

PROBLEMS OF SOCIO-SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT IN CENTRAL DISTRICTS OF WARSAW

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1 Introduction

Three main external factors have influenced the development of the new spatial structures of towns and their core areas in Central Europe since 1989: the socio-economic transformation, the integration into the European and world economy, and new concepts of organising urban space, deriving primarily from the idea of sustainable development. The changes taking place in Warsaw are most visible in the city centre. This is a straightforward consequence of the fact that the centre, after years of neglect, is regaining its rank in the functional-spatial structure of the entire agglomeration of Warsaw. The emergence of the management sector – the network of headquarters of companies and institutions, and the relations among them, associated with the appearance and modernisation of numerous office buildings – has had a particular significance for the development of the city centre (Śleszyński, 2002, 2004a). This development is reflected in the emergence of the city centre, the CBD. The central areas of Warsaw (and other large towns of Central Europe) are becoming similar, in their functional and morphological character, to the central areas of cities in countries with longer traditions of free market economy. These urban changes, as we will discuss, also affect the social tissue of cities.

From the point of view of the city centre of Warsaw it was very important that after 1989 the land-rent mechanism was re-established (Węclawowicz, 1996). This entailed a dramatic increase of land prices, for both existing and newly constructed buildings. For permanent residents it also meant a significant increase in the cost of living. Between 1989 and 2004 in the centre of Warsaw some 3.5 million sq. metres of new floor space were built, 90 percent of which was used as office and trade-and-service space. However, under the unregulated property conditions, the new projects and the changes in the use of existing buildings and plots caused a spatial chaos. Altogether, a strong tertiarisation of the city's functions and its metropolisation (including the appearance of non-public space management and the development of the CBD) have been the most characteristic processes since 1989, which took place at the expense of deindustrialisation, accompanied by the spatial extension of the city centre (succession),

especially in the western direction, along with a lack of cultural functions within the affected areas (Śleszyński, 2004a).

The primary objective of the present study is to draw attention to the social aspects of the transformation in the centre of Warsaw. It is mainly reflected in the numerical and structural changes of the population, as well as in the spatial-social behaviour of residents (e.g. commuting, other migrations, choice of location of residence).

The paper refers to selected results of studies conducted within the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organisation of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, in the framework of various research projects funded by the Ministry of Science and Computerisation surveying the transformation of the inner-city of Warsaw (P. Śleszyński) and the development of electoral space (M. Kowalski), as well as reports elaborated by the commissions of the Capital City of Warsaw.

2 Social development of the centre of Warsaw before 1989

The order-and-distribute system from before 1989 left its imprint on the development of the centre of Warsaw, its functional pattern, and consequently the composition and social structure of inhabitants. First of all, the centre of Warsaw came to conform to the concept of the 'socialist city', elaborated and experimented in the Soviet Union as early as in the 1920s and 1930s (Milutin, 1930), an area "*featuring an extraordinary ideological tension*" and "*in place of ads and traffic of the city centre we have here the images of the monumental forums of the capital, filled with the manifesting crowds*" (from the speech of Bolesław Bierut, the communist president of Poland). As regards social housing policy, the reconstruction of the central part of the town after the war destructions signified, among other things, the mass introduction of the residential function, meant for the working class. The great transformation of the urban pattern of the city centre (one of the largest in the post-war history of Europe) was enabled by the nationalisation of land. This was described well by the Polish socialist poet Adam Ważyk in the title and contents of the poem "*The people will enter the city*". In reality, though, the first newly built housing estates were populated mainly by the families and acquaintances of high Warsaw functionaries, and a part of the newly constructed apartments even had separate entrances for the servants. Initially, the housing estates were compact, and the urban structure followed the street facades. Starting with the 1960s, the traditional facade pattern was practically given up, and significant part of the central housing quarters were constructed as dispersed and insular, and in terms of technology, the use of large prefabricated elements became general (the most pronounced example here

is the *Behind the Iron Gate Settlement*). Some parts of buildings to the west of the city centre were left without reconstruction (there are blocks with single buildings dating back to the period before World War I). In the same part of the town industry was also being developed, especially the printing and electronic branches. Simultaneously, there was an intensive population increase in the city centre¹, to a large extent due to the inflow of population from outside of Warsaw, which entailed a significant change of the original socio-spatial structure.

The mixing of people with different social backgrounds was also facilitated by the differentiated housing conditions, first of all in terms of the age of the buildings, and consequently, in terms of their quality (*Figure 1*). It can be demonstrated on the basis of data from the National Census (*Śleszyński, 2004a*) that housing conditions, as well as the age, education and employment of inhabitants were highly differentiated in the centre of Warsaw. In particular, a correlation analysis confirmed that the spatial differentiation of housing conditions usually corresponded with social patterns (*Harvey, 1973; Węclawowicz, 1988*).

The differing quality of dwellings, originating from the rapid reconstruction of the central areas, including large housing estates, entailed an increased interest in the older, but remarkably modernised buildings. As in the initial post-war period the population moving to the pre-war housing quarters was quite haphazard and belonged most often to the lower-class categories, the process of taking over by the politically and economically stronger social strata was bound to follow. This phenomenon was described by G. Węclawowicz (1988) on the basis of data from the National Census of 1978. Such interrelations could be even more likely to be found in the data from the later periods, by ten years or more, when the processes described became more pronounced.

