

Large Housing Estates in Poland

Policies and practices

ISBN 90-6266-238-2

Printed in the Netherlands by A-D Druk bv, Zeist

Edition: 2004

Cartography, lay-out and cover: KartLab, Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University

All publications in this series are published on the RESTATE-website <http://www.restate.geog.uu.nl> and are available on paper at:

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RESTATE report 3f

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RESTATE

Restructuring Large-scale Housing Estates in European Cities: Good Practices
and New Visions for Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Cities

Utrecht 2004

Faculty of Geosciences, Utrecht University

RESTATE

RESTATE is an acronym of the international research project Restructuring Large-scale Housing Estates in European Cities: Good Practices and New Visions for Sustainable Neighbourhoods and Cities.

The project is funded under Key Action 4: ‘City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage’ in the ‘Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development’ programme within the Fifth Framework Programme of the European Union (contract no. EVK4-CT-2002-00085).

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The aim of this paper is to provide general and specific answers to the set of questions generated in our project, which seem to be universal for all the European countries. Assuming the existence of different policies on large-scale housing estates in European countries, we will try to identify the philosophy behind Polish housing policies and describe and identify the main aims, the forms of activities and the balance between these activities. Important issues also concern the organisational evaluation of the housing policies and its confrontation with real housing problems in housing estates. The basic set of problems and questions concern the participation of the local community in the improvement of housing conditions, which decides about participation and whether this policy is generated top-down or bottom-up.

The answers will be provided directly and indirectly in the following section. First of all, there is a need for an understanding of the current situation, to present the roots and evolution of the housing policy from the beginning of the transformation (from 1989). The shift from a centrally planned economy to a liberal and free market economy has changed the basic rules, place and philosophy of the housing policy and re-assessed the reality (i.e. existing housing stock and housing conditions). The current housing situation in Poland is to a high extent still the outcome of a communist housing policy and its social engineering approach. The statistical outcome of the transformation in housing should be briefly analysed by the comparison of the two national censuses: from 1988 (just before the formal collapse of the communist system) and the most current from 2002 (after 13 years of transformation). However, readers should remember that in the sphere of housing policies there has not been any consistent plan introduced by the government during the 13 years of socio-economic reform in Poland, except the financing of new housing construction. The government prepared several instruments aimed at improving the housing situation, but in most cases they did not correspond with each other and did not support each other. There had also been a lack of continuity in undertaking initiatives. The only institution responsible for housing issues operating on state level – the Ministry of Spatial Economy and Construction – was gradually liquidated and the Department of Housing Policy degraded in the administration hierarchy. As a result, the housing policy became a side issue of the activity of the government.

A whole set of economic programmes applied to the entire country and a set of different policies i.e. concerning employment, environmental, social and educational issues described in the following chapters had a direct impact on living conditions in housing estates. The local dimension of those policies is very important, particularly under the pressure of the permanent evolution connected with the socio-political transformation. Frequently, national policies or programmes were translated into local management tools with some delay. In the mean time

new programmes or policies have been formulated and imposed without consideration of the effectiveness of the old ones. Also the results of the local government election have frequently changed the direction and management of municipalities.

1.1 The inherited past-housing policy under communism

The provision of housing in Poland under communism, at least at the beginning, had been organised and implemented according to the maxim of 'for everyone according to their needs'. The unrealistic promises together with basic economic problems resulted in a shift to the new maxim: 'for everyone according to their work', and next, 'for everyone according to the impartial principles of social justice'. This evolution of the main ideological principles had a basic impact not only on the economic and regional policy, but also on the selective allocation of housing and living conditions. In particular, the ruling group, according to participation in supporting the existing power structure, had each time determined the supposed impartial principles. The housing conditions and the standard of living had been allocated as a part of ideologically determined social engineering. In addition, the gradual formation of interest groups usually defined the housing conditions on a regional and intra-urban scale.

Concerning two housing estates under investigation the policy mentioned above resulted in the creation of a totally different social context of the estates: typical low status, the working-class estate of Wrzeciono, and the better organised and equipped estate of the middle-class and intelligentsia – Ursynów.

1.2 Statistical dimensions of the housing transformation (comparing 1988 and 2002 national censuses)

According to the national census of 2002, there were 12.5 million dwellings with 45.7 million rooms and with an overall living area of 849.8 million m². In the period between 1989-2002 the number of dwellings increased by 1,508,600, i.e. by 13.9 per cent. In the years 1989-2002 the increase in the number of rooms and living area in the housing stock was more dynamic in the urban areas than in rural areas. It was a result of the extension of existing buildings, and the construction of larger dwellings with a higher number of rooms. Most of the housing stock was relatively new, i.e. 76.2 per cent of all dwellings were houses that were built after 1944 and in comparison with data from the year 1988 their share in overall housing stock had increased by 6.7 per cent. The newest stock, i.e. built after 1988, consists approximately of 1.4 million occupied dwellings; among them 961,200 are located in cities.

With regard to installations, a higher standard of dwellings had been achieved in the period from 1988 to 2002. This improvement had been more considerable in rural areas than in cities. It had been influenced not only by the construction of new buildings, but also by a modernisation of old housing stock. Despite a significant increase in the number of dwellings with different installations, there were still 4.3 per cent of all housing units that were not supplied with plumbing and 3.9 per cent with no installation. The complete set of installations (i.e. plumbing, toilet, central heating, gas installation) was noted only in every second dwelling.

Compared to the situation of 1988, 2002 saw favourable changes in the size of residential units. The percentage of small, one two-room units had decreased (from 24 per cent to 17.2 per cent of all occupied dwellings), but the proportion of bigger, four-room units had increased (from 27 per cent to 28.7 per cent).

The improvement in the standard of living was more significant when one considers the number of persons accommodating a dwelling. The number of people that lived in dwellings recognised as being overpopulated (i.e. where one room is occupied by two or more persons), had decreased by 2.1 million, when compared with the situation of 1988. Also the number of people that lived in low density conditions (i.e. less than one person per room) had increased by 4.5 million persons. In 2002, 26.2 per cent of the population lived in good conditions, where one or less than one person accommodated a room. Although it is a considerable improvement, it is still not enough; especially with regard to European Union standards that recommend that every person in an apartment should have his or her own room. Still, in Poland almost 22.2 per cent of the population live in overpopulated units (two or more persons per one room) and within this percentage 6.3 per cent of the population live in conditions where there are three or more persons per one room.

In 2002, 4.6 million people, i.e. 12.2 per cent of the population, lived in conditions considered as substandard, i.e. in dwellings devoid of plumbing and/or inhabited by more than three persons per room. In comparison with 1988 the number of persons living in sub-standard conditions decreased by 6.2 million mainly as a result of improvements in the provision of installation, and because of the replacement of old buildings in bad technical conditions with new ones, or due to the extension of existing buildings.

In comparison with 1988, in 2002 the housing deficit was higher by more than 314,000 dwellings. Since the end of the 1980s a higher growth in the number of households than in the number of dwellings can be observed. Thus there is a gap between the number of households and the number of accessible flats. According to the census the housing shortage (i.e. the so-called statistical shortage), accounts for 1,567,000 in general; 1,007,000 in cities and 560,000 in the rural areas.

