation is seen as a strategy which 'revolves around the three core sustainability aims of a healthy environment, a prosperous economy and social well-being' (p. 2409). Discussing the findings of a case-study research conducted in central areas of Bristol and Swansea, the authors provide evidence that residential function helps considerably in balancing the three ingredients of sustainable development.

Firstly, recycling of inner-city space through introduction of residential function contributes to a decrease of urban sprawl and lessens pressures on the

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24   A trilateral partnership involves the three sectors of the economy: the public, the private and the so-called 'third', i.e. the non-profit organisations (Carmon, 1999, p. 155).

25   For a critical evaluation of the policy of social mix incorporated into the urban renaissance agenda in the United Kingdom see Colomb, 2007.

natural environment. Secondly, local residents support the local daytime and nighttime economy as the clientele of shops, pubs, cafes, restaurants and nightclubs located in the neighbourhood. Since the type of facilities used by residents depends on their age and status, social mix is desirable so that the complementary services fulfil needs of different groups of consumers. Thirdly, living in the inner city encourages limited use of car (or completely eliminates it) and promotes environment-friendly modes of transport, such as walking and cycling. While the local authorities are advised to take these potential advantages of sustainable residentialisation into consideration, the need of tailoring such policy to the local circumstances is, again, strongly accentuated (Bromley et al., 2005, p. 2424).

Application of the above postulates in practice is very challenging. Taking into consideration the array of problems which need to be dealt with in the troubled inner cities and the usually limited financial resources at the disposal of the local authorities, it is not surprising that even the most elaborate revitalisation strategies are not uncommonly compromises for the sake of the economic arguments and bring unsatisfactory effects.

2.2.3 Opportunities and threats of bottom-up approach

Alternative to the top-down strategies of inner-city regeneration is the bottom-up approach which encompasses any individual or collective revitalisation actions undertaken by members of local communities in a given neighbourhood. Its key distinguishing feature is the genuine engagement of inner-city residents which follows from willingness to improve their quality of life. Even if activities directed towards this aim are assisted by public authorities, it is the initial grassroots initiative which makes all the difference. The most prominent example of such scheme is the already mentioned incumbent upgrading.

According to P. Clay (1979), the author of the term, incumbent upgrading stands in opposition to gentrification as it describes spatial improvements in degraded blue-collar and working-class inner-city neighbourhoods which are initiated by the sitting residents and not the newcomers. Hence, it is claimed that the influx of higher-status population may not have to be the necessary key to positive changes in run-down urban areas. Clay's way of reasoning was subsequently resumed by several authors (Downs, 1981; Baldassare, 1984; Varady, 1986) who enriched the theory of incumbent upgrading with further clarifications. One of the most important observations concerned the fact that gentrification may take place in conjunction with incumbent upgrading and that the latter is likely to be publicly subsidised (Downs, 1981). The subsidies may be direct, as in the case of financial assistance programmes for low-income residents. Otherwise, they often take the form of price-reduction incentive to purchase

or even free-of-charge transfer of municipal flats to the sitting tenants. By this means, low-income residents of the inner city are enabled to invest in repairs of their dwellings and thus improve their living standards while continuing to live in the neighbourhood. As a consequence, the area undergoes a progressive indigenous regeneration and the threat of any residential displacement is likely to be warded off.

The spill-over mechanism of incumbent upgrading is explained as residential neighbourhood effects by Y. Ioannides (2002), who provides empirical support for the argument that individual homeowners' maintenance behaviour is influenced by the maintenance behaviour of their neighbours. The reasons for this are twofold. Firstly, it is the psychological effect of 'keeping up with the Joneses', where repairs and improvements undertaken by one or several residents establish benchmark behaviour for others to follow. Secondly, it is the financial motivation to make repairs and improvements to the residents' houses 'since these improvements will be capitalized into the values of their homes' (Ioannides and Zabel, 2008, p. 230)[26].

Yet, commenting on the outcomes of the Urban Homesteading Program, inspired by the incumbent upgrading approach and initiated in the United States in the mid-1970s, D. Varady (1986) questions its effectiveness. The author's main concern regards the low financial and organisational abilities of the former-tenants-new-owners which may be seen as an impediment to the further maintenance of the buildings. Moreover, results of the survey conducted by Varady indicate that application of the Program brought mere results in rehabilitation of the entire local communities, and particularly those experiencing racial change. Therefore, despite the conceptual and political attractiveness of the homesteading policy, Varady's evaluation is far from enthusiastic[27].

More recent views on incumbent upgrading include the above-cited Carmon's (1999) classification of this type of rehabilitation process as a public-individual partnership, together with upgrading by skilled immigrants. Although the latter, like gentrification, involves an inflowing population the 'localistic, community orientation' seems to be maintained:

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26 K. Park (2008, p. 19) draws attention to the pro-cyclity of the neighbourhood effect: '[w]hen the neighbourhood level of home improvement activity is high or rising, individual homeowners see their house values rise and are more likely to invest in their properties. On the other hand, in a deteriorating neighbourhood a rational homeowner reduces maintenance and improvement spending'.

27 In a review of Varady's book P. Kasinitz writes that homesteading's ideological appeal attracted all political options as 'the post-1960s left admired its localistic, community orientation; the right saw it as promoting the values of homeownership and self-reliance, and middle-of-the-road pragmatists hailed homesteading as an efficient way to "leverage" scarce governmental resources' (Kasinitz, 1988, p. 57).

the 'new immigrants' breathed life into deteriorated neighborhoods in New York; they increased employment and the number of businesses in the area, renovated apartments and buildings and filled the schools (Carmon, 1999, p. 148)[28].

In general, incumbent upgrading could be seen as gentrification minus population change and/or displacement. Opportunities created through such kind of practice include all possible advantages connected to involvement of the local residents in the revitalisation process.

Using the example of upgrading processes taking place in two inner-city neighbourhoods in Vienna, P. Rode and D. Grimm-Pretner (2005, p. 103) arrive at a conclusion that '[i]t is essential to involve the local population and actors so that they identify with the process and in order to ensure self-sustaining upgrading'. Similarly, according to M. Pirveli (2008, p. 29)

> attempts to restore the neglected urban districts are most often made only with the aid of money and sole participation of public authorities and concentrated on the issues of preservation and repair, while the social and economic aspects are left out. If, instead, the city is treated as a live organism and its inhabitants are included in the revitalisation programme, then the [revitalisation] process runs more slowly but more efficiently and with a guarantee of a lasting effect.

Furthermore, a *bona fide* partnership between public authorities and local communities may serve to build up civic society and maintain its high standards:

> A properly handled revitalisation process in fact not only brings back life where [this life] has been missing, but also forms a real civic society and prevents, or limits, information exclusion (Pirveli, 2008, p. 31).

In the light of the above deliberations, some conclusions may be drawn with respect to the questions discussed in the first part of the chapter. The presented approach of linking reurbanisation tendencies and demographic change through the concept of residential flexibility is not detached from revitalisation debate. Even if advantages of inner-city living may be regarded as a pull factor for various household types, the influx of newcomers has wider socio-spatial implications. Moreover, these seem

to overlap with effects of regeneration strategies undertaken by public authorities in order to improve the condition of troubled neighbourhoods.

The issue of gentrification accounts only for one of many threads of the narrative, and its complexity explains the difficulties concerned with any comprehensive method of inner-city problem-solving. Nevertheless, a number of indications have been formulated and put forward by researchers specialising in the field. The key words to success of both reurbanisation and inner-city regeneration appear to be 'sustainability' and 'civic engagement'. Also, incumbent upgrading seems to offer multiple possibilities for regeneration with a low risk of displacement. Furthermore, it seems to complement reurbanisation trends and safeguard either the socio-demographic mix, or a sustainable balance between new and old residents.

Since the theoretical introduction has thus far focused on the Western European and, to some extent, North American experiences, the next step is to investigate similar processes taking place in urban areas located to the east of the former Iron Curtain. The aim of the following chapter may be therefore described as an attempt to compare and discuss the situation in inner cities after socialism as well as to explain potential disparities.

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28 S. Zukin et al. (1995) provide a comprehensive picture of such processes taking place in New York during the late 20th century on the example of a variety of ethnic restaurants serving immigrants' homeland cuisines.

3. *Housing and demographic change in post-socialist cities*

3.1 Housing policy under socialism and after

Since the beginning of the 1990s the countries of CEE undergoing socio-economic and political transformation to the Western European capitalist model have experienced processes of urban change analogous to those described in the previous chapters. Yet, due to the post-socialist context, multiple divergences may be observed. One of the most vivid ones follows from the urbanisation paradigm introduced in the former socialist bloc, where after the Second World War urban development became conformed to exigencies dictated by forced industrialisation. According to E. Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska (1988) the process of urbanisation in Poland during the postwar period was not only connected to location and development of industry, but also underdeveloped in relation to the latter. The resulting spatial growth was therefore unsustainable, as it defied social needs and the natural environment balance (Sagan, 1995).

Furthermore, between the years 1946-1986 the share of urban population in Poland increased from 31.8 to 60.5 per cent, owing to considerable rural-to-urban migrations. At the same time, the process of urbanisation lacked such basic attributes as adequate investment in housing, transport and services infra-structures or transformation of the socio-professional structure, and thus may be described as 'urbanisation without modernisation' (Węgleński, 1992). As a cumulative result, disproportions between industrial and urban development in larger Polish cities eventually contributed to the overall crisis of the 1980s.

On account of distortion of the urbanisation process and its disengagement from the market forces, residential preferences of households do not seem to have played any major role in shaping directions of intra-urban migration flows under the socialist regime. Yet, the situation altered dramatically by the advent of the systemic change. The changes in the housing sector, among the many and various symptoms attributed to the post-socialist urban transformation,become the center of researchers' attention. For instance, U. Sailer-Fliege (1999, p. 14) recognises the housing sector as one of the key levels of restructuring processes in CEE, deeply interrelated with the other four, which include post-socialist ideology, economic transformation processes, socio-economic re-stratification and urban planning. The following section approaches the intricacies related to the housing

issues during the socialist period and after 1989, since understanding them seems to be of crucial relevance for the subsequent analysis of sociodemographic change and post-socialist transformation of the inner city.

Immediately after the Second World War, when frail European economies were painstakingly recovering from wartime hardships, the housing condition in many CEE countries was dramatic. Not only war damage had severely reduced the housing stock, but a large part of the region was also affected by massive population movements triggered by new delimitation of several state boundaries. The following adoption of the centrally planned economy model and state social- ism only added to the difficulties, as the dynamic industrialisation resulted in rural-to-urban workforce mobility on an unprecedented scale[29].

Since provision of accommodation was claimed to be the leading ideological aim of the socialist housing policy, built on the principle 'to each according to their needs', dwellings were no longer regarded as commodities, but became a social service (Korniłowicz, 1989, p. 327). The first step towards this rather unrealistic goal consisted in deprivatisation of the housing stock, and the introduction of system of reglamentation and authoritative allocation of dwellings. Although no formal countrywide nationalisation took place, the state, in fact, took over control of all rentable property, forcing the owners 'to rent according to the authorities' dictates' which severely limited their ownership rights (Herbst and Muzioł-Weclawowicz, 1993, p. 248). An egalitarian housing policy was asserted by such practices as limiting development of individual house-building and subdivi- sion of the already occupied flats, in order to assign the artificially created living quarters to further households (Kozłowski, 1989, p. 137).

Despite such radical measures, the gap between housing demand and supply widened, even after construction of large prefabricated estates had become the official answer to the problem of housing deficiency around the 1960s. The main argument for redirecting housing policies towards mass-construction was its seeming effectiveness, ascribed to relatively low cost and short production time. Furthermore, the large housing estates were developed on a cooperative basis, meaning that they were financed through contributions of their future residents. In consequence, along with the state's running out of resources for investment in

house construction, the financial burden was systematically transferred to the individuals. At the same time, the state retained its control over the cooperative housing by means of determining housing standards and norms, as well as through the system of distribution of cooperative dwellings. Hence, it may be acknowl- edged that the housing cooperative movement was not intended to complement the state-led house-building but rather to replace it (Paszyński, 1967, p. 82)[30]. Commonly built by big state enterprises under cooperatives' administration, the tower-block housing profoundly intruded upon the socialist city landscape[31]. While the large housing estates were erected mainly in peripheral districts on extensive plots of undeveloped land, single or high-rise residential buildings can also be found in the inner city, filling the gaps left after the buildings destroyed during the Second World War. The role of such intrusions was also to dominate, and eventually efface, the symbol-packed pre-war housing architecture. As a result, at the beginning of the 1980s in Poland over 70 per cent of the housing cubic capacity were slab-constructed (Basista, 2001, p. 85).

The 'concrete solution' was far from being flawless. First of all, it failed to relieve the housing shortage pressures. Due to the constant accumulation of housing deficit, the number of awaiting families amounted to around two millions (Roszkowski, 1991 in: Basista, 2001, 68). Subsequently, the cooperative system not only was disturbed by the ideologies of socialist housing policy, but turned out to be increasingly subject to the hegemony of industrialisation (Domański, 1997). For instance, employees of state enterprises were privileged in gaining access to cooperative dwellings, set up as company-owned flats (*mieszkania zakładowe*). As a result, the share of flats allotted to entitled members of cooperatives decreased and the waiting time extended[32].

On the other hand, with the growing shortage of dwellings the whole practice of cooperative flat distribution became corrupt and the given decisions highly arbitrary. Counter to the logics of egalitarianism, the social groups who enjoyed the most advantageous housing conditions in Poland during the mid-1980s included, in descending order, white-collar workers with higher education, other white-collar workers and blue-collar workers with secondary education (Kozłowski, 1989). Comparatively high housing standards translated into lower number of inhabitants per dwelling, higher usable floor area per person and

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29 In most of the CEE countries, like Poland for instance, the roots of urban housing crisis may be traced back to the 17th century and related to the economic stagnation and political downfall of that time. As a result, in early capitalist stage of development 'Polish cities lagged behind the global advance- ment of urban technology ... [and] the progress of their communal infrastructure was twenty to thir- ty years backward in relation to Western European countries' (Paszyński, 1967, p. 43-46). According- ly, G. Węcławowicz (1999, p. 33) identifies the pre-1945 urbanisation process in Poland as 'an element of a wider process of Central Europe's "peripheralisation" additionally strengthened by the partitions of Poland' which took place between 1772 and 1795, erasing Poland from the map of Europe until 1918.

30 Especially that the majority of cooperative flats was rented (*mieszkania lokatorskie*) and not occupant- owned, which meant that the ownership entitlement of cooperative members was highly limited, if not nominal.

31 So have the socrealistic urban developments, or 'grand designs', of the 1950s, however, to a considerably smaller spatial extent (see Czepczyński, 2009).

32 In Poland the share of cooperative flats obtained by non-members increased from 20 per cent in 1966 to 60 per cent in 1980 (Jajszczyk, 1989, p. 291).

higher share of dwellings with full water supply and sewerage infrastructure, gas and central heating systems.

At the opposite extreme were the uneducated blue-collar workers who lived in small and overcrowded dwellings, poorly equipped with basic facilities. As Kozłowski notices (1989, p. 146), the source of the 'new social diversification' back then lied in preferential policies of the state, on the one hand, and in the deepening overall processes of social stratification on the other. Thus, despite the egalitarian slogans, both the access to dwellings in general and the quality of housing conditions hugely depended on the individuals' membership or affiliation with the communist party, as well as their social and economic position, i.e. type of occupation, professional and social activity and usefulness, awareness of own housing needs, financial resources and capabilities for execution of own requirements.

Another failure of the cooperative house-building concerned the performance of housing mass-production. Hasty construction of large prefabricated housing estates propelled by the growing deficit of dwellings led to material savings and poor-quality workmanship. At the end of 1984 in Poland out of existing 47,000 residential buildings managed by housing cooperatives 13,000 were affected by leakages and freezing of the exterior walls, 8,900 by corrosion of radiators and 2,100 by defective installation of central heating, while the vast majority required a replacement of central and water heating installations (Korniłowicz, 1989, p. 335).

In addition, flats in tower blocks were often quite small and uncomfortable. A. Paszyński (1967, p. 95) describes the progressive decrease of the average flat size in socialist Poland as 'the outcome of a consistent application of the following rule: more but smaller flats are better than lesser flats, even if [the latter were] bigger or higher in quality'[33]. According to W. Malicka (1975, p. 184), the economic rationale was, to some degree, reinforced by the theory of limiting some of the family functions in support of numerous public institutions (such as schools, cultural centres or canteens) and the postulate of creating social ties in the place of residence through imposition of a habit to fulfil various everyday needs within a neighbourhood unit. A minuscule and windowless kitchen (figure 3.1), also called 'blind kitchen' (*ślepa kuchnia*), serves as an extreme example of this policy. Incommodious and inconvenient, it stood in stark contrast to the rural tradition of immigrant workers where the kitchen is the heart of family life (Imbs, 1993).

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33 The official housing norm established in 1959 and remaining in force until the early 1980s rationed usable living space to 11 square metres per person, while the average size of flats was limited to 44 square metres (Chmielewski and Mirecka, 2007).

Fig. 3.1 A cramped windowless kitchen in a large prefabricated housing estate completed in the early 1970s in Żabianka, Gdańsk
Author: Ewa Lieder

Moreover, the uniform architecture dictated by the egalitarianist make-believe was monotonous, highly standardized and subject to numerous norms and regulations with 'a tendency towards creation of universal plans disregarding any possible variations implicated by different domestic customs and ways of different social groups (Malicka, 1975, p. 187). As summed up by I. Sagan (2000, p. 87),

> [i]t was impossible to propose different forms of housing to different social groups, because according to the ideological assumptions such differences were non-existent in the socialist society. Houses were built in ignorance of their future users[' needs].

Possibilities of choice in the domain of domestic interior design were also severely limited due to poor selection of furniture and other decoration items available for purchase. This went in line with the 'wider vision of the socialist society and functions attributed to dwellings', as places of short respite from multiple activities, since a worker was supposed to 'spend his/her spare time taking part in cooperative meetings or carrying on welfare work while his children were taken care of in a dayroom' (Jewdokimow, 2007, p. 89).

Besides the flawed design of the blocks of flats and their interiors, also their surroundings lacked proper arrangement. Vast open spaces between the buildings originally intended for shops, schools and recreation grounds were often left undeveloped due to financial cuts. The consequent spatial disorder induced various coping strategies, most often pronounced in appropriation of semi-public and semi-private spaces, through unruly parking directly in front of the buildings without parking lots or adaptation of adjoining fragments of common green areas for private gardens by inhabitants of flats located on the ground floor (Szczepański, 1991). As for the infrastructural shortcomings of large housing estates, they were felt most severely in the peripheries, notwithstanding the low cost of public transportation (Sagan, 2000, 2002).

Many of the described defects of the socialist housing system are parodied in a Polish television comedy series of the 1980s, *Alternatywy 4* (read as '4, Disjunction Street' or 'four disjunctions'), presenting an insight into eventful lives of a group of owner-occupiers in a newly built prefabricated block of flats. The leading plot features multiple absurdities of a socialist housing cooperative, such as the process of assigning the flats at the cooperative president's discretion, botches in the building work and finishing details, as well as the unlimited power of the caretaker who owes his position to a political dispatch. Amusing as it may seem today, the screenplay often did not depart far from real-life scenarios.

A passage from *Chamowo* ('Boorsville'), a memoir of Polish writer and poet Miron Białoszewski depicting a year of his life after having moved into a newly built large housing estate in Warsaw in 1976, provides another testimony of inconveniences of living in a socialist block of flat:

> And so it is a resonant house. Not only the [noises from] upstairs can be heard. Other people as well. From the sides and from beneath the floor. Not audible during the [last] four weeks, now they are probably back from holidays. Constant chatter for two days in a row. ... Radio or TV heard only a little. Yesterday a few songs resounded, a lot of clangor somewhere else and in the stairs. A name-day party with loud singing (Białoszewski, 2009, p. 93).

Specifics of socialist large housing estates make them very distinct from similar type of housing units constructed in capitalist cities at the time, it is thus worth mentioning key discrepancies between the two contexts. According to A. Basista (2001, p. 121) the main differences resolve themselves into the issues of scale, monotony versus variation of architecture, freedom of housing choices, quality of construction and standard of dwellings. In overall comparison, the disadvantaged position of socialist mass housing and its unsustainability seem unquestionable.

In retrospect, three sets of causes responsible for the breakdown of the housing cooperative system under socialism may be distinguished (Jajszczyk, 1989, 296-297). To begin with, the blind quest for execution of quantitative guidelines, characteristic of planned economy, overshadowed the remaining elements of effective housing construction. As a consequence, the 'faster-and-cheaper' imperative *de facto* played against the provision of housing needs. Secondly, the disagreement between the goals of housing cooperatives and building enterprises reached a peak. While a cooperative is assumed to provide its members with a possibly widest range of dwelling types, so they can freely choose the most suitable housing option, it is in the interest of the building company to standardise the production and increase own profits through economies of scale. Since the guidelines for housing construction were dictated by planned economy principles, the push for standardisation prevailed over users' needs and preferences. Last but not least, the configuration of organisational, legal and economic relations between the cooperative investor, architect and building contractor was biased in favour of the latter. Thus, despite the cooperative's commissioning role in the process, in point of fact, it had too little influence to control it. However, as noted by M. Szczepański, 'it is not urban planners and architects of real socialism who were the most important actors on the urban scene. An immediate impact on their spatial and social projections was exerted by the officers of the Polish United Worker's Party of all levels, from local through regional to central' (Szczepański, 2005, p. 237).

Regardless of the facts presented above, a cooperative flat in socialist tower blocks was commonly considered to be a much better option than a dwelling in the pre-war housing stock. Technical condition of residential buildings constructed before 1945 was already unsound after the Second World War and tended to deteriorate throughout the following decades. Peppercorn rents in the nationalised old tenement houses accounted for only a fraction of the real maintenance costs. By way of example, between the years 1965 and 1982 in Poland the average monthly rent for a full standard municipal flat cost 3.60 PLZ per square metre and covered only 30 per cent of the total running and repair costs. Meanwhile, during the same period, the average monthly charge paid by cooperative members and covering all the above expenses plus investment credit installments amounted to 11 PLZ per square metre (Jajszczyk, 1989, p. 306).

Such rigidity of municipal rents translated itself into rising underinvestment and decapitalisation of the pre-war housing stock, given that the costs of maintenance of old buildings increase at a much faster rate than it takes place in the case of new cooperative housing. Estimating the value of the repair gap (*luka remontowa*) concerning pre-war residential buildings in 1985 in Poland

J. Korniłowicz (1989, p. 338), on assumption of a 2.3 repair rate[34], arrives at 77.3 billion PLZ of necessary expenditure on repairs. Similar evaluation made for residential buildings constructed after 1981 and a 0.6 repair rate comes up with the number of only 6.7 billion PLZ. The author thus concludes that even if 'restraining further decapitalisation of housing resources is possible, elimination of the repair gap from previous years does not seem probable' (p. 340).

Another factor responsible for lowering the quality of dwellings in pre-war housing during the socialist period is connected to the practice of the imposed flat-sharing. As a common provisional measure applied by the socialist state in order to maximize the use of the existing old housing stock, it resolved itself into division of the flats and allocation of the artificially multiplied units to several households. Such authoritative way of assignment of living quarters, apart from becoming a source of discomfort and occasional strife between the 'co-tenants by force', eventuated in overcrowding of old residential buildings, which only added to the problems of their maintenance.

It should be emphasised that neither of the described types of housing offered much room for consideration of residents' actual needs and preferences, which have acquired the status of a needless luxury and rendered detached single-family house a much desired object of aspiration. It is thus appropriate to underline that, contrary to the situation observed in capitalist countries, dwellings under socialism were not treated as fully available consumer goods and as such intra-urban migrations of that time do not entirely reflect socio-demographic interdependencies outlined in the previous chapters. Certainly, inner districts and suburbs were rather distinct from each other, but residential landscape of a socialist city had its own logics, determined more by type of housing than location within urban space (see section 3.3).

To recapitulate, the accruing housing crisis which afflicted socialist cities of the CEE most severely at the beginning of the 1980s had several symptoms. In Poland, quite representative of the region, it manifested itself in the decrease of housing construction output and rapid increase of construction costs, growing housing deficit, accelerating decapitalisation of existing housing resources, deregulation of the housing system and rising disproportions between the costs of acquisition of a basic standard flat, rents and running costs (Nieciuński, 1989, p. 21). For these reasons, the following systemic change overlapped with a quite challenging situation in the housing sector.

Despite the national specifics across the CEE region it is possible to distinguish some common characteristics of the transition in the housing sector of post-socialist cities. According to Baross and Struyk (1993, pp. 179-180) these include decentralisation of state responsibility for housing provision and privatisation of the housing stock, significant reductions in housing production and restructuring of supply, gradual restructuring and development of housing finance systems and essential, but delayed, reform of the rental sector. Apart from a range of institutional reforms applied to date in the CEE countries with varying results (Herbst, Muziol-Weclawowicz, 1993; Clapham, 1995; Blacksell and Born, 2002; Haase and Steinführer, 2005), the housing state of affairs throughout the region has been still subject to autonomous readjustment to the rules and principles of market economy.