The characteristic features of the Centre of Warsaw (Warszawa-Centrum) on the eve of democratic transition could be summarised as follows (*Węclawowicz, 1996; Śleszyński, 2004a*):

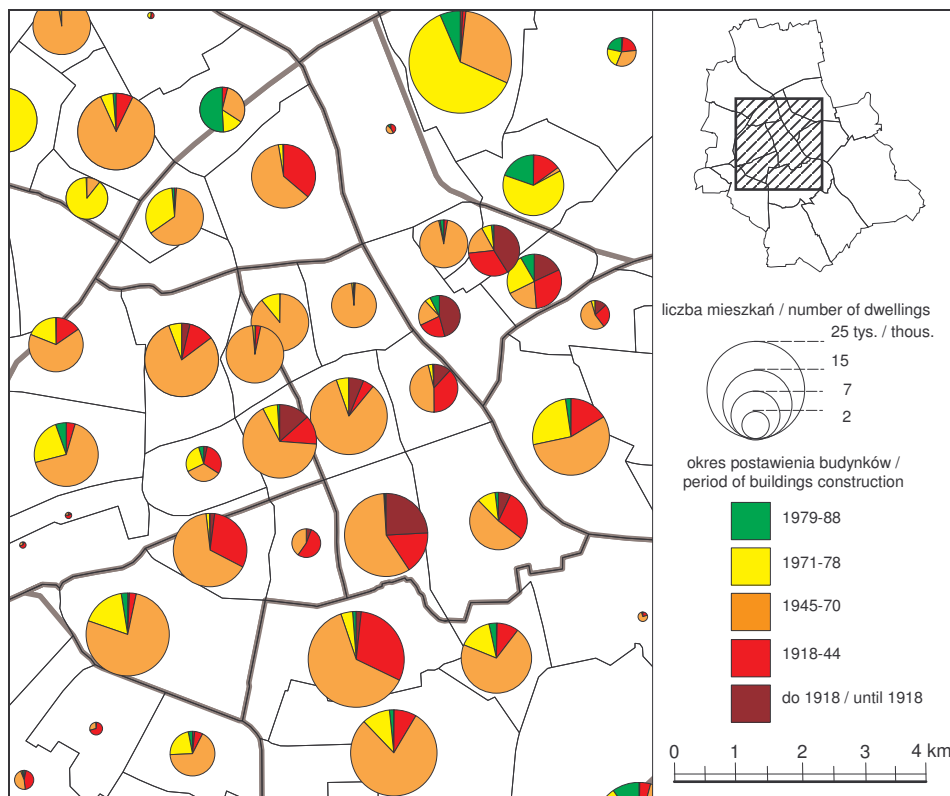
- 1) Extensive development of the central areas;
- 2) Very strong role of the housing function;
- 3) Strong role of the industrial function, especially in the western part;
- 4) Preservation of the pre-war socio-spatial structure in some areas (mainly within the so-called 'Wild West');

¹ Military war activities and two uprisings (1943, 1944) brought about the physical extermination of some 700,000 inhabitants (in 1939 the administrative Warsaw had 1,300,000 inhabitants), in a high proportion Jews, and the destruction of 80 percent of the infrastructure. In 1945 Warsaw had merely 160,000 inhabitants, which is a very rapid decrease of population. It must be emphasised that the Warsaw of the pre-World War II administrative boundaries (corresponding roughly to the present seven central districts) never regained the pre-war population number.

- 5) Development of two centres: one linked with the Old City and Nowy Świat Street (the 'patriotic' one), and the other linked with the Palace of Culture and Science and the adjacent Central Railway Station and the Eastern Wall, with the supermarkets built in the 1960s (the 'communist' one);
- 6) Chaotic, intermingled socio-spatial structure, both within particular blocks and within particular buildings;
- 7) Low mobility (strong registration restrictions) and slow ageing of the population;
- 8) Poor development and low significance of the core area in the functional structure of the town and the agglomeration.

FIGURE 1

Age structure of the dwellings within the central area of Warsaw according to town planning districts in 1988



Source: Own elaboration on the basis of data from the National Census of 1988.