The census reported that in May 2002, privately owned apartments constituted approximately 55.2 per cent of the total housing stock. The structure of housing ownership had changed particularly in the cities, where the share of private apartments in 2002 constituted 37.5 per cent of the total number of apartments.

2 The relevant policies: a general overview

There is no single direct policy aiming at the improvement of large-scale housing estates on a national scale. The whole set of policies introduced at the beginning of the transformation has contributed mostly indirectly to the situation and conditions in the large housing estates. The most important was the economic policy at the state level, particularly the introduction of market forces as a main determinant of the housing situation, and an abandonment of the issues of housing provision from the state. The second important component was the self-government reform in general and shifts of the responsibility from the central level to the local level of the particular management housing problems. The provision of the relatively good living conditions and particularly housing ceased to be the tools of the maintenance of political support.

The regulation of the ownership structure of housing has a basic significance. In the sphere of communal housing and housing from state enterprises, the privatisation of dwellings by selling the units to the dwellers advanced the changes in the ownership structure. In parallel, conditions for the transfer of housing property from state companies to local government ownership had been introduced. The transformation of the cooperative sector consists of three types of rights to the dwellings. The tenement title to the cooperative dwelling means that the dweller did not repay the full cost of construction and his status is similar to the tenant's in the public rental sector. In the owner-occupied sector the dwellers paid the costs of construction and thus can freely dispose over their property (with formal acceptance of the cooperative). Recent legal modifications also allow dwellers to withdraw from the cooperative (if full construction costs are repaid). The dwellers can create the condominium for management over the common spaces. Usually the last two forms of cooperative housing are correlated with the higher value of the property and higher economic and social status of the inhabitants. During transformation the division of the large housing cooperative had become popular and had changed the situation in large housing estates.

Also the formation of the housing condominium legislation introduced, especially in communal stock and new developments, a new set of factors to the existing housing estates while the modernisation of the construction companies provided better conditions for modernisation and reconstruction of the estates.

In the 1980s and 1990s the only direct state level intervention remained in the case of liquidation of the technical problems of prefabricated construction, as the central allocation of subsidies to housing estates. The self-government has no influence on this allocation. This subsidy, for the improvement of prefabricated construction, has been allocated to the housing cooperatives as an owner of housing estates.

Generally the cooperatives have for a long time been in conflict with the self-government. They have had independent land ownership and often infrastructure, as well as important assets acquired during the process of unmovable communalisation from the beginning of the transformation period. Due to the perpetual leases of the developed land (allocated by the state) the cooperatives have become the richest investors or actors on the housing market. At the same time, many localities suffered from the lack of construction land and the local authorities had to invest in technical infrastructure in order to attract housing developers. Good cooperation of the cooperatives with the self-government was very rare.

In spite of the lack of general policy towards large housing estates, public programmes, aimed at increasing accessibility to housing, have had direct impact on the situation in these areas. First of all, it concerns the rental of social housing financed mostly by the state budget. Secondly, it concerns housing allowances financed both by the state budget and by the self-government. Since 2003 the system of financing the allowances has changed. Entire costs of the allowances are paid from the local budget, while general subsidies from the central budget have grown. It was assumed that these general subsidies would cover the larger part of housing allowances. Finally, the third concerns tax incentives.

The state policy concentrates on the support of new construction together with the formation of new, more favourable financial conditions for new construction. The maintenance and the improvement of the existing stock is left behind or neglected.

The Jary Cooperative (about 45 per cent of a selected area in the Ursynów estate, inhabited by 15,000 people) used its own policy. They decided to construct three new blocks of flats just by the subway station. The idea was to sell these flats to the members of the households belonging to the Jary Cooperative for the price lowered by 10 per cent. The dwellings were sold in the first building before its construction was completed. This is an example of integrating policy inside one cooperative, which leads to attaching inhabitants to the place.

2.1 The housing reform of the 1990s and 1999-2003 programme

In 1994 the housing reform was initiated, which had triggered the following changes in the housing sector:

- The state desisted from direct interference in the processes of building, financing and exploitation of housing stock; boroughs took over the responsibilities for local housing policies and became the owners of the majority of public housing stock in the cities with the exception of cooperative housing; different systems of housing acquisition were introduced as the monopoly of cooperatives was abolished.
- The institutional and the legal framework for condominiums was restored.
- Rental reform entitled boroughs to fix housing rent rates and established the rules for the protection of tenants.
- State housing subsidies, which previously had been assigned regardless of the financial situation of occupants, were replaced by housing allowances directed to particularly poor households.
- The programme for the construction of social housing was established, and was based on the system of preferential mortgages.
- The system facilitating savings for housing was introduced.

- The basis for long-term mortgage was created.

The housing reform of 1994 was not completed, but it served as the basis for preparing the following strategy 'Spatial economy, properties and housing' in 1998 (Act on Spatial Economy, Properties, Housing Building, 1998). This programme has been developed and extended with particular attention to the housing issues in the new programme: 'Guidelines for State Housing Policy for the years 1999-2003' in 1999. At the beginning of 2002 the next government created a new programme: 'Infrastructure – a key to development, 2002' and assumed three main directions for acting in the field of housing:

- the creation of the programme of stable-interest credit for housing;
- the improvement and further development of the credit system for social rental housing construction;
- changes in the spheres of bureaucracy and law aiming at liquidation barriers in housing.

In spite of the above mentioned regulations, a lot of housing problems were and still are not solved. The shortage of suitable dwellings and the increasing decapitalisation of the existing housing stock are the main problematic issues of the housing sector in Poland. The majority of households cannot afford to buy dwellings on their own, and are not even able to pay off commercial housing credits. The main aims of rental reform have not been accomplished, as the rent rates in public stock do not fully cover exploitation expenses in many cases.

The efficient financial system supporting the construction of tenant housing has not been elaborated. At the same time, the intensifying processes of selling out public dwellings have caused the decrease in a number of available units for rent.

Polish housing can be seen as a branch experiencing permanent crisis. This can easily be proven by the quantitative shortage on one side, and the completely unsatisfying scope of repairs and modernisation on the other. There are a few limitations of adjustment to this situation. Financial limitations are the most frequently quoted barriers for housing investments. The burden of the poor quality of the multi-family estates from the 1970s and 1980s and subsidies currently paid for loans issued in the late 1980s and early 1990s are the most spectacular examples of the barriers raised by the heritage of the past.

For many years, representatives of the Polish housing sector have expressed different opinions when discussing crucial topics, like causes of the crisis, selection of the necessary systemic solutions and detailed regulatory acts. The differences of opinion among housing professionals and interest groups make the housing debate itself a political issue. Since there are many different opinions on how to end the housing crisis, the dominant notion is that there is no housing policy in the country.

The transformation from a socialist to a market-oriented organisation of construction, financing and management of housing units had to be painful for the great majority of its participants, especially under the condition of a substantial housing shortage, high inflation in the early 1990s, the lack of accumulated investment capital for housing, and an extremely low level of incomes. The ratio of the average income to the price of 1 m² of a dwelling is unfavourable for housing progress in the country; since the beginning of the 1990s an average monthly salary allows to buy 0,4-0,7 m² of a new dwelling. In the beginning of the 1990s this ratio was extremely low, when free prices of construction materials and services co-existed with strong, anti-inflationary control over incomes in the public sector.

