

“Wanted” vs “Unwanted”: Different Faces of Suburbanisation in Polish Cities—The Case of Gdańsk

Aleksandra Wróbel  and Piotr Lorens 

Faculty of Architecture, Gdańsk University of Technology, Poland

Correspondence: Aleksandra Wróbel (aleksandra.wrobel@pg.edu.pl)

Submitted: 30 January 2026 **Accepted:** 3 June 2026 **Published:** 13 August 2026

Issue: This article is part of the issue “Suburban Development and City Extensions” edited by Henriette Bertram (TU Braunschweig), Angela Million (TU Berlin), and Uwe Altröck (University of Kassel), fully open access at <https://doi.org/10.17645/up.i513>

Abstract

Suburbanisation in Poland intensified alongside the socio-political and economic transformation after 1989. While urban expansion had also occurred earlier, the post-socialist transition fundamentally reshaped its mechanisms through market liberalisation, the emergence of private developers, and the growing importance of planning regulations. A key feature of this transformation is the emergence of a dual planning regime, in which statutory zoning coexists with special-purpose legal mechanisms that allow residential structures to be developed despite the specific character of binding local plans, subject to municipal approval and negotiated public-benefit investments. These changes have produced contradictory outcomes, including increasing pressure to urbanise agricultural land and growing resistance to suburban densification. This article examines the evolution of suburbanisation in Poland through three case studies in the city of Gdańsk: Olszynka, Klukowo (a subarea in Matarnia), and Błonia (a subarea in Rudniki), which represent contrasting suburbanisation trajectories. Using a qualitative comparative case study approach, the study conceptualises suburbanisation as a governance process shaped by the interaction among planning instruments, market dynamics, and social acceptance. By introducing the distinction between “wanted” and “unwanted” suburbanisation, the article contributes to debates on suburban development and city extensions in post-socialist Europe, showing how suburbanisation is selectively promoted, contested, or negotiated depending on the alignment between institutional strategies, market pressures, and local expectations.

Keywords

city extensions; planning regulations; post-socialist cities; suburbanisation; urban conflicts; urban development; urban governance

1. Introduction

Suburbanisation has become one of the key areas in which contemporary European cities negotiate housing needs, environmental limits, and changing governance arrangements. In many Western European contexts, metropolitan expansion has been gradually framed by compact city agendas, transport-oriented development, and strong multi-level planning systems. In post-socialist countries, by contrast, suburbanisation has unfolded amid institutional rupture, market liberalisation, and fragmented local planning capacity. Poland represents a particularly dynamic variant of this transformation, where inherited socialist planning frameworks intersect with new legal instruments and strong market pressures at the urban fringe. In this context, suburbanisation is closely linked to post-1989 planning reforms, which have resulted in highly differentiated suburban landscapes, ranging from dispersed low-density housing in former rural areas to more compact extensions associated with new transport and employment nodes. At the same time, climate adaptation, flood risk management, and soil protection policies increasingly constrain where and how suburban growth can occur, adding a further layer of complexity to suburban governance.

A distinctive feature of recent suburbanisation in Poland is the growing importance of exceptional legal instruments, particularly the Ustawa z dnia 5 lipca 2018 r. o ułatwieniach w przygotowaniu i realizacji inwestycji mieszkaniowych oraz inwestycji towarzyszących (Act of 5 July 2018 on facilitating the preparation and implementation of housing investments and accompanying developments; Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 2018), hereafter referred to as the Special Housing Act (commonly known in Poland as *lex deweloper*). This instrument allows residential structures to be developed despite the provisions of binding local plans. This has led to the emergence of a dual planning regime, reducing the predictability of zoning and intensifying negotiation and conflict in development decision-making.

Building on existing research on suburbanisation and planning conflicts, this article introduces a conceptual distinction between “wanted” and “unwanted” suburbanisation. It assumes that suburbanisation is context-dependent and shaped by the alignment between institutional frameworks, environmental conditions, and stakeholder expectations. The study addresses the following research questions: (a) how suburbanisation is constructed as “wanted” or “unwanted” within different governance contexts; (b) which configurations of planning instruments, environmental constraints, market dynamics, and stakeholder expectations shape these outcomes; and (c) how exceptional planning instruments reconfigure these relationships and influence suburbanisation trajectories.

The empirical focus is on the city of Gdańsk and three of its districts: Olszynka, Klukowo (in Matarnia), and Błonia (in Rudniki), which represent contrasting suburbanisation trajectories within a shared institutional framework. Although all three cases are located within the city’s administrative boundaries and thus are not suburban in the classical sense, they are examined as urban-fringe areas exhibiting suburbanisation-like dynamics, including low-density development, land-use change, and planning conflict. They therefore differ from peri-urbanisation as defined in the Central and Eastern European literature, which typically refers to more distant zones beyond the suburban belt (Zborowski et al., 2023). The term suburbanisation is retained here as a functional and planning category that describes processes at the urban edge of the city.

This article examines selected cases of suburbanisation, although it is not intended to provide an exhaustive or comprehensive account of the phenomenon. Instead, it focuses on the broader conceptual and governance

dimensions of suburbanisation, with particular emphasis on zoning and other planning instruments and their role in shaping development processes in the suburban areas.

The article is structured as follows. It first outlines the theoretical background and then discusses the evolution of suburbanisation and planning in Poland. The final section provides a comparative analysis of the cases to identify distinct suburbanisation regimes, understood as configurations of relationships among planning policy, market dynamics, and social acceptance that extend beyond the specific case of Gdańsk.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Historical Trajectories of Suburbanisation in Europe and Post-Socialist Countries

Suburbanisation has long been a central force reshaping European urban regions, although its trajectories have varied significantly across national and regional contexts. In Western Europe, suburban growth since the mid-20th century has been closely linked to welfare-state expansion, mass motorisation, and modernist planning that promotes functional separation (Hall, 2014). In the following decades, environmental regulation, integrated transport policies, and compact-city agendas have moderated outward expansion, supporting more polycentric and transit-oriented development patterns (Albrechts et al., 2003; Goess et al., 2016; Knowles, 2012). In Southern Europe, suburbanisation was characterised by a shift from compact urban growth to more dispersed and irregular forms, and by the expansion of intermediate-density areas beyond the urban core (Ciommi et al., 2018; Leontidou, 1990, 1993; Salvati et al., 2013).

Post-socialist Europe follows a distinct suburbanisation trajectory shaped by systemic transformation after 1989. Under state socialism, strong land-use controls, limited private ownership, and state-managed housing production constrained peripheral growth, concentrating development in large, centrally planned housing estates rather than dispersed suburban forms (Cirtautas, 2013; Kotus, 2006; Sailer-Fliege, 1999). Following liberalisation, a rapid release of land to the market coincided with restitution processes and the state's withdrawal from housing provision (Hirt, 2012; Hirt & Stanilov, 2009; Kryczka et al., 2025; Tsenkova, 2009). This led to accelerated, market-driven suburbanisation in which private developers and individual households became key actors. In the post-socialist context, suburbanisation is not only a gradual demographic shift but also a structural reorganisation of space, conditioned by the collapse of centralised planning, institutional uncertainty, and the new political economy of land (Kubeš, 2013; Leetmaa et al., 2009; Schneider-Sliwa, 2006).

These trajectories have produced persistent differences in suburban development across Europe. Rather than following a uniform model, suburbanisation is shaped by planning traditions, land-use systems, and state-market relations, which continue to structure contemporary planning challenges, particularly in post-socialist contexts such as Poland.