3 Main demographic and social processes after 1989

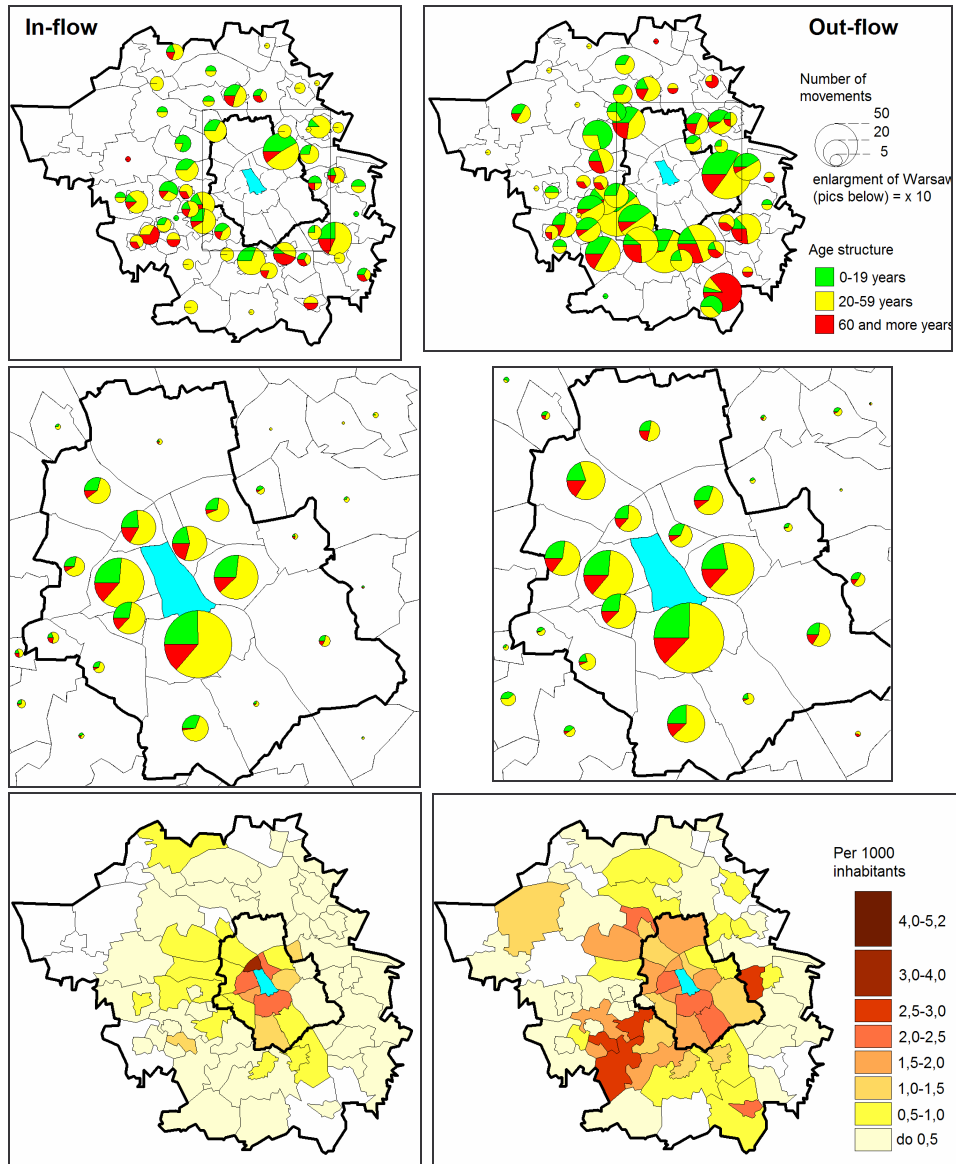
3.1 Depopulation and ageing of population

During the period of transition the relatively common depopulation processes in the centre of Warsaw were increasing. The rapid ageing of the population has been observed in detailed analyses (on the basis of cartographic analysis of the data from National Censuses) since at least the 1970s (Węclawowicz, 1991). The phenomenon of the outflow of population from Warsaw to the suburban zone got increasingly intensive in comparison with the inflow from this zone to the capital, until an equilibrium was reached in the 1980s (Korcelli, 1989; 1990). Then, in the 1990s a significant growth of the outflow from Warsaw to the suburban zone could be pointed out (Potrykowska-Śleszyński, 1999), although the respective data were underestimated, as a consequence of the abolition of the obligation to register after 1984 and the fact that a great part of migrants were not registering the change of their residence. Thus, for instance, the data from the recent census of 2002 showed that the former province of Warsaw is inhabited only by some 100,000 people more than what the current population registration shows (Śleszyński, 2005a).

While in the central quarters, especially those situated on the left bank of the River Vistula (Warszawa-Centrum, Ochota, Wola, Żoliborz, a part of Mokotów), the decrease or stagnation of the population has been obvious since the 1970s, an intensification of these processes clearly took place in the first half of the 1990s (Potrykowska-Śleszyński 1999). Among the above-mentioned factors, a basic one was the flow of suburbanisation that meant a change of place of residence for the purpose of improving the residential conditions (especially natural environment) by the wealthier segments of population (Figure 2).

In the case of Warsaw the typical migration pattern of A. Rogers and L. Castro (1981) according to age groups, is confirmed, with the age group of 35–45 years being more highly represented in comparison with other age groups (Figure 3). It should also be emphasised at this point that the majority of migrants move from the city centre not directly to the suburbs, but to the quarters located within the boundaries of the town, including Mokotów, Wola and Praga South.

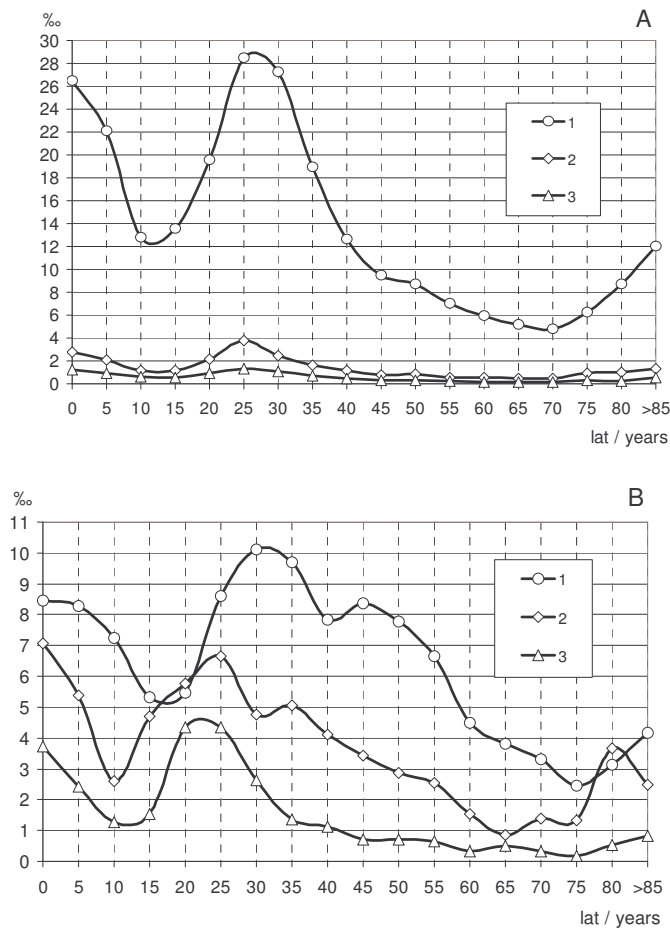
FIGURE 2
Migration inflows and outflows to and from the Central Districts
of Warsaw in 1995