Since the idea of dwelling as a commodity was, at least ideologically, invalidated during the postwar decades in the socialist cities of CEE, the ongoing re-commodification of housing is relevant in several aspects. Firstly, the property tenure structure changes fundamentally, especially when privatisation and restitution processes gather momentum. Secondly, real estate value is officially reintroduced and to a greater extent shaped by factors such as location and infrastructure standards, and not merely according to the size[35]. Thirdly, dwellings are increasingly regarded as investments, liable to generate further profits through renting out or complete renovation and resale. Next but not least, housing needs and preferences regained substance, once again becoming a significant push and/or pull factor motivating residential flows.

Although all of the above rearrangements have been progressing gradually, their impact on the socio-spatial structure of cities is extensive. Already in the early 1990s, J. Musil (1993, p. 902) predicts that intra-city migration is bound to increase rapidly in post-socialist cities and that new patterns of social segregation are likely to emerge. Similarly G. Węcławowicz (1998) claims that housing marketisation induces social differentiation, whereas K. Grime (1999) provides statistical evidence for inequalities resulting from privatisation of housing in Budapest, Cracow, Prague and Warsaw. S. Marcińczak (2007) referring to Węcławowicz describes suburbanisation, gentrification, segregation and separation as the major processes shaping the residential structure of a post-socialist city, using the example of Łódź. Even though their effects are interrelated and found across the city as a whole, considering the subject of the following study a detailed analysis of these processes will be limited to inner city (section 3.3), with only passing references to other urban areas.

In spatial terms the urban composition under socialism quite considerably departed from the concentric zones identified by E. Burgess (see Chapter 1).

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34 Repair rate illustrates the ratio of expenditure on repairs undertaken in the previous year to the total value of the building.

35 Until 1989 in Poland the price of a square metre in municipal and cooperative flats was fixed, regardless of standard or type of building, while the ersatz of the housing market, existing in the marginal private sector, had only minor importance.

Deconstructing the socialist city model I. Sagan (2000, p. 93) classifies four separate zones of spatial development which form a rather irregular, mosaic pattern:

- **city centre**, typically comprising the historical core and adjoining development from the capitalist (pre-socialist) period[36],
- **transition zone**, where the existing pre-socialist structures were supplemented and/or replaced with socialist urban tissue,
- **new housing developments**, with large prefabricated estates as the leading type of housing,
- **peripheral suburban zone**, consisting of open spaces, recreational grounds, industrial areas, agricultural plots and individual housing units.

As indicated by Sagan, an important distinguishing feature of the socialist city lies in favouring of central areas and new housing developments over the transition zone in terms of urban investment. While partiality for the former was apparent in rapid and prioritised postwar restoration of representative, historical city cores and excessive capital expenditure on construction of the large housing estates, the indifference to the latter manifested itself in intentional disinvestment in the inner-city housing structures.

The explicit policy of neglect of pre-war tenement houses was conditioned by inexistence of the ground rent mechanism, which rendered value of all urban land equal, regardless of location. In political terms, the old housing, the reminiscent of the capitalist city and the bourgeoisie, was worthless and as such condemned to annihilation. Thus, the deliberate lack of repairs and renovation measures was aimed at decapitalisation and 'self'-destruction of the unwanted relics of the non-socialist past.

According to many authors, the re-establishment of capitalist economy translated into at least partial return to the pre-socialist spatial patterns. For the same reason, the post-socialist city model developed by S. Liszewski (2001) returns to Burgess's conception. Thus, the first zone equals the **'historical city centre'** and is surrounded by the **'inner zone'**, defined by building stock and industrial infrastructure of pre-war origin. Situated next to it, is the **'outer zone'** with socialist residential development, adjoined by **'suburban zone'** of mixed use and appearance. Since similar categorisation is proposed and applied by other authors investigating CEE cities (cf. Sýkora et al., 2000; Matlovič et al., 2001; Brade et al. 2009), it will also be adopted in the following sections.

As a theoretical concept, the post-socialist city model tends to oversimplify the complexities of spatial transformations and it does not take into consideration the relative spatial inertia of urban systems. In this vein L. Coudroy de Lille

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36 For obvious reasons, the centre of a socialist city lacked a central business district typical of the capitalist world.

maintains that 'the dynamics of residential space over a decade after the beginning of post-socialist transformation reflects the weight of [socialist] spatial legacies rather than vivid social mobility and vitality of the housing construction' (2001, p. 207). Firstly, it follows from limited access of many social groups to the emerging housing market during the time of transitional economic hardship (see section 3.2), as well as it is an effect of imperfections and rigidities of the housing market itself, such as delays in the process of privatisation of municipal flats. Secondly, it is related to the residential immobility and rootedness asserted under socialism and persistent well beyond the early 1990s. While in the Western European countries repeated and frequent changes of address are treated as a 'natural, inherent ingredient of the contemporary lifestyle' (Węgleński, 1992, p. 11), post-socialist societies are characterised by 'low intensity of migration and local scope of the majority of flows, as well as quite common disinclination to move [at all]' (Węgleński, 1992, p. 101). Within urban areas rootedness tends to be especially pronounced in districts inhabited by high proportions of elderly residents, who have spent there substantial portions of their lives. Such is the case of postwar settlers in Polish inner cities located in the Western and Northern Territories, which were incorporated into Poland after the Second World War[37]. Many of the newcomers, having been displaced from the Eastern borderland, developed a strong attachment to their new adoptive homelands and after they have experienced a traumatic event of forced removal, they were less willing to move again (see Krzemiński, 2003). Similar attitudes were often displayed by former members of rural communities who had migrated to cities in search for employment. To this day, even when affected by substandard housing conditions or imposed co-tenancy, for many of them 'change of residence would equal to a calamity, a rupture of vital and supportive social ties' (Kaltenberg-Kwiatkowska, 1982, p. 288).

On the other hand, increasing numbers of urban dwellers in post-socialist cities demonstrate high residential mobility and seem to be more mindful of their actual housing needs and preferences. Especially in bigger urban centres of the CEE, dwellings cease to be treated as permanent, life-long locations and repetitive moving increasingly becomes a popular strategy for step-by-step improvement of quality-of-life conditions (Kotus, 2005). The dominant direction of residential flow up to date has been centrifugal, since from around the late 1970s a detached

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37 Otherwise called 'the Regained Territories', they included lands east of the rivers Oder and Lusatian Neisse, which in the distant past periodically had belonged to Poland but were parts of Germany at the outset of the Second World War. The border shift which resulted in their 'return' to Poland was one of the agreements of the Potsdam Conference in the summer of 1945. Prior to that, in the aftermath of the Yalta Conference held in February, Poland lost much of its eastern territory to the Soviet Union. Massive repatriations followed the two events.

house in the suburbs has been an epitome of social aspirations, as well as an escape from the dull socialist prefabricated estates or rundown inner-city housing. It is hence argued that while in the several decades after the Second World War the CEE cities boomed owing to migration from rural areas, at the end of the 20th century the process reversed (Kupiszewski et al., 1998).

Strong suburbanisation trends have gathered momentum after the collapse of the socialist system, amplified not only by 'restitution' of free choice of housing based on individual needs and preferences, but also by such other factors as lack of coordinated spatial policy within urban regions, investors' pursuit of sites for greenfield housing development and intentional policy of local governments seeking to attract new residents (Lorens, 2005, p. 40-41). Negative effects of suburban sprawl are similar to those outlined in Chapter 1, however, the dominant concern is the financial burden placed on the local authorities of depopulating cities (Michalski and Nowakowska, 2002). The most extreme situation of this kind can be found in the shrinking cities of the former German Democratic Republic, especially after the German reunification (Harth et al., 1998; Wießner, 1999; Bontje, 2004; Nuissl and Rink, 2005).

As the suburbanisation phase is gradually replaced in many cities of the CEE by overlapping deurbanisation and reurbanisation trends (Parysek and Mierzejewska, 2005), potential for the development of the latter appears to be considerable, and the recently observed social and demographic changes already bear much resemblance to the processes investigated in the previous chapters. These similarities are shortly analysed in the following section.

3.2 Social and demographic urban transformations after 1989

The systemic transformation taking place in the CEE region since the early 1990s has reverberated across all domains of life of the citizens involved. Simultaneous political, economic, social and cultural changes have had massive repercussions. On the one hand, there were the opening opportunities connected to the restoration of the democratic social order and the system of market economy. Those who could use them well, at once gained several steps up the social ladder. Then again, the same opportunities easily turned into threats in the case of those members of the society, who suddenly lost the safe ground beneath their feet. To illustrate this phenomenon I. Berend (2007) employs a metaphor of the doors which 'opened widely, but most of the people were frightened to enter into an unknown world' (p. 277). It should be added that to some social groups the same door was merely left ajar.

Among those who coped quite well under the new political and economic conditions were the well-educated professionals, especially young and having a good command of foreign languages. Overnight careers were symptomatic for the first half of the 1990s in Poland, when graduates from public universities, regardless of their field of study, were bound to succeed in the 'new' service jobs, such as marketing or banking and insurance. Conversely, those who used to be fostered in the previous system suffered the greatest losses as big state-owned industries faced bankruptcy and/or underwent severe restructuring. The demise of the socialist government's safety net accompanied by deindustrialisation and conversion towards service economy meant that large numbers of people became affected by structural unemployment, decline in wages and quality-of-life deterioration, which eventually led to their frustration and disappointment with the new capitalist reality. Although in later decades the situation gradually improved throughout the region, relatively high levels of dissatisfaction still persist among the most disadvantaged, nurturing the Ostalgie and/or anti-EU sentiments[38].

The long awaited freedom thus seems to have emerged as a troublesome boon, if not a burden, to many social groups. For instance, female citizens, who were seemingly advantaged under socialism, appear to have lost more than they have gained (LaFont, 2001). Even though women emancipation was at the time quite superficial, availability of such, presently forfeited, perks as the extended state-provided childcare or unlimited access to the labour market stands no comparison with the current situation:

> Communism, at least, promised to liberate women through increased opportunities in education, employment, and political representation. ... Currently, many of the post-communist states are doing little to address women's interests. ... In the areas of employment, political representation, and reproductive rights, women have lost ground while their governments seem to be hoping that the 'women's question' will be solved later, when economic and political stability have been achieved (LaFont, 2001, p. 215).

Yet, one of the most problematic social consequences of the political and economic turn, particularly overexposed due to the abandonment of the welfare policies, has been the acquired passivity and general unfitness for the unstable economic reality of the transformation period. Only to some extent the transition effects have been alleviated through the same or similar coping strategies which had been applied as a response to inconveniences of living under socialism. For instance, despite the fact that reciprocity of services and favours, identified by A. Smith

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38 The term *Ostalgie*, a blend of *Ost* ('East' in German) and *Nostalgie* is used in the countries of the former socialist bloc, and especially in eastern Germany, to express a certain longing for the 'lost' benefits of the previous system, with a strong tendency towards idealisation of the past (Czepczyński, 2007).

and A. Stenning (2006) as one of the major non-market economic practices, has persisted in the post-socialist reality, it appears that 'often it is not the most needy in post-socialist societies who are able to draw upon such assets, but those already able to sustain livelihoods' (p. 208).

Furthermore, along with the political and economic came the cultural change responsible for a shake-up of the system of values[39]. Drawing on Bauman's interpretation of the 'liquid times', briefly referred to in Chapter 1, it could be stated that the transformation period in the former socialist European countries seems to have been particularly liquefied in comparison with Western Europe. Unsurprisingly, the concomitant unsteadiness and insecurity of that time heavily imprinted on the demographic processes throughout the region, with the SDT effects largely intensified by the overlapping socio-economic transformation. Although first traces of the SDT could be detected in the CEE countries a few decades before the beginning 1990s, it was after the collapse of the socialist system that the SDT trends appreciably gathered speed (Hoem et al., 2009). Regardless of different starting points and various paces of the process, similar demographic tendencies have been observable throughout the region, which allows for their joint analysis in the following paragraphs (cf. Kurkiewicz, 1998).

One of the most manifest symptoms of the SDT in post-socialist conditions concerns changes in fertility, as regional fertility patterns in the former Eastern bloc were quite distinct from those predominant in Western Europe back then. Namely, typical fertility behaviour under socialism is associated with 'strong attachment to the two-child family norm with only a small proportion of women remaining childless, ... early family formation, ... an early start of childbearing (as compared with the western European standard), and ... a subsequent short spacing of births' (Sobotka, 2003, p. 453). Additionally, childbearing used to be inextricably linked with marriage since '[p]remarital conceptions were common, while extramarital births were relatively rare' (p. 454). The situation changed dramatically during the 1990s, when CEE countries repositioned from the very top to the bottom of the European ranking of fertility levels (figure 3.2). A facile explanation attributing this phenomenon to unsteadiness and insecurity of the transformation phase only seems to scratch the surface of the whole picture.

Having thoroughly examined fertility patterns of sixteen former socialist countries of the CEE (including the German Democratic Republic), Sobotka arrives at a conclusion that the main reasons for the observed rapid decline in childbearing rates in the CEE region after the systemic change are twofold. Primarily, they follow from a tendency of postponement of births, and secondly, they arise out of a departure from the two-child towards one-child family model, which results in sub-replacement fertility levels[40]. At the same time, both of those predominating trends appear to have slightly different trajectories throughout the region. The discrepancies develop out of the diversified pace of post-socialist transformation and different degrees of achievement in the economic sphere together with cultural reasons, including varying impacts of religion in Catholic and Protestant countries.

Fig. 3.2 Comparison of total fertility rates in European regions, 1980-2000
Source: Sobotka, 2003, p. 455

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39 I. Berend (2007) even attributes the central role in the social shock not to economic but cultural factors.
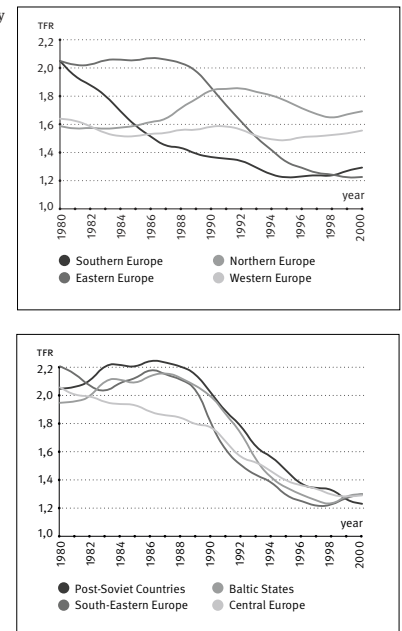
40 In Poland the maximum value of fertility rate among urban female population shifted from the age cohort 20-24 years to the subsequent one (25-29 years) in 1995 and within the next 10 years the maximum fertility level in the former became lower than in 30-34 years age group (Trzepacz, 2006).

Moreover, effects of the transformation-related economic hardship as a fertility-decreasing factor are further strengthened by lifestyle changes. The latter quite rapidly approach the Western European model, more carrier-orientated and individual-centred rather than focused on family formation and childbearing. Such opinion is formed by R. Lesthaeghe and J. Surkyn (2002, p. 3), who claim that in the case of post-socialist transition '[n]ot so much the economic crisis per se, but the entire restructuring of society is an accelerator of the ideational and demographic changes'.

Another important finding from Sobotka's analysis concerns an expansion of the extramarital childbearing, which brings to the fore the second key element of the post-socialist demographic revolution, namely changes in the living arrangements. General SDT trends in this domain also bear much resemblance to the Western European, with the biggest differences regarding their speed and intensity, and the most manifest shifts concerning the decline of nuptiality and postponement of marriage[41]. Of no lesser importance are the household transformations, which seem to slowly undermine the CEE's designation as the stronghold of traditional family. Even though married couples with children remain the predominating type of family, their share constantly decreases in favour of childless married couples, one-parent families, cohabitations and reconstructed families (Slany and Kluzowa, 2004).

To recapitulate, the prerequisites for the second demographic transition in the CEE region are not much different from those observed in Western Europe. I. Kotowska proposes, with the reference to van de Kaa's threefold classification (see Chapter 1), the listing of structural, cultural and technological causative processes (table 3.1). Apart from a number of processes strictly related to the systemic transformation, all the remaining features are typical of the old-capitalist European countries. The distinction between various social units reveals how individual's embeddedness in primary and secondary groups increases the level of complexity following from conflicting social roles and the shift towards individual's emancipation.

Table 3.1 Explanatory framework for demographic changes in Poland during the systemic transformation

Societal dimensions /Processes	Social units		
	Secondary groups	Primary groups (Family /Couple)	Individuals
STRUCTURAL PROCESSES			
1. Transformation of political and economic systems and social institutions.	• gradual development of the middle class, • increasing social differentiation, • gradual development of civil society, • increasing significance of ideological groups (political, religious, etc.), • emergence of group behaviour	• increase of the alternative costs of marriage and maternity, • increased independence of spouses (partners), increased freedom of choice of partner, • growing difficulties in sharing the roles of a partner and a parent	• individual skills, ambitions and qualifications determine individual's social and economic position, • individuals are faced with increasing and numerous demands, which are difficult to fulfil simultaneously, • necessity of becoming mobile (flexible), • late independence, • increased sense of responsibility for own career
CULTURE			
1. Modernisation and westernisation. 2. Increasing democracy, inequalities, autonomy, pluralism, universalism, individualism, primacy of low-order needs.	• fall of authority and destabilisation of value systems, • reduced cohesion of norm-making groups and decreased possibility of control of abidance by those norms, • emergence of and rivalry between subcultures, • increasing intergenerational conflict, gender rivalry, etc.	• changes in the balance of power (roles) between women and men, • weakening of rules and norms, • difficulties with reconciling careers and family life, especially by women	• depreciation of formal relationships, • increase of significance of self-accomplishment, • search for personalised lifestyles, • increase of women's economic independency, • conflicting social roles, • increase of individual responsibility for economic and social position

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[41] For instance, the probability of a Polish woman in any of the age cohorts getting married in 1996 was 15-45 per cent lower than in 1988, and the probability that a 16-year-old girl never marries quadrupled during the same period of time (Ziętek, 1998, p. 105)

Societal dimensions / Processes	Social units		
	Secondary groups	Primary groups (Family / Couple)	Individuals
TECHNOLOGY			
1. Increasing access to newest technology, IT revolution. 2. Development of transport and communications, advance in biotechnology, increased use of birth control.	• rapid development and use of information and multimedia techniques, • reduction of the costs of information transfer, • inequality of access to medical and educational services	• rising demand for all kind of information, • dissemination of knowledge, • possibility of effective prevention of unintended pregnancy, • rising social acceptance of childlessness	• growing demand for education as a factor determining individual's life chances, • possible use of contraceptives as a result of individual decision-making, • increase in sexual freedom, • ban on abortion of unintended pregnancies

Source: Kotowska, 1998, p. 24-25.

Within the past twenty years, the rising popularity of informal unions and the concomitant heterogeneity of household types led to the emergence of new accepted norms in post-socialist Europe[42]. Yet, not surprisingly, findings of numerous investigations into the expansion of the SDT trends in the region point to their particular concentration in urban areas and among younger populations (Długosz, 2006; Trzepacz, 2006; Barański and Kaczmarek, 2007; Mynarska and Bernardi, 2007). Out of all of the SDT symptoms, two of them seem to have the most pronounced consequences for the housing issue in Central and Eastern European cities, i.e. the increasing total number of households and their growing diversity.

Despite fertility decline and outflow to the suburbs, which have severely affected urban population development, the housing crisis in post-socialist cities has not been diminished, but rather aggravated due to the upsurge in the number of households. The fragmentation of living arrangements (Piątek and Karwacki, 2004) meant that the formerly predominating multiperson (and often multigenerational) family model has been replaced with a wide spectrum of smaller households, usually consisting of two to three members or singles. Therefore a present-day equivalent of an exemplary 5-person household inhabiting a flat in the 1960s could well be two 2-person and one single-person households living in three separate dwellings.

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42 In Poland to such a degree that the latest National Census introduced an extended definition of family: 'two or more persons who are related as husband and wife, partners living together (cohabitants) – individuals of opposite sex, or as parent and child' (Slany and Kluzowa, 2004).

Apart from quantitative changes in the housing demand, there have been many qualitative ones as well. In consequence of the introduction of market economy and due to the rising diversification of household types, residential needs and preferences tend to destandardise likewise. The strive for individualism, overtly stifled during the socialist period under the banner of egalitarianism, became released together with the newly emerged lifestyle options and aspirations brought about evolving housing demand patterns and contributed to the formation of the budding estate market.

As shown by results of a study on valorisation of residential areas by clients of estate agencies based in Łódź, in the new market conditions a 'suitable location of a dwelling within urban space is more valued than the dwelling itself' (Groeger, 2004, p. 104). This argument is backed by the finding that with the growing housing supply it is considered to be easier to find a dwelling and adjust it to specific needs, rather than expect the transformation of immediate surroundings. At the same time, it is observed that whereas tenement houses and high-rise blocks of flats are on the whole regarded as the least desired types of housing, the former are longed-for by people with the highest incomes, who appreciate the prestige connected to owning a flat in a centrally located old (but preferably renovated) residential building. Then again, study results from another Polish city, Lublin, indicate that 'traditional perimeter blocks … regained their attractiveness in comparison with the excess of anonymous [residential] space of prefabricated estates' (Kipta, 2008, p. 13). (Re)valorsation of different housing structures may thus vary greatly, which is why a more detailed enquiry into the causal relationship between the socio-demographic characteristics of urban dwellers and their residential needs and preferences is necessary.

Summing up the observations made in this chapter so far, it may be stated that the post-socialist legacy in the housing sphere, in combination with the effects of the SDT, have produced the new settings for residential mobility and flexibility patterns. Juxtaposition of the two groups of factor, based on the example of Poland, is presented in table 3.2.

Table. 3.2 Linkages between the post-socialist housing legacy and the consequences of demographic change (the case of Poland)

Housing situation and demographic change after 1989 in Poland	
Post-socialist housing legacy	Second DemographicTransition effects
severe shortage of dwellings	growing number of households
large prefabricated housing estates for nuclear families	variation of living arrangements, rise of non-traditional households

mass produced, standardised architecture	differentiation of lifestyles, individualisation
residential stability, rootedness	residential instability, flexibility
devaluation of inner city	revaluation of the inner city

Source: Own elaboration.

When it comes to the issues concerning the overall housing demand, it appears that the SDT consequences magnified the already existing socialist liabilities. For instance, the severity of housing deficit has been aggravated by both the rise in household numbers and heterogenisation of their types, resulting in growing housing needs accompanied by diversification of residential preferences. Furthermore, demographic change as a derivative of social and cultural transformations has contributed to modification of mobility patterns, which departed from residential stability and rootedness typical of the socialist period. It may also be stated that the combination of the above-mentioned factors provided opportunities for the revaluation of the post-socialist inner city. On the one hand, the shortage of dwellings, together with a relatively sluggish pace of new housing construction, have led to a critical reassessment of the available housing stock, including old inner-city tenement houses. On the other, alongside the pursuit of residential flexibility, attention has been drawn to compound advantages of the inner-city dwellings. Even if the renewed interest in such flats has been caused largely by the relatively low cost of their acquisition, it cannot be seen as the only pull factor to the inner city, which is further supported by the results of the empirical research in Chapter 4.

Therefore, it appears that after decades of neglect of residential needs and preferences, their importance has been restored and hence new trends of residential mobility triggered. Certainly, apart from the immediate SDT effects, other important factors have played significant roles in the process as well. For example, the proliferation of elderly one-person households, as a result of population ageing, has undoubtedly added to the housing demand strains in the urban areas of the CEE (de Vos and Sandefur, 2001; Długosz, 2002; Kurek, 2006; Niezabitowski, 2009) while on the contrary, massive migrations to the United Kingdom, which followed Poland's accession to the European Union, may have temporarily eased the deficit of dwellings[43]. Nonetheless, it is difficult to overrate the importance

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[43] The scale of this mobility is unknown, since register data on international migration after 1st of May 2004 are incomplete. Yet, it is roughly estimated that the number of Polish immigrants in the EU-15 increased from around 450,000 in 2002 to 750,000 in 2004 and more than doubled during the first three years of Poland's membership (*Informacja o rozmiarach...*, 2009, p. 3).

of the SDT, not least because 'current population and household developments will have considerable consequences for the socio-spatial organization and the housing markets of cities in CEE in the future' (Steinführer and Haase, 2007, p. 185). Investigating first signs of such transformations at the inner-city level is the principal aim of the following section.

3.3. The post-socialist inner city

Among the specifics of a socialist city, subjected to the ideological hegemony of the state and the regime of centrally planned economy, the most critical for current development of its inner city was the almost complete lack of private property tenure and intended disinvestment in the inner-city areas, which led to their social and material degradation. Restoration of market mechanisms in the 1990s and the reintroduction of ground rent value as a regulator of processes shaping the spatial and functional structure of urban areas thus has inevitably led to a modification of the mosaic pattern of the socialist city, and a partial return of the pre-socialist socio-spatial arrangements[44].

As stated earlier on in this chapter (see section 3.1), the inner city constitutes the second of the four zones of urban development outlined in the post-socialist city model (Liszewski, 2001)[45]. Functional transformation in the inner zone consists in re-adaptation of industrial edifices for new uses and expansion of services which, to some extent, replace residential function. Spatial changes manifest themselves in building over vacant plots, while changes on the social plane appear as social degradation of residential areas and creation of new pockets of poverty (Liszewski, 2001, p. 306). However, according to Liszewski, in comparison to the central and suburban zones, the inner zone stands out due to relatively low intensity and incidental character of the ongoing changes. Findings of numerous researchers do not necessarily agree with that statement, pointing to a plethora of transformations taking place in the post-socialist inner city. For instance, Matlovič et al. (2001) identify among them processes of commercialisation, functional fragmentation, gentrification, demilitarisation, deindustrialisation, sacralisation and, albeit to a lesser degree, revitalisation, intensification, recession and urban decline, (social) separation, segregation and regression of the socio-economic status.