2.2. Contemporary City Extensions: Governance, Planning Regulations, and the Power of Zoning

Contemporary suburban extensions develop under conditions of tension shaped by planning regulations, policy priorities, socio-economic pressures, and environmental constraints. As a result, suburbanisation increasingly emerges as a negotiated process rather than a linear form of spatial expansion, often producing

discrepancies between planning assumptions and actual outcomes, which in turn generate social and political conflict (Hesse & Siedentop, 2018). These dynamics are widely discussed in the literature on planning conflicts and contested urban development, which emphasises that spatial decisions reflect competing interests, values, and expectations (Gualini, 2015). In this perspective, suburbanisation becomes a site of negotiation among institutional actors, market forces, and local communities, where conflicts concern not only land use but also legitimacy, fairness, and the distribution of costs and benefits.

Among planning instruments, zoning plays a key role in shaping future spatial development, although its influence varies across national and local governance contexts (Nadin & Stead, 2008). In Western Europe, it operates within multi-level planning systems linking regional strategies and local plans (Cotella et al., 2021). In post-socialist countries, zoning gained renewed importance after the collapse of centralised planning systems in 1989, when local authorities became responsible for spatial regulation under market conditions (Hirt & Stanilov, 2009). This transition, combined with land commodification and decentralised planning competencies, often introduced regulatory instability. As a result, zoning increasingly functions as an arena of negotiation, mediating between market pressures, infrastructural constraints, and environmental considerations.

Suburbanisation also exposes persistent mismatches between development and infrastructure provision. Growth often outpaces the delivery of essential services, generating fiscal pressures, uneven service levels, and disputes over the distribution of costs (Hortas-Rico, 2014; Muñoz Gielen & Lenferink, 2018). At the same time, environmental governance introduces additional constraints, as decisions on land allocation increasingly intersect with climate adaptation and the protection of ecological systems (Bahers et al., 2022; Oliveira et al., 2019).

Recent research further highlights the role of remote and hybrid work in intensifying suburban demand, reducing the importance of commuting distance, and increasing pressure on peripheral areas (Kužmar et al., 2026). This shift challenges existing planning assumptions and reinforces the complexity of suburban governance.

Zoning is therefore neither merely a technical regulation nor a deterministic constraint. Instead, it functions as a dynamic governance instrument shaped by political interests, institutional arrangements, and market dynamics. Understanding how zoning enables, constrains, and mediates suburban development is essential for analysing contemporary city extensions and for explaining why similar planning instruments can produce markedly different spatial outcomes.

2.3. Conceptualising “Wanted” and “Unwanted” Suburbanisation

The literature on suburbanisation has extensively addressed conflicts surrounding spatial development, including planning conflicts and, in particular, the concept of NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard), originally associated with resistance to locally undesirable land uses (Dear, 1992). The concept is now also used more broadly to describe conflicts surrounding urban development, including both densification and suburban expansion. However, NIMBY-type responses should not be understood as simple or irrational opposition to change. Such resistance is often rooted not only in perceived environmental or infrastructural impacts, but also in concerns over planning legitimacy, distributive fairness, and the disruption of established socio-spatial expectations.

These approaches conceptualise suburbanisation as a negotiated process shaped by competing interests, values, and expectations among institutional actors, market forces, and local communities. At the same time, research on urban governance emphasises the role of institutions and planning legitimacy in shaping the acceptability of development. However, while these perspectives provide important insights into the emergence of conflict, they offer limited explanation as to why similar forms of development are accepted in some contexts and contested in others.

To address this gap, this article introduces the distinction between “wanted” and “unwanted” suburbanisation as a relational analytical category. In this framework, “wantedness” is understood as the degree of alignment or misalignment between three actor positions: municipal objectives, market or developer interests, and local community expectations. These positions are examined in relation to planning and regulatory frameworks, environmental and infrastructural conditions, and the perceived benefits or costs of development. A process may therefore be interpreted differently by different actors, depending on their interests, expectations, and understanding of local conditions. The distinction between “wanted” and “unwanted” suburbanisation shifts the analytical focus from the mere presence of conflict to the conditions under which development gains or loses institutional, market, and social support. It therefore provides the conceptual framework for the comparative analysis presented in the following sections.

3. Empirical Background: The Evolution of Suburbanisation and Planning in Poland

Suburbanisation in Poland follows a broader post-socialist trajectory shaped by the transformation after 1989 (Schmidt et al., 2015). Restitution and reprivatisation of the land resulted in fragmented ownership patterns, while a highly decentralised planning system transferred responsibility for spatial planning to local governments operating with limited institutional capacity (Wagner, 2017). These changes, combined with market liberalisation and rising household incomes, released previously suppressed demand for suburban living (Pichler-Milanović et al., 2007). An attempt to stabilise the planning system was the introduction of binding local spatial development plans. While areas covered by local plans became subject to clearer zoning rules, large portions of suburban territory remained unplanned and highly responsive to market pressure (Lackowska & Zimmermann, 2011; Mikuła, 2023, 2024).

A significant shift occurred with the introduction of the Special Housing Act, which allows residential development outside binding local plans in exchange for negotiated public-benefit investments. Initially intended for post-industrial redevelopment, this instrument has also been widely applied in suburban areas, weakening the determinacy of local plans and increasing the role of discretionary decision-making (Parysek, 2017). Recent studies indicate that the scale of its application varies across Polish cities, yet the instrument has substantially altered the mechanisms of spatial governance. At the same time, its implementation has generated new arenas of conflict, particularly where development is perceived as misaligned with local spatial, environmental, or social conditions (Nowak & Tasan-Kok, 2025).

As a result, the Polish planning system operates within a dual structure in which statutory planning coexists with exceptional mechanisms enabling selective development. This configuration allows similar forms of suburbanisation to be evaluated differently depending on their implementation and level of social acceptance. It also provides the basis for analysing the Gdańsk case studies, in which suburbanisation emerges as a differentiated governance process shaped by planning instruments, development pressures, and stakeholder responses.

4. Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative comparative case study approach. The analysis focuses on Gdańsk, one of Poland's largest cities, with a population of 489,160 (City of Gdańsk, 2025). Since the 1990s, the city has undergone major socioeconomic and spatial transformations linked to systemic transition, the restructuring of heavy industry, and the diversification of the economy towards services, logistics, tourism, and high-tech sectors. These changes have increased development pressure on peripheral and previously undeveloped areas.

The case selection followed a purposive sampling strategy. Three areas were selected to represent different suburbanisation trajectories within the same legal and institutional framework. The selection criteria included environmental conditions, development pressure, planning status, and the presence or absence of social and institutional conflicts related to land-use change. The cases were selected to reflect clear variation, resulting in distinct development configurations. At the same time, they represent some of the most recent examples of suburbanisation processes in Gdańsk, allowing the analysis to capture the current planning context.

The analysis combines institutional sources, independent materials, and author-conducted analyses. Institutional sources include planning documents, strategic materials, environmental and hydrological studies, and reports from participatory processes. One of the authors was involved in the preparation of these participatory reports, which were used as one type of publicly available institutional source. This involvement provided contextual knowledge of the institutional setting, but it may also have increased familiarity with official planning perspectives. For this reason, the reports were not treated as neutral accounts or as the primary empirical basis of the study; rather, they were critically compared with independent materials and author-conducted analyses. Independent materials, including press articles, published interviews, and discussions in local online communities, were used to reconstruct stakeholder perspectives. Field observations, geological and hydrological map analyses, and the authors' spatial and land-use analyses were used to assess current development patterns and to compare official planning frameworks with observable spatial and environmental conditions.