Source: Own elaboration on the basis of A. Potrykowska, P. Śleszyński (1999) Migracje wewnętrzne w Warszawie i województwie warszawskim (Internal migrations in Warsaw and Warsaw voivodship; in Polish), Atlas Warszawy, 7, IGiPZ PAN, Warsaw.

FIGURE 3

Distributions of internal migrations in the former voivodship of Warsaw according to the five-year age categories in 1995 (the data do not account for the change of address within the confines of the same commune, except for the urban-rural communes, in which division into urban and rural areas was preserved)



Key: A – inflow to Warsaw; B – inflow into rural areas (rural communes and rural areas in urban-rural communes); according to the origin of migrants: 1 – from Warsaw; 2 – from other towns; 3 – from countryside

Source: Potrykowska and Śleszyński (1999), modified.

Between 1988 and 2004 the population of the central quarters of Warsaw decreased by 72,100 inhabitants, with the strongest decrease in Warszawa-Centrum, amounting to 18,400 (11.7%), while in the other quarters to 53,700 (6.3%, see *Table 1*). A detailed cartographic analysis reveals an even more pronounced spatial unevenness of this process. Particularly high decrease was recorded in the quarters of Wola, Żoliborz and Mokotów (*Figure 4*). The share of the centre in the total population of Warsaw and its urban region has shrunk.

TABLE 1
Changes in the numbers and shares of population in different functional zones

Unit	Absolute values				Changes of shares in zones distinguished			
	number		change		Warsaw – outer zone		Areas within Warsaw and outer zone	
	1988	2002	1988–2002	1988–2002	1988	2002	1988	2002
Agglomeration of Warsaw, totals*	2,415	2,534	119.0	4.9	100.0	100.0		
Warsaw total	1,655.2	1,671.4	16.2	1.0	68.5	66.0	100.0	100.0
Downtown quarter	156.9	138.5	–18.4	–11.7			9.5	8.3
Remaining central quarters**	847.8	794.1	–53.7	–6.3			51.2	47.5
Remaining part of Warsaw	650.4	738.7	88.3	13.6			39.3	44.2
Outer zone of agglomeration	759.9	862.7	102.8	13.5	31.5	34.0	100.0	100.0
1 st belt of communes	248.8	315.9	67.2	27.0			32.7	36.6
2 nd belt of communes	409.3	438.9	29.5	7.2			53.9	50.9
3 rd belt of communes	101.8	107.9	6.1	6.0			13.4	12.5

* Within the boundaries of the former voivodship of Warsaw, functioning in the years 1975–1998.

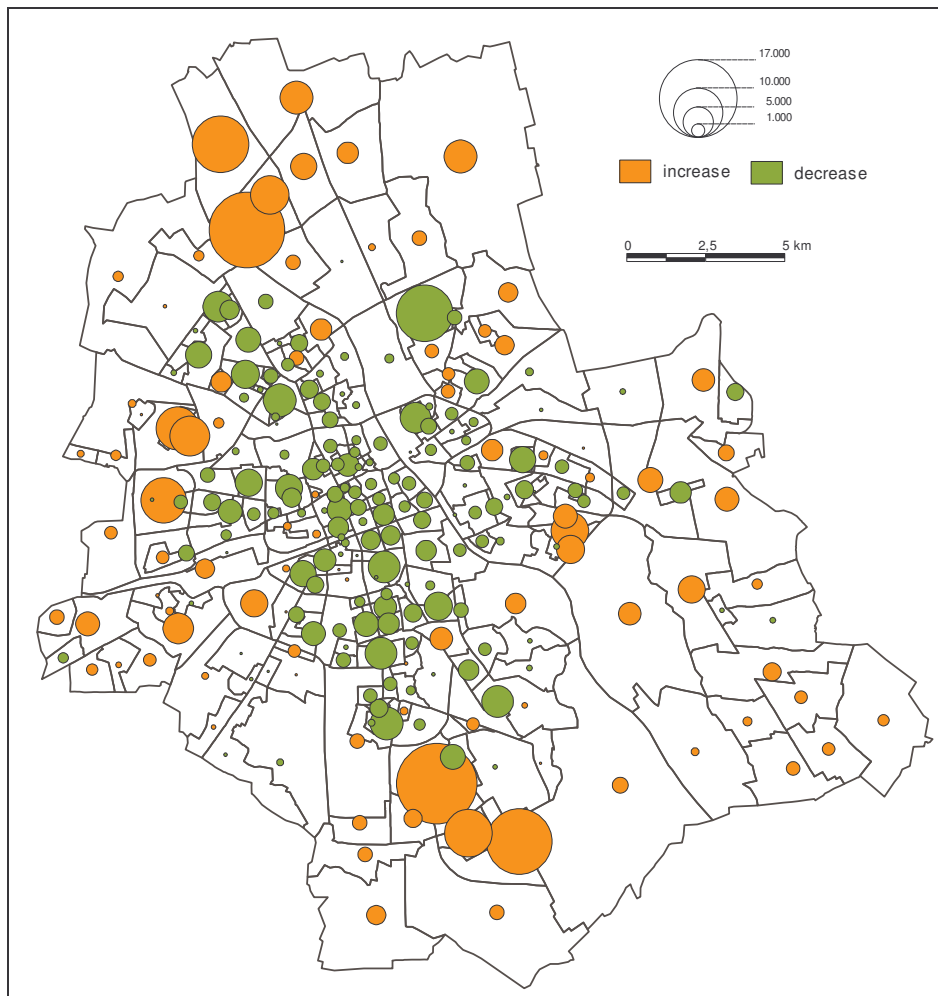
** The quarters of Żoliborz, Wola, Ochota, Mokotów, Praga North and Praga South.