The liberation of prices was a prerequisite for market forces to start operating. Steadily increasing real personal incomes do not protect the national policy against lowering demand. The gap between the incomes and wealth of the better-off groups and the poor is growing and relatively many people cannot satisfy their basic housing needs. Political debates and the unstable situation on the housing market allowed the developers in the 1990s to increase prices instead of efficiency, at least in the most affluent segments of the market.

On the other hand, the decrease of housing completion does not simply depend on the volume of state subsidies. In the late nineties, despite the decrease in state subsidies, the amount of completed units had risen in 1997 and 1998. The correlation between the decrease of budgetary funds designated for housing construction and the number of houses built is not univocal and the number of new units decreased faster than the state withdrawal from financial state subsidies for housing.

The shock therapy in the beginning of the transformation proved that the real demand for housing, based on the market price of commodities and capital, is low. The reforms were initiated in the sphere of financing new investments. The collapse of housing construction is commonly connected with changes in the credit system, especially the withdrawal from preferential interest rates as of 1990 and from the costs of a part of the credit through the state budget resources as of 1992. At the same time, however, a mechanism of assisting the banks through the state budget was introduced. In the years 1993-1995 the borrowers were obliged to pay the mortgage equal to 25 per cent of their net income. The budget temporarily purchased a part of the remaining debt and the interest on those mortgages. The scheme, although closed in 1995, still serves the 'old debts' (i.e. the mortgages issued since the 1980s to 1992 and loans granted before the end of the first quarter of 1995, mentioned above). It creates the situation that the high share of the state budget housing expenditures are designed for the solution of the problem of past investments.

The debate on long-term mortgages should address the mental aspect of crediting and the attitudes of the potential debtors. There are several other arguments to the fact that not only the question of insufficient funding limits the demand. If the resources are allocated to

Table 2.1 – Budgetary expenditures and completed dwellings in Poland, 1992-2002

Year	Participation in GDP (percentages)	Central budget expenditures for housing (percentages)	Number of units completed (in thousands)
1992	2.0	7.5	133.0
1993	1.3	4.4	94.4
1994	1.3	4.4	76.1
1995	1.0	3.4	67.1
1996	0.9	3.4	62.1
1997	0.8	3.0	73.7
1998	0.6	2.3	80.6
1999	0.4	1.5	82.0
2000	0.4	1.7	87.8
2001	0.5	2.2	106.1
2002	0.3	1.2	97.6

Source: State Office for Urban and Housing Development and Statistical Yearbooks, 1993-2003; Central Statistical Office, Warsaw

inadequate institutional and organisational structures, quite likely the effects will not meet the expectations.

The critical opinion on several instruments implemented during the first stage of reforms led the policy makers to the decision to abandon some of the programmes (tax relief for construction, contractual saving system), and strengthen existing programmes (housing allowances, social rental housing), or launching new programmes, like: communal infrastructure, housing intended for poor people and enhancing the affordability of mortgage loans. A main reason for cutting off existing instruments is the high cost of the programme for the state budget and the inconsistency with the philosophy of social and economic reforms.

Construction tax relief can serve as an example of a changing approach to the promotion of housing investments. The reform of the tax relief system caused an abolition of most tax reliefs in the personal income tax. Quite favourable personal income tax for house purchasing has been replaced by the interest rate tax relief. This instrument concerns much smaller groups of beneficiaries (only mortgage borrowers) and offers smaller bonuses than the previous system of reliefs (only equivalents of interest rate expenses can be deducted from the tax).

Housing policy does not lead to rapid improvement of housing conditions and changes in the consumption pattern. Poland, with 300 dwellings per 1,000 inhabitants ranks far below most European countries. Due to the low affordability of housing, the consumption models do not change in favour of housing investments. Statistically the shortage of dwellings in urban areas slows down the processes of spatial segregation and keeps the public interest on lower quality and multi-family housing (including estates built with prefabricated technologies) on a relatively high level.

Concerning recent priorities of state housing policy, one can mention a few programmes (or the lack of them), which may influence multi-family housing. The following programmes can be listed:

- the withdrawal from the housing renovation tax relief;
- the development of the Thermo-renovation Fund;
- the increase of tax on building materials and services;
- the lack of an urban renewal programme, including public financing of part of the urban renewal project.

A right to deduct personal income tax from the owners as well as tenants due to their spending on repairs and modernisation of dwellings and buildings encouraged people to improve their housing conditions. Due to the need of increasing budgetary inflows, this incentive had been abolished in 2003 and the tax relief will exist only till the end of the year 2005, when the current three-year period of functioning of that incentive expires. One can assume that in practice multi-family estate managers lost their chance to organise more advanced modernisation schemes, based on the certain financial involvement of individual owners/tenants involved in investment activity aimed at the modernisation of dwellings and buildings.

The recourses of the Thermo-renovation Fund are used to provide financial assistance to investors implementing heating efficiency improvement measures, using loans granted by commercial banks. An investor who has implemented such a measure may obtain a so-called heating efficiency improvement premium, which is used for the repayment of 25 per cent of the loan. The decisions on the award of heating efficiency improvement premiums are taken by the National Economy Bank, which manages this fund. There are several conditions regarding

the access to the premium. The demand for the bonuses, due to the thermo-modernisation investments is moderate. Out of the ca. 800 approved applications (1999-2002) with a total amount of premiums equal to 22 million Polish zlotys, the most numerous were applications submitted by the owners of single-family houses and housing cooperatives which modernised apartment blocks.

Tax on building materials is expected to increase along with the Polish accession to the European Union. Details of the action are still being discussed, but there is no doubt, that this policy influences the costs of housing construction, modernisation and transfer. Even when the consumer-friendly strategy on tax will be implemented, there will be short-term as well as long-term consequences on the housing market. Concerning short-term effects, the expectations of a price increase provoke the instability of the market and long-term economic consequences.

Also the withdrawal of the government's promises of support with limited public resources from these local governments, which will prepare comprehensive renewal projects, does not encourage the estates' managers to think and act in the course of the multi-dimensional programmes addressed towards social and technical changes in the neighbourhoods. The issue of modernisation and renewal becomes the most urgent topic. The shortage of dwellings dominates the nation-wide debate on housing while 'the modernisation gap' attracts less public attention.

2.2 The evolution of administrative division

In the administrative division of Poland, up until December 1999, the capital city of Warsaw was the union of seven boroughs under the Law of March 8, 1990 on self-governing boroughs. The capital city of Warsaw by law has a legal personality. In 1994, the administrative structure has changed and Warsaw became the union of 11 boroughs, i.e.: Warszawa-Bemowo, Warszawa-Białołęka, Warszawa-Bielany, Warszawa-Centrum (this borough has been divided into seven districts), Warszawa-Rembertów, Warszawa-Targówek, Warszawa-Ursus, Warszawa-Ursynów, Warszawa-Wawer, Warszawa-Wilanów and Warszawa-Włochy.

In 2002, due to the Act on System of the capital city of Warsaw (which came into force on October 27, 2002), Warsaw has become one city with county (powiat) status (Act on System of the capital city of Warsaw, 2002). The former boroughs and districts of the centrum borough have maintained only district status. Therefore Warsaw is divided into 18 districts: Bemowo, Białołęka, Bielany, Mokotów, Ochota, Praga-Południe, Praga-Północ, Rembertów, Śródmieście, Targówek, Ursus, Ursynów, Wawer, Wesola, Wilanów, Włochy, Wola and Żoliborz. In November 2002 however, Warsaw has been extended and two neighbouring cities i.e. Sulejówek and Wesola have been added.