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[44] The presocialist, i.e. early capitalist, inner cities of the CEE not only were subject to the market mechanisms, but also to intensive residential segregation both in horizontal and vertical terms (physical location of the buildings and position of dwellings inside them) (Malicka, 1975, p. 181).

[45] Directly translated into Polish, the term 'inner city' (*miasto wewnętrzne*) has a rather ambiguous meaning, which is why it is usually reformulated as 'inner-city areas/districts' (*obszary/dzielnice wewnątrzmiejskie*) or 'extended city centre' (*centrum rozszerzone*; Rykiel, 1995).

These socio-spatial transformations obviously vary in scope and intensity, depending on the city size, leading function(s) and position in the national and global urban hierarchy. In this respect, A. Zborowski and M. Dej (2009, p. 112) differentiate between two types of urban centres in Poland, multifunctional metropolises like Warsaw, Cracow, Poznań or Wrocław, and large cities with a functional structure formerly dominated by industry, as in the case of Łódź and Katowice. Inner cities of the former type are predisposed to be affected by the advanced segregation and social polarisation, while, at the same time, they may display progressive gentrification tendencies which accompany or result from undertaken revitalisation policies. In turn, the changes in the latter type of inner cities are found to be connected to depopulation, as an effect of the outflow of the better-off residents to the suburbs, which is not being compensated by new arrivals[46].

Before turning to a more detailed discussion of changes in the post-socialist inner city, it is worth to pinpoint the outset situation in those urban areas. Back in the end of the 1980s J. Wiench (1989, p. 111) who outlines a 'sociological sketch for a portrait of old inner cities' accentuates the concentration of old-age inhabitants, who live off their meagre pensions, represent low levels of education and strong attachment to the place of residence. While elderly single women were the typical households to be found in such ageing neighbourhoods, their housing conditions were viewed as relatively worse than in other parts of the city, due to a high proportion of small and substandard flats. However, as Wiench rightly points out, 'such homogeneous image does not quite correspond to reality, since the use of average [statistical] indicators blurs the inner diversification, concerning the old housing structures and their residents alike' (p. 112). This judgement is further supported by the outcomes of W. Czeczerda's (1989) investigation into the social and demographic qualities of the old housing structures. The obtained results deny uniformity of housing conditions and reveal their dependence on such factors as age and architectural design of the buildings or general reputation of the city itself, as well as reputation of its particular districts. The resulting heterogeneity is also reflected in the residential mix:

> The real picture of old residential neighbourhoods' populations includes both stereotypical features, such as aged population dominated by old women, and phenomena which stand in direct contradiction to this stereotype, i.e. relatively numerous groups of youngsters and children. … In larger cities old residential neighbourhoods' are inhabited by relatively

46   The city of Leipzig in eastern Germany provides a classic example of this type.

higher proportions of white-collar than blue-collar workers and the socio-occupational structure is diversified (p. 357).

A similar extent of the inner-city diversification seems to have persisted 20 years later. Even though the low standard of some flats prompts many relatively well-to-do inhabitants to move out (Zborowski et al., 2009), those who are left behind are not necessarily forced to stay through the lack of sufficient economic capacity to change their place of residence. Residential rootedness, evidenced in the aforementioned studies, continues to act as an anchor despite any inconveniences of inner-city living. Results of a survey undertaken by Czeczerda (1989) in the late 1980s demonstrate elevated levels of attachment to flats in pre-war tenement houses among their residents, since in reply to a hypothetical question concerning willingness to stay or move out of the current building to a newly-built estate outside the inner city, the vast majority of respondents chose the former option. Likewise, early in the 21st century, local inhabitants of inner-city Wrocław, despite their dissatisfaction with poor technical condition of the houses and degradation of residential environment in general, were very appreciative of architectural values of the buildings, wide-ranging qualities of the flats and neighbourly relations with other owners and tenants (Kłopot, 2003, p. 167). In Łódź the vast majority of residents of two inner-city pre-war housing estates, claim to be content with their dwellings, and although 80 per cent of them hope for some changes regarding the bad technical condition of the buildings and local roads, 84 per cent declare that they do not wish to move out (Marcińczak, 2006, p. 191).

Meanwhile, besides the highly satisfied inner-city veterans, various advantages of inner-city living have begun to appeal to new groups of urban dwellers. Such trends, already observed by Czeczerda (1989, p. 349), were at first qualified as the remedial measures to appease the growing housing demand. Provided that it could be the case back in the 1980s, incipient reurbanisation processes taking place in Polish inner cities after the breakthrough of 1989 seem to be driven by additional forces. Despite the lack of adequate statistical data to confirm this phenomenon, there is a reliable indirect evidence for the arrival of newcomers to the post-socialist inner city. Just like in Western Europe, the involved urban dwellers tend to derive from younger age cohorts and are largely represented by non-traditional households. For instance, a study focusing on the post-socialist socio-spatial transformation in Cracow's urban area and region during the 1990s confirms that young singles and families constitute a sizeable proportion of the new arrivals in central and inner city neighbourhoods (Zborowski and Soja, 2009; figure 3.3).

To some extent, the high share of young new residents is linked to a post-1989 upsurge in the number of students and inner-city location of most of student

accommodation. Even though the explicit preference for centrally located dwellings characteristic of this group (see Bartnicka, 1987) has not changed much in the last decades, it was the increase of the demand for higher education and resulting shortage of rooms in halls of residence that caused the abrupt increase in student lodgings' demand and supply and boosted the inner-city studentification.

However, just like in Western Europe, it is not only students who choose to move into inner cities of the CEE. Newcomers to the three most central residential zones in Cracow, apart from displaying the young-age pattern, also exhibit the highest variety of household types within the city region. Even if the given classification of households is not complete, lacking distinction of single parents or flatsharers, it provides a clear enough indication for the existing residential and household mix.

Fig. 3.3   Residential influx to zones of development in the urban region of Cracow in the 1990s, by household type
Source: Zborowski and Soja, 2009, p. 39
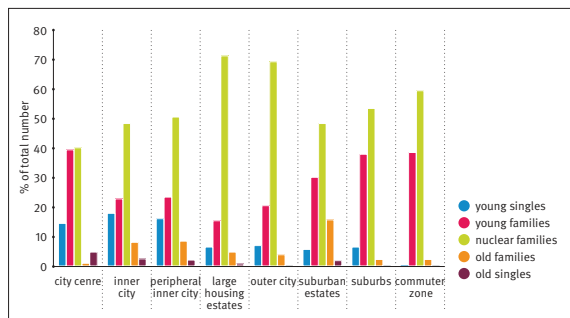
Similar conclusions are reached in a recent study of social space of Gdynia, yet another Polish city under transformation[47]. While the post-socialist large housing

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[47]   The urban history of Gdynia dates from the beginning of the 20th century when it was developed from a small fishing village to the biggest Polish port, hence its spatial structure is fairly different than in Gdańsk or Wrocław. Yet, the modernist architecture of Gdynia's central districts shares the qualities of inner-city prewar housing typical of older cities in Poland.

estates and individual housing in the urban peripheries represent the two poles of socio-spatial polarisation, it is the central and the inner-city area which exhibits the most far-gone residential diversification. While, on the one hand, it represents a stronghold of the rooted elderly inhabitants, on the other it has attracted increasing numbers of creative class' representatives: 'entrepreneurs running big and profitable businesses, traditional intelligentsia and highly creative and usually affluent freelancers' (Szmytkowska, 2008, p. 133)[48].

Therefore, in spite of suburbanisation trends culminating throughout the CEE region, traces of reurbanisation are also to be observed. Coming back to Liszewski's statement on the relative stagnation of the post-socialist inner city, it seems that in fact the situation is quite the reverse:

> Already, the existing small body of studies concerning … inner-city areas [in Central and Eastern Europe] has confirmed that they are by no means stagnating. On the contrary, micro – and meso-scale analyses prove that household structures as well as age and tenure compositions have changed in recent years … . Also quantitatively, the inner city is in a constant though not always apparent transformation (Steinführer and Haase, 2007, p. 190).

Hitherto, many of the parameters of the post-socialist inner-city transformations have remained unknown. For instance, reasons for the choice of inner-city living have not been diagnosed exhaustively, usually taking into account residential needs and preferences of either individuals or households as a whole on the basis of their socio-economic status and ignoring such features as household composition or lifestyle patterns. Certainly, it needs to be acknowledged that housing strategies are hugely dependent on availability of financial resources or their alternatives, such as material help provided by relatives. Therefore, apart from the fact that the cost of purchase of flats in old pre-war buildings is relatively low, it is also easier for young well-off professionals without family commitments or childless double-income cohabiting couples to obtain a credit loan (Grabkowska, 2008). Also, the aged owner-occupiers or long-term sitting tenants are most likely to bequeath them to their young grandchildren who often have not (yet) established families of their own. Especially when younger households are concerned, inheritance of flats appears as a common way of gaining residential access to the inner city, alongside purchase and, to a lesser extent, rent[49]. As for the flat-share arrangements, they are increasingly

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[48]   P. Kubicki and M. Galent (2011) call them urbanogentsia (or *nowi mieszczanie,* Kubicki, 2011) and point out their increased propensity for civic engagement.
[49]   A longitudinal insight into inhabitants' motives for moving into two inner-city prewar housing estates in Łódź reveals that, while in the 1960s the dominant reason of residential influx was assignment of

becoming a popular means of reducing costs of living, applied not only in student communities, but among other non-family households as well.

The issue of budding reurbanisation in the post-socialist inner city, although already appearing in academic debate (Lisowski, 2005; Parysek and Mierzejewska, 2005; Steinführer and Haase, 2007), so far seems to have been ignored by urban practitioners throughout the CEE region. Nevertheless, the discussed processes concerning the influx of new, demographically distinct, residents to run-down centrally located urban neighbourhoods, are beginning to draw attention of policy makers in the context of the inner-city regeneration. By reason of the relative novelty of the issue in post-socialism, the level of expertise in this field has been low, hence, in search for ready-to-use revitalisation formulas, urban policy makers seem to draw upon experiences and solutions applied in Western cities (Grabkowska, 2005). The resulting transfer of revitalisation know-how can be valuable on the one hand, as it may limit or preclude probability of committing preventable mistakes. However, on the other hand, it leaves the risk that the transferred policies will be unfit for the post-socialist setting. Accordingly, this risk is further increased by the lack of adequate studies of the regeneration issues in the local contexts.

Despite its 'newness', inner-city regeneration has been high on the political agenda in the CEE countries. There are, however, two key hindrances to competent implementation of revitalisation programmes, i.e. the lack of legal and organisational frameworks and financial constraints. In Poland, two decades after the collapse of socialist economy, limitations connected to the nonexistence of suitable regulations still linger on. Regulation gaps particularly pertain to ownership ambiguities brought about by unfinished process of land denationalisation and municipalisation of the former state property (Załuski, 2004). Another problematic issue is the revitalisation bill, yet unpassed, necessary to legally settle such issues as, for instance, coordination of joint ventures between public sector and private investors.

The ongoing deliberation on the final form of the document has continued since 1993. One of its draft versions stipulated interconnection of revitalisation policies with spatial planning at the local level, specification of roles and capacities of engaged institutions, ways and means of financing regeneration projects and social participation (Bryx, 2003)[50]. According to some experts, passing the bill could raise the standard of efficiency of revitalisation practices and contribute

to their acceleration, as for the time being authorities of many Polish cities tend to withhold from broader actions and undertake only makeshift modernisation and repair works. As remarked by A. Billert (2008, p. 13), '(l)egal regulations do not guarantee revitalisation … they can only set in order processes engendered by other factors … demographic or economic, above all including the estate market mechanisms'. Nevertheless, the lack of legal revitalisation framework 'poses a risk of not only undesirable social effects, as for instance gentrification, but may lead to a waste of public funds involved in the urban renewal and their inadmissible appropriation by the private sector' (p. 18). The mentioned threat of misuse of public resources could happen if, for example, general repair expenses in a run-down district increase the value of dwellings only for the benefit of owners and, as such, put pressure on other residents to move out.

For the time being, the economic condition of many Polish municipalities, which have been heavily burdened with obligations and left to their own resources after many decades of centrally planned economy, does not seem to allow them to act single-handedly in the field of regeneration. Local authorities find it difficult to cope with the high-level capital intensity, long payback period and increased investment risks, which also appear to deter potential private partners in regeneration projects[51]. A partial solution to the problem of financial support emerged due to Poland's membership in the European Union and access to the structural funds. Nonetheless, the principle of additionality in the EU funding presents yet another hurdle, especially to less operative municipalities[52].

Apart from the already mentioned impediments to regeneration, there also remains the question of different understandings of the term. In the light of the bill proposal, it is referred to areas in crisis and decline and defined as an action directed towards social development of their local communities, while local authorities, estate property owners and local residents are recognised as responsible partners participating in the process (Billert et al., 2003, s. 13). Such community-oriented approach complies with both the idea of sustainable development and the European Union guidelines for social regeneration (Colantonio and Dixon, 2009). Inclusion of local inhabitants, however, entails a change

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municipal dwellings, in the following decade it was inheritance and in the 1990s it was mostly an effect of purchase or exchange of dwellings (Marcińczak, 2006, p. 186).

50 In Poland the three-tier system of governance introduced in 1999 consists of central, regional (voivodeship) and local (powiat and gmina) levels.

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51 Singular cases of realised commercial urban revitalisation projects as outcomes of matrimony between economy and culture in Poland (see Murzyn, 2004, Grabkowska, 2005, 2006) serve rather as exceptions confirming the rule.

52 Prior to 2007 the maximum level of co-financing of structural projects was 75 per cent, which meant that every three Euros spent by the EU had to be complemented with an additional Euro of own resources. In practice, on the account of payments being transferred in installments as well considering the costs of transfers, the share of own financial contribution could amount to even over 30 per cent (Głąbicka, Grewiński, 2003, s. 226). For the programming period 2007-2013 the maximum co-financing rate increased to 85 per cent.

of collective consciousness since many of veteran residents, especially among municipal tenants, still manifest apathy and/or claimant attitudes shaped during the socialist period. Inability to take common action and increased expectations towards administrative bodies indicate that

> [r]ootedness and strong social ties within local urban communities are not prerequisites for coherence of these groups, in the sense of formulating common aims and self-organisation ... [Therefore] it can be stated that such communities are characterised rather by mechanical than organic solidarity (Wiench, 1989, p. 125-126). Furthermore, wasteful exploitation of old tenement houses taken under state control and management not only led to decapitalisation but also contributed to their common perception as nobody's property[53]. Even today, with privatisation processes well under way, it is extremely hard to eradicate this tendency. As a result, inner-city residents often continue to act towards and be treated by the municipal authorities not as partners in regeneration process but rather as burdensome clients[54]. In addition, particular owners' willingness to undertake repairs on their own may be hindered by the concern that their expenses will be futile unless their neighbours invest too (Polko, 2005, p. 71).

Taking these circumstances into consideration it, would seem that prospects for successful neighbourhood upgrading are limited. Nevertheless, there exist positive examples of such processes taking place in Polish inner cities. One of the most outstanding is the case of two residential and former industrial districts of Lublin, Stare Bronowice and Kośminek (Kipta, 2008). Both neighbourhoods, with housing structures dating from the 19th century, were intended for demolition during the socialist period, which contributed to their gradual technical and social degradation. After the 1989 the plans for pulling down the old residential buildings were eventually dismissed, which however did not solve the underlying problem. Given the poor reputation of the neighbourhoods, the local authorities decided to create development plans on the basis of a close collaboration with the residents and with their financial engagement as key investors. In the course of public consultation and in-depth discussion involving all parties, clear and comprehensible frameworks for action were developed and adopted. As a result,

major repair and modernisation works were realised with private owners' input exceeding 75 per cent of all costs, an impressive share considering the relatively low economic status of the local residents. What is more, once boosted, their activity continued even after the official end of the programme. The explanation for such accomplishment lies in prioritising local residents' needs, as well as providing them with practical guidance and, perhaps first and foremost,

> communicating with residents in the initial stage of gathering suggestions and materials to the plan and not, as it is commonly practised, when the plan proposal is already finished (Kipta, 2008, p. 14).

Genuine participation of the inhabitants in the upgrading process translated into their approval for the plan, also helped to avoid time-consuming objection procedures after the plan was presented to public. Also, the obligatory public consultations could serve their original purpose, that is discussion and exchange of opinions, instead of being treated by the authorities as a superficial formal requirement, as oftentimes happens (cf. Hałat, 2010). Interestingly, while the elaboration process took only a year, another year was spent on overcoming the resistance of planners and decision-makers attached to the idea of demolition and anticipating failure of the whole undertaking. This shows that the major barriers to the successful upgrading are mutual distrust and/or unwillingness to cooperate between local authorities and residents.

Another example of upgrading practices in a Polish city post-1989 is evidenced in inner Wrocław (Kłopot, 2003). In one of the most deprived neighbourhoods, Oławskie Przedmieście (dubbed 'Bermuda Triangle'), 73 per cent of respondents surveyed, admitted having the technical condition of their dwellings improved or modernised during the 1990s, with municipal funding reported in only 15 per cent of them. Although the need for many of those improvements was set off by the flood of 1997, the extent of works went far beyond the water damage repairs[55]. Therefore, the Wrocław case, like Lublin, proves that there is a potential for improving technical condition of pre-war housing structures, even in the most degraded areas of post-socialist inner cities[56].

Upgrading practices are, however, strictly related to privatisation of the municipal housing stock. In the case of Poland, the option to buy out municipal dwellings

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53 In fact, occasionally the residents purposefully added to this decapitalisation hoping that the worse technical condition of the building, the more the authorities would be compelled to repair it.

54 A notable exception is the Programme for Small Improvements (*Program Małych Ulepszeń*) which allows residents of municipal flats in Szczecin to obtain co-financing for upgrading of individual heating systems and undertaking of other types of essential modernisations. Between the years 1998 and 2006 almost 4 million zł were granted altogether (*Biuletyn Informacji...*, 2012).

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55 Among 399 respondents, 94 per cent modernised water-sewer and/or electric installations, 58 per cent built missing bathrooms and/or toilets, 32 per cent replaced heating systems, 30 modified flat layout and only 20 per cent of repairs were directly related to the damages caused by the flood (Kłopot, 2003, p. 156).

56 See also Tölle (2008) for an overview of *Selbstnutzer* (owner-occupier) upgrading programme in Lepizig.

by the sitting tenants appeared in the 1970s (Wiench, 1989, p. 116), but the sales gathered speed only after the systemic transformation had begun. The changing tenure of dwellings altered the ownership structure of the whole buildings and raised an issue of shared responsibility for their maintenance. Regarding the domination of municipal housing in the inner city, it is the old tenement houses which have been most affected by these adjustments.

The Act on Ownership of Housing Units, of 24 June 1994, introduced the legal category of commonhold (*wspólnota mieszkaniowa*, also translated as 'housing association' or 'condominium')[57]. Defined as 'the total of owners whose dwelling units belong to the same real property' (*Ustawa z dnia...*, 1994, article 6), the main task of such body is decision-making regarding maintenance of the common property. A commonhold is established the moment that any of the flats in a municipal building is privatised, which means that depending on the existing tenure structure of dwellings, it is made up of either private owner(s) and a representative of the municipality, or private owners only. The decisions have to be unanimous in the case of small commonholds (*małe wspólnoty mieszkaniowe*), which consist of seven or less dwellings, and made on a majority basis in big commonholds, with more than seven dwellings (*duże wspólnoty mieszkaniowe*). Any costs of undertaken renovations and investments in the common property, such as repair of the staircase or roof replacement, are shared between the members. Even though commonhold is an incomplete legal person, without legal entity but having legal capacity, it may, for instance, apply to the European Regional Development Fund for grants supporting repairs and modernisation of the common property (Fila, 2008).

Establishment of commonholds thus, on the one hand, partially discharged municipalities from liabilities connected to high costs of maintenance of old residential buildings. For this reason, a common policy of local authorities in Poland is to encourage municipal tenants to purchase the dwellings they rent. Incentives include discounts reaching even 90 per cent of the dwellings' market value, which have proven to be very effective considering the soaring prices during the recent housing market boom. On the other hand, tenure readjustments and the emergence of commonholds may be seen as a return to the idea of self-governance, originally underlying the introduction of the socialist housing cooperatives but later distorted (Sagan, 2000). To residents of pre-war tenement houses the described changes may offer new possibilities for improving not only technical condition of the buildings, but quality of life as well. Even if in the first years of functioning, the commonholds faced a lot of difficulties, related not only to lack of

knowledge and understanding of the legal issues, but also lack of time or interest of their members to become actively involved (Blunt and Muzioł-Węcławowicz, 1998), the situation has gradually changed for better.

The major remaining obstacle to commonholds' efficiency is connected to the fact that many former municipal residents living in old, decapitalised stock, who bought out municipal flats at favourable prices, are currently unable to afford neither their maintenance nor regular monthly contributions for necessary repairs and improvements of the whole building. Furthermore, the increasing rate at which municipal flats are being sold, raises questions about the limits to privatisation. In most of Polish cities the social housing stock has already dwindled substantially and continues to diminish[58].

Yet, privatisation of the municipal housing stock and relatively low prices of the dwellings in the degraded inner-city neighbourhoods stimulate their rotation and induce residential inflow. Regarding the aforementioned rootedness, typical of veteran resident of the post-socialist inner city, such processes seem to have a quite revolutionary potential. Results of a pilot research aimed at uncovering patterns of residential behaviour of households inhabiting two case-study neighbourhoods of inner Gdańsk (Buzar and Grabkowska, 2006) reveal a clear differentiation between residential mobility (capacity for moving from one dwelling to another) and spatial flexibility (ability to adapt the dwelling to changing needs). Four possible permutations (mobility/immobility versus flexibility/inflexibility) meant four typical household situations could be summarised in a square of oppositions (figure 3.4).

With reference to this typology, the follow-up research discussed in the final empirical chapter focused on the two cases involving spatial flexibility (types II and IV) with the recognition of 'in-situ' housing transformation, as typical of the post-socialist context and frequent transitions between different housing units, common among young nest-leavers. The former housing strategy is in line with the reasoning of S. Mandič (2001), who shows the prevalence of 'in-place dynamism' in her study of residential behaviour of households in Slovenia and attributes it to the specifics of the housing market during post-socialist transition. Issues like housing shortage and resulting (relatively) low mobility rates, the dominant preference for ownership and the persistent 'move-to-stay' approach to residential relocation can be used to account for the similarity between the Slovenian and Polish residential patterns, which, all together, are not the same as the mobility-centred Western perspective. Residential flexibility thus represents a coping strategy which enables households to adjust their dwellings to changing

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57 As there is no direct translation of the term *wspólnota mieszkaniowa* in English, 'commonohld' will be used as the closest equivalent.

58 For a discussion of possible measures to counteract this tendency, including housing policy roundtables and community-based monitoring, see Erbel (2012).

needs under conditions of, as yet, underdeveloped housing market. The old inner city tenement houses seem to be best suited for this purpose while non-traditional households are most likely to take advantage of the opportunities they offer (see section 2.1).

Fig. 3.4 Residential mobility and spatial flexibility patterns: a square of oppositions Source: Buzar and Grabkowska, 2006, p. 165
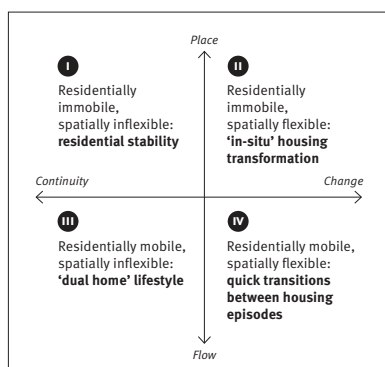
Some patterns of household behaviour typical of North America and Western Europe appear to be almost identical in post-socialist cities and have been adopted especially by younger generations of urban dwellers. Young Dutch adults' house-hold and residential decisions made on leaving their parental home are investigated by C. Mulder and D. Manting (1994). The term 'flexibility' is used by the authors to describe the strategy which resolves itself into postponement of settling down (that is, entering marriage and homeownership), allowing the individual to 'keep all options open' and at the same time giving temporary priority to her/his educational and/or occupational career over the household and housing career (p. 157). Traces of ongoing studentification in post-socialist inner cities suggest that such is the path followed by flatsharing students, who represent residentially mobile and spatially flexible households of the fourth type.