Sources: National Census 1988, 2002.

At the end of the 1960s the quarter of central Warsaw had around 200,000 inhabitants, whereas it had only 157,000 residents in 1988, and even less, 138,000, in 2002. It can be argued that on the scale of the entire urban region the deconcentration of population followed the concept of urban cycles very well in the long run (*Klaassen–Paelinck, 1979; van den Berg et al. 1982; Korcelli, 1989*). It must be admitted, though, that the rate of population decrease in the city centre has declined in recent years, and the ageing process has slowed down, as well. Thus, in 1988 the population of post-productive age accounted for 29.6

percent of the total population in the city centre, while nowadays it accounts for 30.0 percent. This is nevertheless a high value, comparable with those of the central areas of other European capital cities. The social problems associated with this phenomenon are also comparable, such as the necessity of securing adequate accessibility to health care, effective urban transport, etc.

FIGURE 4
Changes of population in Warsaw, 1988–2004



Source: Own elaboration based on National Census 1988 and 2004.

When referring to the model of urban life cycle, we should also note that in light of the data from the recent national census, the agglomeration of Warsaw is not yet in the phase of absolute deconcentration (i.e. desurbanisation). This type of development of the demographic-spatial processes was indicated by data from the statistical registration of recent years. In addition, there are some central areas where an increase of the population was noted in comparison with 1988. The question therefore remains: to what extent the change in the political and economic situation after 1989 has contributed to the development of the urban cycles mentioned earlier, especially in the centre of Warsaw (Śleszyński, 2004a).

However, since the role of migration to the suburban zone is increasing, an intensification of the deconcentration process of population can be expected in the future. It should be noted that these observations were made on the basis of calculations for Warsaw in its administrative boundaries. If the functional specificity was accounted for, such deconcentration could also be observed on the basis of the census data. Many family housing estates within Warsaw, such as Wawer, Wilanów or even southern Ursynów or Włochy have more of a suburban than urban character, and the movement of population towards these areas takes place for exactly the same reasons as towards the typical suburban areas. Besides, the rapidly expansive spatial development of Warsaw was characterised by a step-wise absorption of consecutive suburban localities into the administrative boundaries of the town. After 1951 the territory of the town was extended by 277 square kms, inhabited by 165,000 people. Then, in 1957 the town of Rembertów was annexed, in 1977 the town of Ursus, and in 2003 the town of Wesoła.

Irrespective of the functional-administrative specificity of Warsaw, one should remember that the central zone of the town is relatively sparsely populated in comparison with the corresponding areas of other towns of similar scale and status (e.g. European capital cities). In light of these remarks, a strong deconcentration of the population within the agglomeration of Warsaw is by no means a fully certain process.

3.2 The centre as the main node of work in the agglomeration of Warsaw

The rapid economic development of the centre of Warsaw was accompanied by radical quantitative and qualitative changes in the social and professional structure. In quantitative terms, the primary change was the decrease of population. The shifts of the labour market affected the balance between employment in industry and services, especially in metropolitan and higher-quality services (Gawryszewski et al. 1998).

Due to the acute lack of statistics, the precise number of people employed in Warsaw is hard to define. It is estimated that at the beginning of 2005 there were altogether 675,000 people employed in the central quarters, close to 200,000 of whom worked in Warszawa-Centrum (Śleszyński, 2005b). This constituted, respectively, 64.3 percent and 18.9 percent of employment in the whole of Warsaw. The traditionally high-quality services show a higher degree of concentration. Thus, for instance, three central quarters, Warszawa-Centrum, Wola and Ochota, accounted for 58.4 percent of employment in the financial sector and for 67.6 percent of employment in public administration. Also, there is an increasing difference between the proportions of permanent residents and commuters, which can be seen through the comparison of the number of jobs and the permanent population (*Figure 5*). Consequently, commuting gains in importance, which, given the significant gaps in transport facilities (lack of ring roads or transit traffic, lack of parking places etc.) and a substantial increase of car ownership (record-breaking indicators on the scale of the country), entails heavy road congestions.

A growing demand for services, confronted with the lack of sufficient possibilities of carrying out investments, resulted in a definite deconcentration of jobs, or slowed down the process of concentration in the narrow city centre in other ways. Near the traditional area of the city centre a strong concentration of employment appeared, not only in its closest surroundings (the eastern part of Wola, northern Ochota, northern Mokotów) but also at significant distances. Most important was the emergence of business parks, making use of the former industrial areas. *Industrial Służewiec* became the largest of them, with cc. 220,000 square metres of office space (close to 10 percent of all office space in Warsaw). The second process to be mentioned is the deconcentration of retail trade and the appearance of large trade and service centres, of which there are more than 20 in Warsaw by now. Such a centre provides jobs for 1–3 thousand people on average, entailing also the concentration of other businesses in the closest vicinity.