Regardless of the administration structure in Warsaw, there has not been any housing policy aimed directly at estates. However, some initiatives undertaken from the former borough level as well as from the city level have indirectly influenced the situation of the estates.

According to one of the experts (interview Ewa Bończak-Kucharczyk), The administrative, centralisation reform had mutual consequences on different aspects of the development of districts and estates. In her opinion some problems occurring in former independent boroughs were tackled more effectively under the old administration system. But the central government is more conducive to solve problems that require coherent management embracing the whole urban organism.

Before the reform, local authorities were more committed to initiate positive changes within the areas of the borough than it is in the case of central management. They also had more competencies in administrating funds, and could decide what kind of investments should be financed. The local authorities had better possibilities to create proper conditions for the construction of new dwellings, especially concerning the provision of building land and spatial organisation. On the other hand, such aspects as communicational infrastructure or environment protection are better administrated at a central level. These problems require bigger financial subsidies and coordination within the whole city organism.

The state government should create legal and financial conditions for the development of housing construction. Based on the state legal and economic solutions, boroughs should prepare their own local housing policies supporting the construction of dwellings for purchase or rent. These policies should include spatial plans and provide investors with land for building.

3.1 Main aims included in the policies

The basic instrument for the coordination of housing issues at the local level concern the municipal actions described in the strategy of local development. An integral part of this document in many cases is the local housing strategy. These documents serve as a guideline for local authorities, inhabitants, private investors, and all actors of the housing market. Also it should serve as a tool for the selection of long-term and short-term decisions. The local housing strategy, if prepared by the local authority, usually consists of a comprehensive assessment of housing needs and conditions and usually has a plan to tackle the housing problem in those areas. Unfortunately, having the strategy of local development and particularly implementing it, is not obligatory.

In the case of Warsaw, the whole city has a master development strategy under the title: 'Warsaw Development Strategy until the year 2010', which had been approved by the Warsaw city council in May 25, 1998. The preparation of this strategy began in 1992 as a preparation of different analyses in various spheres of local economy and living conditions. At that time (1994-2002) Warsaw introduced a specific, for Poland, self-governing system, i.e. association of 11 independent boroughs with the largest Warszawa centrum borough. Each of the independent boroughs had been searching for its own identity and gradually introduced a separatist policy. Long deliberation of different projects and confusing delegation of responsibility hampered the decision-making processes, affecting particularly spatial planning and housing investment. As a result, even when the new Act on the System of the capital city of Warsaw was introduced on October 27, 2002, and the capital city of Warsaw once again became one borough (i.e. city with the powiat status), many decision-making problems remained.

The strategic programme is not sufficiently precise and becomes sort of a vision, not an action plan. In general, strategic planning fails to be a tool used for protection from the insufficient coordination of housing policy within boroughs and at the city level. One can conclude that 'Warsaw city government does not conduct – to a significant extent – housing investment projects and does not utilise the instrument of housing policy which could encourage the market to develop more varied forms of housing' (Muzioł-Węclawowicz, 2000). In spite of these constraints market-based housing has demonstrated its power by the creation of a high standard investment for the affluent part of Warsaw's society by using the inefficiency of the local self-government. The interest of the private investor, providing luxury housing frequently prevailed in the land use policy of self-government over the interests of other investors providing more moderate housing.

The development strategy for Warsaw identified, in spite of problems with implementation, basic strategic goals that are very important for the future housing situation in the city. One of the main strategic goals is to improve the residents' living environment and the city's attractiveness. One of the operational goals is to expand residential housing construction. In addition, many infrastructure investments protecting environmental resources and improving for example communication and transport are mentioned.

On a more local scale, for example at the level of the borough, the strategic aims are less general. For instance, in the strategic plan for the Bielany borough, in which our Wrzeciono estate is located, attention has been devoted to the following issues: privatisation of communal stock, modernisation and governance. First of all, as the strategy assumes, the process of privatisation of communal dwellings to current tenants will be encouraged, as well as the programme of modernisation of technical infrastructure aimed at the liquidation of asbestos from housing. In addition, new organisational structures have been proposed i.e. the formation of new managerial organisations for communal housing stock, and the initiation of the new housing construction by the Social Housing Association with the programme of social rental housing construction.

The strategic planning also concerns the identification of basic problems. In the case of Wrzeciono it concerns the following issues, for which a solution should be found at a later date. There is a constant shortage of dwellings for the lowest income households i.e. a lack of social housing for communal disposal. Also a lack of new communal housing has been noticed, as well as very little prospects for the future.

The basic problems also concern very low technical standards of existing communal housing stock and the lack of a general programme for the communal housing stock. In addition, the gradual degradation of prefabricated construction in the Wrzeciono estate and other estates in this municipality has no real programmes for the future.

Perhaps the Ursynów estate is an exception. In a document published in 2000 (Study of circumstances for future spatial development of Ursynów Borough, 1999) there is a proposal for revitalisation of prefabricated construction of the buildings erected in the 1970s. The urban revitalisation programme has so far a pilot character. In the middle of the 1990s two housing projects had been chosen as a model for renovation. One of them was located in the Ursynów borough in the Na Skraju housing estate. This project however exceeded the financial ability of the housing cooperatives and the local government.

The implementation of this programme, however, was very problematic under the current administration of the city. In the planning study the introduction of the new economic activities had been planned. For example three new higher educational institutions have been established (i.e. private universities) and service zones, small businesses and recreation, exhibition and fairs.

3.2 Main activities included in the policy

Although, the state significantly freed rent regulations, certain limitations on the rents in publicly owned housing stock remained. From 1994, the boroughs' authorities became eligible to fix the rents in rental flats belonging to them. The maximum rent could constitute 3 per cent of the replacement value per year. It was assumed that it would cover all maintenance and renovation costs of the communal stock. However, in most cases rent prices have been much lower than the allowed 3 per cent of the replacement value per year. Only in a few boroughs did the rent hardly reach the level of 2 per cent.

One of the reasons for a passive rent setting policy was the bad financial situation of the tenants. In 1994 the Act on Lease of Dwelling Premises and Housing Allowances introduced housing allowances as a measure for social help to poor families who are not able to cover the full rent price. The payment of allowances became the duty of boroughs that obtained subsidies from the state budget. To supply boroughs with the funds designated for housing allowances, state expenditures for this purpose were planned in state budgets every year. Between 1994 and 1998, state budget subsidies fully compensated 'the state part' of the demand for financing allowances. The situation had changed from the beginning of 1999, when the level of state financial assistance for boroughs had decreased. The share of state budget funds in financing housing allowances had decreased from approximately 50 per cent in the years 1994-1998 to approximately 37 per cent in 2001. The withdrawal of significant parts of the state financial input, covering allowances costs, puts an additional burden on the boroughs' budget. The amount of the average allowance was 141,2 Polish zlotys (about EUR 31 per month), which was lower than in 2001 by 9.1 per cent. In 2002 housing allowances were used by 832,000 households, among them there were about 36.5 per cent households living in borough-owned housing and 41 per cent living in cooperative housing stock.