Although it has been ascertained that examples from Western Europe point to gentrification as a major potential threat to sustainability of the inner-city regeneration (section 2.2), until recently no evident signs of intense gentrification have been observed in the cities of CEE, apart from spatially limited cases in

several capitals (Sýkora, 2005). Yet, even these are found to be often connected to commercialisation and/or upward social mobility of the existing population. Within the whole region, classical gentrification trends seem to be the most developed in Prague, because of advanced processes of restitution and high proportion of foreigners with the preference for the inner-city residence, and still

> we can speak about gentrifying areas but about gentrified neighbourhoods with greater difficulty. Gentrifying places are characterised by a mixture of original population and gentrifiers, old and new establishments, refurbished and not-yet-renovated properties (Sýkora, 2005, p. 96)

Moreover, so far residential change in the post-socialist inner city can be described as simultaneous 'de-mixing' and 're-mixing' (Haase et al., 2009), as well as replace-ment rather than displacement, which means that the population outflow is volun-tary and the shift in the population composition proceeds gradually (Sýkora, 2005, p. 98). However, it may become accelerated with progressing restitution, which interchanges municipal housing with private renting and/or intended 'change of social structure' as a result of top-down regeneration programmes (Jadach-Sepioło, 2009, p. 135)[59]. Areas most prone to gentrification under such conditions are those which, despite suffering much degradation during the socialist period, managed to retain (some of) their pre-war reputation as desired residential addresses.

To sum up, as yet 'gentrification in post-socialist cities, is spatially limited to a plot or a block, restoration of a whole district remains a song of tomorrow' (Marcińczak, 2007, p. 68), which explains the gap in Polish literature on the subject (cf. Jadach-Sepioło, 2007). There exists, however, one additional threat to the residential sustainability, which is connected to the emergence and the rising popularity of gated communities in CEE. Interestingly, this phenomenon of restricting physical access to residential areas has occurred on a limited scale in Western Europe and is mostly associated with North American cities. Out of the three main types of gated communities distinguished by E. Blakely and M. Snyder (1998), namely the 'lifestyle communities', the 'prestige communities' and 'security zones', a combination of the latter two seems to prevail in larger post-socialist cities. According to B. Jałowiecki (2008), the scale of gating in Warsaw is 'enormous' and resulting not only in widespread security fencing and entryphone systems, but also in such drastic interventions in public space as, for

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59 The latter mechanism is illustrated by the example of two Polish cities, Będzin and Szczecin, where up-grading and modernisation of the existing housing stock were to be accompanied by its privatisation and resettlements of municipal tenants. Thus, 'without calling it gentrification, but only improvement of population structure, gentrification processes were set in motion' (Jadach-Sepioło, 2009, p. 134-135).

instance, demarcation of new city streets inaccessible to non-residents in the new-built housing estates.

Typical of gating in Poland is the fact that it occurs both within infill housing developments located in degraded inner-city neighbourhoods and new residential estates constructed in the peripheries, where gates and fences separate residents from nothing else but vast tracts of undeveloped land. This confirms Jałowiecki's assumption that prestige motivations play a far more important role than the safety reasons, especially since results of research conducted in the United States do not suggest that gating has any real impact on crime (Blakely and Snyder, 1998, p. 66). It also appears that the most enthusiastic proponents of gating are developers who fuel artificial demand for fences and security systems in order to benefit from elevated prices of dwellings. Nevertheless, despite the interest which the issue of gating has raised in the academic cirles, it seems not to have been recognised yet as a hot potato by practitioners (Jałowiecki and Łukowski, 2007; Gądecki, 2009).

This chapter provided an overview of the processes shaping the socio-residential space of post-socialist (inner) city. Assuming that residential flexibility plays one of the key roles in attracting various, and especially non-traditional, households to the inner-city neighbourhoods (Hypothesis 1), further questions are raised about potential consequences of their arrival. It appears that gradual influx of young and well-educated newcomers could encourage upgrading processes through engagement in commonholds, following from personal interest in improving residential satisfaction and quality of life. Provided that the in-migration does not entail displacement and the resulting social (re)mix is maintained, processes of the inner-city residential change could contribute to sustainable bottom-up regeneration and reurbanisation (Hypothesis 3). In view of the fact that the Polish inner city has actually never faced the problem of massive population outflows, unlike the inner cities of eastern Germany, reurbanisation in Poland is more about ensuring socially sound neighbourhoods, rather than counteracting severe depopulation. The subsequent empirical chapter of the book presents findings of the Gdańsk case-study, which are analysed from the point of view which allows for testing the three hypotheses.

4. *Socio-demographic changes and residential flexibility as a basis for bottom-up regeneration in inner-city Gdańsk (case study)*[60]

4.1. Inner-city transformations after 1989

The city of Gdańsk, a seaport and a part of the largest urban agglomeration in Northern Poland, appears as an interesting setting for the following case study for a number of reasons. First of all, it is a city with a long and complicated past, resulting in the multifaceted social and cultural landscape of today, intertwined with the palimpsest of the built structures from different periods of time. Secondly, the multiplicity of socio-economic processes which have been taking place over the past two decades following the systemic change, renders the city an excellent urban laboratory. For instance, according to the statistical evidence, the second demographic transition is well under way, even if not all of its characteristics are detectable through census data. Last but not least, despite the fact that the inner city of Gdańsk, except for the historic city core, suffered relatively little war damage and therefore fulfilled a key role in the postwar decades, it has since then experienced great change. The inner-city neighbourhoods, with their high proportion of municipal flats, have gradually fallen behind the newer districts because of the lack of investment in the old buildings. Nonetheless, they currently seem to be experiencing a certain renaissance, being increasingly recognised as well-located and simply convenient if not yet fashionable.

Located at the mouth of the Vistula Gdańsk boasts an over millennial history. A former Hanseatic port, the Free City of Danzig and a site of the first shots of the Second World War, the city still bears the traces of a complicated past. Washed off its German identity during the communist era, it was heavily industrialised and propagandised as the working class hub, eventually becoming the cradle of

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60 Parts of earlier versions of this chapter have been published in Haase et al., 2011 (see Grabkowska, 2011a) and Grabkowska, 2011b.

the Solidarity movement and a symbol of struggle for freedom and independence. In 2010, with a population exceeding 455 thousand, it is the capital city of the Pomerania voivodship and a greater part of the Tricity agglomeration which consists of Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot, having around 750,000 inhabitants in total. Recently, it has also been a shrinking city with an ageing population, struggling with the negative effects of deindustrialisation and considerable population loss.

The number of Gdańsk inhabitants has been on the decline since the mid-1980s. Even though during the last intercensal period the number of inhabitants decreased only by 0.6 per cent (from 464,308 in 1988 to 461,334 in 2002), it continued to fall, reaching 455,581 in 2008 (figure 4.1). According to statistical projections, further decline will result in the total population of circa 360,000 in 2030 (*Ludność, ruch naturalny…*, 2006, p. 113).

Fig. 4.1 General population development in Gdańsk, 1988-2010
Source: Own calculations based on national census data and annual statistics
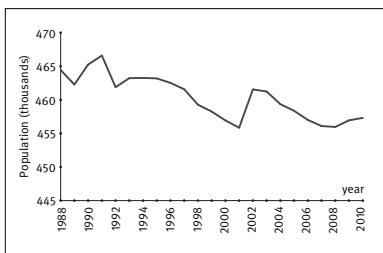
Two main factors have been influencing general population development in Gdańsk from the late 1980s onwards. On the one hand, decreasing numbers of Gdańsk inhabitants is a consequence of a rapid decline in birth rates which continued until the beginning of the 2000s, contrary to the stabilised mortality (fig. 4.2).

These unfavourable fertility trends have been, at first, connected to the difficult and unstable economic situation after the collapse of the socialist system. In recent years, however, they seem to be increasingly dependent on SDT-related lifestyle transformations, such as rising childlessness or progressing postponement of child-bearing. For instance, a detailed analysis of distribution of births by age of mother shows that 48.1 per cent of children born in Gdańsk in 2010 were delivered by females of 30 years of age or older (*Rocznik Demograficzny 2011*, 2011). The reversal of the downward tendency since 2002 is mainly due to entry of the baby

boom generation of the 1980s into the reproductive age group, although the improving living conditions in Poland also play a significant role.

Fig. 4.2 Natural population dynamics in Gdańsk between 1988 and 2010
Source: Own calculations based on national census data and annual statistics
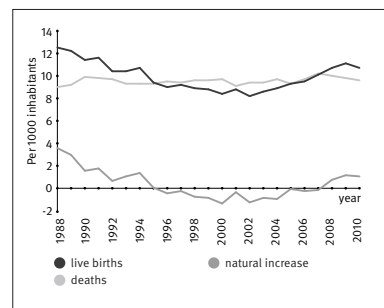
Fig. 4.3 Dynamics of migration balance in Gdańsk between 1988 and 2010
Source: Own calculations based on national census data and annual statistics
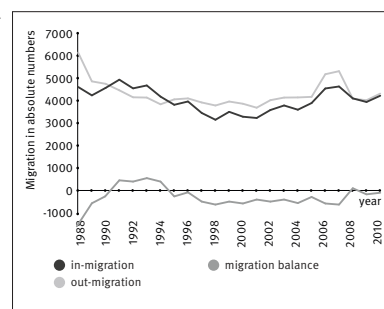
The other factor responsible for the population decline in Gdańsk is the massive outmigration to the suburbs, causing a negative migration balance for the majority of the intercensal period 1988-2002 (fig. 4.3). Like in most other second-order cities in Poland (see chapter 3.1), also in Gdańsk such situation has been a consequence of an unbalanced housing market, relatively high prices of flats and limited

availability of new housing stock within the city. Therefore, the city of Gdańsk tends to lose its inhabitants in favour of the surrounding rural gminas (table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Differences in natural population dynamics in the city of Gdańsk, Tricity agglomeration and Gdańsk subregion between 1999 and 2009

Spatial unit	1999	2009	1999-2009
	Population in thousands*		Per centage change
City of Gdańsk	457.6	451.6	-1.3
Tricity agglomeration	750.0	737.3	-1.7
Gdańsk subregion	450.5	512.7	+ 13.8

* Officially registered residents of administrative units.
Source: Own calculations based on data retrieved from Bank Danych Regionalnych 2010.

Summing up the data interpretation so far, the major processes shaping the demography of Gdańsk at the turn of the centuries appear to be connected to the second demographic transition and suburbanisation trends. Before turning to a more detailed data analysis at the district level it is important to define Gdańsk inner city and explain its characteristics.
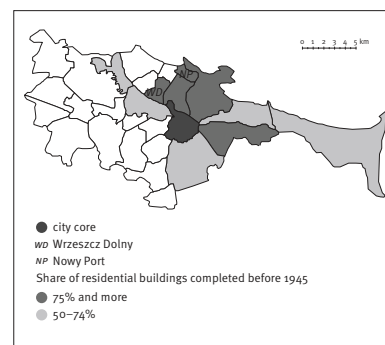
The earliest spatial development of Gdańsk proceeded from the mediaeval city core (*Śródmieście Historyczne*) northbound, along the Vistula estuary, as well as alongside the main transportation axis parallel to the coastline. These two dominant directions of urban expansion were also forced by the local physiographic conditions, as for centuries the post-glacial moraine plateau set boundaries to urban development in the south-west direction of the historically oldest part of the city. Therefore, districts with the highest shares of old housing structures are mostly located around the historic city core – itself severely destroyed during the Second World War – within the so-called lower terrace (figure 4.4)[61].

For the use of this study and with reference to Z. Rykiel's (1995) delimitation of the inner city as 'the area of the 19th century urban development' (see section 3.3), the inner city of Gdańsk is to be understood as neighbourhoods with high proportions of pre-war tenement houses concentrated in perimeter blocks. Two districts marked in the figure 4.4, Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port, have been found to be among the most representative of this type of urban setting and chosen for the following case-study analysis. In both of them the share of pre-1945 residential

buildings exceeds fifty per cent and both of them boast a contextually rich common history of former working-class estates, which underwent a progressive degradation during the socialist period, but recently have started to show signs of rejuvenation and renewal.

Fig. 4.4   Concentration of pre-war housing in Gdańsk by districts in 2002
Source: Own calculations based on national census data

● city core
WD Wrzeszcz Dolny
NP Nowy Port
Share of residential buildings completed before 1945
● 75% and more
● 50–74%

Both Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port are classified as priority areas in the Local Revitalisation Programme (*Program rewitalizacji...*, 2004), the first formal regeneration agenda in post-socialist Gdańsk. The main criteria applied in the selection of the districts intended for regeneration were threefold and concerned their social characteristics (high unemployment rate, low education level, low level of entrepreneurship, high degree of social exclusion and poverty), condition of the natural environment (considerable pollution) and technical state of built environment (large number of culturally valuable structures, bad technical condition of the existing development, insufficient or inoperative infrastructure, degraded areas of high economic potential such as post-industrial and post-military brownfields)[62]. Accordingly, the majority of the selected areas are located within the inner city, with Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port fulfilling several criteria and thus being included in the first phase of implementation of the programme. Since then, however, the top-down regeneration undertakings in both case-study

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61 As for its administrative structure, Gdańsk consists of six basic divisions called city boroughs (*dzielnice*), that is Oliwa, Południe, Port, Śródmieście, Wrzeszcz and Zachód, which are further divided into twenty-seven districts (*jednostki urbanistyczne*).

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62 The values of the indicators at the district level were related to the city-average values.

areas have progressed relatively slow, due to financial constraints, as well as the revaluation of priorities and redirecting the focus of attention to the district of Letnica, the future site of the UEFA Euro 2012 Football Championships (*Program rewitalizacji...*, 2009)[63].

Despite the similarities between the two districts, there are also two vital differences, which should be borne in mind while making any comparisons based on the statistical data. One of them consists in their location, and the other relates to the homogeneity of the housing stock. The location of Wrzeszcz Dolny, adjoining the main Tricity transportation axis, is more privileged and often being referred to by the interviewees as 'central', whereas the more peripheral Nowy Port is regarded as less accessible and accordingly less attractive (fig. 4.4). Both Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port, however, win hands down in this category when compared to new housing estates located within the districts of the upper terrace, linked to the city centre and the main communication system with only a few bottleneck access roads.

The second difference is that despite the 85-per cent share of pre-war buildings in Nowy Port, the demographic characteristics of the district are affected by the existence of a few high-rise buildings and particularly an immense deck-access block of flats (*falowiec*) with over 2,000 inhabitants, erected in the 1970s and inhabited mainly by young families with children. Both Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port, nonetheless, feature mostly densely built-up pre-war housing structures with a quite distinct inner-city quality and potential for residential flexibility which makes them suitable for the purposes of the study.

Looking into the census and annual statistics data concerning demographic processes in Gdańsk during the last two decades at the district level, it is evident that they are subject to strong spatial differentiation. For instance, the progressive reduction of population pyramids' bases and broadening of their tops indicate high dynamism of the ageing processes at the city level, which appear to be even further advanced in the inner-city districts (fig. 4.5)[64].

An overall spatial analysis also confirms that the share of the elderly is prominent in the districts of the lower terrace, and particularly in the inner city (fig. 4.6). This can be partly explained by the fact that after the Second World War the inner-city dwellings were occupied mostly by young families of repatriates from the pre-war Poland's eastern borderland. Due to the housing shortage of the

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63   Details concerning the planned revitalisation actions in Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port are provided subsequently.

64   These general trends of declining youth rates and corresponding increase of the elderly rates are unlikely to reverse in the coming years and were recognised by the local authorities among the main threats to the city development (*Gdańsk Development...*, 2004, p. 21).

Fig. 4.5   Population pyramids of Gdańsk in 1988 and 2002
Source: Own calculations based on national census data
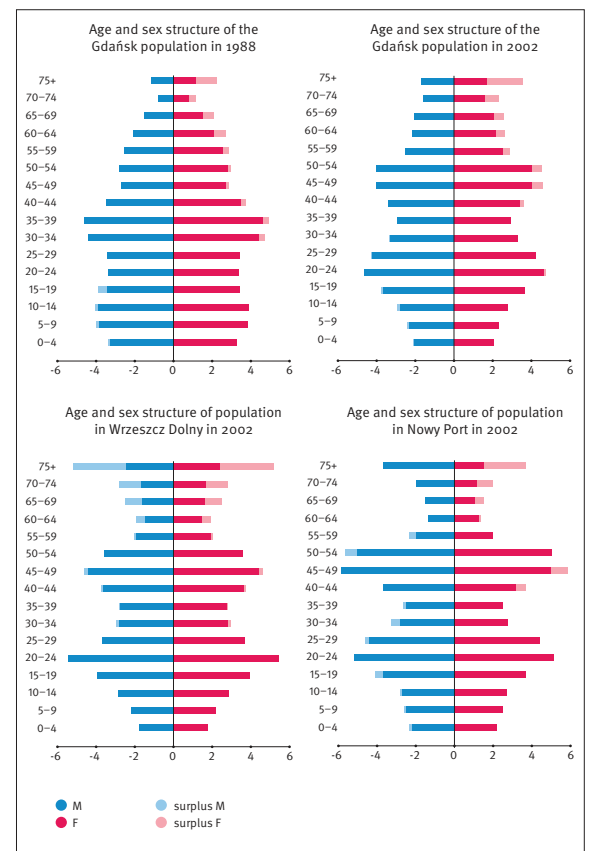
communist period, but also because of the gradually acquired rootedness, many of those 'forced' inhabitants did not have the opportunity or decided not to change their place of residence in the following decades. Correspondingly, the western and sou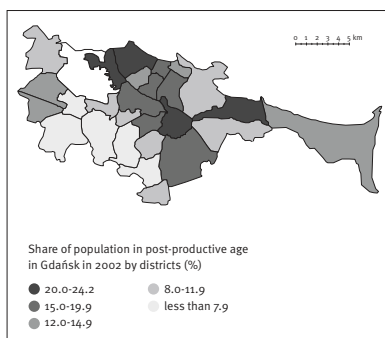thern districts of Gdańsk are populated with relatively younger inhabitants, as the majority of households living there are nuclear families with children (Piotrzkowska et al., 2006).

Fig. 4.6 Spatial dimension of ageing in Gdańsk in 2002
Source: Piotrzkowska et al., 2006, p. 8

Population ageing, as well as several other significant demographic processes manifest in the Gdańsk inner city, are closely related to household changes. Despite the aforementioned population decrease between 1988 and 2002, not only the number of households increased by 15.4 per cent during the same period but their structure changed significantly as well (fig. 4.7), resulting in a decline of the mean household size from 2.82 to 2.45 persons per household.

Despite the fact that the lack of comparable statistical data at the level of districts in 1988 hinders analysis of the intercensal demographic change in inner-city Gdańsk, there are several hints available. For instance, the shares of non-traditional household types in 2002 in inner-city districts were relatively higher than the city average (table 4.2 and figure 4.8)[65]. Even though this anomaly

could be partly explained by higher proportions of elderly women resident in the inner city, it seems that such interpretation is insufficient.

Fig. 4.7 Household structure by size in Gdańsk in 1988 and 2002
Source: Own calculations based on national census data
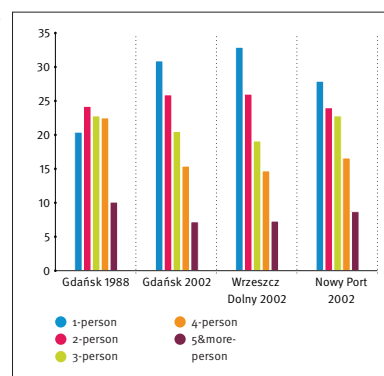
Table 4.2 Non-traditional and traditional household types in Gdańsk and Wrzeszcz Dolny in 2002

Households by types	Gdańsk	Wrzeszcz Dolny
	per centage of total number	
1-person households	30.9	32.9
Non-family households	33.3	36.2
Married couples	73.6	70.5
Cohabiting couples	2.8	2.8
One-parent households	23.6	26.7

Source: Own calculations based on national census data

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65 The category of non-family households includes 1-person households and any multiple-person households without direct family links between household members (*Narodowy Spis ...*, 1990, p. IV).

Fig. 4.8 Spatial distribution of non-traditional households in Gdańsk in 2002
Source: Piotrzkowska et al., 2006, p. 13-14

Share of 1-person households in Gdańsk in 2002, by districts (%)

- 35.0–44.4
- 30.0–34.9
- 25.0–29.9
- 20.0–24.9
- less than 19.9

Share of single-parent households in Gdańsk in 2002, by districts (%)

- 30.0-35.8
- 25.0-29.9
- 20.0-24.9
- 15.0-19.9
- less than 14.9
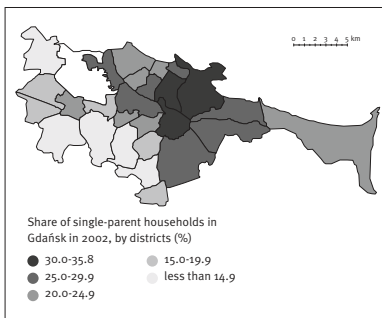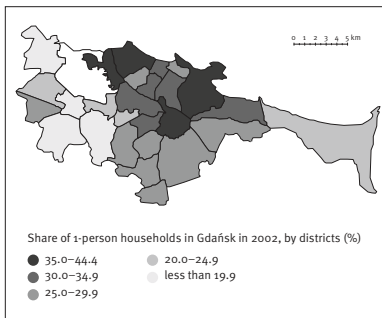
As for residential preferences of the inhabitants of Gdańsk, an 'outward' direction of intra-urban migrations points to strong residential segregation. The migration balance between 1995 and 2004 was positive only in two peripheral boroughs, Zachód (West) and Południe (South), where the majority of new housing developments have been constructed post-1989 (figures 4.9 and 4.10). Popularity of such urban-fringe residential locations is explained both by the overall housing shortage and their relatively low price. The comparatively lesser appeal of the older districts could be related to the fact that by many inhabitants

of Gdańsk, the inner city is still stereotypically perceived as dilapidated and dangerous.

Fig. 4.9 Intra-urban migration inflow and outflow in Gdańsk between 1995 and 2004
Source: Own elaboration based on Zaborski, 2006

Migration balance

- inflow
- outflow
- uninhabited unit
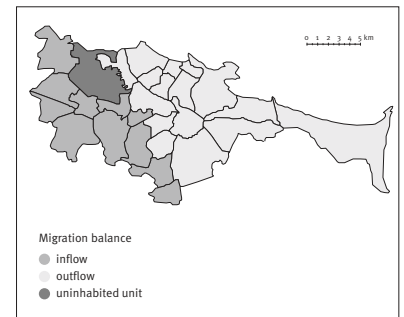
Fig. 4.10 Dominant types of housing structures in Gdańsk in 2002
Source: Own elaboration based on *Studium uwarunkowań...*, 2001

Type of housing stock:

- prewar tenement houses
- high-rise blocks of flats
- single-family houses
- new housing estates
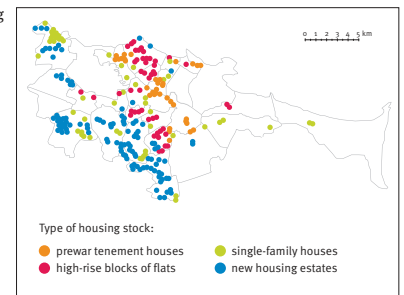
To date, there has not been any statistical evidence of the opposite, inner-city oriented, migration trend in Gdańsk. However, several types of transformations ongoing in post-socialist inner city create possibilities for the influx of new population groups. One of the most significant is related to privatisation of the municipal housing stock. In Gdańsk the share of this type of tenure has

considerably decreased during the intercensal period 1988-2002 in favour of private ownership (fig. 4.11). In 2007 alone, 1,894 municipal dwellings were sold to sitting tenants, while in the two previous years the number of such transactions exceeded 2,000 (*Raport o stanie...*, 2008, p. 138).

Fig. 4.11   Changes in the tenure structure of dwellings in Gdańsk, 1988 and 2002 Source: Own calculations based on national census data
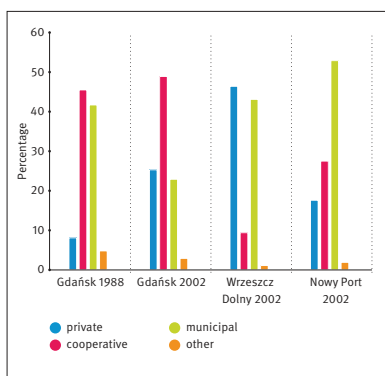
While it is not possible to compare the extent of tenure change in inner-city Gdańsk, due to missing data for the year 1988, it could be expected that the privatisation impact has been even greater because of domination of municipal, typically pre-war, housing stock in these areas. Both in Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port the proportion of municipal dwellings is however still quite high, which allows to assume that the buyout will continue.

Furthermore, the inner city of Gdańsk has begun to experience a massive generational replacement, with flats usually either being inherited by grandchildren of veteran residents or rented out, not always along legal lines, to avoid taxes. Although there are no reliable statistics to confirm the size of such processes, several local experts claim that both of them are common in inner-city Gdańsk (interviews conducted by the author, see next section).

Another noteworthy inner-city change, related to property letting, follows from the influx of students renting accommodation and the process of 'studentification' (chapter 2). In Gdańsk the majority of higher education institutions

are clustered within or in close vicinity to the case-study districts[66]. Since flats in pre-war tenement houses offer student flatsharers attractive location, adaptability and relatively low price, they have increasingly taken over the functions of overcrowded halls of residence. Even though there are some negative sides to the studentification as, for instance, rough relations with immediate neighbours, students' presence animates inner-city space and contributes to development of numerous services and facilities frequented by other urban dwellers as well. For example, it is not by chance that the biggest vegetarian restaurant in Tricity and two most popular low-price and self-service restaurants (*bary mleczne*) are located in Wrzeszcz.