The empirical material was analysed using framework-based qualitative content analysis combined with cross-case comparison. The analysis followed several steps. First, the material was collected and reviewed to establish familiarity with the empirical context. Second, a thematic framework was developed based on the research questions. The framework included five categories: (a) environmental and infrastructural conditions, (b) planning and regulatory framework, (c) municipal position, (d) development and market pressure, and (e) community responses. Third, the source material was systematically classified according to these categories. Fourth, the results were organised in a comparative matrix, allowing the same dimensions to be compared across all three cases. Finally, the material was interpreted by identifying patterns of alignment and misalignment between municipal authorities, developers or market actors, and residents. "Wanted" and "unwanted" suburbanisation were operationalised as relational outcomes defined by the degree of agreement or conflict among these actor positions, while environmental and infrastructural conditions were treated as factors that shaped, enabled, or constrained them.

The study has several limitations. It does not include independent stakeholder interviews, surveys, or in-depth fieldwork with local actors, reflecting its focus on formal planning processes and publicly articulated stakeholder positions. Since official planning documents reflect institutional framings of

development problems, they were not treated as neutral accounts but were compared with independent materials and author-conducted analyses. The use of diverse source types enabled comparisons between official narratives and publicly expressed social perspectives, thereby partially mitigating this limitation.

5. Results and Analysis

The following three case studies examine contrasting trajectories of suburbanisation on the fringes of Gdańsk and serve as an empirical test of the distinction between “wanted” and “unwanted” suburbanisation. Olszynka, Klukowo (a subarea in Matarnia), and Błonia (a subarea in Rudniki) are all located within the city’s administrative boundaries, yet differ in the mechanisms that shape the alignment or misalignment among planning policy, market dynamics, and social acceptance. The rationale for case selection, including variation in spatial position, regulatory context, and development pressure within a shared municipal framework, is summarised in Table 1. Their location within Gdańsk’s urban structure is illustrated in Figure 1.

Table 1. Case selection criteria and analytical dimensions.

Dimension	Olszynka	Klukowo (in Matarnia)	Błonia (in Rudniki)
Position within the city structure	Eastern peripheral zone, directly adjacent to the historic city centre	Western metropolitan fringe, airport-adjacent zone	Eastern industrial periphery, strategic gateway corridor, directly adjacent to the historic city centre
Initial dominant land-use profile	Agricultural and low-density residential polder landscape	Suburban low-density residential area	Industrial and logistics district
Strategic role in municipal spatial policy	Agricultural protection and flood-risk management area	Metropolitan growth area linked to the airport and employment zones	Industrial and port-related zone with potential for functional transformation
Planning and regulatory baseline	Low coverage by local plans; strong agricultural designation	Medium coverage by local plans; stabilised suburban zoning	High coverage by local plans; strong industrial designation
Presence of exceptional planning instruments	No binding exceptional instrument at the time of analysis	Application of the Special Housing Act for residential densification	Application of the Special Housing Act for mixed-use redevelopment
Type of development pressure motivating the selection	Latent suburban demand constrained by environmental and planning conditions	Strong residential pressure linked to metropolitan infrastructure and the labour market	Transformational pressure linked to the redevelopment of underused industrial land

The selected cases represent three distinct configurations of suburbanisation: an underused inner-fringe polder area constrained by environmental and planning conditions (Olszynka); a rapidly developing metropolitan fringe zone characterised by conflict over densification (Klukowo, in Matarnia); and an industrial district undergoing policy-supported functional transformation (Błonia, in Rudniki), as summarised in Table 1.

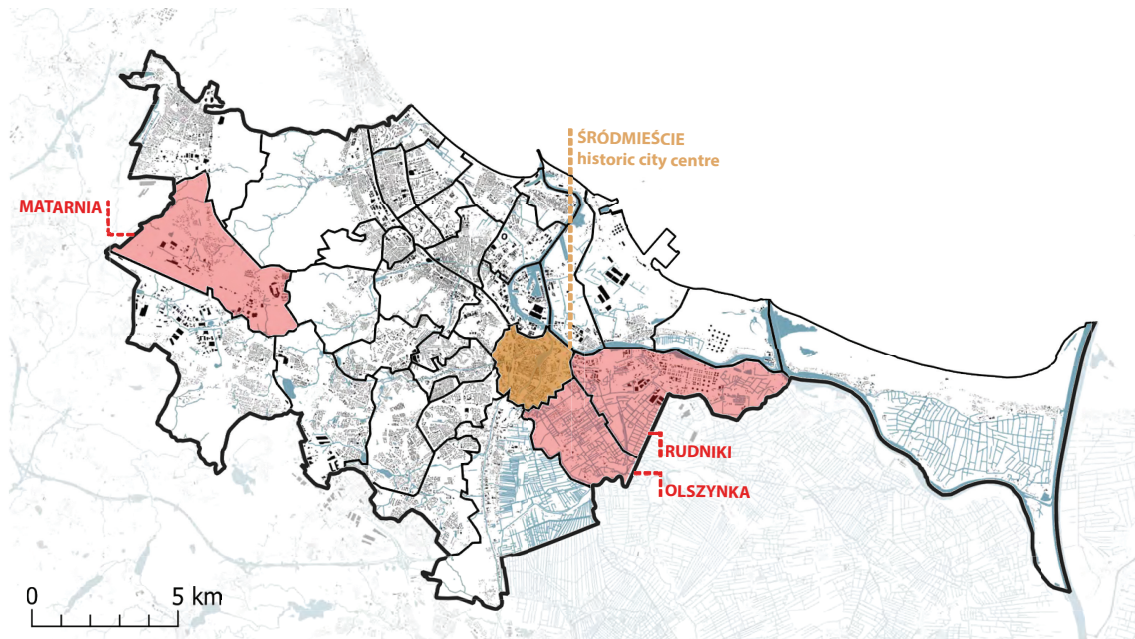


Figure 1. Schematic location of case study districts within Gdańsk.

Each case is analysed using a consistent set of dimensions: spatial and functional conditions, environmental and infrastructural constraints, planning and regulatory mechanisms, and stakeholder positions. This framework enables identification not only of whether suburbanisation is “wanted” or “unwanted,” but also of the mechanisms that produce these outcomes, including environmental constraints, plan instability, and exceptional regulatory interventions.

5.1. Case Study: Olszyna

Olszyna is located directly east of Gdańsk’s historic centre, within the Żuławy Gdańskie (the Gdańsk Żuławy lowland). Separated from Śródmieście (the central district) by the Motława River Moat, the district remains physically and functionally linked to the city core, while simultaneously retaining extensive agricultural land and low-density development (Figure 2). This land-use structure reflects its origin as a polder landscape, historically adapted for agriculture, and its infrastructure remains ill-suited to more intensive urban development. As a result, any transition towards residential or mixed-use functions requires significant infrastructural upgrades. The district covers 7.85 km² and had a population density of 351 inhabitants per km² at the end of 2025, with a gradual decline in the number of permanent residents between 2015 and 2025 (City of Gdańsk, 2025).

Spatially, Olszyna is characterised by a clear division between dispersed single-family housing interspersed with allotment gardens in the northern part (between the Motława River Moat and the railway line) and extensive agricultural land in the central, southern, and eastern areas (Figure 2). Services are limited, reinforcing the district’s semi-rural character despite its proximity to the city centre. Recent residential development, driven by individual investors, remains below the city average, reflecting environmental and planning constraints.