To apply for housing allowance, the households cannot earn more per head than the lowest retirement pension in multi-person households and not more than 150 per cent of the lowest retirement in a single-person household. The right to obtain an allowance is also restricted by

the area of the dwellings; the normative area of dwellings is set at 35 m² for one person, 40 m² for two persons and 45 m² for three persons and for each additional person the normative area rises by 5 m². Poor people living in slightly bigger units can still have the right to apply for allowances, but they do not cover the costs of the whole living space.

According to the 1994 Act on Lease of Dwelling, Premises and Housing Allowances, a part of the boroughs rental flats should be designated as social housing stock for the lowest income households with high levels of social needs, i.e. for households with incomes under the living minimum or in relative poverty. Social rental flats could be of a lower technical quality and a lower standard of equipment. The rental contract on social housing is signed for a period of time. The council of the borough considers applications for social housing; they check the financial and housing situation of candidate households and select households, which are eligible for social housing. Usually, qualified households are put on a waiting list. The period from applying for social housing to the final decision of the council about granting social flat can take even up to six years. Usually, the multi-person households have the highest chances of being granted a social flat. For example in Ursynów only two social houses have been built in the last ten years with 150 dwellings for the resettlement of poor families.

Due to the permanent problem, which is the shortage of dwellings particularly in urban areas, the issues of the affordable tenement housing construction became one of the priorities of the state housing policy.

In 1995 and 1996 the social rental housing programme, which had a systematic solution character, was established. The system is based on the provision of preferential long-term capital for the financing of the construction and the modernisation of dwellings for lease. In this system, the rent payments cover both the credit repayment and maintenance costs of dwellings. This programme is meant for tenants who cannot afford owner-occupied housing but can pay economic rents.

The social housing criteria, defined as subsidised housing in Poland, also concerns communal housing and cooperative rental housing (the poorest part of the cooperative members). It also concerns social housing – in Polish criteria i.e. housing devoted just for poor people and the allocation of the homeless, with very low rents, but also lower than standard communal technical equipment and quality. Usually this is the worst part of the dwellings belonging to communal housing stock, frequently without a standard infrastructure, which limits the exploitation costs (mainly for the use of heating and hot water).

One of the solutions of the housing shortage problem in Poland was establishing the so-called Social Housing Association (*Towarzystwo Budownictwa Społecznego*). The association operates as a non-profit company, the main purpose of which is the construction of multi-family dwellings for rent. Apartments constructed by the TBS are targeted at economically weaker households, which can not afford to purchase or rent apartments on the free market. The TBS operates on special regulations (Act on Selected Forms of Support of Construction of Housing, 1995) and is assisted by the state. The activity of the TBS is financed by subsidised (preferential) loans from the National Housing Fund operating within the structure of the National Economy Bank. The National Housing Fund covers up to 70 per cent of the total construction costs of the newly-built rental house. The rest (30 per cent) is covered by the TBS own resources, which often include the means of the participant – private persons or legal persons which pays a certain part of the cost of a given dwelling to ensure the right to nominate the tenant. Most of the TBS is funded by local governments. In most cases the

borough participates in financing construction and becomes the sole shareholder or owns the majority of the shares. Beside parents, who want to secure children with a flat, employers, who are interested in renting flats for employees and private owners of tenements, who want to move their tenants to another place – can act as participants.

The TBS dwellings can be rented exclusively to a private person, if this person or other persons in the household do not have a legal title to another dwelling and if the household income does not exceed the average monthly salary per capita in the given region. The tenant is obliged to pay a deposit of 3-10 per cent of the replacement value of the flat when he or she moves in. According to regulations the rent is limited to 4 per cent of the replacement value of the flat annually. The rent includes administrative, exploitation and credit costs. Additionally the tenant must cover technical infrastructure costs (connected with the supply of water, energy, gas etc.). According to the regulations the tenant never becomes the owner of the flat. The deposit is returned to the tenant in case the tenant wishes to resign from renting the dwelling.

The TBS should fulfil the general requirements concerning housing construction as a concept of social rental housing construction. It must be affordable for users and be self-financing, it cannot be more expensive than other multi-dwelling building investments in the given region, and the size of the dwelling should be moderate – depending on the number of users, and relatively lower seasonal energy demand (E ratio).

Apart from the construction of new flats, the TBS can also:

- buy dwellings;
- renovate and modernise buildings assigned for housing purposes;
- lead other activities referred to housing construction and accompanying infrastructure.

The programme of apartment construction within the framework of the TBS was initiated in 1995. From 1996 the popularity of this form of housing construction has been systematically increasing. At the end of 1999 there were 220 TBSs registered, at the end of 2000 – 270, and in the middle of 2002 about 370. In total, dwellings financed with NHF resources, transferred for use in the years 2000-2001 constituted around 9 per cent of the dwellings constructed in Poland during these years.

The very important factor, which improves the situation of the Ursynów housing estate, is the programme of support for thermal modernisation. Over the last few years, 60 of all 84 houses in the Jary Cooperative have been thermally isolated – the older part of the selected Ursynów area, constructed in 1978-1979, inhabited by 45 per cent of all inhabitants in the selected area. Today the buildings have a complete new look, with new elevators, new staircases, windows, new front doors, etc.

This is a very comfortable manner in solving the thermal insulation problem, because inhabitants pay the same rent for dwellings, but a lower price for central heating covers the interests of credit. It is estimated that about 50,000 buildings in Poland will be insulated this way.

Table 3.1 – Housing situation in selected cooperative in Warsaw, 2001

Lp	Housing stock	Specification	WSM	RSM 'Praga'	SM 'Wola'	RSM 'Osiedle Młodych'	WSM 'Ochota'	RSM 'Energetyka'	SM 'Strop'	MSM 'Nowy Dom' 1982	SBM 'Wardom'
1	Number of dwellings		25,383	15,833	11,095	13,258	9,153	18,172	2,509	1,420	2,294
2	<i>Dwelling tenure</i>										
3	Owned		17,691	10,621	7,752	9,152	6,614	15,515	2,021	1,179	1,890
4	Rented		7,387	5,100	3,053	4,038	2,406	2,657	472	240	404
5	Rented National Housing Fund		–	–	112	18	–	–	–	–	–
6	Others		–	8	–	50	–	–	16	1	–
7	Maintenance costs in thousands (Polish zlotys) of which		108,303	86,317	51,318	59,855	49,496	78,680	11,293	7,013	9,484
	percentages:										
8	Management and administration		5.8	7.2	5.4	4.5	2.8	6.4	1.0	11.7	0.05
9	Costs of current use		5.9	12.5	15.0	13.6	6.3	15.4	15.8	24.2	35.1
10	Current repairs		8.6	7.2	5.3	2.9	9.9	6.4	6.2	12.0	4.1
11	Major repairs and modernisation		5.6	–	–	8.3	22.7	–	4.5	–	–
12	Deduction for repair fund		13.0	15.9	13.8	20.6	18.9	18.4	10.5	–	5.2
13	Services		17.9	19.5	19.1	12.8	15.1	15.3	28.2	11.5	15.1
14	Costs of central heating and hot water		35.8	37.7	39.4	34.6	24.3	37.0	32.8	33.6	40.5
15	Other		7.4	–	2.0	2.7	–	1.1	1.0	7.0	–
16	Members waiting for a dwelling		3,054	1,460	656	250	34	918	210	318	53
17	Vacant dwellings at disposal of cooperatives in 2001 (regained in the old stock)		30	11	16	30	11	30	1	2	–
18	Dwellings completed in 2001		359	240	487	199	–	226	246	83	146
19	Average useful floor area of a dwelling, m ²		55.6	49.6	60.7	67.2	–	64.4	71.5	60.9	62.1
20	Average gross construction costs of 1 m ² of useful floor area, Polish zlotys		3,700.0	2,900.0	3,252.0	3,440.0	–	3,322.0	3,588.0	3,567.6	3,223.0