In order to capture more information on the demographic changes and initial reurbanisation processes in the Gdańsk inner city, merely signalled in the presented statistics, a purely qualitative research method was employed involving detailed semi-structured interviews with selected households from Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port. Turning to a more detailed description of the two case-study areas, it should be underlined that even though the statistical analysis applied to the whole districts, only selected neighbourhoods were the objects of the empirical study. They are defined according to the prevailing type of housing (pre-war tenement houses) and its density (perimeter blocks) and hence occur to be identical with priority areas designated for regeneration in the Local regeneration Programme (fig. 4.12).

Fig. 4.12   Areas investigated in the empirical study: Wrzeszcz Dolny (left) and Nowy Port (right) Source: *Program rewitalizacji...*, 2004, p. 194 and 231

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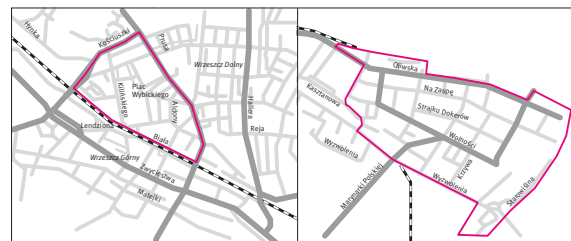
66   The total number of students only in public institutions of higher education exceeded sixty thousands in 2007 and the trend is rising (*Raport o stanie...*, 2009, p. 52).

Wrzeszcz Dolny (population of 31,199 in 2002) together with Wrzeszcz Górny, located on the northern side of the main transportation axis, used to be a part of a former suburban village, incorporated to Gdańsk in 1807. At the beginning of the 19th century besides being a second place of residence for many affluent citizens of Gdańsk, Wrzeszcz also numbered around 900 permanent inhabitants, who found employment in local breweries, distilleries and retail trade (Cieślak, 1998). While luxurious villas and spacious tenement houses were built predominantly in Wrzeszcz Górny, workers' housing estates developed south of the Grand Alley. Wrzeszcz Dolny, consisting mostly of densely concentrated brick tenement houses, was designed to have a regular street plan and a substantial amount of greenery (figure 4.13).

Fig. 4.13   An early 20th century postcard featuring one of the main streets in Wrzeszcz Dolny, *Marienstrasse* (today: Wajdeloty Street)
Source: Own archives

Many of the flats lacked basic conveniences, such as bathrooms, which were substituted with shared toilets located in the staircase landings. Yet, Wrzeszcz was an important residential precinct of pre-war Gdańsk, as aptly described by Günter Grass in his famous novel *Dog Years*:

> There was once a city – in addition to the suburbs of Ohra [Orunia], Schidlitz [Siedlce], Oliva [Oliwa], Emmaus [Emaus], Praust [Pruszcz], Sankt Albrecht [Święty Wojciech], Schellmühl [Młyniska], and the seaport suburb of Neufahrwasser [Nowy Port], it had a suburb named Langfuhr [Wrzeszcz]. Langfuhr was so big and so little that whatever happens or could happen in this world, also happened or could have happened in Langfuhr (Grass, 1976, p. 337).

The position of Wrzeszcz Dolny became even more heightened shortly after the Second World War, in the face of massive destruction of the Main City. In 1945 the flats in tenement houses were occupied by Poles arriving mostly from the eastern borderland and often subdivided (see section 3.1). Nonetheless, in the following decades residential buildings, taken over under municipal management, underwent progressive disinvestment. Today, despite their historical value[67], the technical condition of many of the housing structures is still quite bad (figure 4.14), which contributes, on the one hand, to the district's low appreciation by the potential flat buyers, and on the other, keeps the estate prices at a rather affordable level.

Fig. 4.14   Wajdeloty Street as of September 2011
Author: Maja Grabkowska

Originally, the regeneration plans in Wrzeszcz Dolny envisaged renovation of buildings of historic and cultural value, refurbishment of public spaces such as streets, squares and parks, as well as backyards and undeveloped plots, creation of bicycle paths, repairs and modernisation of several streets and sewage infrastructure, elimination of the individual coal-heating systems, brownfield redevelopment of the old brewery into a shopping centre and rebuilding of the main communication axis of the district, Wajdeloty street, into a pedestrian zone (*Program rewitalizacji...*, 2004). Yet, the only undertakings realised so far include renovation of a square in the vicinity of the family home of Günter Grass and restoration of two parks, the small Kuźniczki park situated next to an old brewery complex and a common stretching along the Strzyża stream. The interventions have therefore been limited in number and in scope and concerned only the physical aspect of regeneration.

In recent years, the infrastructure-oriented approach has slightly evolved to focus more on the social sphere and community-building. Accordingly, several non-

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67   The urban complex dating from the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century is defined as area under protection in the local development plans (*Studium uwarunkowań...*, 2007, p. 180).

governmental organisations active in Wrzeszcz Dolny were invited to cooperate in the creation and implementation of the revised version of the programme. Also, the upgrading potential of the local commonholds has been noticed and rewarded with new opportunities for co-financing of repair investments. It must be underlined that the inclusion of both the local NGOs and commonhold leaders in the top-down regeneration programme followed from their previous engagement and commitment in bottom-up regeneration initiatives (see section 4.3). Nevertheless, the outcomes of the joined forces remain to be seen, as the programme's re-edition is currently still in a quite initial phase.

Meanwhile, despite the slow pace of the top-down regeneration in Wrzeszcz Dolny, it has been increasingly regarded as an attractive residential neighbourhood, not only due to the price-related factors, but also because of the appeal of its pre-war architecture and the fact that by many inhabitants of Gdańsk it is perceived as a part of the functional centre of the city (Załęcki, 2003a, p. 145)[68].

The district of **Nowy Port** (12,538 residents in 2002), had similar suburban origins, as it developed from a fishing village situated 5 kilometres north of the Gdańsk Main Town, at the mouth of the river Vistula. A rapid expansion of the settlement began under Prussian rule following excavation of the new waterway (*Neufahrwasser*) in 1675, and in 1814 it became the official district of Gdańsk. Inhabited mostly by sailors and workmen from the big industrial plants situated by the river, the area flourished at the turn of the 20th century, attracting many tourists because of its seaside location (Nocny, 2005). At that time, most of the Art Nouveau tenement houses were built next to fishermen's cottages and the population increased significantly[69].

After the Second World War the district underwent further developments, particularly in the 1960s and 1970s when several high-rise residential buildings were constructed, including the gigantic deck-access block of flats. At present the district is divided into two zones: the unchanged since the 19th century southern part with carefully planned streets and varying in style pre-war housing and, adjacent to the north, modern and monotonous, concrete-slab neighbourhood (figure 4.15). New infill development in the form of two gated tenement houses was constructed in the newer part of the district during the case-study research (see section 4.4).

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68 During the socialist period many of the trade and service facilities were located in Wrzeszcz which, unlike the historical city core of Gdańsk, retained its function as a main shopping destination after 1989.
69 Having suffered relatively little war damage, the remains of the fishermen's settlement in Nowy Port were registered in 1982 as an urban monument under preservation order (*Studium uwarunkowań...*, 2007, p.159).

Fig. 4.15 'Old' versus 'new' housing structures in Nowy Port (Na Zaspę Street, as of April 2006)
Author: Maja Grabkowska

Just like in Wrzeszcz Dolny, many of the pre-war residential buildings in Nowy Port are not in the best state of preservation, yet social degradation is even further advanced. For instance, the share of inhabitants receiving social aid in 2002 was one of the highest among all districts of Gdańsk (Piotrzkowska et al., 2006, p. 28). Mainly for this reason, as well as due to the soaring crime rates in Nowy Port until the early 1990s, the district's attractiveness in the eyes of Gdańsk inhabitants is very low (Załęcki, 2003a, p. 138).

Also, as in the case of Wrzeszcz Dolny, the initial revitalisation plans focused on the improvement of the physical environment, however, with an inclination towards the assumed touristic and recreational potential of the area. The vicinity of the mediaeval Wisłoujście fortress located on the other side of the port canal is regarded by the authors of the Programme as a crucial tourist attraction factor. Hence the plans which include restructuring of a fragment of the formerly industrialised waterfront into a park, construction of a promenade and bicycle paths along the canal, provision of a wide-range of water-sports facilities and renovation of buildings of historical or cultural value (*Program rewitalizacji...*, 2004).

One of such edifices is the former public baths intended for adaptation into a branch of Laznia Centre for Contemporary Art (*Centrum Sztuki Współczesnej Łaźnia*) functioning since the early 2000s in a twin building located in Dolne Miasto, another degraded inner-city district of Gdańsk (cf. Lechman, 2002). Identically to the original institution, apart from running the traditional open-public cultural programme, *Nowy Port Artystyczny* would also serve as a community centre for the local inhabitants. This project was later supplemented with another one aimed at the activation of the local community, namely, conversion of two

listed buildings into restaurants with vocational training facilities for unemployed or threatened by social exclusion residents of Nowy Port.

Expectations of the local population are, nevertheless, elevated, as shown by results of a street survey carried out during the pilot phase of the programme. The respondents' opinions on the desired revitalisation actions in Nowy Port highlighted that their eventual success is highly dependent on simultaneous repairs of the buildings, improvement of technical condition of roads and pavements, as well as on the development of trade and services (Sulikowski, Słomczyński et al., 2007). Many hopes are also pinned on the aforementioned decision to locate the UEFA Euro 2012 stadium in the neighbouring district of Letnica, which thus far, however, only postponed realisation of the Nowy Port revitalisation projects.

The main research aims of the undertaken empirical study included gaining information on socio-demographic characteristics of (relatively) new residents, who moved into flats in pre-war tenement houses in either of the case-study neighbourhoods after 1989, as well as identification of the predominant reasons for the choice of inner-city dwelling (appendix 1). In addition, residential satisfaction in the context of households' needs and preferences was investigated, together with the examination of the consequences of new residents' inflow and presence in the old neighbourhoods. Thus, two particular criteria were used for the selection of the interviewees: the households under investigation had to be **inhabiting flats in pre-war tenement buildings** (i.e. housing structures representative of the inner city) **after having moved into them since 1989** (that is, their location choice was not a result of the regulations of the state socialist era). Traditional and non-traditional households alike were to be approached on equal terms to provide grounds for comparison, although in spite of this, the latter were overrepresented in the sample interviewed.

Altogether fifteen semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted between July 2007 and May 2008, nine with households residing in Wrzeszcz Dolny and six in Nowy Port (table 4.3)[70]. The interviewees were approached by means of a snowball sampling method and interviewed usually at their homes with the use of a digital recorder. The choice of interviewees was quite selective, but reflected the aims of the study, which focus on identifying patterns of inner-city households' residential behaviour rather than constructing a fully representative image of residential change in the inner city of Gdańsk. The questions asked during the interviews concerned, *inter alia*, dynamics of household composition, housing biographies of individual members, motivations for moving, daily lifestyle patterns, quality

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70   In the following text the first letters of interviewees nicknames indicate the name of the case study district ('N' for Nowy Port and 'W' for Wrzeszcz Dolny), while the endings specify gender (all feminine names end in 'a').

of social relations and technical condition of built environment, neighbourhood change (and potential for it), as well as own engagement in community actions.

Information gathered from the residents was also supplemented by and confronted with opinions of several local urban practitioners interviewed on issues related to signs of reurbanisation and revitalisation in inner-city Gdańsk[71]. Among the 11 interviewed experts there were 2 urban planners, 4 representatives of private housing administrations, 2 municipal housing officers, 1 real estate developer, 1 real estate agent and 1 representative of a local non-governmental organisation (table 4.4).

Regardless of the fact that the research sample of residents of Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port was by no means statistically representative of the population living in the two districts, the abundance of the gathered information concerning the interviewees' living arrangements allows for their rough socio-demographic portrayal. General characteristics of the interviewed members of inner-city households include relatively young age (vast majority of under-forties), higher education, well-paid and/or prestigious professions (academic teachers, architects, IT specialists, entrepreneurs). In the case of the students, many of them work part-time in order to earn their living or to supplement financial means received from their parents.

Table 4.3   Characteristics of the interviewed households in Nowy Port (N) and Wrzeszcz Dolny (W)

Code	Interviewees' nicknames*	Household type**	Household composition*	Age of hhold members	Flat size (sq metres); layout***
N1	Natalia	Patchwork family	Wife Husband Husband's son	31 46 18	85; 3 rooms (2 BR, LR with KA) + 60 sq m basement (WR)
N2	Nora Norman	Married childless couple (DINK)	Wife Husband	30 30	56; 3 rooms (BR, LR, WR), K
N3	Nina	Patchwork family	Cohabitant Cohabitant Nina's daughter	38 38 16	60; 2 rooms (2 BR), K with dining space

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71   It should be noted that in a number of cases the experts turned out to be former or present residents of the districts under investigation.

Code	Inter-viewees' nicknames*	Household type**	Household composition*	Age of hhold mem-bers	Flat size (sq metres); layout***
N4	Nela	Student flatshare	Single student Single student (F) Single student (F) Single student (F)	20 22 25 27	89; 3 rooms (2 BR, shared LR), K
N5	Natan Noel Nadia Norbert	Mixed flatshare (consisting of both students and working graduates)	Single student Married graduate Married graduate Single graduate Single student (M) Single student (F)	21 26 ? 27 21 22	ca 85; 4 rooms (4 BR), K
N6	Nikodem	Grandparent with adult grandchild	Grandson Grandmother	27 ?	?; 4 rooms (3 BR, 1 LR), K + laundry
W1	Wojtek	Grandparent with adult grandchild	Grandson Grandmother's sister	28 ?	65; 2 rooms (2 BR), K (used also as WR)
W2	Weronika	1-person household	Single	29	45; 2 rooms (2 BR), K
W3	Wiktor Wiola	Married child-less couple (DINK)	Husband Wife	32 32	79; 3 rooms (BR, WR, LR with KA)
W4	Walery	Cohabiting couple	Cohabitant Cohabitant	42 25	100; 3 rooms (3BR), K + big balcony
W5	Witold	1-person household	Single	38	67; 3 rooms (BR, WR, LR with KA) + 30 sq m flat adapted from attic
W6	Wawrzyniec	Married couple with a child (nuclear family)	Husband Wife Daughter	40+ 40+ 12	140; 4 rooms (2 BR, 2 LR), K
W7	Wanda	Single parent	Divorced mother Daughter Son	53 18 17	80; 4 rooms (3 BR, LR with KA)
W8	Westa	Married couple with a child (nuclear family)	Wife (pregnant) Husband Son	33 34 5	72; 3 rooms (2 BR, LR with KA) + dressing room separated from part of LR

Code	Inter-viewees' nicknames*	Household type**	Household composition*	Age of hhold mem-bers	Flat size (sq metres); layout***
W9	Winona Wilma Wilbur	Student flatshare	Cohabiting student Single student Cohabiting student Single student (M) Single student (M)	24 24 24 24 24	ca 50; 2 rooms (2 BR), K

* Non-traditional household types are marked in green.

** Household members participating in the interviews are marked in bold.

*** BR – bedroom, K – kitchen, KA – kitchen annex, LR – living room, WR – workroom. All flats include bathrooms/toilets.

Source: Own elaboration.

Table 4.4 Characteristics of the interviewed experts

Code	Interviewee's function/occupation
E1a	Urban planner from Port unit at Gdańsk Development Bureau
E1b	Urban planner from Wrzeszcz unit at Gdańsk Development Bureau
E2	Investor in the new housing development in Nowy Port
E3	Leader of a community NGO based in Wrzeszcz
E4	Technical specialist at the Gdańsk municipal housing administration (section Wrzeszcz)
E5a E5b	Owner and head of a private housing administration providing management services to around 60 commonholds in Nowy Port Employee at the same company
E6	Director at the Gdańsk municipal housing administration (section Nowy Port)
E7a E7b	Head of a private housing administration providing management services to the majority of commonholds in Wrzeszcz Deputy-head at the same company
E8	Investment manager in a major Tricity estate agency

Source: Own elaboration.

Looking at the household composition of the interviewees it appears that the variety of household arrangements existing in Gdańsk but concealed within the broad statistical categories of the national census, became exposed during the qualitative research. Among the fifteen interviewed households only two could be

defined as typical nuclear families, consisting of two parents with child(ren). The other, non-traditional, household types included: singles, cohabiting or married childless couples (DINKs), a single parent, patchwork families, grandparent-with-adult-grandchild households and student or mixed flatshares.

The presence of non-traditional households in inner Gdańsk is acknowledged by only a few experts interviewed. While most of them speak of a 'social mix' or a 'cross-section of the population', especially in relation to Wrzeszcz Dolny, only a few differentiate between various household types. A specialist at the municipal housing administration in Wrzeszcz asked directly, whether there had been an increase in the number of non-traditional household arrangements, answered in the affirmative. Basing on her long-term experience from participation in executive meetings of commonholds, she claims to have observed an expansion of singles or informal relationships and denotes 'a break with tradition within those matters' (E4, 9-10)[72]. As for the members of non-traditional households themselves, they often seem unfamiliar with the term and find it difficult to name the living arrangement they represent:

Walery: Relations between us [meaning his partner and himself] are
               somewhat close, however how it will all develop in the future
               I do not have any idea…
Interviewer: So is it a rather non-traditional household?
Walery: Yes. A non-traditional household – no children, one cat… (W4,
               16-18)
Nina: [describing her household's composition] …two adults and one
               16-year-old young lady… Family bonds link my daughter and me,
               whereas my partner… we live in an informal relationship, so
               he is a so-called cohabitant of mine. I don't like this word, but
               it is the official term. And so our family is a bit incomplete, a
               kind-of-family, but we have been going on like this for 10 years
               now and it somehow lasts (N3, 2).

The interviewed residents of the inner city also demonstrate rather high levels of housing mobility. Unlike their parents and grandparents, many of whom moved only once in their lifetime (or never), the interviewees tend to have quite long and complex housing biographies. For instance Natalia, aged 31, changed her address of residence seven times. There are, however, also cases of adult children who live with their parents until starting a family of their own, as in the case of Wiktor, who

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72   All interview references include an interview code, according to the classification in table 4.3, and respective number(s) of paragraph(s).

simply transferred 'from mother's [home] to wife's' (W3, 91-92). Unsurprisingly, the highest levels of residential mobility are to be found among singles, whose relocation decisions are not restricted by other household members, whereas the least mobile are couples with children and single parents, who often refrain from moving with regard to well-being of their offspring connected with proximity to school or friendship networks.

It follows from the interviewees' accounts that there are more than a few reasons for moving into the inner city. Apart from the low-price factor, central location, proximity to work or university and preference for old housing, are enumerated as the key motivations. The advantageous location of inner-city housing, in contrast to the new residential developments in the upper-terrace peripheries, is in particular underlined by the interviewees. Wawrzyniec, for example, depicts this opposition while recounting how, after moving to Wrzeszcz from the suburbs, he and his wife realised that the monthly expenses formerly spent on petrol equalled the amount of their bank loan installment (W6, 50). Accessibility to the dense public transport network is especially important to younger households, like the one of Wiktor's, who recalls that 'back then [after graduation] we didn't have a car and so we wanted to find a place [to live] in some central point of the city' (W3, 164-166). Likewise, the flat-share students appreciate the fact that they can either walk to the university or easily commute.

The architectural quality of pre-war residential buildings is yet another pull factor. The old housing structures in Gdańsk are considered to be the 'root of the city's identity' (Michałowski, 2007, p. 261), therefore it is not surprising that, despite the relatively high maintenance costs of the old housing structures, the interviewees regard them as attractive and appealing. Reasoning her choice of the flat in an old tenement house in Nowy Port Natalia states:

Natalia: Why here? Because it is a cool district, with great history. Be-
               sides, we came across this particular flat, which has a superb
               potential and is ideally located. … We were looking for old hous-
               ing, essentially a tenement house, … and the metric volume
               was very important to us (N1, 70).

Some of the interviewees openly admit their lack of interest in post-war architecture, like Wiola, who affirms that 'high-rise blocks are not for us' (W3, 108), or Walery, who is proud that he managed to avoid living in a block of flats, notwithstanding his long and complex housing biography (W4, 289).

Also, the lengthy processes of flat-searching recounted by the majority of interviewees indicate that their specific housing preferences are of substantial importance. Determined to find the 'ideal' flat for purchase, Wawrzyniec and his

family lived in a rented flat for a year (W6, 52), while Wiola and Wiktor looked through 'heaps of newspapers' (W3, 99-112). The level of satisfaction with the current flat varies among the interviewees, although many of them seem to have fulfilled their needs.

> *Interviewer*: Are you satisfied with this flat and its location?
> *Wanda*: Yes, I mean, with the criteria I assumed while searching for a flat I am not disappointed, I have exactly what I wanted.
> *Interviewer*: And those criteria, what meaning do they have for you today?
> *Wanda*: They haven't changed. If I were to search for a flat again, I would still apply the same criteria (W7, 142-145).

Relatively high costs of heating, lack of sunshine due to density of the surrounding development, occasional damp and mould, are the most often named disadvantages of inner-city flats. Yet, the benefits come uppermost and include spaciousness, adaptability of space, wholesome constructional technology and sound-proof walls. As for the pros and cons of the case-study neighbourhoods, user-friendly scale of architecture, peacefulness, atmosphere of a small town, sense of community and non-anonymity, as well as, density of services infrastructure, counter deficiency of greenery, backyards' slow pace of regeneration process, general neglect and lack of inhabitants' responsiveness to the issues of maintenance and preservation of the old buildings and their surroundings. On the whole however, as Wiola puts it, 'the benefits definitely outnumber the disadvantages' (W3, 291).

The question of ownership, following from the research results, remains rather one-sided as, apart from the flatsharing student households, only one respondent did not own the inhabited flat at the time of the interview. Weronika, having inherited a communal flat from her late grandmother, nevertheless intends to buy it out and has already made an adequate application at the municipal housing administration (W2, 59-60). Among the other interviewees the status of being an owner seems to be of utmost importance, especially to the recent nest-leavers. For instance, Nora and her newlywed husband decided to buy a flat after they had lived together with her parents for nearly a year. 'We wanted to be on our own', they both claim (N2, 74-77). As for the students' expectations of their future housing options, they provide a quite realistic assessment of their prospects:

> *Interviewer*: And will you be looking for a[nother] flat for rent [after the graduation] ...?
> *Winona*: I guess so... I mean, I will not be able to afford buying a flat, it is simply impossible...

> *Wilma*: You would first have to win the lottery! [laughs].
> *Winona*: Yes, if we manage to gather some big cash, then we will buy something. But otherwise we will rent and [then we will buy on credit] and then we will be paying back the bank loan for the rest of our days. Typically, like the majority of Poles.
> *Wilma*: [That just sounds t]errible... (W9, 105-109).

The above preliminary findings and introductory remarks based on the study results lead to the following deepened analysis which begins with deconstruction of residential flexibility.

4.2. Residential flexibility as a pull factor of the inner city

4.2.1. Flexible households: the 'ever-searching people'

It has been stated that the interviewed sample is dominated by various types of non-traditional households, predominantly young, highly educated, relatively well paid and pursuing high status professions – that is a socially and economically advantaged group. In this section the question of flexibility of inner-city inhabitants is discussed, or, in other words, the households' abilities to meet their needs and preferences in their quest for flexible-living are pinpointed and explained.

Results of the investigation into the interviewees' housing biographies confirm that residential mobility is often, but not necessarily always, connected with the transition from one household arrangement to another. Using the example of Natalia, aged 31, whose dwelling at the time of the interview was her seventh address, the consecutive stages of such transition included leaving the family home when she married for the first time, her subsequent divorce and remarriage. The story gets even more complicated in the case of Walery, aged 42, who left his family home to live in multiple flatshares during his studies outside of Gdańsk, then rented a flat in Wrzeszcz with his newly-wed wife, bought a flat together with her as a married couple and finally stayed there as a single after divorce, while currently cohabiting and being undecided about the future of his relationship with his girlfriend. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the duration of the current flat occupancy amounts to two years in Natalia's case and is more than eight in Walery's.

As household configurations partly determine housing options, it needs to be acknowledged that housing strategies are also hugely dependent on the availability of financial resources as well as material help provided by relatives (section 3.3). All of the interviewed young adults who took over flats after family members inherited them from grandparents, rather than parents, on the principle of generational alternation. A number of makeshift arrangements are also frequently applied,

especially the practice of 'flat juggling' within a family. A single flat owned by a member of extended family is thus treated as a common good and used according to the current needs of the family members. For instance, several interviewees experienced living with an older relative, both in order to provide him or her with company and help with daily activities, as well as to gain more personal space and to prepare to inherit the flat following the relative's death. Such was the rationale of Wojtek, aged 28 and unmarried, who moved into the flat of his late grandmother after his older brother moved out in order to provide company for their great-aunt. Wojtek is happy with such an arrangement, since after sharing a room in his parents' home with his brother for almost twenty years he can now enjoy having a room of his own. His housing needs are thus satisfied for the time being, especially that his great-aunt's presence is only a temporary solution[73].

Nearly all of the interviewed flat owners recognized low price as an important criterion for choosing an inner-city dwelling. Although soaring housing prices throughout the years 2004-2007 affected all types of flats, regardless of their location, the pre-war housing stock of Nowy Port and Wrzeszcz Dolny retained their competitive edge on the secondary market. Some interviewees admit that in order to lower the cost of purchase even further, they looked for a flat in poor technical condition with the intention of restoring it in stages at a later date (see section 4.2.2). However, this does not relate to Wanda, a divorcee and mother of two teenagers, who wanted a flat in a good state in order to move straight in, so as to save money and time, both of which are rather limited resources in a one-parent household.