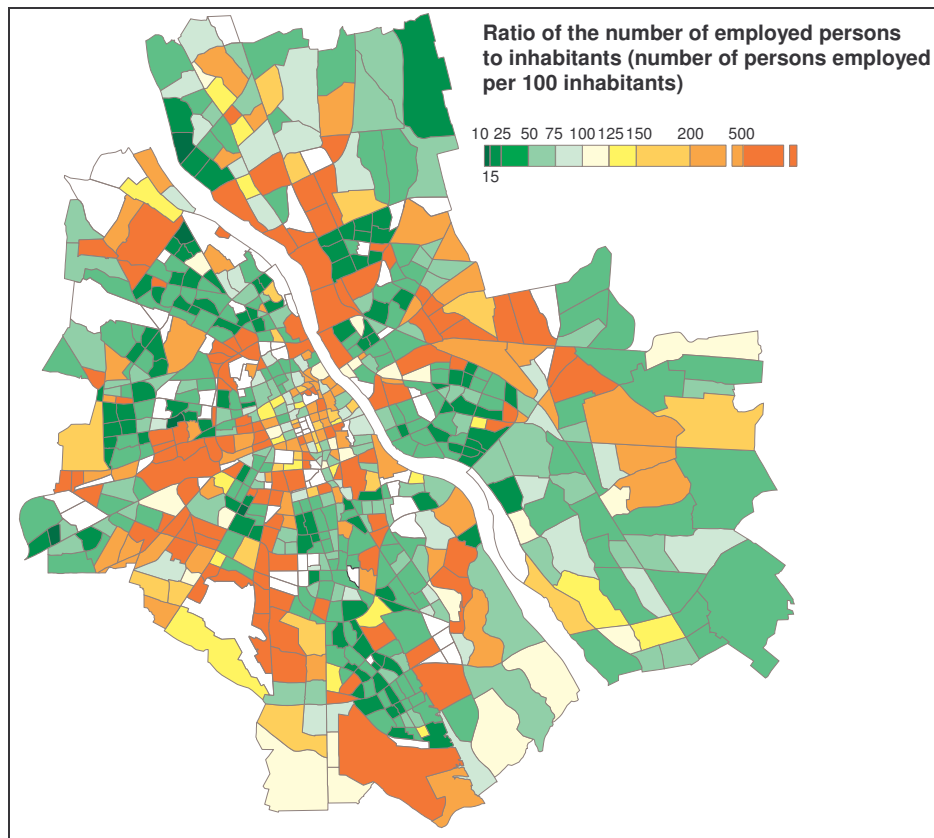
3.3 Pauperisation and gentrification: an increase of socio-spatial differentiation

The increase of inhabitants' wealth and the broadening possibilities of choosing the place of residence has caused an increase in spatial mobility. This derives not only from the processes of suburbanisation and polarisation similar to other large cities, but displays its own specific character, as well. It should be noted that there has been a strong shortage of dwellings in Warsaw, largely as a consequence of the housing policy of the state after World War II (Węclawowicz

1996). In 2002 the average residential area per inhabitant in the central quarters of Warsaw amounted to 18–26 square metres, which is not only about half of the size for developed countries, but also the lowest among the countries of the former communist block in Central and Eastern Europe.

However, the role of high-quality apartment projects is more pronounced than it would ensue from the number of dwellings, due to the frequently prestigious location of the buildings. Such estates are situated in well-visible places, with good transport connections, usually along main streets. In this way high-quality housing projects become important elements shaping the spatial structure of the city, and influencing the process of revitalisation.

FIGURE 5
Ratio of employed people among inhabitants in Warsaw, 2005
(number of persons employed per 100 inhabitants)



Source: Own elaboration based on data from Central Statistical Office.

New housing projects are generally of a rather high quality. Since they are expensive, they are inhabited by the higher social strata (the so-called “metropolitan class”; *Jałowiecki et al.* 2003), and the respective process fits the concept of gentrification. In the years 1988–2004 in Warszawa-Centrum alone about four thousand apartments were built with an average area of over 100 square metres (the average for the rest of the town was around 60 square metres).

A separate issue is constituted by the process of revitalisation, in view of the limited means of the city budget encompassing only selected areas, associated primarily with historical heritage (the area of the Old City and the Royal Road). An instance of successful revitalisation is also provided by the renovation of Żabkowska Street in the quarter of Praga North, situated in the former functional centre of the historical district of Praga.

On the other hand, there is an ongoing pauperisation of entire residential blocks. This is observed, in particular, in the western part of the centre (*Śleszyński*, 2004a), where a high percentage of housing blocks dates from before World War II. The causes of the impoverishment of particular areas in the centre of Warsaw are quite typical and are associated with the already mentioned outflow of more prosperous groups of inhabitants and the ageing of population. There is a growing number of households, for which the cost of maintenance is too high and which are unable to pay not only the costs of repairs, but also the housing utility fees. Thus, for instance, at the end of 2003 there were 6,500 apartments in Warszawa-Centrum, whose debt, resulting from delays in paying the rent, amounted to 1.6 million EUR (*Table 2*).

4 Selected social attitudes: electoral geography in the centre of Warsaw

The 15-year period of democratic elections has configured a strong spatial differentiation of Poland in terms of electoral behaviour. This differentiation concerns the relations both between town and countryside, and between particular areas, whether within urban or rural space (*Kowalski*, 2000, 2004).