Source: The Warsaw Housing Report, 2002

3.3 Organisation of the policy

Large housing estates ceased to exist as independent organisational administrative units or as organised communities. The roots of this transformation is in the increasing scale of the dwellings constructed under communism, and the division of the cooperatives, which originally were the 'producers', and the managers of the housing estates. As a result housing estates are currently managed by different cooperatives, some of which operate in different housing estates located in different parts of the city; housing is also managed by local authorities, condominium organisations and private households or investors. The interests of each of the above-mentioned actors are different and sometimes create conflicts. The basic structural conflict concerns the different interests of the cooperatives and the local self-governments.

It seems that varying costs of management and administration of housing estates depend generally on the scale of them. In two little estates in Warsaw numbering less than 3,000 dwellings the share of these costs is about 1 per cent or less of the total maintenance costs. In the group of larger estates with more than 10,000 dwellings, the costs of managing and administrating are between 4.5-7.2 per cent.

The costs of the current use are generally higher in the little estates, where they are between 16 and 35 per cent, whereas among the greatest estates these costs are between 6 and 15 per cent. Current repairs probably depend on the state of the houses and the quality of materials used for construction. Major repairs and modernisation depend mostly on the financial state of the estate administration, which is generally better in those cases where the share of owned dwellings is relatively high. In those cases it is easier to collect money for modernisation – people in such estates have better possibilities to pay extra money or higher rents.

There is a characteristic phenomena in Poland – the new cooperatives established during the last ten years are in a much better position than the older ones, not only because of relatively new buildings and their equipment, but also because almost 100 per cent of the dwellings in these buildings are private. It means that inhabitants of the new cooperatives have a higher financial status. However, we have examples of old cooperative houses that needed urgent major repair – for the first time after 40 years since construction.

The basic problem of such older housing estates is that currently rather poor and elderly people inhabit them and it is impossible to take more money from them or for them to obtain credit from the bank.

In some cases the managers decided (in spite of protests from households) to construct new floors on the top of buildings and sell new dwellings. This way they acquired enough money for the general modernisation of the buildings.

In some cases the older and larger cooperatives decide to invest modernisation funds to a much larger extent than the new ones.

The situation of cooperative members waiting for dwellings varies. Some of the cooperatives build a relatively larger number of new dwellings year by year but others do not. In some cases, the number of newly constructed dwellings is higher than the number of waiting members. Other cooperatives build about 20 per cent of the dwellings required by their members.

3.4 Social participation in the policy

Participation as a specific type of activity, connected with real democracy does not have a long tradition in Poland. Generally, people in Poland do not trust officials, they are not engaged in general social matters, and especially the situation when the level of unemployment is about 18 per cent and about 90 per cent of households have no money saved. Two to three times a year cooperatives organise meetings for all householders with their managers to discuss essential and current problems and future solutions. Only 7-10 per cent of households take part in these meetings. They can discuss for example changes of bus routes and stops, some changes in rents, modification of flat equipment, current renovation of houses, creation of parking places and green areas, modification of streets inside estates etc. Naturally this participation regards only limited matters in the frame of activities of independent cooperatives. Practically it never embraces new development plans, the location of new buildings, though sometimes inhabitants protest against some construction, but mostly too late.

There is one characteristic example of participation. Just at the time of the beginning of the transformation the main architect of the Great Ursynów Housing Estate proposed plenty of changes in architecture and spatial organisation in his own designed estate. All the buildings that had been proposed for changes were constructed about ten years previously. These changes were carefully planned. He proposed to build additional storeys to some of the houses, especially third- or fourth-floors, and cover them by a steep roof made of a red tile, others would have wider first-floors added for different services, shops and so on. All these drawings were displayed for public discussion and acceptance. The idea and solutions were really beautiful in those times and radically changed the monotony of this estate made of concrete plates. It was a great opportunity to extend the set of shops and services. Almost 90 per cent of the inhabitants protested against these proposals and cooperatives had to give up. It seems that people were not prepared for such changes. Moreover, they saw that the construction of new shops or schools and other buildings taking three to four years and they hated all the noise and disorder connected with the building process.

3.5 Advantages and disadvantages of the policy

State tax policy during the last twelve years practically supported the richest part of the society, because other people had no money for buying new dwellings and a common system for renting dwellings does not exist. As a result the new buildings of the old housing estates (like in Ursynów) are inhabited by rather wealthy than poor people. In this way, the general problem of deprivation in such growing estates is a matter of the future.

3.6 Conclusion and evaluation

It is expected that the market value of the dwellings in large post-war estates will decrease over the next few years. In most cases the living conditions in these estates do not suit peoples' needs and requirements. The size and the form of large-scale estates are not favourable for creating a friendly-living environment. One of the problems is the lack of cultural centres

or shopping and service infrastructures; the second one is the progressive degradation of the physical condition of buildings. Besides this, we can observe negative social processes occurring in estates, such as crime or alcoholism. People do not identify themselves with their place of living and it deepens the feeling of alienation and the lack of sense of joint responsibility for the neighbourhood. All these aspects contribute to creating slum spots within estates and the migration of better-off households to other more modern and more comfortable parts of the city. But the scale and rate of degradation of the particular housing estate will differ according to the many social, economic and spatial factors.

Economic and employment problems in Warsaw's housing estates have their roots in the national economic problems and particularly in urban development.

In spite of the lack of a general vision and strategy of urban development in Poland the growth and recovery of some urban areas is not only the result of the inherited economic assets. They are also, to a high extent, the result of strategic attitudes of urban policy makers – usually local government leaders.

From the very beginning of the transformation, Warsaw was considered to be among the cities which were most attractive for investment, and foreign investors in many industries began their expansion into the Polish market from the capital. New domestic businesses such as private institutions of higher education, consulting firms, and financial institutions, are also concentrated in Warsaw. Some strategies have been created by the 'invisible hand of the market'. The best example of this is the case of Warsaw's 'Stadion' dominated by the shadow economy sectors, which has become the largest bazaar in Europe serving the former Soviet Union countries and generating higher employment (partly illegal) than the whole industrial sector in Warsaw.

As a result Warsaw has become the leader in transformation compared to regions that have not benefited from the changes. So the unemployment issues are of a different character even in the worst housing estates of Warsaw, like Wrzeciono, in comparison to some rural areas of northern Poland. On a local scale, Wrzeciono has its own niche of shadow economy within the neighbourhood, in the form of the 'Wolumen Bazaar'.