Price-connected pull factors are also important for tenants, represented in the case study by flatsharing students. Location of a number of higher education institutions in Wrzeszcz, including University of Technology and Medical University, accounts for the considerable 'studentification' of its immediate neighbourhood (W9) whereas the quite well-connected Nowy Port is regarded as a cheaper second-best option (N4, N5). The large size of the pre-war flats in both case-study districts permits co-existence of several occupants which keeps the rent low, while the relatively central location and accessibility minimises or simply eliminates commuting costs. Overcrowding and lack of personal space, as well as the usually quite modest interior design, are among the necessary compromises. Nonetheless, temporariness and transitional nature of flatsharing seem to lessen the students' current expectations, as opposed to those exhibited towards the idealised future 'real' adult home (see also Kenyon, 1999). As concluded by one of the flatsharers,

I don't think any of us thinks of what (s)he could change here or what is missing. Everyone treats it as a transitional place and does not intend to stay here for long (N5, Norbert, 408).

Quite understandably, most of the interviewed students have unspecified plans for the future and admit to ad-hoc decision-making. As both the flatsharing and makeshift arrangements are transitory by definition, it is not very likely that they will last for extended periods of time[74]. Wojtek's outlook for the near future is for example very vague:

(...) I don't know how much longer I will stay here, my brother [currently living abroad] has recently told me that he plans to come back [to Poland and to the flat] in August, so maybe I will stay here until August and then... I don't know... I also plan to go [and live] abroad sometime... Perhaps I will join my friend who lives and works in London... (W1, 15-17).

These examples show how the choice of residential strategies may be influenced by household configuration. Single people for instance seem to be fairly autonomous and unfettered in their decision-making, while a single mother is forced to find a middle way between her own housing needs and the needs of her offspring. Consequently, the presence of children in a household appears to be an impediment to residential mobility, especially in the case of younger schoolchildren, who have already established their own social networks in the original place of residence.

This particular reason is perhaps one of the key factors determining traditional households' attachment to suburban environments once they have decided to settle down there and have children. Such attitudes are apparent from remarks made by a representative of one of the local property companies, who recently launched a development in Nowy Port and who admitted to having thought about the (eventually rejected) possibility of moving there from an estate in Southern Gdańsk. Although the relocation would have made the daily commuting of the interviewee's husband much easier, the argument which tipped the scale against it was the fact that her son had already started attending school in the district and she thought that moving him away from his friends would be wrong (E2, 83-85).

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73 According to Wojtek much greater inconvenience is caused by his father's use of part of Wojtek's kitchen as office space for his advertising enterprise, which is yet another example of 'flat-juggling' arrangement among family members.

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74 Some of the flatsharers however declare that they have become emotionally involved with the district, as for instance Winona, a student of architecture, who cherishes the idea that she might continue to live in Wrzeszcz Dolny after graduation. Together with her flatmates she dreams of joint ownership of an old tenement house with their common flat in the attic, design office on the ground floor and flats for rent in between (W9: 491-508).

However, the residential mobility, revealed in the housing biographies of most of the interviewed households, does not necessarily mean a low attachment to their current place of residence. On the contrary, the interviewed owners had made well-thought-out and careful choices of their flats and simply do 'not think about leaving' (W7, 149). Furthermore, Wiola, who has lived with her husband in their current flat for eight years, maintains that 'something very, very strange would have to happen in order to make us change our mind and move out from here' (W3, 301). Yet, she underlines that

we are ever-searching people and we still don't know what we will be doing in life If we, for example, set up an ostrich farm or engage in dog breeding then we will have to change the place of our dwelling. At present we are thirty years old and we don't have a clear vision [of the future] whatsoever (W3, 303).

In summary, residential mobility patterns vary between the interviewees and show a close connection to household type and form of tenure. The most flexible housing strategies are employed by the renting and flatsharing students, while owners with children seem to be the most restricted in their housing choices. The possible reasons behind the high level of residential satisfaction are presented in the next section which provides a view of the adaptability of inner-city dwellings.

4.2.2. Flexible dwellings: 'according to our own ideas'

Some of the interviewed households' reasons for moving to pre-war flats in inner-city Gdańsk are introduced in section 4.1. However, these motives appear to be significantly enhanced in the interviewees' accounts of their daily geographies by the concrete examples they give of the ways in which the flexible setting of home facilitates the everyday practice of living.

The notion that 'lifestyle matters' is found throughout the interviews as the respondents reveal their desire for self-expression, individualism, creativity, work fulfilment and a thriving social life. The attitudes and corresponding activities of the 'ever-searching' city-dwellers are all reflected in the design and the ways they use their flats. Wiktor and Wiola, a childless married couple, appreciate the 79-square-metre capacity of their flat which allows them to display their large and much prized collection of books and historic artefacts. The open-plan kitchen and adjacent antique-furnished sitting room, serve both for family and social life, with regular get-togethers. In the case of Walery, even the balcony plays a significant role, being appropriated at party time as an extra floor space, an extension of home. Since Walery is engaged in numerous civic movements, his spacious flat is also frequently used as an activist operational venue.

The flats under examination very often contain working spaces, either in the form of separate study rooms or delimited 'professional corners'. Considering the occupational profile of the interviewees it is unsurprising that many of them work from home. The fact that their flats double as workplaces, is valued because of the convenience and comfort of working from home, even if it requires a lot of motivation and good organisation skills:

Wiktor: The advantages [of working from home] are such that I can freely organise my time according to my own needs. Some things may be done later or I can work during the night... (W3, 237)

For several interviewees equipment of the domestic workplace is limited to a portable computer and a table or desk since 'in the era of the laptop the working space is kind of more liquid', as stated by Wawrzyniec, W6, 76). However certain types of work activities require special equipment and settings. For example, moving into her pre-war tenement flat finally enabled Natalia to pursue her childhood dreams of becoming a furniture restorer. Her previous dwellings lacked the necessary space and adaptability which are the main advantages of her current 85-square-metre living space augmented by a 60-square-metre basement. Recently the basement was renovated and tailored to meet the standards of a workroom, while a writing desk in the living room functions as an office for her website-based furniture restoration company. She also employs her living room as a showcase – it is filled with restored old furniture and curios, most of it found and bought cut-price on internet online auctions. One side of the room is occupied by a 100-year-old Gdańsk neo-baroque concert piano, featuring an ivory keyboard and stylish candelabra. Natalia remarked that she has more and more work to do as 'a lot of people move, furnish, redecorate and so the number of commissions is increasing' (N1, 42), which provides a hint that 'in-situ' adaptation and change is a common social practice. In fact, a distinguishing mark of most of the flats visited during the interviews, is that their designs merge new look with old architecture. The walls may be painted in bright colours, ikea furniture may be introduced, walk-in wardrobes installed, but, at the same time, old ceramic stoves are displayed and paint removed from the wooden window and door frames to expose their natural beauty. Some interviewees emphasise their personal contribution to the appearance of their dwellings, for example Walery boasts about designing and carrying out (with help from his father and brother) all the interior decoration of his kitchen (featuring wooden handmade cupboards, fragments of wall with uncovered brickwork or textured plaster and a beamed ceiling adorned with wicker twigs).

Individualism and creativity seem to be shared approaches towards the appearance of flats, but the most spectacular manifestation of this is evident in relation to changes in the construction and layout of flats. Many flats have undergone massive transformations aimed at adjusting them to the needs and tastes of their inhabitants. One of the methods of transformation can be described as 'once and for all' and is exemplified by Nina:

> After moving in we demolished everything [inside of the flat] and then rebuilt it from scratch according to our own ideas ... The only thing that now keeps changing is the interior design and decoration ..., apart from that nothing will change now (N3, 60).

Witold speaks of two phases of major repairs, 'the first was general repairs, as this flat was in ruins ... and the second dealt with finishing off' (W5, 62, 86). The extent of work done was immense, as it included a complete makeover of the original layout – turning two small rooms into one large room, the construction of a kitchen annex in the enlarged living room, the conversion of the former kitchen into a workroom and extension of the bathroom at the cost of the hall, all of it followed by adaptation of the adjoining attic space into a separate studio for rent (figure 4.16). Asked about the reasons for such dramatic changes, Witold explains that 'the two small rooms were in fact like dog kennels and it was very impractical for me not to have direct access to the kitchen [which previously was located at the far end of the flat]' (W5, 82). He also admits that the design of the living room dictated by his 'open house' policy turns out to be very guest-oriented.

The integration of the kitchen into the rest of the flat proved to be of special importance to the interviewees. It allows for the person preparing the meals to be with the rest of the household and visiting guests and very often is the centre of family and social life. In the flat of Nora and Norman it is the big kitchen table which attracts their visitors rather than their fancy living room. A number of interviewees admit that the functions of rooms tend to be flexible:

> *Walery*: What are the [room] functions? Er, well this room... I treat this room as a room where I have my computer, where I sleep, work, etcetera, and the other room is... I don't know... more social [i.e. intended for socializing]. Anyway, at this moment it's my partner's realm (W6, 132).

Fig. 4.16 Changes to the layout in Witold's flat
Source: Own elaboration
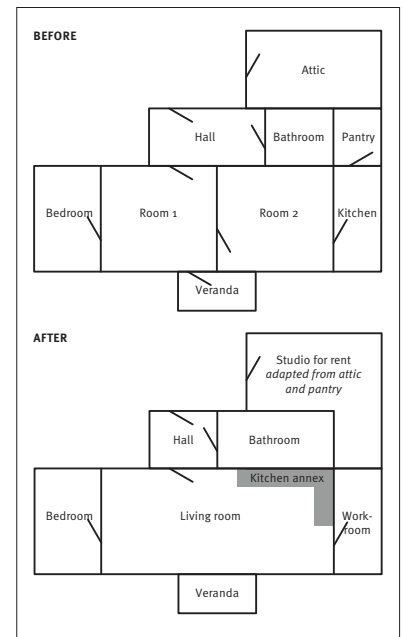
The rooms' functions also tend to fluctuate along with the households' ebbs and flows. Natalia's patchwork family has reached the stage where her stepson is about to leave home for university in another city:

> His room will be cleared and we will move in there with our bedroom, whereas the current bedroom will become an office and an occasional guestroom. In point of fact, it is only a matter of some rearrangement of the furniture (N1, 135).

The interviewees' flats vary in size from 45 up to 140 square metres, most of them consisting of three rooms, and so they are regarded as relatively big. Despite the conventional opinion that one-person households need less living space, the research shows that taking into account their specific lifestyle requirements they may demand more space than a nuclear family. The size of the flat also makes a difference to flatsharers, who seem to gain more from economies of scale than from benefits connected to adaptability of dwellings.

There are obvious restrictions as to how far a rented flat can be transformed. However, the members of the three flatshares who were interviewed appear to have managed to carry out some fine-tuning. For example, Winona and her friends painted the walls decorating them with colourful handprints and brought some furniture from home. As the flat was not in particularly good condition, at the time of moving in, they also undertook a few minor repairs and upgrades, including replacement of a broken boiler, wallpapering the kitchen and tiling the bathroom, all at their own expense. By contrast the flat inhabited by Nela and her flatmates was thoroughly renovated by the owners before they rented it out and any necessary repairs are dealt with directly by them. The rooms were well-furnished and the slight additions by the tenants were only aimed at domestication of the interior design.

Although the layout of the shared flat is fixed, different arrangements among the household members are put into practice. In Winona's case the two bedrooms are divided between two subgroups of friends with a common kitchen and bathroom. A similar division has been applied in the mixed flatshare – of the four rooms two are individual and the other two are shared. In the less crowded four person flatshare of Nela, it has been possible to order the space into two bedrooms, each for two girls, and a communal living room with a TV set and a big table serving as a desk for the laptops. It is, nevertheless, generally agreed among all the flatsharers that the greatest advantage offered by their dwellings, apart from 'economies of size', is their location in the inner city.

Before moving on to discuss the location-oriented flexibility of inner-city flats, it is important to emphasize the relative 'interior-flexibility' advantage of pre-war dwellings over those situated in newer buildings. An insight to the issue of the small size of flats in prefabricated housing estates, a consequence of rigorous norms and regulations of the socialist period, is provided by Wojtek, who mentions that he had to share a room with his brother almost until he graduated. The very same norms and regulations are responsible for the fact that in many blocks of flats built after the Second World War, the kitchens are relatively small and sometimes even windowless (see Chapter 3.1) which substantially reduces their comfort of use. Similar limitations are either nonexistent or much more easily overcome in the pre-war flats where, for example, the lack of bathrooms not included in the

original layout was dealt with, often illegally, through their construction by the self-reliant inhabitants[75].

Even in comparison with the newest housing developments, the old flats are much more adaptable. Such at least is the opinion of the estate agent, who when interviewed, criticised the current primary market offer in Gdańsk as ready-made flats created according to the architect's vision and which did not take into account the needs and preferences of potential buyers (E8, 56-60). It is, therefore, something of a misconception to think that the rigidity of the socialist cost-effective prefabricated architecture has been eliminated with the arrival of capitalism, as private property companies in Gdańsk, at least, seem to be acting in a similarly rigid way.

4.2.3. Flexible neighbourhoods: 'you just don't waste your time'

One of the major benefits of an inner-city location, mentioned by many of the interviewees, is the proximity to work and school. For example, a five-minute walking distance to his workplace was the primary reason for Noel to join a flatshare in Nowy Port. For several other interviewees, from Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port alike, the notion of proximity does not necessarily relate just to physical distance. Nina's job for example involves a lot of driving around the Tricity area during the day, from one big shopping centre to another, where she organises promotional events. For her it is a blessing not having to be stuck in the traffic jams on the roads connecting the upper-terrace part of the city with the lower terrace, which would be inevitable were she to live in the suburbs. Likewise, Wiola would not wish to live in any of the suburban estates, as she maintains that commuting from there to the inner city 'is a horror' (W3, 316). Also Nikodem, deliberating on a possible alternative location of his dwelling, concludes that

> there are things which I find totally unacceptable, like, for example, having to spend an hour and a half in the car every morning in order to get to work. For this reason the southern districts [of Gdańsk] are, in my case, completely out of question (N6, 194).

The inner-city location is thus viewed as advantageous compared to the upper-terrace peripheries, and since many of the households do not own a car, accessibility to the transportation systems rather than just nearness of home to

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75 Several interviewees speak of such operations having been undertaken by the previous owners or tenants, while a couple of them describe their own actions aimed at enlarging the existing bathrooms.

work is important[76]. To Walery his home has an 'excellent location in terms of communication' (W4, 188) and this view is shared by most of the interviewees in Wrzeszcz. Even Witold, who mainly moves around by car, admits using public transport during bad weather or roadworks-induced heavy traffic and considers the presence of the light railway (*Szybka Kolej Miejska* or *SKM*), two tram lines and multiple bus lines to be 'a very big plus' (W5, 184)[77].

Access to the SKM is not possible directly from Nowy Port though, which generally adds to its relative separation from the functional centre of Gdańsk[78]. However, most of the interviewed inhabitants of Nowy Port do not complain about its location within the Tricity communication system, and some even speak of 'an underestimation' of the district's location as 'after all, either by tram or car access is quite efficient, which isn't the case for the southern districts' (N6, 74).

Closely linked to the issue of inner-city accessibility is another flexibility factor – the more general notion of 'closeness' (e.g. W1, 408; W8, 100; N2, 318). This can be understood as the proximity to public transport, shopping and services and is described by Wanda as 'one of the key elements of [her household's] quality of life' (W7, 127). Similarly, having 'all necessary [urban facilities] at hand' means that 'you just don't waste your time' (W7, 127). The ease of moving about on foot is an additional advantage. According to Wojtek

> [i]t is always possible to walk out of the door and get everything... Here we have a 24-hour grocery shop, over there is the butcher's... Somewhere there you can find the cobbler ... and there is the hairdresser. ..I like the fact that this network is so dense ... because back in Morena [a large high-rise housing estate] you had to walk quite a way even to get to the grocer's. Here I can do this without taking my slippers off (W1, 114-16).

Therefore, the interviewees appear to share the opinion that the inner city offers a better residential environment than the large high-rise estates. Wrzeszcz Dolny however ranks higher than Nowy Port, the former being described by Walery as 'the commercial base for the whole city of Gdańsk' (W4, 246), especially as

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76   Some respondents reason their lack of car by pro-ecological attitude and lifestyle prerequisites ('public transport or a bicycle – these are my most frequent means of communication'; W4, 202), while others openly speak of economic factors ('I think it would be just stupid to [live here] and [pay to] maintain a car'; W7, 104).

77   It is worth underlining that the role of SKM as public transport not only facilitates communication within Gdańsk but also provides a convenient link to Sopot and Gdynia.

78   The branch line between Nowy Port and the Gdańsk Main Station was closed in 2002 due to unprofitability. Interestingly enough, it was the first branch of the SKM in Gdańsk (opened in 1951), which only in later decades was extended along the Tricity main communication axis.

in recent years the range of trades and services on offer has been supplemented with two large shopping centres[79]. Apart from being a shopping area, Wrzeszcz (as a whole) is also seen as a fairly attractive entertainment and eating-out area, although many interviewees said that an increase in the number of pubs, cafés and restaurants was needed.

Nowy Port on the other hand, is less vibrant, but its inhabitants claim that it provides all of their basic needs, and in recompense for the district's more peripheral location they benefit from peace and quietness and a sense of community:

> It is specific for a small neighbourhood that everyone knows each other here. If someone has lived here for a while and goes to the same shops, then people start addressing you by your first name, the shopkeepers know your shopping preferences, you can have a chat with everyone ... The atmosphere is like that of a small town and old-world traditional at the same time, I like it very much (N1, 206).

Such are the advantages in the eyes of the owners. The students who were interviewed, as previously stated, value proximity to the university campus, which has to be balanced by the higher price for flats in the case of Wrzeszcz. Students of architecture from Wrzeszcz Dolny justify their choice of location because of the need to carry bulky models and one of them admits that her determination to find accommodation close to the university at the beginning of her studies was dictated by unfamiliarity with the layout of the city (W6, 30)[80].

Such initial unfamiliarity with the city experienced by newcomers limits their daily movements and seems to influence their choice of location. For example, Nela, a first-year student, does not yet know her way around Gdańsk nor has she developed social networks, and therefore spends most of the day at home studying or communicating with her family and hometown friends through the internet. Her longer resident flatmates, however, tend to spend a lot of time away from he flat, travelling around Tricity to attend various social activities. Hence, access to public transport is of key importance to them.

To flatsharers from both case study districts alike Wrzeszcz appears as a major city hub ('because this is where we spend most of the time at the uni or hanging out with friends', N5, 395; 'Wrzeszcz is an important focal point in Gdańsk, it lies

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79   One of them, Galeria Bałtycka, contains 45,000 square metres of commercial surface and has been advertised as the biggest shopping centre in northern Poland.

80   Her determination was so strong that it led to her to renting, for almost a year, a small under-heated room to which the only entrance was via the en suite bedroom of the owner. This particular case also proves how the students' first-time residential choices may not be too picky.

within the central axis', W9, 368). Its old-built environment is also perceived as more attractive in comparison with the adjacent large prefabricated housing neighbourhoods, underlined for example by Wilbur:

> It's a cool district. I think it's much better to live here than in those [relatively] new block-housing estates, like Morena or Niedźwiednik (W9, 346).

Some members of the flatsharing households in Nowy Port do complain a little about the district's accessibility, especially those who remember the time when there was a SKM connection ('when I moved in here in 2000 this place was well connected … the SKM ran quite frequently and … it was the alternative means of communication [to trams]', N5, 373). Nonetheless, opinions are again mixed, as Nela's flatmates, for example, accept a full hour as a tolerable time for 'short-duration commuting within the Tricity area' (N4, 182).

Thus, with the exception of the mixed flatshare tenants, the interviewees on the whole seem to be enthusiasts of living in the chosen inner-city neighbourhoods. Overall, the most frequent complaints about both districts apply to the neglected physical condition of the pre-war buildings and the passive mindset of the local inhabitants. However, the respondents who have been resident longer, agree that the utterly negative stereotypes of Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port no longer hold true as both the material and social environment have been undergoing changes:

> It used to happen that … people thought of Wrzeszcz Dolny as a tricky district on account of the type of people living here … but it's just a cliché which perhaps had its *raison d'être* some ten years ago, … now it is all changing for the better (W4, 303).

> There have been a lot of changes. The rotation is huge and when you walk in the streets, you only need to look at the new windows and cars. At the moment it is a district of huge contrasts (N1, 243).

The generally positive attitude towards both neighbourhoods was additionally confirmed in the answers to the 'good friend question'. Almost all interviewees claimed they could recommend buying a flat in 'their' district to a close friend and indeed, several had already done so.

In the case of Wrzeszcz Dolny, its advantages are recognised by all of the interviewed experts. Urban planners, because of its central and lower-terrace location, see it as meeting the requirements of different types of households and becoming increasingly 'inhabitant friendly' (E1a, 151). The same interviewees did not think so highly of Nowy Port; only, the local investor rated it very highly regarding it as

'ideal for [housing] investment' and predicted that in future its location would be more favourable than that of Wrzeszcz Dolny, which 'will become traffic-jammed, excessively dense and its accessibility will decrease' (E2, 3, 69).

Apparently, though, judging from the opinions of the interviewees, the case-study neighbourhoods at present seem to win the competition with both upper-terrace peripheral suburbs and lower-terrace estates of prefabricated blocks of flats when it comes to a comparison of their locational and infrastructural assets. This component of the inner-city residential flexibility is also most commonly appreciated by all types of households examined in the case study.

In conclusion, the two components of residential flexibility examined in this section, that is the structural flexibility of flats in pre-war tenement houses and options for adaptability resulting from their location, appeared to play an important role in attracting particular types of households to the inner city. Therefore, it can be stated that Hypothesis 1 was confirmed by the empirical results. The next section provides analysis of the effects of newcomers' presence, which is the assumption of Hypothesis 2.

4.3. Newcomers' engagement in upgrading processes

In an assessment of the condition of pre-war housing structures in Poland towards the end of socialism, W. Czeczerda (1989) acknowledges that 'the problems of the old housing resources in Poland are of a particularly large extent and specifics, which in part results from the country's historical trajectory and in part – from mistakes in the housing policy' (p. 347). It is unquestionable that the poor maintenance and lack of investment in municipally owned old tenement houses during the socialist period considerably aggravated their technical condition connected to their age (see Chapter 3; figure 4.17).

Fig. 4.17 Peeling facade of a tenement house in Władysława IV Street (Nowy Port, above) and fragment of wall riddled with wartime bullets in Sochaczewska Street (Wrzeszcz Dolny, below)
Authors: Maja Grabkowska and Tomasz Strug

In such context, the privatisation processes which took place in Gdańsk after 1989 appear to have a catalyst effect on the inner city rehabilitation. Its most clearly visible consequence is the on-going improvement of the technical condition of the buildings. Commonholds appear to be key actors in such bottom-up upgrading processes and, as shown by the interview results, their actions prove to be more efficient than any top-down policies of renewal implemented so far in inner-city Gdańsk (Grabkowska, 2010; Grabkowska, 2011b).

The rise in the numbers of the commonholds in the two case-study districts, is the immediate consequence of changing tenure structures described in section 4.1. It is generally agreed among the interviewed experts that flat ownership fosters the sense of responsibility for the entire building and its immediate surroundings:

E4:   From the moment the commonhold were set up, it is evident that some of the tenement houses have been undergoing a particular metamorphosis. It shows that something got mov- ing. I mean here specifically the repair issues (103-6).

E1b: [Municipal tenants] buy out the flats and once they own them, they start looking after them… [The area] becomes nicer and nicer, the backyards begin to look cleaner and well-kept, step by step… The greens are introduced, … the facades are painted and so on… (146-8)

The interviewed experts estimate that the interest in buyouts among municipal tenants has been substantial in the past few years. Representative of the municipal housing administration in Wrzeszcz argues that 'the municipal housing stock has been dwindling because of attractive terms of purchase and recent prosperity of the estate market in general' (E4, 72-4). Similarly, director of the municipal housing administration in Nowy Port has noted a 'tremendous surge in the number of buy-outs' in recent years (E6, 50). Apart from the 90-per cent discount, the city administration encourages tenants to purchase not only through special announcements in the local media, but also on the occasion of various public meetings and via individually addressed letter. According to the head of a private housing administration company in Wrzeszcz, the scale of publicity is unsurpris- ing because 'by getting rid of municipal flats the city gets rid of their maintenance costs, [which] seems pretty logical and clear' (E7a, 64). Nevertheless, in the eyes of her deputy, the active leaders of the commonhold most often arise from 'the youngsters who recently arrived [in the district] … a young squad, very dynamic…, who do not fear raising bank loans to finance repairs in the buildings' (E7b, 62). The interviewed inhabitants express similar opinions:

Westa: … it is very indicative that young people who move into these old houses take the initiative because most of the inhabitants … are pensioners who do not have financial abilities nor the will to struggle [with organisation of the repairs] (W8, 87-88).

It is also symptomatic that the first moves are often made by individuals and whether they succeed to mobilise the other owners or not hinges on their charisma and leading skills:

Wawrzyniec: The building was recently inspected and it is in good condition, which in a way follows from he fact that the previous leader of the commonhold was a very proper man and he managed to get a lot of things out of the woods: the roof is repaired, the northern wall of the building insulated, the facade on the other side painted. … (W6, 112)

Apart from the mere sense of responsibility, the owners' engagement in renovation of the houses they live in also follows from the awareness that every investment in the building increases the value of their flat. According to the previously cited housing administration manager, 'younger people are certainly more eager to spend money on raising the quality of the structure of the house and, at the same time, raising the use value and the market price of their property' (E7a, 18).