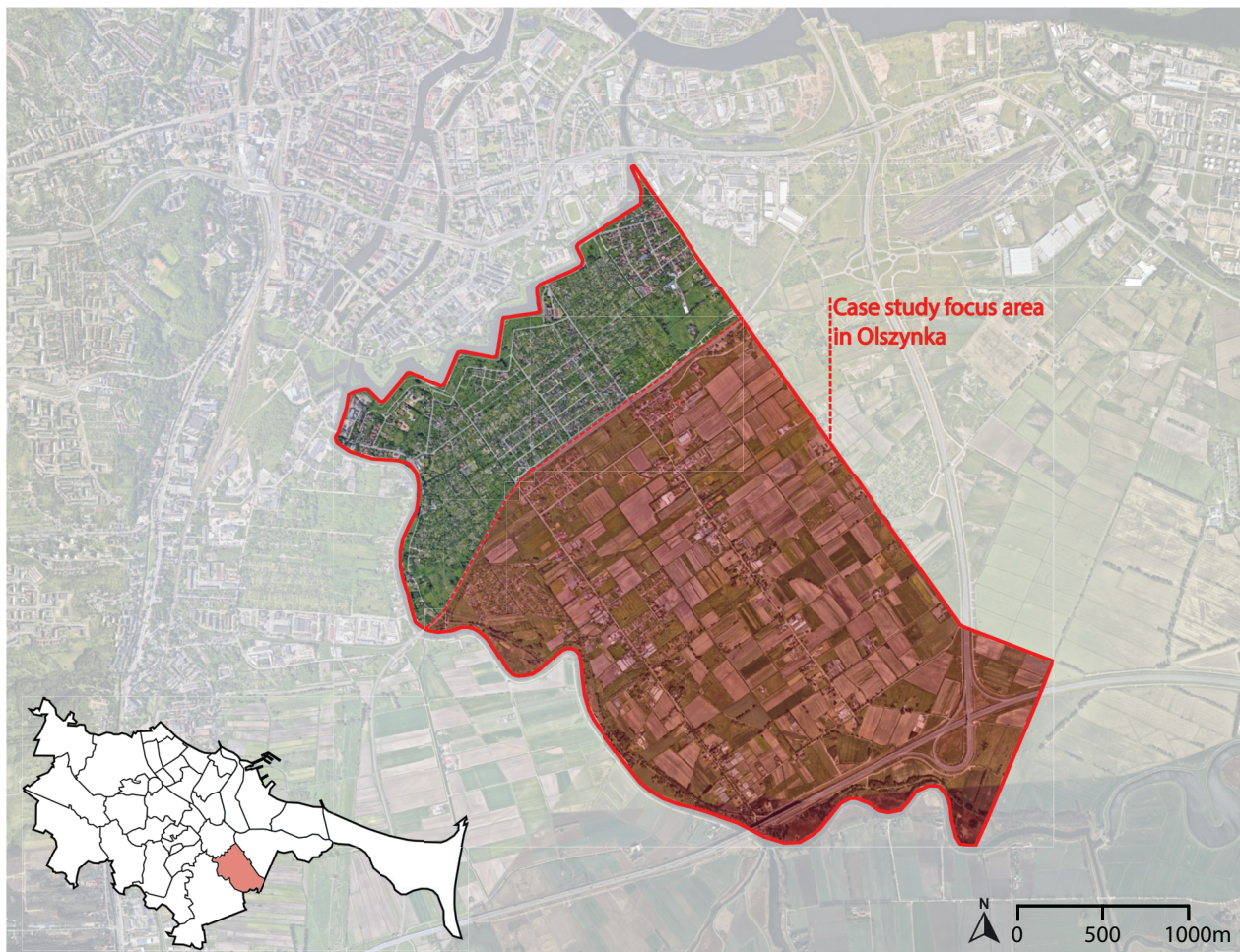


Figure 2. Spatial structure of the Olszynka district and the location of the case study area.

Olszynka lies entirely within the Żuławy Gdańskie and is characterised by high-value alluvial soils (Polish Geological Institute – National Research Institute, 2022). The area is largely below sea level and therefore highly susceptible to waterlogging. Extensive artificial drainage, supported by a dense network of ditches and mechanical pumping, is required to maintain current land use. Sea-level rise is an inherent condition of this polder landscape, yet planning responses focus primarily on maintaining existing systems rather than on adaptive transformation strategies.

The Motława River and the Motława Moat form part of the Ogólnomiejski System Terenów Aktywnych Biologicznie (City System of Biologically Active Areas, hereafter referred to as OSTAB), an organised network of ecological connections and green spaces supporting environmental continuity in urban areas, as defined in the *Studium uwarunkowań i kierunków zagospodarowania przestrzennego miasta Gdańska* (Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development of the City of Gdańsk; Biuro Rozwoju Gdańska, 2018). Together with allotment gardens, green corridors, and drainage canals, these elements structure the city's ecological system. Landscape protection applies to parts of the inter-embankment zone. Infrastructure provision is uneven and reinforces development constraints: Service networks are concentrated in the northern, more urbanised part, whereas agricultural areas have significantly weaker provision and lack key utilities. Additional constraints include waste management deficits, evidenced by illegal dumping near allotments.

The planning framework further constrains development. The *Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development of the City of Gdańsk* designates Olszynka primarily for agricultural use, allowing only limited residential development in its northern part. Local plans cover only 29.4% of the district (City of Gdańsk, n.d.-a), and the area is not prioritised for intensification, which corresponds with limited public investment. As a result, planning policy reinforces the existing low-intensity land-use pattern despite increasing development pressure.

In response to these constraints, residents have submitted a formal request, through their district councils, for the municipality to prepare a comprehensive master plan for the Żuławy Gdańskie, including Olszynka. This civic initiative prompted the municipality to begin drafting a document intended to revise planning policy for these areas and to allow the development of housing structures. While this reflects growing demand for functional transformation, the proposed document has not yet been adopted and therefore has no regulatory effect.

Stakeholder perspectives indicate a clear misalignment between local demand and the existing planning framework. Civic participation in Olszynka is comparatively high, reflected in strong engagement in local governance and planning processes. Residents consistently support improvements in environmental quality and everyday services, while advocating selective reclassification of agricultural land for residential and service uses. This position is also shared by local farmers, who increasingly question the viability of agricultural use due to soil contamination associated with the area's proximity to the city centre and major transport corridors. A collective letter, signed by approximately 150 residents in 2023, emphasised the district's urban character and its integration with Gdańsk, contrasting it with the surrounding rural areas (Grzenkowska, 2023). At the same time, infrastructural deficits and limited drainage capacity constrain development, as localised water accumulation results from system inefficiencies.

Private real estate investors consider Olszynka one of the most attractive inner-fringe locations in Gdańsk, thanks to its proximity to the historic core and the availability of large undeveloped plots. Although polder conditions increase construction and site-preparation costs, they do not eliminate market interest. However, the feasibility of large-scale residential development is substantially constrained by the need for comprehensive infrastructure transformation. The area is currently primarily used for agricultural purposes, and the introduction of residential development would require extensive upgrades, including reconfiguring drainage systems, providing sewerage and water supply networks, and constructing roads. These requirements generate exceptionally high costs, which, combined with limited municipal support, significantly constrain development. For municipal authorities, Olszynka therefore presents a planning dilemma: maintaining existing agricultural and hydrotechnical functions versus responding to increasing pressure to transform them.

Olszynka thus represents a case of “wanted” suburbanisation that remains structurally constrained. While residents and market actors support development, it is constrained by environmental conditions and reinforced by restrictive planning frameworks, resulting in a misalignment between demand and institutional capacity and in increased intervention costs.