4.1 Main aims included in the policy

The main goal of the employment policy is to acquire a higher engagement of the population into the process of work. Achieving this goal requires improvement at the level of employability (providing people with attributes being requisite for their employment) and complying with the principle of equality of opportunities on the labour market and also the development of entrepreneurship and improvement in the ability for enterprises to adapt to a changing market.

4.2 Main activities included in the policy

In search of adequate solutions to the unemployment problem, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy has undertaken a set of initiatives to stimulate employment. A governmental strategy in this field is the National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources Development 2000-2006. It is, on a large scale, the continuation of intentions, which were realised within previous governmental programmes devoted to the labour market. However it also comprises new proposals of actions.

As the unemployment among young people in Poland is three times higher than the average rate, in June 2002 the government launched a programme, 'First Job', which aims at enabling young people to enter the labour market through acquiring their first work experience (First Job, Programme of Professional Activation of Graduates, Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, 2002). In accordance to the programme statements, small and medium-size enterprises are supposed to employ young people, with government financial assistance for the employers. The government refunds the employees' pay and social insurance contributions. Self-employment is encouraged among young people through facilitating the procedures required for establishing an enterprise, the provision of cheap credit and guarantees. The programme involves education and training measures including schooling in entrepreneurial skills, continuing education (organised by labour offices) and initiatives in schools to promote employment (the creation of 'professional careers offices'). The Information and Professional Career Planning Centres, at the regional (voivodships) level and selected local (borough and district) departments provide vocational guidance and employment services' information. Job seekers from the Wrzeciono estate are provided with various employment services by the Labour Club – a specialised entity of the Bielany Centre for Social Assistance where vocational advisors collect and make available information on professions, the labour market and the options in achieving professional qualifications, as well as help in taking some vocational decisions. It is estimated that approximately 1,000-1,200 customers take advantage of services provided by the Labour Club. Workers of the Labour Club disseminate information on job offers and organise and develop training courses for job seekers. During the courses participants attend practical workshops on job hunting, develop transferable skills (such as self-presentation and basic computer skills) and find out about different industries and career paths. Customers are also offered the assistance in preparing job applications. In the Labour Club job-seekers also have the possibility to use a computer, to send documents via e-mail or to use a fax machine. All services rendered are free of charge. The club itself employs graduates for short time contracts in the framework of the First Job Programme. Due to this form of employment four persons had their contract prolonged and now they are full-time employees at the Centre for Social Assistance.

Moreover, the Labour Club with the cooperation of the provincial labour office organises and coordinates labour fairs. Such events have been organised five times since the beginning of the club's existence (2002). The last fair took place in one of the schools in the Wrzeciono estate. The fair gives the chance for job seekers to establish direct contacts with employers or with specialists in the field of human resources or labour law. Such meetings are the source of information on requirements on the contemporary, local labour market.

Besides, some institutional entities of the Bielany borough related to the Wrzeciono estate are engaged in an intervention work programme. It is a short-term direct job creation

programme with employment on projects organised mainly by government agencies, including municipal governments. Intervention work operates essentially as a wage subsidy programme. The wage is paid by grants that can be no more than the unemployment compensation benefit. The work projects may last up to six months. There are also incentives for employers to permanently retain workers. After the end of an intervention work project, employers can receive wage subsidies for retained workers amounting up to 150 per cent of the national average wage. An example of an intervention work project organised within the Bielany borough was the project prepared by the borough Department for Environmental Protection. The department engaged temporary workers for cleaning a neighbouring forest. Additionally the project assumed that workers who had been previously convicted had precedence in being engaged in these works. Also the Board of Communal Housing in cooperation with the voivodships labour office organises intervention works, connected with a renovation of buildings.

In the Ursynów estate, the problem of unemployment was not so significant as in the Wrzeciono estate (only about 3 per cent of unemployment), but in 1999 the borough established an unemployment point, where people could use a telephone, fax, photocopier and find advice. About 500 people are registered at this point. In 2002, the Ursynów borough also created a branch of the labour office that is open once a week. People looking for a job can get full information there, and make contact with potential employers etc.

During the last ten years, the Ursynów estate has been gradually growing, attracting more and more new developers, cooperatives and inhabitants. This concentrated area of skilled people is also attractive for business, so new enterprises and offices are being located there. The new buildings, constructed after 1990, are of a modern design; many of them made of brick (instead of great plates), often with space for commercial and service activity. This process has increased commercial attractiveness to the area.

4.3 Organisation of the policy

Issues connected with the labour market belong to the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy. This ministry is the leader in labour market policy. The employment policy is executed on the base of the network of labour offices operating at both regional and local levels. It allows for the adoption of solutions that recognise the needs of a given area best. The local labour offices cooperate directly and indirectly with schools, local councils and administrations, and other entities functioning on the local labour market.

The variety of issues, which had been raised by customers of the labour offices, resulted in the introduction of 'The Centres of Information and Planning of Vocational Career' within the structure of labour offices. The centres take an active part in carrying out the undertakings, which concern the promotion of education, enterprise and professional activities, such as educational fairs, seminars, and programmes supporting the unemployed. The national labour office in Warsaw provides administrative support to the voivodships labour offices and delivers information on labour market trends and labour programme activity. In order to disseminate information on the First Job Programme as widely as possible, the ministry has created a special website.

4.4 Conclusion and evaluation

While at Wrzeciono the high rate of the unemployed population constitutes one of the biggest problems in this area, the Ursynów estate has not been so enormously affected by unemployment.

Ursynów is considered as an attractive location for new investments so businesses and services have been growing there. Additionally, the relatively high levels of education of the inhabitants of Ursynów make them more flexible, competitive, and effective on the labour market.

At Wrzeciono the situation is reversed. Economic transformation contributed to the crisis in the heavy industry, in which the majority of Wrzeciono inhabitants were employed. As a result many low-skilled workers lost their jobs and have not been able to change their qualifications to find any new employment. This problem is even more striking as unemployment patterns are often passed from one generation to another.

Therefore, next to creating new jobs, such issues as retraining, providing the unemployed with job-search competencies or spreading information on available vacancies are commonly recognised as crucial when tackling problems regarding unemployment.

The transformation and introduction of democracy in Poland resulted not only in many positive changes but unfortunately also in varying and growing threats of crime. New types of crime, previously unknown, have appeared. Among others it also applies to the most serious types of crime, those resulting in bodily harm and loss of life. Police figures point out a rise in the crime rate and it is considered to be a negative effect of the country's political and economical transformation. The results of a sociological survey conducted in various parts of Poland show that the majority of Poles mention the lack of safety as the one of the three most important problems. According to research conducted in our case study areas, inhabitants indicated assaults, thefts, drugs and alcohol abuse as the most problematic aspects in the neighbourhoods.

5.1 Main aims included in the policy

The main aim of the safety policy is to effectively fight against crimes and offences and to assure and improve public safety.

5.2 Main activities included in the policy

In order to increase the level of safety in the estates, the Warsaw City Office launched the citywide programme called 'Warsaw's Safety Map'. The programme embraced all Warsaw's districts including the Ursynów and Wrzeciono estates. One of the objectives of the programme is the identification of the unsafe places in the districts. In the initial phase of the project, representatives of city authorities and municipal police organised meetings with estate residents. The meetings were designed in the form of dialogs, during which residents informed about disturbing incidents that caused feelings of insecurity and expressed their opinions on police activity. Participants of the meetings were also requested to point out in questionnaires the most dangerous places and to indicate the experienced types of offences and crimes. Moreover, police officers provided detailed statistical data about committed crimes. As a result of the meetings and consultations with police officers, the list of the unsafe areas was prepared and reinforced police patrols were directed to these places. Also bike and mounted-patrols of police were implemented in the Ursynów and Wrzeciono estates.