Taking all the above into account, it should not come as a surprise that, contrary to the common stereotype of decrepit and falling to pieces inner-city buildings,

technical condition of tenement houses in both case study districts is most often assessed as 'good' by the interviewees. However, as in the words of the housing administration manager from Wrzeszcz, 'a lot has been done already … but a lot still remains to be done' (E7b, 24). The lists of necessary repair works are usually long and the schedules are heavily conditioned by the availability of the financial resources.

At the beginning of each commonhold's activity, the first repair undertakings usually concern 'small things' (E7a, 38), such as replacement of rundown entrance doors, which is dictated by limited funds. In later stages the order of repairs develops out of priority, starting from roof reconstruction and preservation of foundations, insulating and damp-proofing, staircase renovation and finishing with painting of the facades. Explaining the typical sequence of repair works, the representative of a housing administration in Nowy Port concludes:

> [w]e try to keep the order which in the first place secures human life, in the next human health, personal property and then at the very end [we take care of] the aesthetics (E5b, 64).

As estimated roughly by one of the experts, the average time needed for a complete makeover of a pre-war tenement house by the commonhold is minimum 10 years (E7a, 38). The capability to finance such enormous and long-running investment has developed over the years with the increasing share of owners and credit possibilities. Nonetheless, financial restraints still create considerable obstacles. First of all, in the newly established commonholds and those with higher proportions of communal flats, the collected repair funds are often insufficient for any larger investments. Secondly, until 2008 bank loans could only be allocated to individual owners and not to the commonhold as a whole (see section 4.3). This condition raised justifiable concern among the older inhabitants who feared 'that they might not be solvent in a year or two' and referred to the idea of a 10-year repayment 'but will I still be alive by then?' (E7b, 40). Thirdly, many of the buildings are listed, which raises the costs of their renovation and, paradoxically, may obstruct the whole process. For example, execution of thermal insulation is often hindered by the requirement to preserve all decorative elements of the facades. In effect, 'the total amount of the already high costs of insulation needs to be multiplied by 1.5' (W6, 109).

Apart from the financial constraints other difficulties may arise, for example those connected to the decision-making process. Especially the necessity to reach consensus in small commonhold sometimes turns out to be quite problematic (see section 3.3.). It is for this reason that one of Wanda's criteria for the choice of her flat was that it had to be located within a building with a big commonhold, as she

previously had some bad experience with reaching consensus in the previous place of dwelling. In addition, the general technical condition of the building was of importance to her and so she regarded the fact that 'all the major works already had been done' as a considerable advantage (W7, 81).

In response to the direct question whether it is easy or not (and why) to reach decisions within a commonhold, the interviewees usually answered that it was not easy but not impossible either. Again, it was pointed by many respondents that typically the bone of contention would be related to the financial limitations of some, particularly older, inhabitants. Yet, the prevalent attitude to this issue is that 'generally, there are no problems with pushing ahead various conceptions for improvement, because it is always a question of money **only** and if the money is to be found elsewhere then [the inhabitants] are open [to changes] and do not behave in a senselessly obstructive way' (W8, 96).

Individual engagement and devotion to the cause of particular commonhold members appears to come in handy in overcoming decision-making impasses. One of the experts underlines the role of the leaders in this context:

> E7b: There are several active individuals with whom we cooperate, because with the number of owners in commonhold it often happens as in the proverb 'where there are two Poles, there are five opinions', but … usually there is at least one engaged person who either works at home or has a flexible job and with such person we are able to combine forces, which is very helpful (38).

The citation at the same time points to the issue of newcomers' flexibility, as introduced in section 4.2.1 and is in line with the statement of Wawrzyniec, who describes the commonhold he heads as operating 'efficiently, even though it's mainly one person's activity' which he attributes to the 'quite fortunate [situation] that I have a lot of time which I can devote to taking care of the things' (W6, 120). The case of Wawrzyniec could therefore prove that the combination of new initiative and undemanding work schedule is a successful formula for commonhold to run smoothly.

It is also rather evident that the newcomers are more eager to work as a team for the benefit of commonhold interests because they are more aware of the necessity to meet the old buildings' maintenance requirements. Walery for instance, states that 'to some people an old tenement house is like a financial bottomless pit, but if you want to move in here you must be prepared for some serious repairs in order to put [the building] in shape' (W4, 222). In this context it is also hard to overrate the new owners' motivation to find creative solutions for additional

funding, such as lending the surface of blind walls for large advertisements, as in the case of a neighbouring commonhold mentioned by Natalia (N3, 66).

Yet another type of obstacles brought up by the interviewees and experts alike may be labelled as 'mental remains of socialism'. This umbrella term should be treated as a common heading for the older inhabitants' ways of thinking and behaviour imprinted during the socialist period, and it is closely linked to the already mentioned issue of (non-)ownership (see Chapter 3). An illustration of this phenomenon is provided by Wawrzyniec, who depicts a situation that occurred when he got to know the neighbours inhabiting a communal flat in the adjoining staircase, which also belongs to his commonhold. The fact that they did not know him as the head of the commonhold board did not come to him as a surprise, since municipal tenants usually do not have much connection to the commonhold activities. However, he found it shocking when the neighbour asked him where she should report a broken-down entryphone:

> And so I tell her that apart from the board [of commonhold] there is also a housing administration company which takes care of the current management of the building and she says 'Oh, really? And where is it?'. I reply that by sheer coincidence it is located in the building next door. [This made me realise that] a woman who has lived here for thirty years is entirely unaware of her rights and it is something that struck me, it is something truly horrible in those old districts (W6, 154).

The question of acquired passivity as characteristic of the old inner-city community is also raised by Witold:

> … if a sweet wrapper falls on the ground in front of the entrance to the house, it may lay there until the street-sweepers clear it off, because none of the locals will pick it up. Sadly, they are not being taught to do it or, perhaps, it derives from the mentality they acquired under the real socialism (W5, 160).

According to several interviewees, the origins of the today state of affairs are to be traced back to the end of the Second World War, when flats of the resettled Germans were allocated to municipal tenants, blue-collar workers mainly. In the opinion of Wanda the municipal ownership translated into

> degeneration, disregard and neglect … which has continued for years and years now … because if people do not own something, they treat it as their due … It is easy to observe this kind of attitude. There are a lot of poor people,

not necessarily alcoholics, but those who just somehow didn't cope with their lives and this goes on from generation to generation (W7, 127).

Nevertheless, some criticism goes to the new owners as well. As maintained by Wawrzyniec

> the major shortcoming [of the social sphere in Wrzeszcz Dolny] is the local inhabitants' lack of a broader sense of responsibility for the surroundings and the fact that even if you want to do something here, it is hard to make them take the initiative … This space really breaks up into [multiple] spaces of single tenement houses whose inhabitants very often are not aware that they are co-owners who are co-responsible for their houses. I see it as a serious problem (W6, 170).

The concrete case Wawrzyniec refers to, is his finding that out of twenty mixed-ownership tenement houses located in Wajdeloty Street in only three there exist commonhold boards, while the rest is managed entirely by the housing administration:

> I am able to understand this in the case of a commonhold with majority of municipal flats, but if there is a majority of private owners then it's outrageous. It means that the owners were afraid of responsibility and gave it away to the [housing administration] company … depriving themselves of all means of control … it appalled me too, that … such ownership is very ostensible and it seems that to those people it is more of a burden than privilege (W6, 154).

In the words of one of the experts, who moved to a flat in an old tenement house in Wrzeszcz Górny several years ago, her neighbours still 'have not grasped that we are the owners of the house and the plot' (E3, 14). Describing her backyard as cluttered with 'some hideous sheds and garages' which her neighbours 'advocate as if they were advocating independence' she regrets that 'in consequence there will never be any chance to create [here] some kind of nice atrium, to plant grass and to transform it into our shared space, so that we could all look out of our windows and feel good about it' (E3, 10). It needs to be added that in this particular case financial restraints cannot provide an excuse for inaction as '[i]nterestingly enough, the neighbours [have enough money to] change windows [into plastic ones] or invest in new kitchens, whereas the common parts [of the estate] are left untouched' (E3, 10).

Although the extensive catalogue of impediments to the commonhold effectiveness repeatedly damps down the enthusiasm of the engaged members, their

achievements do not remain underrated. The aforementioned expert resident in Wrzeszcz Górny regards it is as her personal success that, after almost three years of striving, she finally managed to persuade her own neighbours into establishing a commonhold board. She furthermore recognises it as 'an example of positive gentrification which is bound to happen in Wrzeszcz' and concludes that despite the harsh beginnings she came to understand that the trust of neighbours is something to be acquired step by step (E3, 14).

At the same time she speaks of the 'alternative model' applied by her friends who on moving into a tenement house in her neighbourhood declared to pay for repainting of the neglected staircase from their own funds:

> Of course, because they gave the money [for the painting], they started off from a different position than I did … and if I had known this two and a half years ago, I would have probably use the same manoeuvre (E3, 14).

Westa also admits having adopted a similar strategy to prevent a delay of windows' replacement in the staircase of her tenement house:

> My husband simply did it at his own cost and the same amount will be deducted in instalments from our monthly payments to the repair fund for the next twenty years (W8, 88).

A potential positive side-effect of such actions is the possibility that the newcomers' efforts are appreciated and motivate other inhabitants to join in. Witold for instance speaks of a joint initiative of staircase painting, undertaken by owners and municipal tenants, outside the commonhold repair fund:

> when [municipal tenants] see that something is being done over here, then they feel obliged to do something for their part as well … So it's possible to change things [for the better] (W5, 160).

Thus, the 'keeping up with the Joneses' effect may also be observed (see section 2.2.3), wherein 'the Joneses' are mostly the new residents to the neighbourhood.

As much as the opinions on the recent changes in the material environment in both districts are varied, it is beyond dispute that the situation is far better in tenement houses with mixed ownership and existing commonhold, than in buildings owned entirely by the municipality:

> It shows. You can tell the difference with a naked eye. The buildings with commonhold, co-owned by individuals, are being repaired … and even the

smallest amounts of money are allocated to the repair [funds], whereas the municipal buildings are being abandoned to their fate (E7a, 36).

> A commonhold, as long as it has money, will gather and [make a decision to] do the roof repairs or insulate the walls. A typically municipal building, in turn, is left without repairs and slowly undergoes degradation. The council has no sufficient financial resources to provide repair funds for the entire city[81] (E1a, 86).

Judging by the differences in the proportions of the private and mixed ownership of all buildings in Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port, the degree of positive changes differs between the districts. Indeed, Wrzeszcz Dolny tends to be perceived as somewhat outdistancing Nowy Port (E1b, 87).

Paradoxically, the better condition of tenement houses in Wrzeszcz Dolny is also partly related to the outcomes of a flash flood, which occurred in the summer of 2001. The overflowing Strzyża stream affected the construction elements in a number of buildings, and caused severe damage which had to be tackled with urgency. Thus, as in the words of private housing administration representative, 'actually the flood hastened the need for general repairs' (E7b, 26). Likewise, according to the interviewed estate agent, 'a lot of works were launched after the flood as a number of building orders enforced execution of vertical insulations and this inflicted other repair works' (E8, 4).

Lately Wrzeszcz has also become a scene for budding civil society movements. Several non-governmental organisations have been set up with the aim of fostering bottom-up regeneration initiatives. In the opinion of one of the experts 'inhabitants [of Wrzeszcz] are vividly interested not only in their immediate surroundings … and a lot of organisations are being created' (E7a, 80). Interestingly, many of the founders recruit from newcomers to the district. One of such leaders, named by one of the interviewees as 'the *spiritus movens* of certain activities [in the neighbourhood]' (W4, 244) is the founder of Association of the Local Community Wrzeszcz Wajdeloty (*Stowarzyszenie Wspólnota Lokalna Wrzeszcz Wajdeloty)*, whose main objective is the activation of the local community and fostering its participation in bottom-up revitalisation initiatives. The extended catalogue of measures applied in order to reach this aim includes 'initiating local urban self-governance, supporting civil engagement and democracy development, counteracting social and material degradation of urban areas, initiating integrational,

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81 In 2007 the Gdańsk Administration of Municipal Estate (*Gdański Zarząd Nieruchomości Komunalnych*) spent a total of 32.4 thousand PLN on the repairs of municipal buildings in the whole city (*Raport o stanie…*, 2008, p. 134).

artistic and recreational activities, execution of civil rights … and cooperation with governmental institutions, local authorities and other institutions with similar objectives' (Wspólnota Lokalna Wrzeszcz Wajdeloty 2010).

Despite the aforementioned low level of engagement of Wrzeszcz inhabitants, the association has proved to be very successful. Among its most considerable accomplishments is the victorious lobbying campaign for comprehensive renovation of Wajdeloty Street (figures 4.13 and 4.14). One of the campaign's elements involved gathering of almost a thousand signatures under the appeal to the local authorities for inclusion of Wajdeloty Street renovation into the Gdańsk Long-term Investment Plan:

> It succeeded and I must say that it came as a complete surprise to us that this community action produced an effect. And so I think that it is some kind of a proof that it is worth stimulating activity among people, that it needs to be done without, however, counting on huge support (W6, 172).

A partial explanation of the generous response may lie in the fact that the petition-signing campaign was preceded by a range of community-building actions. Perhaps the most spectacular was the Festival of Wajdeloty Street (*Święto Ulicy Wajdeloty*), held in 2002 and 2006, involving open-air concerts, street parades, art shows, talks on the districts' history and fun activities for children (figure 4.18).

Fig. 4.18   A snap-shot of the street parade in Wajdeloty Street Festival in 2006
Author: Jakub Kulczyński

Eventually, owing to the exertions of the local activists, revitalisation of Wajdeloty Street has been included in the Regional Operational Programme (*Regionalny*

Program Operacyjny) of the Pomorskie voivoidship for the years 2007-2013[82]. Together with several other non-governmental organisations based in Wrzeszcz Dolny, the Association will also carry on initiatives directed at activation of the local community. Moreover, in response to the commonhold leaders' suggestions, on 28th August 2008 the city council changed the regulations concerning co-financing of repairs in residential buildings co-owned by the municipality, which enabled the commonholds, and not only their individual members, to take out bank loans to that end.

Among other initiatives led by the Association, one of the most spectacular was the celebration of Günter Grass' 80th birthday in August 2007. The main event of the anniversary was a thematic walk around places in Wrzeszcz connected to the writer's life and literary works, with the fifth of the eight stops entitled 'Wajdeloty Street as an example of civic action for revitalisation of Wrzeszcz Dolny' (fig. 4.19).

Fig. 4.19   The plan of thematic walk '8 presents for Günter Grass's 80th birthday'
Source: Own archives

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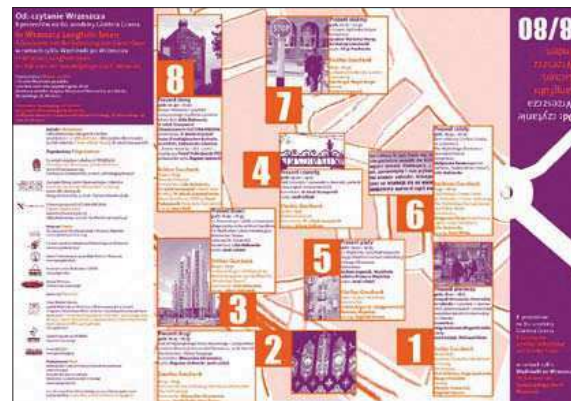
82   The Programme had competed for the EU funds intended for co-financing of revitalisation projects in Wrzeszcz Dolny, Letnica, Nowy Port and Dolne Miasto and, as of early June 2010, obtained 43 million PLN for their realisation.

The walk was in fact part of a series of twenty one thematic walks co-organised with two other local NGOs between 2006 and 2009. The walks featuring a wide range of local issues connected, such as unknown features of background areas in Wrzeszcz or the intricacies of the district's history (figure 4.20). Another vital element of the three NGOs' cooperation is the establishment of a community web portal, which not only presents information on local news and events, but also serves as a forum for exchanging opinions and ideas and provides virtual space for bottom-up initiatives, such as 'The Trace' project aimed at documentation of true-life stories of the elderly people living in Wrzeszcz.

According to the interviewed NGO leader engaged in the above-mentioned bottom-up activities, the idea behind them could be summed up as the 'new way of thinking about local community' (E3, 2). Referring to the 'triumvirate' of the most active local community organisations, she acknowledges that what unites them is 'the awareness that we cannot engage in any domain of collective action around the local interests without the support of the local community itself' (E3, 2). Hence the focus on community-building is evident in all of their undertakings.

Fig. 4.20   Invitation to one of the thematic walks ('Seven and a half centuries of Wrzeszcz'; right) and its participants (left)
Source: Stowarzyszenie Kultura Miejska

For instance, one of the associations, which aims at promoting, exhibiting and explaining art locally, had its headquarters located in the post-industrial space of the old brewery in Wrzeszcz Dolny. Owned by a private investor, the land with several historic buildings is to be transformed into a new housing and services precinct with open-access to non-residents. The investor's departure from the gated community model in the planned development is said to be a result of a common elaboration:

> [t]hey are not interested in building a mere housing estate but rather the new centre of Wrzeszcz … This idea came up also in the course of our common discussions and we are very pleased [about it] … Opening this area for [all of the] local inhabitants is a rare way of thinking … And we support it (E3, 4).

A contradictory approach is represented by another investor, who intends a construction of four high-rise buildings on a plot formerly occupied by a tram depot in Wrzeszcz Górny. After controversial details of the project design had been revealed to the public, a heated debate has followed. Local inhabitants accused both the investor and the city authorities of intentional disinformation and concealing such issues as the height of the tower blocks and plans of gating the whole area. The local organisations became fully engaged in the campaign against such policy, at the same time treating this case as a testing ground for the involvement of local community in the matters of public concern:

> [the] point really is to begin understanding civic participation in a different way. So that it's not like we sit and wait … and organise ourselves only when an excavator or a bulldozer enters [the building site], but [we want] to create a public voice and civic background, so that the next investor realises that we are to be reckoned with. … (E3, 46).

The initiative is thus intended to move beyond the NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) attitude and aspires to elaborate tools for the local community engagement for the sake of common interests:

> Up till now the Gdańsk authorities were only prepared for protests of inhabitants which never surpassed the level of 'we do not wish for this investment, because it will be dirty and noisy over here'. … Among us there are many architects, urban planners, social psychologists and sociologists and … we want to take part in the discussion of the city authorities' policy as a whole … We want to have an influence on urban development, to be informed about [investment] plans … and have access to them (E3, 44).

Most recently the participatory tendencies in Wrzeszcz Dolny have evolved and, partly, institutionalised through the District Council of Wrzeszcz Dolny's (*Rada Dzielnicy Wrzeszcz Dolny*) decision to allocate half of its budget in 2012 for invest-

ments chosen directly by the inhabitants in the formula of participatory budgeting (Sagan and Grabkowska, forthcoming).

By contrast, in Nowy Port activation of the local community by the newcomers has not (yet?) taken place. The few NGOs based in Nowy Port are rather long-exisiting and orientated toward social assistance and welfare, as for instance the Home on the Edge (*Dom na Skraju*) which has provided extraschool care for children of the local socially-deprived families since 1993. On the other hand, the district boasts a 15-person Neighbourhood Council of Nowy Port (*Rada Osiedla Nowy Port*) elected in 2008, a noteworthy fact, considering that until 2010 only 13 institutions of that kind had existed in Gdańsk[83]. In addition, a number of individual actions have been taken by the local inhabitants themselves. Such is the case of one of the interviewed experts, resident in Nowy Port, who was faced with a lack of financial resources for restoration of an almost 100-year-old wooden sculpture of a smiling cod decorating one of the facades in Rybołowców Street (figure 4.21):

I managed to find a high-minded renovator who did it for free. I roped some people in to sponsor the paint and other materials and the fish which was falling apart is now in an ideal condition and will be able to last for another one hundred or one hundred fifty years (E6, 25).

Similar initiatives certainly create potential for civic activism and involvement of the local community, but it remains to be seen if this potential is further expanded and utilised in Nowy Port.

The presented examples speak in favour of the hypothesis that the newcomers to the inner city of Gdańsk may play a significant role in the process of social and material upgrading of the area. The improvements are gradual and often hard-fought, the effects however make up for the amount of time and effort spent on particular undertakings. Especially in Wrzeszcz the bottom-up accomplishments seem to outreach top-down regeneration achievements[84]. Thus, despite the fact that the assumptions of the official revitalisation policy are generally positively evaluated, the slow pace of their implementation is widely criticised among the interviewed experts:

The revitalisation programme is good, but the postponement of its execution will generate problems in Wrzeszcz (E8, 15).

I am under the impression that the revitalisation proceedings recently have been brought to a halt … The focus, of course, switched to the stadium and its neighbourhood, which is understandable, however, it should all go hand in hand, and the issue [of revitalisation of Nowy Port] should not be suspended, because even the smallest grants or repairs could provide the local people with incredible hope (E4, 52).

Fig. 4.21 Installation of the restored sculpture in the facade under 'supervision' of the local inhabitants
Author: Marcin Tymiński

The last of the cited opinions makes a point about the city authorities' moral duty to offer financial help for inhabitants of the inner city. This argument is further developed by representative of a private housing administration based in Nowy Port who believes that

… because the municipality exploited those buildings for such a long time [during socialism] and handed them over to the commonhold in deplorable state, it practically means that people who would like to restore the condition of such buildings are forced to take sky-high bank loans … And because a lot of older people cannot afford neither the credit loan nor the rise of the repair fund monthly payment … we simply count on the help from the city [authorities] (E5b, 60).

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83   In the remaining neighbourhoods or districts either the required 10-per cent quota of attendance was not reached or the inhabitants failed to apply for the Council's creation. The latter, as a matter of fact, is not easy to proceed with, as the application needs to be signed by at least 10 per cent of population of the stated neighbourhood or district, a challenging condition to be fulfilled with, especially in bigger administration units (e.g. the District Council of Wrzeszcz Dolny was established in 2011). For this reason, the majority of the pioneer councils in Gdańsk had been constituted in the areas with dominating municipal ownership or threatened by location of controversial developments (Załęcki, 2003b, p. 201).

84   See also Grabkowska and Makowska, 2011.

Although the statement may seem slightly exaggerated, similar postulates and expectations of making up for the inglorious past by the present local authorities, echo in other opinions as well. A few voices also reveal radical disillusionment with the programme:

> I will tell you straight away that I do not really believe in all this [revitalisation programme]. … I have been working as an administrator since 1982, previously in the municipal housing administration, and the issue of revitalisation was being discussed already back then … promises have been made, meetings have been held … Then, twenty five years passed and to this day nothing has happened. It is simply a matter of lack of funds. And in the meantime the [technical condition of the residential] buildings not only hasn't improved, but, on the contrary, got worse (E5a, 93).

It stands to reason that not all results of spontaneous bottom-up undertakings may be considered as (fully) successful. One of the widely discussed issues of public concern is the question of certain nonchalance in the approach to renovation of pre-war tenement houses. The most common contraventions in this domain include discretionary choice of the shape of replaced windows by individual residents and painting the old facades in garish colours (figure 4.22). Use of polystyrene as insulating material is also controversial, since despite being a cheap solution, it renders impossible preservation of small architectural details which decorate the old buildings. According to housing administrators such shortcomings follow mainly from unawareness rather than wilful neglect (E5b, E6b).

Nonetheless, even despite occasional lapses, the effectiveness of commonhold in improving the technical state and aesthetics of old housing structures is impressive in relation to hitherto performance of Gdańsk authorities in the implementation of the revitalisation programme. It is therefore difficult not to agree with Wawrzyniec's way of thinking, according to which it would be beneficial for Wrzeszcz if active commonhold leaders were more numerous in the inner city:

> I know three more [newcomers] who moved [to Wrzeszcz] recently and are members of their commonhold boards, managing them with dynamism. If there were someone like that to be found in every tenement house, the structure of the district would change immediately. Because even though it's difficult to obtain the EU funding for repairs of a single building, it shouldn't be a problem to get it for twenty. But if there are no partners [willing to do this], then there is no one to talk to (W6, 156).

The director of the municipal housing administration in Nowy Port upholds the opinion of commonholds' efficiency and beneficial impact of their activity on the neighbourhood:

> The commonholds which have by now managed to collect some financial resources first repair the roofs and do the insulation, but there is already a great deal of those which move on to renovate the facades. … those buildings already look totally different… If all of them looked the same, it would be a very colourful district (E6, 49).

Fig. 4.22 Renovation wrong-doings: painful lack of window bars in a newly renovated tenement house in Wrzeszcz (above) and unintended (?) 'disneyification' of a facade in Nowy Port (below) Authors: Piotr Połoczański and Izabela Sitz-Abramowicz (Wolne Forum Gdańsk 2010)

It follows from the presented analysis that the upgrading processes initiated by commonholds engaged in renovation of old tenement houses in inner-city Gdańsk should be treated as complementary to the outcomes of top-down regeneration policies. Adoption of such combination could, therefore, provide an optimal remedy for improving the quality of life in inner-city districts, since it involves their residents on a partnership basis. The example of the Wajdeloty Street in Wrzeszcz shows that the road to cooperation with local authorities may be long and painstaking, so it is desirable that the top-down policies were more flexible in taking into account the social capital already available in the inner city as well as encourage further useful bottom-up initiatives.