5.2. Case Study: Klukowo (in Matarnia)

Matarnia, located in western Gdańsk, is a key component of the metropolitan fringe known as Gdańsk West, as shown in Figure 3. The district covers 14.48 km² and has a population density of approximately 418 inhabitants per km² (City of Gdańsk, 2025). It comprises several historically distinct settlement units, among which Klukowo plays a central role in understanding the dynamics of contemporary suburbanisation. The district's spatial structure and Klukowo's location within the metropolitan context are illustrated in Figure 3. The area is spatially differentiated, with medium-rise housing in the north and low-density suburban development in Klukowo and adjacent Rębiechowo.



Figure 3. Spatial structure of the Matarnia district and the location of the Klukowo case study area.

Around the airport and its transport junction, extensive clusters of production, logistics, and service facilities have developed, forming one of the principal employment centres on the city's upper terrace. The expansion of Gdańsk Lech Wałęsa Airport and the Airport City complex has reinforced Matarnia's role as a metropolitan economic node supported by strong transport connectivity.

Klukowo itself, incorporated into Gdańsk in 1973, has transitioned from an agricultural village into a suburban neighbourhood shaped predominantly by individual housing development (Klukowo, n.d.).

Although agricultural land persists, it has gradually been converted into residential plots, reinforcing a low-density model embedded in the local plan and shaping resident expectations.

At the scale of the Matarnia district, environmental and infrastructural conditions both enable and constrain development. The district lies primarily on the Wysoczyzna Gdańska (Gdańsk Upland), with smaller areas located in valley zones. Forest patches and allotment gardens form part of the ecological network within OSTAB, while agricultural land remains a reserve for potential urbanisation. Hydrological management relies on a system of streams, drainage infrastructure, and retention reservoirs, which has been expanded to accommodate increasing runoff from new development. Infrastructure provision is generally strong, but rapid growth in Klukowo generates pressure on roads and social services. At the same time, environmental constraints, particularly aircraft noise and height restrictions within airport corridors, limit development options and influence residential quality standards.

According to the *Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development of the City of Gdańsk*, Matarnia is designated as a multifunctional district where further development of housing, production, service, and transport functions is expected. Agricultural use is projected to decline, except for selected permanent allotment gardens. Klukowo (in Matarnia) is intended to remain a low-intensity residential area, with a planning strategy aimed at maintaining a high standard of living to ensure competitiveness relative to neighbouring municipalities. In parallel, the airport zone is designated for intensive service and production development associated with Airport City and related economic functions.

Local spatial development plans cover approximately 64.5% of Matarnia (City of Gdańsk, n.d.-b). A key shift occurred with the application of the Special Housing Act, under which a private developer proposed a multi-family housing project of approximately 600 dwellings, increasing the building area ratio from about 0.5 to 0.8. The final decision rests with the Gdańsk City Council (Office of the Gdańsk City Architect, 2025a).

This proposal sparked a conflict among residents, developers, and municipal authorities. Residents perceive the project as a breach of established low-density planning expectations. A letter signed by around 480 residents and public meetings attended by approximately 100 participants confirmed strong opposition, citing concerns about compliance with the binding local spatial development plan, infrastructure pressure, and changes to the area's character (Office of the Gdańsk City Architect, 2025a). For developers, Klukowo has clear market appeal due to its proximity to the emerging high-tech cluster and strong links to metropolitan transport, including the Pomorska Kolej Metropolitalna (Pomeranian Metropolitan Railway). Higher-density housing is presented as compatible with the 15-minute city concept and necessary to support the growing workforce in the airport-related economic zone. The municipal administration views the investment favourably. Although it conflicts with the local plan, it aligns with the strategic vision outlined in the *Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development of the City of Gdańsk*. The Special Housing Act enables such deviations by allowing negotiated public-benefit investments, including the transformation of the primary school building, the development of public green space, and upgrades to transport infrastructure.

The conflict centres on the mismatch between statutory planning expectations and more recent strategic development objectives, amplified by the use of the Special Housing Act. Although residents' opposition has elements of a NIMBY-type conflict, it should not be reduced to resistance to densification. It also expresses a

critique of planning instability, as the project departs from low-density development expectations established by the existing local plan.

In synthesis, Klukowo illustrates a contested form of suburbanisation shaped by conflicting governance logics. Metropolitan growth pressures and strategic planning objectives favour intensification, while local planning frameworks and community expectations support low-density continuity. The Special Housing Act acts as a catalyst, enabling deviations from statutory plans and intensifying conflict. Suburbanisation in Klukowo is therefore “wanted” from a metropolitan and economic perspective but “unwanted” by the local community.

5.3. Case Study: Błonia (in Rudniki)

Rudniki is located between the Martwa Wisła River and the eastern administrative boundary of Gdańsk and comprises several subareas, such as Błonia (Figure 4). The district covers approximately 14.66 km² and has a population density of about 60 inhabitants per km², the lowest in Gdańsk (City of Gdańsk, 2025). Its spatial structure is dominated by production, logistics, and storage functions, concentrated along major transport corridors, with only small, dispersed residential clusters characterised by limited supporting infrastructure and restricted access to services. Błonia (in Rudniki) is primarily used for service and industrial purposes,