Polish political space is divided into four basic political options: the rightist, the leftist, the liberal and the peasant. The primary political forces are the left and the right. Their influence is highly divergent in particular rural areas, this fact being related to the strongly diversified historical conditions. It is especially important, which of the neighbouring countries a given region of Poland belonged to in the 19th century. This is less visible in the urban areas, where the differences in the influences between towns and their parts are not so clear any more. The fundamental difference between urban and rural areas is, however, manifested in the divergence of the influence of the liberal and peasant options.

TABLE 2
Indicators of housing situation in the central quarters of Warsaw, end of 2003

Unit	Number of		Average living area of flats		Flats with arrears in payments		Value of arrears		
	population	flats	per flat	per person	number	%	in this: arrears of 3 and more months	total	per flat
WARSAW	1,689.6	729.9	55.8	24.1	32,068	4.4	49.9	16,404	512
quarters outside of the centre, total	771.2	305.4	64.6	25.6	4,118	1.3	51.8	1,681	408
central quarters	918.3	424.5	49.5	22.9	27,950	6.6	49.6	14,723	527
Downtown	136.3	70.9	48.5	25.2	6,517	9.2	27.7	1,601	246
Ochoła	93.1	43.3	49.7	23.1	2,849	6.6	74.4	715	251
Wola	145.8	67.9	43.5	20.2	3,098	4.6	48.6	1,437	464
Żoliborz	50.5	24.9	53.1	26.2	416	1.7	44.5	146	350
Mokotów	230.6	104.5	53.0	24.0	7,606	7.3	57.8	5,888	774
Prague North	74.4	31.5	44.2	18.7	4,070	12.9	45.0	1,746	429
Prague South	187.6	81.6	51.6	22.4	3,394	4.2	59.3	3,190	940

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland.

A strong influence of the peasant option is characteristic only of rural areas. In many places this option brings better electoral results than the leftist and the rightist options. The pronounced influence of the liberal option is characteristic of the urban and suburban areas. This option also overshadows the electoral strength of the left and the right at many places (Kowalski, 2000, 2004).

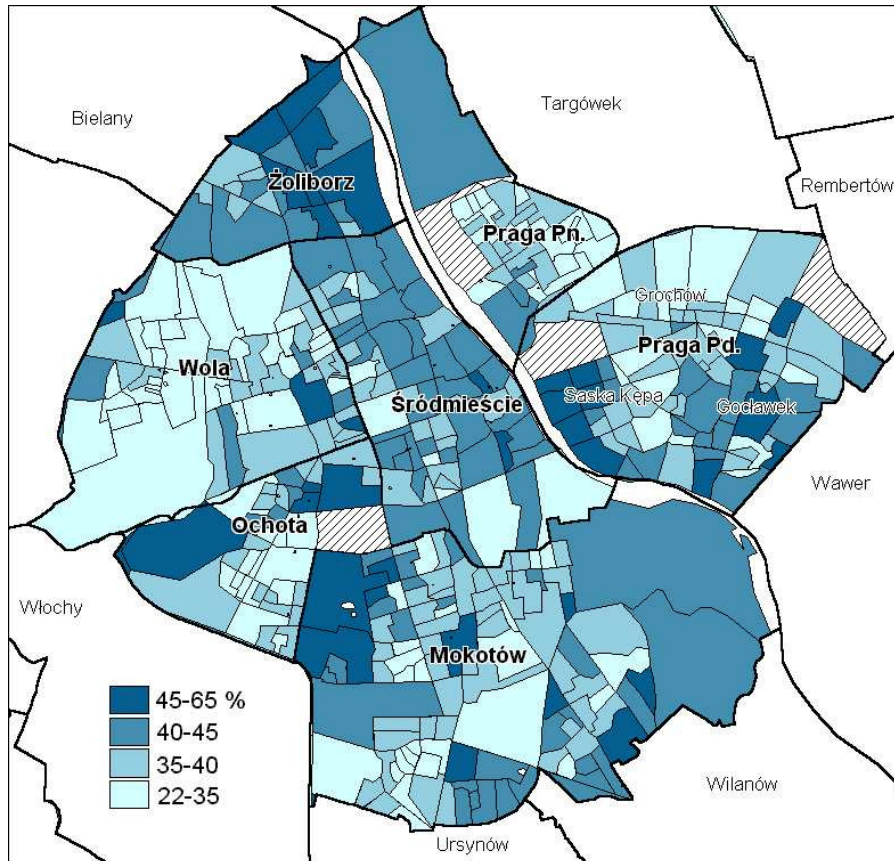
In terms of electoral behaviour, Warsaw does not differ significantly from other large cities of Poland (Węclawowicz–Jarosz–Śleszyński 1998; Kowalski, 2000). In the consecutive elections good results were achieved by the liberal option (Liberal-Democratic Congress, Democratic Union, Union of Freedom, Citizen Platform, Union of Real Politics). While both the rightist parties (Centre Alliance, Christian-National Union, Electoral Action of Solidarity, Movement for the Reconstruction of Poland, Law and Justice, League of Polish Families) and the leftist ones (Alliance of Democratic Left, Union of Labour, Polish Social-Democracy) achieved good electoral results as well, it is the former that was distinctly better, while the peasant option (Polish Peasant Party, Self-Defence) had marginal significance.