Interestingly, community-led upgrading practices were quite common in the pre-war Gdańsk. M. Dymnicka (2006) enumerates several past civil society organisations active in this field, and demonstrates resemblance of their concerns to the present-day issues. For instance, the Wrzeszcz-based Association for Beautification and Promotion of Langfuhr (*Verein zür Verschönerung und Förderung Langfuhrs*) supported, *inter alia*, initiatives aimed at raising aesthetic values of the district and interceded with the local authorities in solving problems relevant to the residents (Dymnicka, 2006, p. 332; see also Szczepańska and Szczepański, 2011). The authorities in turn responded rather eagerly, unlike today, when it takes a lot of energy and time for the local activists to have their voices heard[85].

It should be underlined, that the commonholds' and NGO's undertakings directed at the physical upgrading, have beneficial side-effects in the social sphere, namely the creation of social ties and stimulation of individual residents' engagement in the common undertakings. The role of newcomers in these processes is crucial, as they may set the good example to the less resourceful veteran residents, as well as, assist them in taking the initiative and foster entrepreneurialism. It appears that the demographic dimension matters too, as newly-arrived members of non-traditional households themselves admit that they are predisposed to act on behalf of the local community. As one active leader from Oliwa, another inner-city district Gdańsk, half-jokingly concluded in a local newspaper interview:

> [w]e don't have kids, we don't need to cook dinners everyday… We are representatives of a yet rare species – the civil society. We are annoyed by the omnipresent dirt and disorder, because the way our city presents itself depends on us. We are huge fans of Gdańsk and opponents of its visual devastation. And we intend to change this state of affairs (Kozłowska, 2009).

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85 For a discussion of a similar point in the case of another inner-city district of Gdańsk, Dolne Miasto, see Polańska, 2008.

Summing up, the main benefits of upgrading and bottom-up regeneration processes initiated in the case-study neighbourhoods include:
- **economic effectiveness**, since the greater part of the invested resources, namely money and time, is provided by the local residents who act in their own interest,
- **strengthening of social aspects of revitalisation and community-building**, which are crucial for sustainability of the process,
- **enabling local residents to become involved in shaping their residential environment**, which increases their awareness and sense of responsibility for the immediate urban surroundings,
- **guarantee of continuity and stability of the revitalisation process**, released from dependence on political decisions and current priorities and needs (*vide* the UEFA Euro 2012 case).

The multiple opportunities created by the synergy effect of grass-roots initiatives and top-down policies therefore seem to be a sufficient argument towards local authorities' support of the newcomers' engagement in the inner-city regeneration.

4.4. Gentrification and displacement or succession and replacement?

Having investigated the factors attracting newcomers to old residential neighbourhoods (section 4.2) and the socio-material outcomes of their inflow (section 4.3), a pending question concerns their impact on the social composition of the inner city. It is reasoned in Chapter 2 that similar processes of new population influx in inner areas of Western European cities may result in such undesirable effects as gentrification and displacement. Yet, as further argued in Chapter 3, because of the specifics connected to the socialist system, such transformations run along quite different lines in post-socialist cities. For instance, it has been said that, in comparison with Western Europe, but with the exception of the former Germany Democratic Republic, inner cities of the CEE have not experienced much depopulation in the second half of the 20th century. As a result of housing market deficiencies and inhabitants' rootedness, the outflow from dilapidating inner-city districts has been nominal even after 1989, hence today the inner cities in Poland still benefit from quite sound social structure representing the mixture of social groups and classes.

While the housing shortage issues in Gdańsk may be regarded as currently losing in strength with the increasing proportion of new housing constructions, it should be recalled that a similar rising tendency applies to the number of households (see section 4.1). Therefore, it can be stated that underdevelopment of the local real estate market fosters persistence of residential immobility

characteristic of the socialist era. The dominating ownership patterns, especially the primacy of private ownership over private renting, also account for the factors determining persistence of the inner-city residential mix. Although the real scale of rentals is unknown (cf. section 4.1), the landlords' ability to raise rents to the point of incurring massive displacement of less affluent tenants, as in the mechanisms described by S. Zukin (1989), seems to be very limited. Owners, in turn, usually develop a strong attachment to the area replacing residential mobility with flexibility, as already exposed in section 4.2.

Rootedness is mentioned by several interviewees, particularly in relation to the older inhabitants of the case-study districts, whether they are neighbours, relatives or previous owners. The attractiveness of flats and convenient location, as well as established daily routines and social networks are cited among the main anchoring features ('people know each other very well here, by name at least and certainly by sight'; E5b, 8; 'a lot of older inhabitants live close with their neighbours ... They help each other, ... it's a genuine community'; E5b, 21). 'Sentiment', 'memories of youth' and the commonly shared belief that 'old trees shouldn't be transplanted' are also of importance (E4, 38).

Also, municipal tenants tend to appreciate the inner city too much to wish to change their place of residence. Nonpayment of rent is quite a common practice for municipal tenants in Poland, as the law protects them from eviction, so that they 'only' risk being relocated to lower quality accommodation in less attractive areas of the city. However, facing the deficit of the total number of municipal flats in Gdańsk and less favourable location of many of them, tenants in Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port are often motivated not to become transferred, which has recently manifested itself in an improvement of rent payments:

E4a: Of course there have always been and there will always be debt arrears, however, in comparison with several years ago their proportion has decreased. ... The tenants are doing their best [to pay regularly].

E4b: Yes, the arrears are paid by instalments, settlements are reached... There are various options available to the debtors. *Interviewer*: And what is the reason for such improvement?

E4a: The tenants fear the [possible] loss of the flat. They start taking bank loans or...

E4b: ...or get help from relatives. They do what they can not to lose those flats, simple as that (134-139).

Municipal flats in both case study districts are thus appreciated and treated as valuable goods which, even if not owned, are to be kept within families:

The [municipal] flats are handed down from generation to generation, there are no new settlements as such (E4, 25).

Any replacements take place on the basis of generational exchange. ... Those [potential new inhabitants] who don't know Nowy Port are too scared [to move in] ... and those who already live here do not wish to move out (E6, 9).

A confirmation of the latter statement's validity in the case of Wrzeszcz can be found in the municipal tenants' group protests against the administrative ban on the buyout procedure following from particular clauses in the spatial development plan:

Municipal tenants in Biała Street, for example, are very interested in the buyout option, yet, since the 1960s the area has been reserved for construction of a new road and the sale of the flats is blocked. There exists a feasible solution consisting in an exchange and buyout of a municipal flat located elsewhere in the city, however, it is hard [for the inhabitants] to bring themselves to leave the flats plus it's [a matter of] emotional involvement (E4,

In Wrzeszcz, a real-life trial of the inhabitants' attachment to place occurred in 2001, in the aftermath of the great flood. In spite of extensive destructions, the inhabitants refused to leave their flats and only a few of municipal tenants eventually decided to move out of the afflicted buildings (E7b, 32).

The intense sense of belonging among many inner-city residents combined with appreciation of the neighbourhood advantages occasionally even leads to practices on the verge of legality:

Even though the law forbids grandchildren moving in [to municipal flats rented by grandparents] if their parents had previously moved out, a lot of them do so (E6, 40-1).

As already stated in section 4.2, the strategy for handing down the flats from grandparents to grandchildren is a common means of providing the youngsters with their own flats and keeping the housing resources inside the family. One of the interviewed experts even calls it the main reason of immigration to the district:

The turnover [of residents] isn't that big. It is mainly because of the heirs, people who inherit the flats who move in here. ... The local inhabitants are

permanent and their flats everlasting. The elderly, as is well known, are reluctant to leave their homes … (E7a, 12).

The gathered and insofar presented evidence thus suggests that the use of the term gentrification to name the processes ongoing in the inner-city Gdańsk may be unjustified, since there is no indication of displacement. Taking into account the gradual pace of the influx to the case-study neighbourhoods, the ongoing transformations could be rather denominated as succession, rejuvenation and diversification. Because of their location, both areas are also undergoing studentification – a fairly recent, in terms of its actual scale, phenomenon in the Polish inner cities (see section 3.3).

It is also worth emphasising, that despite the interviewees' criticism of the veteran inner-city residents' inertia, mutual relations between the two groups are far from antagonistic. Just as the interviewed NGO leader praises social mix in Wrzeszcz, claiming that 'both intellectuals and blue-collar workers live here and that's what makes the essence of a city' (E3, 48), the interviewed inner-city newcomers also show respect, or at least understanding, for the locals. Although any closer interactions develop at a quite unhurried rate, if at all, most of the interviewees are able to provide quite detailed socio-demographic descriptions of their next-door neighbours, which at the same time shows how the human-scale architecture of a tenement house rules out anonymity and supplies a potential breeding ground for sound social relations.

In turn, some of the original residents seem to look up to the newcomers and follow their example. According to the urban planners the benefits of the existing social mix and further re-mixing are evident:

E1b: I don't think that [social] segregation will take place here, be-
         cause those [from outside the district] who buy flats move into
         buildings occupied by poorer families and it will all end up in a
         [social] mix with no segregation whatsoever. … The social struc-
         ture is [already] very mixed … I think it is very good. Because it
         functions far better that way, it mobilises those from the lower
         steps of the social ladder to move up.

E1a: Because it really works this way, [that one starts thinking] that
         'if Mr Kowalski cares so much for this staircase, then I shall
         restrain myself from littering it with my own rubbish and take
         it to the dustbin instead' (169-174).

A number of positive examples of the newcomers' activities and their impact on the older inhabitants have been described in section 4.3. The list becomes complete with the addition of the following citation of an owner-to-be:

Weronika: I am not engaged in the commonhold matters, as I'm not yet an
                owner … but … my neighbours keep asking me when I will finally
                buy my flat out, because when I do it and my other neighbour
                does it, then we [the owners] will simply be in majority …
Interviewer: And when you become an owner, will you get engaged then?
Weronika: Sure, I will have to know what's happening in here, you know…
                (W2, 136)

The foregoing argumentation confirms that mechanisms of bottom-up regeneration, in both material and social dimension, may be a panacea for the troubled inner-city Gdańsk. However, there rosy picture could become black-spotted. Two major threats which are potentially menacing its sustainability, include the gating of new-build gentrification and the massive outflow of former municipal tenants from their newly bought-out flats.

In Nowy Port several vacant plots have already been classified as suitable for prospective infill development, and a number of derelict old buildings have been pulled down to make room for new investments (E6, 7). So far however developers have not taken any larger interest in these locations, apart from the Magellan's Tenements vaguely mentioned in section 4.1. Interestingly, this particular investment is said to have received a lot of acclamation among local residents:

The inhabitants of Nowy Port judged that [the Tenements] would fit very
nicely in here. They won't collide [with the landscape] as they are not too big,
nor too extravagant or exaggerated. Instead they will blend beautifully into
the background and will act as a nice screen for these uglier [pre-fabricated]
buildings. We also think that people who will move into them will not be
ill-disposed [towards the local community], so all in all we think it's a very
good idea (E5b, 72).

At the time of the interview, that is a year before the completion of the buildings, the representative of the company claimed that the sales were 'going even better than we [had] expected' (E2, 87)[86]. Furthermore, she expected the investment to

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86 Almost a year later, on 16th of March 2009, only 25 of 56 flats have been pre-purchased, with another 5
    having been reserved. This setback, however, resulted most probably from the recession of the hous-
    ing market heavily influenced by the global recession of the late 2000s. As of 4th of March 2010, after

have a comparable effect to a similar one in the adjacent district of Brzeźno which, contrary to pessimistic forecasts, turned out to be very successful:

> I know that many people from Brzeźno are not biased against this location [in Nowy Port] and they are also aware how the prices [in Brzeźno] went up. It changed radically over there as not so long ago Brzeźno and Nowy Port were perceived as almost equivalent[ly dangerous and unattractive]. And I remember when the first new villas were being built and some people were very sceptical, whereas it's a really wonderful location, just next to the sea (E2, 99).

Yet, it is slightly disturbing that the Magellan's Tenements are gated (figure 4.23), leaving possibility for new-build gentrification. So far there has not been much public debate on this issue in the Tricity agglomeration and it seems that it is not yet commonly regarded as a real danger. Nevertheless, the issue has been raised in an article published in a local daily newspaper, featuring the opinion of urban planner D. Kamrowska-Załuska, who claims that gated estates cause 'breaches in the urban structure' and make public spaces 'disappear' (Szcześniak, 2008). She also underlines the fact that when a new gated estate is developed in a district between existing, older buildings, in the space previously accessible to all inhabitants, then the newcomers are less welcome by veteran residents. In even harsher words her view is supported by sociologist L. Michałowski, who asserts that gating is equivalent to 'murdering the city'. In addition, he blames gating to be the result of the 'typically Polish mentality', suggesting that it is especially desired by consumers on the estate market in Poland.

The interviewed local estate agent would not entirely agree with the latter view, since according to him, there is not much demand for gating beside singular cases of more expensive investments located within the old-built residential areas of the lower terrace in Gdańsk (E8, 50). Such statement implies, that while a fence around new development is a sought-after feature among potential buyers of properties located in old inner-city neighbourhoods, the same factor loses its significance in the case of new housing estates in the 'safe' upper-terrace districts. Nevertheless B. Jałowiecki's theory, that the demand for gating is artificially stimulated by developers themselves (see section 3.3), also seems to hold true in this case.

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a considerable price reduction all flats, except from only 3 reserved, were sold (*Mieszkania Gdańsk...*, 2010).

Fig. 4.23 Urban idyll behind the fence? Magellan's Tenements in Nowy Port against a background of socialist housing (as on October 2011) Author: Maja Grabkowska

By contrast, in Wrzeszcz Dolny the street plan with housing development cramped in perimeter blocks is quite dense leaving 'no open spaces for fences to be put up' (E1b, 169). For instance, location of Aldona's Tenement (*Kamienica Aldony*) refurbished towards the end of 2008, renders physical separation of the building impossible (figure 4.24). Worth noticing is the fact that although the 36-unit residential building, previously owned by a state pharmaceutical company, dates from the interwar period of the 20th century, the present owner advertises its restored version almost as if it were a completely new development (Kamienica Aldony, 2010)[87].

A few other brownfields are still eligible for new residential investments in Wrzeszcz Dolny. One of them is the brewery complex mentioned in section 4.3. So far, however, no signs of the beginning of construction are to be observed. The other potentially gentrifying factor to be investigated, is the risk of dissolution of the social mix due to selective mobility. It should be noted that some of the local inhabitants suspect speculative transactions to be taking place in the case-study areas. For instance, Wawrzyniec estimates

> that in almost every tenement house a[t least one] flat a year changes its owners, so this movement is pretty big, and only in part natural, [with suc-

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87 As of 18th of March 2009 twenty eight flats were sold, while on 4th of March 2010 six of them were still on offer. The planned construction of 8 additional flats in a ground-floor annex to the main building has been thus suspended.

cessions] accounting for around 30 per cent [of move-outs], while the rest result from somewhat speculative buy-out underhand dealings (W6, 162).

According to Wawrzyniec, such 'underhand dealings' concern mainly lawyers and notaries, who run their offices in restored tenement flats in Wrzeszcz and make use of the fact that they are often well-informed about intricacies of the local properties' tenure. Allegedly thus enables them to advantageously get possession of them in order to upgrade them to a very high standard and later resell at a profit. Yet, no reliable data is available to confirm these assumptions.

Fig. 4.24 Aldona's Tenement House in Wrzeszcz Dolny: view of the building in October 2011
Author: Maja Grabkowska

All in all, market mechanisms seem to have the decisive impact on the ongoing inner-city transformations. It follows from the expert interviews that no planned policy of either social de-mixing or re-mixing has been envisaged so far. Although the interviewed urban planners speak briefly of new guidelines for 'inward development' which aims 'to prevent the excessive growth [on the peripheries] of the city while there is still vacant land in its centre' (E1, 24), the issue of its potential socio-residential consequences is left untouched. Similarly, in spite of the fact that privatisation of municipal flats and increasing tenure mix of inner-city residential buildings are welcome by the Gdańsk authorities, the resulting changes of the socio-demographic structure are regarded more likely as a by-product, rather than an intended effect.

Such indifference towards the ongoing inner-city transformations, plainly exhibited by the city authorities, is certainly less damaging than any active measures to attract new residents to the old districts at the risk of inducing gentrification. However, unawareness of or disinterest in the favourable, but still fragile tendencies, which currently take place in the inner city, could also be harmful.

In conclusion of this section it should be underlined that the analysed processes of residential change in Wrzeszcz Dolny and Nowy Port are still at an early stage. Nevertheless, a state-of-the-art diagnosis is possible and advisable if further transformations are to be monitored. As follows from the analysis, succession and replacement, related mostly to generational change, tend to predominate as no traces of gentrification may be observed in either of the case-study neighbourhoods so far. Even though a few housing developments emerged in both districts after 1989, their presence has not (yet) entailed any negative outcomes for the existing population. The risk of displacement appears to be low considering the present tenure structure and rootedness of the older inhabitants. Hence, it would be crucial that this positive *status quo* is maintained and the precarious practices, such as gating, possibly curtailed.

5. *Conclusions: Towards sustainable urban regeneration*

The significance of the inner-city transformations consists in the fact that they deeply affect the condition of urban organism as a whole. Although in Western Europe trajectories of urban development after the Second World War varied in time and space, the need to address socio-economic and material downgrading of the inner city may be enumerated among their common features. The evolution of approaches towards regeneration has not led to discovery of any universal remedy to the inner-city ills, yet some principles of how to increase the probability of success have been established. One of the most crucial resolves itself to inclusion of local communities in the regeneration process and ensuring that they benefit from its outcomes. It also emerged that while the increasing recognition of the inner-city residential advantages by new, usually younger and more affluent, population groups may appear supportive to renewal of the troubled neighbourhoods, the following in-migration also carries the risk of unfavourable gentrification side-effects.

Distinctness of analogous processes observable in the inner cities of CEE is directly related to the consequences of the former socialist housing policy, and the corollary of systemic change. On the one hand, due to ideological reasons, their material degradation was more acute than in the West and the first, if few, regeneration measures have been undertaken only since the beginning of the early 1990s. In Poland this postponement at first led to further neglect of the inner-city neigbourhoods, but eventually encouraged incumbent upgrading and grass-root regeneration initiatives. On the other hand, however, the relative population mix remaining from the socialist period alleviated concentration of social problems in inner-city neighbourhoods.

Changes in tenure structure of inner-city dwellings, namely privatisation of municipal flats sold at a discount to their tenants, and establishment of commonhold as the administrative body in mixed-tenure residential buildings, may be regarded as necessary conditions, and at the same time decisive factors of post-socialist bottom-up revitalisation. In the Introduction it was assumed that the additional stimulus to inner-city renewal could be provided by newcomer residents to the inner-city, attracted by residential-flexibility features of pre-war housing (Hypotheses 2 and 1), while the gradual and 'natural' pace of the influx

and activation of the local community could minimise the risk of undesirable side-effects (Hypothesis 3).

The outcomes of the conducted empirical research not only confirmed these assumptions, but also allowed for a number of additional observations. The interview results revealed that despite high levels of residential mobility recorded in the respondents' housing biographies, their current, inner-city, place of residence was in most cases regarded as satisfactory and was unlikely to change in the near future. Thus, it appears that the capability of the residential flexibility not only attracts households to the inner city, but also encourages them to stay there.

Limited residential mobility, however, does not apply to the transitional arrangements of non-owners, represented in the sample of interviews by renting students and the 'makeshift' occupant of an inherited family flat. Being constrained in their customising capabilities, the flatsharers and other renting young nest-leavers appreciate the locational advantages of the inner city even more. This component of spatial flexibility is more pronounced in Wrzeszcz Dolny, which is considered by owners and renters alike as more attractive and offering a wider spectrum of urban facilities than Nowy Port. Nonetheless, against the background of state socialist housing estates and the new suburban developments, housing opportunities in both case-study neighbourhoods are rated very positively.

Another notable finding of the study is that the expected distinctiveness of housing needs and preferences of non-traditional household arrangements, appears to be less significant than their specific urbanite lifestyle patterns. It therefore needs to be underlined that the discussed residential flexibility features, render inner-city living appealing to more than the restricted category of non-traditional households. Most of the conveniences are of universal scope as, for instance, proximity to shopping facilities and availability of public transport, which fosters the sustainability of social mix.

Adaptability of pre-war flats, commonly praised by the interviewees was accentuated as a key quality of inner-city housing. However, what is crucial in the context of the topic of the study, apart from wide-ranging array of repair and construction works, creative interior design and its frequent changes aimed at best fulfilment of households' needs, most of the interviewees displayed also high levels of commitment in the shared maintenance of the tenement houses they live in. In conjunction with the overall positive perception of both neighbourhoods and shared opinion on their high potential for development, new residents appeared as proponents and, in several cases, active leaders of positive change extending well beyond their homes. As evidenced by the interview results, the newcomers' engagement in the commonhold undertakings not only greatly contributes to improvement of the built structures' technical condition, but also encourages creation of local community bonds and fosters activity among veteran residents.

Benefits following from the influx of new population groups to the case-study neighbourhoods, namely their physical and social upgrading, are thus evident, especially considering the sluggish implementation of the top-down revitalisation programme. It needs to be underlined that the adopted ethnographic approach proved successful in capturing and diagnosing these processes at their initial stage and thus the methodological aim of the study has been fulfilled.

Looking at the effectiveness of commonhold maintenance of inner-city buildings, starkly contrasting with the poor condition of tenement houses fully owned by the municipality, the following stages of post-socialist inner-city change may be distinguished:

- full municipal ownership of residential buildings and lack of bottom-up upgrading,
- mixed tenure of residential buildings with pioneer commonholds and small-scale upgrading (individual buildings),
- mixed tenure of residential buildings with domination of commonholds and larger-scale upgrading (more individual buildings and groups of buildings) accompanied by activation of the local community.

The scheme shows how the progression of privatisation translates into spill-over of upgrading practices, and how separate initiatives merge in an organised bottom-up regeneration movement. With reference to the two case-study neighbourhoods, it may be noted that changes ongoing in Nowy Port are typical for the second stage, while those in Wrzeszcz Dolny already have moved to the third, and the most advanced, stage.

The answer to the pending question, whether the end stage of the process should be full privatisation, remains negative. It seems that retaining the social mix, understood as inclusiveness and not merely co-existence of different but segregated and separated socio-demographic groups of residents, is of utmost importance. Therefore, as much as the role of new residents in stimulating the positive inner-city changes may be regarded as vital, local authorities should concentrate on supporting the grass-root initiatives and integration of the local communities, rather than attracting more newcomers. Such support would be especially needed in the less privileged inner-city areas, such as Nowy Port in the case of Gdańsk.

Another conclusion, which also should be taken into account by municipal policy makers, is the necessity for bringing together of the grass-root level activity and local regeneration plans and strategies. While the extensive list of bottom-up revitalisation advantages, pinpointed in the summary of section 4.3, provides a strong argument for treating community-led initiatives as complementary to any top-down programmes, the potential synergy effect of their coordination is considerable. In turn, disregard of the bottom-up revitalisation undertakings

might counteract their effectiveness. The recognised significance of the socially and demographically induced processes of bottom-up inner-city regeneration proves that further studies on the development of the presented tendencies should ensue. Awareness of dynamics and trends of inner-city transformations is a precondition for a genuine post-socialist urban renaissance.

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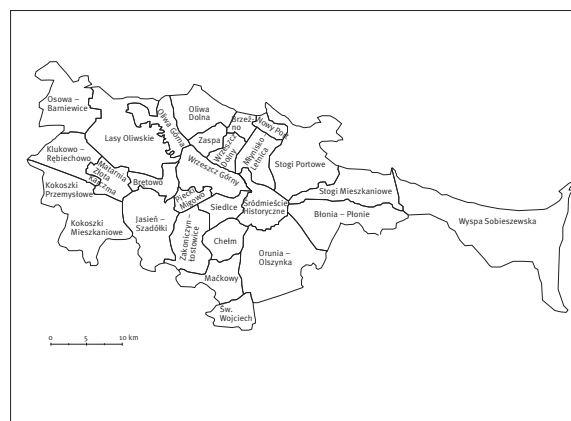
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Appendices

Appendix 1. City boroughs (*dzielnice*) in Gdańsk
Source: Gdansk Development Bureau
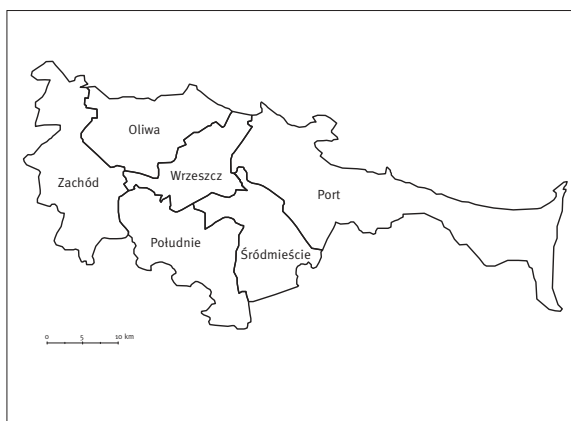
Appendix 2. City districts (*jednostki urbanistyczne*) in Gdańsk
Source: Gdansk Development Bureau