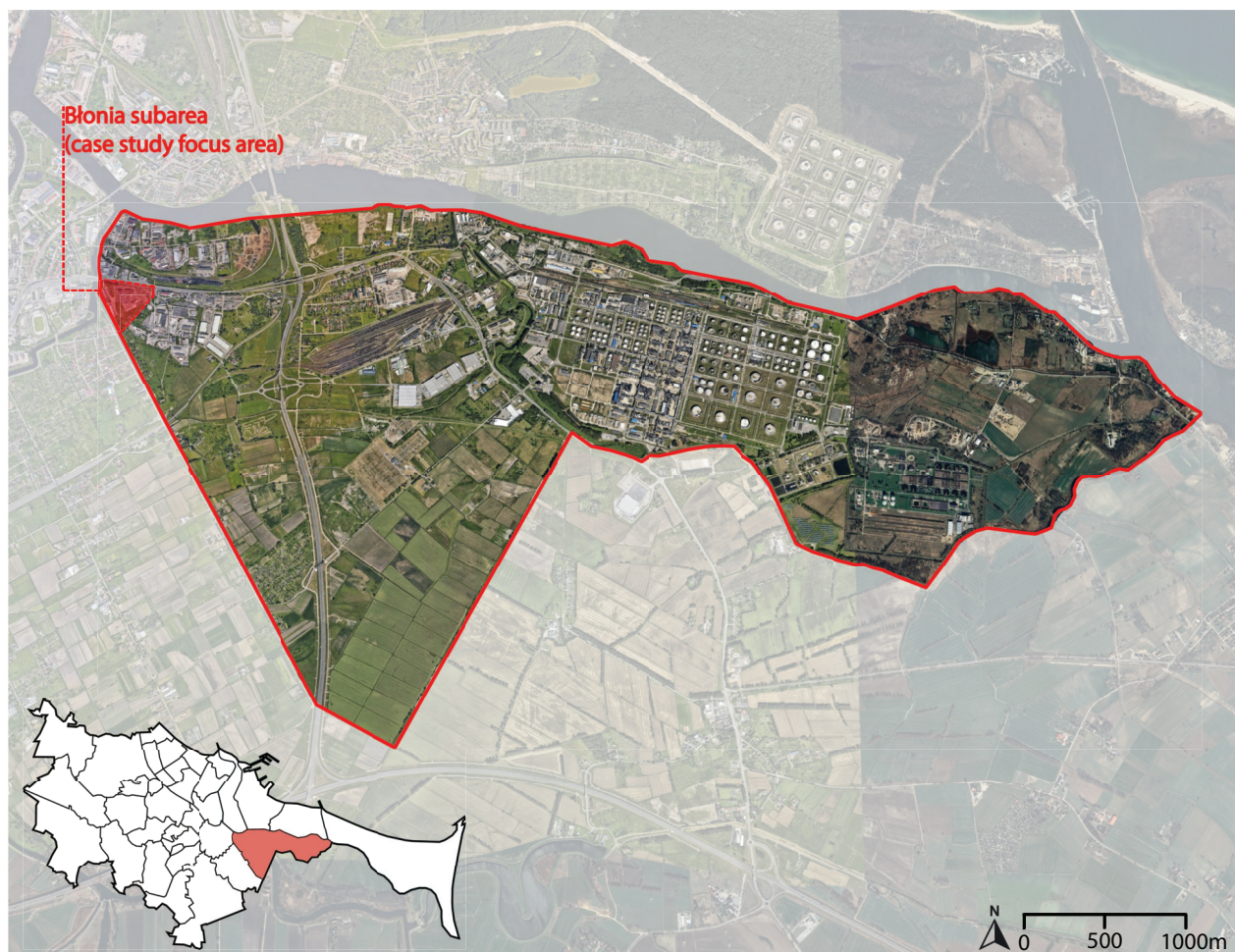


Figure 4. Spatial structure of the Rudniki district and the location of the Błonia case study area.

including car dealerships and automotive workshops, and is complemented by allotment gardens. Although these functions remain active, the site's proximity to the historic core repositions the area as a potential inner-city extension, generating pressure for functional transformation.

Environmental and infrastructural conditions illustrate the fragility of the district's spatial system. Rudniki is entirely situated within the Żuławy Gdańskie, with high groundwater levels and high susceptibility to waterlogging. These characteristics require a complex drainage system supported by multiple pumping stations. While sufficient for industrial use, existing infrastructure limits the feasibility of residential development, especially where networks are ageing or unevenly distributed. Noise and air pollution from industrial activity and transport corridors further reduce residential quality.

Planning documents reinforce Rudniki's industrial role. The *Study of Conditions and Directions of Spatial Development of the City of Gdańsk* designates the district almost exclusively for industrial, service, and port-related activities. Coverage of Rudniki in local spatial development plans is high, at approximately 77.2% (City of Gdańsk, n.d.-c). This regulatory consistency stabilises the industrial function and limits the scope for functional transformation.

A key shift occurs with the proposal for the Błonia site, submitted under the Special Housing Act, in which the earlier planning framework is confronted with a more recent interpretation of the site as a strategically located part of the district. A private consortium proposed a mixed-use development comprising 16 buildings of five to seven storeys and approximately 521 dwellings (Office of the Gdańsk City Architect, 2025b). The Special Housing Act enables such proposals by allowing deviations from local plans in exchange for negotiated public-benefit commitments, effectively creating a parallel decision-making pathway.

Public engagement reveals a distinct pattern. Despite the small population, consultation meetings gathered more than 50 participants, and an online survey attracted 49 responses, a relatively high rate given Rudniki's limited residential base. Most participants expressed support for the proposed functional change, framing it as an opportunity to improve environmental quality, accessibility, and service provision (Office of the Gdańsk City Architect, 2025b).

The developer proposed a substantial package of public-benefit investments, including educational facilities, community infrastructure, and improvements to public space. These commitments played a key role in securing social acceptance and reframing the project as local improvement. For municipal authorities, the proposal offers an opportunity to transform Błonia, a strategically located part of Rudniki near the historic city centre, adjacent to residential and service areas, and situated along an important entrance corridor. In this context, mixed-use redevelopment is understood as a continuation of the surrounding urban structure and as a means to improve the image of this gateway area. The Special Housing Act thus enables a selective departure from the established industrial zoning framework.

In synthesis, the Rudniki case illustrates a distinct form of suburbanisation driven by negotiated transformation. It represents an emergent pathway enabled not only by market demand or community pressure, but by the convergence of municipal ambitions to improve the city's image and regulatory flexibility.

5.4. Comparative Interpretation

The three cases illustrate distinct configurations of suburbanisation within the same municipal framework, enabling comparison under consistent institutional and governance conditions. Since all cases are located in Gdańsk, differences in outcomes cannot be attributed to different administrative structures or planning cultures, but to local configurations of planning instruments, environmental constraints, market dynamics, and stakeholder expectations. Despite these shared conditions, the cases follow markedly different trajectories, as summarised in Table 2.

Olszynka represents demand-driven but constrained suburbanisation. Development is supported by residents and market actors, but limited by environmental conditions and a restrictive planning framework. High groundwater levels, polder infrastructure, and agricultural designations reduce the feasibility of intensification despite favourable location and demand. Suburbanisation is therefore “wanted” socially and economically, but “unwanted” institutionally due to high infrastructural costs and the limited capacity of existing systems.

Klukowo (in Matarnia) represents contested suburbanisation. Intensification is promoted through metropolitan strategies and enabled by the Special Housing Act, while residents oppose higher-density housing as inconsistent with established expectations. Suburbanisation is “wanted” institutionally and economically, particularly by municipal authorities and developers, but “unwanted” by local communities, who perceive it as a disruption of planning stability and neighbourhood identity.

Błonia (in Rudniki) represents a form of “wanted” suburbanisation, as mixed-use redevelopment is supported by municipal authorities, market actors, and residents as an opportunity to improve a strategic gateway area near the historic city centre.

Table 2. Key comparative dimensions of suburbanisation in the three case studies.

Dimension	Olszynka	Klukowo (in Matarnia)	Błonia (in Rudniki)
Type of suburbanisation	Constrained	Contested	Aligned
Main development driver	Social and market demand	Institutional pressure	Institutional and redevelopment-driven
Environmental and infrastructural constraints	High (polder system, groundwater, drainage dependency)	Moderate (airport noise zones)	High (groundwater)
Planning stance	Restrictive (agricultural designation)	Mixed (plan stability vs intensification)	Flexible (exceptional instruments)
Community response	Supportive	Oppositional	Supportive
Developer/market interest	Strong	Moderate	Strong
Mechanism of alignment/misalignment	Regulatory stability constrains development	Regulatory override generating conflict	Regulatory flexibility enabling alignment
“Wanted” vs “unwanted”	“Wanted” socially and economically; “unwanted” institutionally	“Wanted” institutionally and economically; “unwanted” socially	“Wanted” institutionally, economically, and socially

The comparison reveals that similar structural conditions do not yield similar outcomes, and that identical mechanisms may operate differently across contexts. Klukowo demonstrates that infrastructural investment can justify intensification despite local opposition and a relatively peripheral location, while in Olszynka, development remains restricted despite its central location and clear demand. Another inconsistency becomes visible when comparing Olszynka and Błonia. Both areas are located within the Żuławy Gdańskie and face comparable hydrological constraints, yet they are treated differently in planning practice. In Olszynka, environmental conditions are used to justify the preservation of agricultural functions, while in Błonia, similar constraints do not prevent residential development.

The divergence suggests that planning decisions are shaped not only by environmental risk or technical feasibility but also by the interaction among land-use designation, prior infrastructural investment, and strategic development priorities. In Błonia, the industrial character allows constraints to be reframed as manageable within a redevelopment logic. In contrast, in Olszynka, they are institutionalised to maintain the existing land-use structure.