In Warsaw as a whole, and in the central quarters, a quite pronounced difference in support for particular political options could be observed. The liberal option, as mentioned earlier, was strongly supported in all urban areas, and received the strongest support in the quarters considered to have been 'good' locations for decades – Żoliborz, Saska Kępa, the eastern part of Ochota, the western part of Mokotów. It gained a similarly strong support in the new housing estates constructed in recent years, but concentrated mainly in the outer belt of the city (Kabaty, Nowodwory, Bemowo). The central part of Gocławek can be classified as such an estate. Taking into account the character of these quarters and estates, the strong support for the liberal option should be associated with voters belonging to the socio-economic elite: intellectuals, managers, free trade professionals (*Figure 6*).

A strong influence of the left was characteristic mainly of the quarters where apartments had been constructed in the socialist period for the functionaries of the communist authorities: activists of the communist party, state officers, militiamen and the military. In the central part of town this included mainly the quarter of Mokotów and, to a lesser degree, the southern part of Warszawa-Central, the western part of Ochota and Gocławek. In the outer belt this applied to Bemowo and Rembertów.

The support for the right-wing was also spatially divergent. It was visible especially in Wola, Grochów, Ochota, Praga North, in the quarters inhabited by lower-class employees (blue collar workers, technical personnel, clerks). In the outer quarters mainly the housing estates dating from the 1960s and 1970s (Bielany, Chomiczówka, Targówek) and the suburbs with traditional family houses (Ursus, Wawer), also dominated by similar social groups, were involved.

FIGURE 6
Support for liberal option in European Parliament election 2004



Source: Own elaboration based on data from Polish National Electoral Commission.

Low support for this option corresponded with a strong influence of the liberals and the left. In the central quarters this was the case primarily in Mokotów, while in the outer quarters, in Bemowo and Ursynów.

The observation of the electoral behaviour of the inhabitants of Warsaw provides additional information on the spatial differentiation of socio-economic development. Electoral behaviour clearly correlates with the appearance of clusters of characteristic social groups. Political divisions become an important element of the social differentiation of population, and also an important and simultaneously synthetic indicator of the economic conditions of people inhabiting particular parts of the town.

5 Summary

After 15 years of political and socio-economic transition we can attempt to forecast the directions of the social development of the centre of Warsaw.

First, we can assume a stagnation of the demographic profile of the permanently residing population, with an increase of the share of professionally active persons. In our estimate, a stronger decline of the demographic potential cannot be expected, since the first signs of a shift in the tendency have already appeared. Data from the current population registry indicate a change in the components of population dynamics. In 2004 in the quarter of Warszawa-Centrum a natural increase of 0.5 thousand inhabitants was registered for the first time in a long period, while the age groups of 0, 1, 2 and 3 years are now twice as big as the age groups of 4–10 years. Similarly, the net balance of migration has been usually positive in recent years. In the remaining central quarters, however, the values of natural increase are as a rule negative, though with a positive tendency. The persisting positive net migration balance indicates, however, that the natural loss may be compensated for in the course of time. Altogether Warszawa-Central may remain an 'island' of population growth among the other, surrounding central quarters, where a further decrease of population can be expected (especially in Wola, Ochota, Żoliborz and Praga North, and to a lesser degree in Praga South and Mokotów).

Population ageing will persist as an important problem. Here we can expect a difficult economic situation of the households of pensioners, increasingly severe as they will largely continue to stay in the buildings located in the centre, where costs will be high, in terms of both maintenance and repair. Given the increasing decline of buildings, it now appears to be reasonable to ensure an adjustment of the household structure to the real needs, including the introduction of incentives to a voluntary change of the place of residence by the elderly. Such an operation could succeed, owing to a relatively large difference of apartment prices in the centre and outside, allowing the purchase of a much bigger flat for the same price. Problems, however, may result not only from the set habits of the population and the psychological barriers, but also from the lack of possibilities of finding the areas featuring relatively good (comparable with the previous one) environmental standard and access to services, especially health and social care, municipal transport, etc.

The intensification of the use of land will result in the increase of jobs. Thus, for instance, one office facility of a medium magnitude (10–20,000 sq. metres of working space) generates up to 2,000 jobs. The currently realised large trade and service centres (like the Golden Terraces, located next to the Central Railway Station, to be opened at the end of 2005 or at the beginning of 2006) will generate 5,000 new jobs in the narrow centre of the town. It can be expected that in

the next 2–3 decades the number of persons employed in the central quarters of Warsaw may increase by as much as 50–100,000. Without a serious improvement of transport conditions the city can get paralysed. The question also arises, to what extent Warsaw will become similar to the cities of Western Europe, where a deconcentration of jobs is observed, although one should remember that this deconcentration in the west proceeds from much higher employment rates (with respect to population number and area), than those currently recorded in the central areas of Warsaw.

Along with these processes, typical social phenomena will be taking place. First of all, one should expect the acceleration of spatial segregation and polarisation processes of the various social groups. This will lead to the differentiation of areas into ‘better’ and ‘worse’ neighbourhoods; the main question will remain the scale of this socio-spatial stratification. In this context the question of the role of foreign immigrants seems to be important. Assuming that there are now some 50–100,000 immigrants in Warsaw, mainly from post-Soviet and Asian countries (only 10–20 percent of them residing legally), and that in 10–15 years this number may double or even triple, one wonders where they would live. Whether, because of the location and advantageous conditions, immigrants will concentrate within Wola (the western part of the centre), and the name ‘Wild West’ will become appropriately descriptive again? Or perhaps one can expect a process of settling in Praga North and South, where the 10th Anniversary Stadium is located, functioning now as a great bazaar. It is hard to say. Conclusions drawn from the processes having taken place in the towns of Western Europe in the last 50 years are all too suggestive. Summing up, one should expect that the centre of Warsaw would become more similar to other centres of large cities functioning in free-market economies.

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