6. Discussion and Conclusion

The article's starting point was the assumption that suburbanisation is context-dependent and shaped by the alignment or misalignment among institutional frameworks, environmental conditions, market pressures, and social expectations. The analysis confirms this assumption, showing that "wantedness" is not a fixed attribute, but depends on which interests, arguments, and instruments become dominant in the decision-making process.

In addressing the research questions formulated in the introduction, three main conclusions were drawn. First, planning instruments do not operate as neutral and uniform regulatory frameworks. They are applied selectively in line with the city's strategic priorities, as outlined in the Special Housing Act, which allows departures from local spatial plans in some areas. Second, environmental and infrastructural conditions do not automatically determine development trajectories. Their significance depends on planning interpretation, as similar constraints may either justify limiting urbanisation or be treated as manageable within functional transformation. Third, social acceptance depends not only on building density but also on the alignment of development with local expectations, perceived benefits, and trust in planning procedures.

The findings, therefore, confirm that the same form of development may be interpreted as "wanted" or "unwanted" depending on who evaluates it. In this sense, the distinction between "wanted" and "unwanted" suburbanisation helps explain why similar development processes are accepted in some cases, while in others they are restricted or contested.

The findings align with the literature on post-socialist suburbanisation, which emphasises the importance of systemic transformation, land market liberalisation, and the weakening of planning stability after 1989. They are also consistent with studies on planning conflicts, which show that local opposition should not be reduced to NIMBY attitudes. The case of Klukowo demonstrates that residents' resistance may result not only from reluctance towards densification, but also from a perceived violation of planning predictability.

At the same time, the article develops existing approaches to suburbanisation as a process negotiated between institutions, the market, and local communities. While the literature explains the sources of planning conflicts, it pays less attention to why similar development processes are accepted in some contexts and contested or restricted in others. The comparison between Olszynka and Błonia is particularly important, as it shows that environmental and infrastructural arguments are not applied neutrally or uniformly. Similar hydrological constraints may lead to different planning outcomes depending on the strategic interpretation of the area.

The main contribution of the article is the proposed distinction between “wanted” and “unwanted” suburbanisation as an analytical tool for examining the selective acceptance of urban development. This concept moves beyond a simple division between desired and conflict-generating development, showing that the acceptance of suburbanisation emerges at the intersection of interests, regulations, and planning narratives. The article also contributes to the discussion on exceptional legal instruments, such as the Special Housing Act, which not only accelerates investment processes but also alters the relationship between urban development strategy and the negotiation of the public interest. If departures from local spatial plans are possible, they should be based on clear evaluation criteria, including their impact on trust in the planning system and the social legitimisation of development.

Although the analysis is situated in Gdańsk, its relevance extends beyond a single case study. Similar tensions between planning stability, housing pressure, environmental constraints, and flexible development instruments occur in many contemporary urban regions, particularly in post-socialist cities. The proposed concept may therefore support a more precise diagnosis of planning conflicts by identifying whether tensions result from the built form itself, the application of legal instruments, infrastructural deficits, local expectations, or mismatches between strategic and regulatory documents.

However, the study has several limitations. As discussed in the methodology section, these concern the scope and character of the source material. In addition, the study focuses on three cases within one city. This enables in-depth identification of mechanisms shaping the relationship among planning, the market, and social acceptance, but does not capture the full spectrum of possible suburbanisation trajectories. Further research should examine whether similar mechanisms of selective acceptance occur in other cities and how exceptional planning instruments affect planning stability, public trust, and the legitimisation of urban development processes over time.

Funding

The APC was funded by the project Envisioning Neighbourhoods and Co-Creating Thriving Communities in the 15-Min City (ENACT 15 mC), funded under the Driving Urban Transitions Partnership (DUT Call 2022), which is co-funded by the European Commission.

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

References

Albrechts, L., Healey, P., & Kunzmann, K. R. (2003). Strategic spatial planning and regional governance in Europe. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 69(2), 113–129. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944360308976301>

- Bahers, J.-B., Athanassiadis, A., Perrotti, D., & Kampelmann, S. (2022). The place of space in urban metabolism research: Towards a spatial turn? A review and future agenda. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 221, Article 104376. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landurbplan.2022.104376>
- Biuro Rozwoju Gdańska. (2018). *Studium uwarunkowań i kierunków zagospodarowania przestrzennego miasta Gdańska* (Załącznik nr 1 do Uchwały nr LI/1506/18 Rady Miasta Gdańska z dnia 23 kwietnia 2018 r., zmienionej Uchwałą nr XII/218/19 z dnia 27 czerwca 2019 r.).
- Ciommi, M., Chelli, F. M., Carlucci, M., & Salvati, L. (2018). Urban growth and demographic dynamics in Southern Europe: Toward a new statistical approach to regional science. *Sustainability*, 10(8), Article 2765. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su10082765>
- Cirtautas, M. (2013). Urban sprawl of major cities in the Baltic states. *Architecture and Urban Planning*, 7, 72–79. <https://doi.org/10.7250/aup.2013.009>
- City of Gdańsk. (n.d.-a). *Dzielnica Olszynka*. <https://www.gdansk.pl/olszynka>
- City of Gdańsk. (n.d.-b). *Dzielnica Matarnia*. <https://www.gdansk.pl/matarnia>
- City of Gdańsk. (n.d.-c). *Dzielnica Rudniki*. <https://www.gdansk.pl/rudniki>
- City of Gdańsk. (2025). 04.1.1.D. *Stan ludności—Liczba mieszkańców oraz gęstość zaludnienia dzielnic Gdańska* [Data set]. https://gcigdansk.sharepoint.com/:x:/s/UMG-OtwarteDane3.0/IQDwefyxEL2DRq7LnBzszWCeAch7fltYENpKiSOcb_pYVtk?rt=Me75M1pb3kg
- Cotella, G., Janin Rivolin, U., Pede, E., & Pioletti, M. (2021). Multi-level regional development governance: A European typology. *European Spatial Research and Policy*, 28(1), 201–221. <https://doi.org/10.18778/1231-1952.28.1.11>
- Dear, M. (1992). Understanding and overcoming the NIMBY syndrome. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 58(3), 288–300. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944369208975808>
- Goess, S., de Jong, M., & Meijers, E. (2016). City branding in polycentric urban regions: Identification, profiling and transformation in the Randstad and Rhine-Ruhr. *European Planning Studies*, 24(11), 2036–2056. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2016.1228832>
- Grzenkowska, K. (2023, November 22). Przygotowania do masterplanu dla Żuław Gdańskich. Chcemy porównywać się do Rotterdamu. *City of Gdańsk*. <https://www.gdansk.pl/wiadomosci/Prace-nad-masterplanem-dla-Zulaw-Gdanskich-rozpozete-Chcemy-sie-porownywac-do-Rotterdamu,a,254047>
- Gualini, E. (Ed.). (2015). *Planning and conflict: Critical perspectives on contentious urban developments*. Routledge.
- Hall, P. (2014). *Cities of tomorrow: An intellectual history of urban planning and design since 1880* (4th ed.). Wiley.
- Hesse, M., & Siedentop, S. (2018). Suburbanisation and suburbanisms: Making sense of continental European developments. *Raumforschung und Raumordnung | Spatial Research and Planning*, 76, 97–108. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s13147-018-0526-3>
- Hirt, S. (2012). *Iron curtains: Gates, suburbs, and privatization of space in the post-socialist city*. Wiley.
- Hirt, S., & Stanilov, K. (Eds.). (2009). *Twenty years of transition: The evolution of urban planning in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, 1989–2009*. UN Habitat.
- Hortas-Rico, M. (2014). Urban sprawl and municipal budgets in Spain: A dynamic panel data analysis. *Papers in Regional Science*, 93(4), 843–865. <https://doi.org/10.1111/pirs.12022>
- Klukowo. (n.d.). In *Gedanopedia*. <https://gdansk.gedanopedia.pl/gdansk/?title=KLUKOWO>
- Knowles, R. D. (2012). Transit-oriented development in Copenhagen, Denmark: From the Finger Plan to Ørestad. *Journal of Transport Geography*, 22, 251–261. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jtrangeo.2012.01.009>
- Kotus, J. (2006). Changes in the spatial structure of a large Polish city—The case of Poznań. *Cities*, 23(5), 364–381. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2006.02.002>
- Kryczka, P., Sikorski, D., Figlus, T., Lisowska-Kierepka, A., Musiaka, Ł., Spórna, T., Sudra, P., & Szmytkie, R.

- (2025). Defining suburbanization in Central and Eastern Europe: A systematic literature review. *Cities*, 158, Article 105626. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2024.105626>
- Kubeš, J. (2013). European post-socialist cities and their near hinterland in intra-urban geography literature. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, 19, 19–43. <https://doi.org/10.2478/bog-2013-0002>
- Kuźmar, S., Woźniak-Jęchorek, B., & Bole, D. (2026). Will remote work drive a new wave of suburbanisation in Poland? Analysing the relocation preferences of Polish office employees. *Applied Geography*, 186, Article 103848. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2025.103848>
- Lackowska, M., & Zimmermann, K. (2011). New forms of territorial governance in metropolitan regions? A Polish–German comparison. *European Urban and Regional Studies*, 18(2), 156–169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0969776410390746>
- Leetmaa, K., Tammaru, T., & Anniste, K. (2009). From priority-led to market-led suburbanisation in a post-communist metropolis. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 100(4), 436–453. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9663.2009.00551.x>
- Leontidou, L. (1990). *The Mediterranean city in transition: Social change and urban development*. Cambridge University Press.
- Leontidou, L. (1993). Postmodernism and the city: Mediterranean versions. *Urban Studies*, 30(6), 949–965. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00420989320080881>
- Mikuła, Ł. (2023). Creating planning visions for fragmented post-socialist city-regions. *Regional Studies*, 57(4), 670–684. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00343404.2022.2051469>
- Mikuła, Ł. (2024). City-regions in Central Eastern Europe: Emerging metropolitan territorialities in post-socialist planning systems. *European Planning Studies*, 32(1), 148–168. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2023.2195903>
- Muñoz Gielen, D., & Lenferink, S. (2018). The role of negotiated developer obligations in financing large public infrastructure after the economic crisis in the Netherlands. *European Planning Studies*, 26(4), 768–791. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2018.1425376>
- Nadin, V., & Stead, D. (2008). European spatial planning systems, social models and learning. *disP – The Planning Review*, 44(172), 35–47. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02513625.2008.10557001>
- Nowak, M. J., & Tasan-Kok, T. (2025). When flexibility backfires: Justification of flexibility and legal loopholes in Poland's adaptive Housing Specust law. *Urban Research & Practice*, 19(2), 206–224. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17535069.2025.2563599>
- Office of the Gdańsk City Architect. (2025a). *Gdańskie Błonia. Inwestycja mieszkaniowo-usługowa wraz z inwestycjami towarzyszącymi. Raport z przebiegu Gdańskiego Dialogu Społecznego w ramach procedury ULIM*. https://download.cloudgdansk.pl/gdansk-pl/d/202512266174/gds_gdansk-blonia-online.pdf
- Office of the Gdańsk City Architect. (2025b). *Klukowo. Inwestycja mieszkaniowo-usługowa wraz z inwestycjami towarzyszącymi. Raport z przebiegu Gdańskiego Dialogu Społecznego w ramach procedury ULIM*. https://download.cloudgdansk.pl/gdansk-pl/d/202504251505/gds_klukowo.pdf
- Oliveira, E., Leuthard, J., & Tobias, S. (2019). Spatial planning instruments for cropland protection in Western European countries. *Land Use Policy*, 87, Article 104031. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2019.104031>
- Parysek, J. J. (2017). Lokalna gospodarka przestrzenna w Polsce—Prawo a rzeczywistość. In W. Ratajczak, M. Szewczyk, & J. Weltrowska (Eds.), *Teoretyczne i praktyczne aspekty prawne gospodarki przestrzennej* (pp. 139–151). Bogucki Wydawnictwo Naukowe.
- Pichler-Milanović, N., Gutry-Korycka, M., & Rink, D. (2007). Spraw in the post-socialist city: The changing economic and institutional context of Central and Eastern European cities. In C. Couch, L. Leontidou,

- & G. Petschel-Held (Eds.), *Urban sprawl in Europe: Landscapes, land use change and policy* (pp. 102–133). Blackwell Publishing.
- Polish Geological Institute – National Research Institute. (2022). *Szczegółowa mapa geologiczna Polski 1:50000*. https://geologia.pgi.gov.pl/karto_geo
- Sailer-Fliege, U. (1999). Characteristics of post-socialist urban transformation in East Central Europe. *GeoJournal*, 49(1), 7–16. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1006905405818>
- Salvati, L., Morelli, V. G., Rontos, K., & Sabbi, A. (2013). Latent exurban development: City expansion along the rural-to-urban gradient in growing and declining regions of Southern Europe. *Urban Geography*, 34(3), 376–394. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02723638.2013.778675>
- Schmidt, S., Fina, S., & Siedentop, S. (2015). Post-socialist sprawl: A cross-country comparison. *European Planning Studies*, 23(7), 1357–1380. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09654313.2014.933178>
- Schneider-Sliwa, R. (2006). Global and local forces in cities undergoing political change. In R. Schneider-Sliwa (Ed.), *Cities in transition: Globalization, political change and urban development* (Vol. 83, pp. 1–8). Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/1-4020-3867-4_1
- Sejm Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej. (2018). Ustawa z dnia 5 lipca 2018 r. o ułatwieniach w przygotowaniu i realizacji inwestycji mieszkaniowych oraz inwestycji towarzyszących (Dz.U. 2018 poz. 1496). *Dziennik Ustaw*, 2018.
- Tsenkova, S. (2009). *Housing policy reforms in post-socialist Europe: Lost in transition*. Springer.
- Wagner, W. (2017). The failure of planning in a fragmented property market: Poland's model of suburbanization. In N. A. Phelps (Ed.), *Old Europe, new suburbanization? Governance, land, and infrastructure in European suburbanization* (pp. 41–65). University of Toronto Press. <https://doi.org/10.3138/9781442616479-006>
- Zborowski, A., Gałka, J., & Surmacz-Wybrańczyk, M. (2023). How are suburbanization and peri-urbanisation not the same? Key differences in urban regions in Central and Eastern European countries: The case of cities in southern Poland. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, 62, 87–106. <https://doi.org/10.12775/bgss-2023-0036>

About the Authors



Aleksandra Wróbel is a PhD candidate in architecture and urban planning in the Department of Advanced Urbanism at the Faculty of Architecture, Gdańsk University of Technology. Her research examines how flood-prone landscapes near city centres, especially polders, can be reimagined as multifunctional spaces that strengthen climate resilience while responding to contemporary socio-economic and environmental challenges.



Piotr Lorens (PhD, DSc) is an urban planner, the city architect of Gdańsk (since 2021), a full professor in urban design and development (since 2016), and head of the Department of Advanced Urbanism at the Faculty of Architecture, Gdańsk University of Technology (since 2007). His research interests include urban planning and regeneration processes, with a special focus on waterfront areas and public spaces.