On the base of residents' statements, new localisations for camera monitoring systems were also selected. After about one month from the start of pilot actions the next meetings with inhabitants were organised, in order to collect up-to-date data about effectiveness of the undertaken initiatives.

Residents' opinions confirmed that pilot actions brought significant improvement to safety levels. Due to the movement of extra police patrols to selected regions, negative incidents were limited.

The council of Ursynów borough decided to help the local police station delivering several office workers for administrative tasks and by injecting extra money for essential repairs of the police station (about EUR 230 thousand in 2002), equipment for criminal specialists, computers, cells, etc. In 2003, the borough bought four cars for this police station.

In 1997, the Ursynów borough signed an agreement with the Police Training Centre, and as a result of this, officers from the Guide Dog Instruction and Training Centre were employed.

Some programmes are dedicated to promoting and guaranteeing the safety of children and youth. The municipality police officers and specifically employed for this goal, labelled guards are sent to monitor street crossings and make sure that children from neighbourhoods cross the streets safely.

The project 'Safe school' was launched in order to eliminate delinquency on and around school grounds. One of the steps undertaken to protect pupils at schools was organising school patrols consisting of police officers and city guards. Their task is to monitor and supervise the environment around the school and intervene in risky and threatening situations. The general assumption of the programme is to encourage school headmasters to closer cooperation with school police patrols and the Office for Safety and Crisis Situations Management. Headmasters are supposed to deliver updated information about troublesome pupils, (i.e. pupils who play truant, use drugs or alcohol or who are members of informal, violent youth groups). The most active and the most engaged headmasters are rewarded with additional funds designed for modernising school infrastructure.

In the Ursynów estate the foundation 'Safe Ursynów' together with private sponsors financed the system of camera monitoring in some schools. Installation of cameras in school buildings first of all plays a preventive role, thus it strengthens the childrens' and teachers' sense of safety.

A very difficult situation is observed in the sphere of family violence. The Polish law is not sufficient for wives and mothers in defence against violence. Boroughs do not have social dwellings for battered women, who escape from their homes. Thanks to the cooperation with local orphanages and with the Women Law Foundation, the Ursynów borough has at its disposal some places in their centres.

5.3 Organisation of the policy

The project 'Warsaw Safety Map' was initiated in the City Office of Warsaw. The entity responsible for the processing and coordination of the project at the city level is the Department of Safety and Crisis Management. The city safety department has its branches in each district, which are involved in various safety issues in each district area. Each estate is under the supervision of local police constabularies. Also schools and other non-governmental organisations are involved in actions aimed at raising local safety. Special entities are concerned

about ensuring safety for social groups which are the most vulnerable to be threatened by violence, for example children from dysfunctional families.

5.4 Participation in the policy

In most cases inhabitants have passive attitudes to the safety issues in the site. There is a common opinion that assurance of safety belongs to the duties of special police services. Residents usually demand better supervision of their area of living by police and city guard patrols. However, a part of the society begins to understand that the level of safety depends also on civil active participation in counteracting crimes. Some of the estates are monitored by patrols consisted not only of police officers but also of inhabitants who voluntarily supervise their neighbourhood. Besides, some housing associations organise additional protection of their living environment by fencing buildings and hiring additional guards who monitor the surrounding area.

During the meetings organised in the framework of the 'Warsaw Safety Map' programme, the most active in informing about dangerous places were older people, and the youth was not strongly represented. The great interest in the project was also favoured among local activists who put forward many propositions concerning the improvement of the safety level in the estates.

5.5 Conclusion and evaluation

According to inhabitants of both estates, an introduction of the programme 'Warsaw Safety Map' reduced the level of insecurity (report on the processing of the first stage of the programme 'Warsaw's Map of Safety'). Implementation of additional police and city guard patrols on both estates undoubtedly responds to basic residents' expectations, but does not necessarily mean that it has sufficiently and permanently influenced the improvement of safety in the neighbourhoods. According to the residents' statements, once the police patrols were removed, acts of vandalism were witnessed again. It implicates the necessity of permanent monitoring of the neighbourhood by police services. Obviously it is impossible to guarantee police patrols on every street corner at any time of the day or night. To guarantee more extensive protection of the residential area, private organisation of protection of the living places is becoming more and more popular in both estates. Of course, this kind of protection can be implemented only in the case when residents of the given area can afford this type of protection. As a result, it leads to the situation when the estate terrain is divided into two separated realities:

- distinguished, better protected and inhabited by better-off households;
- remaining outside the protected, and neat area, which is subject to undergoing depreciation and decapitalisation.

6 Education policy

Education in Poland has been undergoing extensive restructuring since the early 1990s. The reform of the educational system in Poland has been among the most important issues on the government's agenda. The Polish formal educational system consists of elementary (primary) schools, middle schools, secondary schools (general grammar schools, technical grammar schools, and vocational schools), and universities and other institutions of higher education. Tuition in the state schools is free and schooling is mandatory until the age of 18.

Basically, the education in Poland starts at kindergarten level as the non-obligatory pre-school. Before September, 1999, an eight-form primary school constituted the first level of obligatory education. Now, pupils begin their education at the age of six in 'Form 0', where they acquire preliminary skills for reading and writing, and learn simple mathematical concepts and operations. They continue their education at a six-form primary school, which ends with a test giving information on how much pupils have learnt. The six-year primary school is now followed by a three-year lower stage of secondary education school (gymnasium). As a rule, on this and previous levels, pupils attend the schools nearest to their place of living. After gymnasium, pupils continue their education in three different types of upper stages of secondary education. Based on the results of the final examination concluding education in gymnasium, pupils can choose between three-year general education grammar schools, four-year technical grammar schools, or two- to three-year vocational schools. General and technical grammar schools finish with the 'matura' – a school-leaving examination, which gives entrance qualifications for higher education (college or university). Education in a vocational school concludes with a professional examination. On graduation of a five-year university course, holders of a master's degree may begin doctoral or post-graduate studies. The reform assumed not only different education structures but also the development of a new curricula and grading system. For example in primary schools in forms I-III teachers are free to arrange the learning process. The subjects and learning programmes are tailored according to the level of the students' performance and their ability to acquire knowledge. The learning process in forms IV-VI is not divided into traditional subjects, but is carried on in four subject blocks. The reform also changed the rules of teacher training, career patterns and financing methods. Teachers are promoted through successive grades of professional qualifications: from trainee teacher, contractual teacher, to appointed teacher and diploma-holding teacher. During the last few years next to state schools, non-public and private schools have been becoming more and more popular at all levels. They are fee paying but training performance is often considered as a better standard.

6.1 Main aims included in the policy

The educational changes in Poland are aimed at eliminating the drawbacks of the previous educational system. Educational reform brought radical changes aimed at bringing the educational system and its institutions much closer to the 'real world', and in equipping learners in learning capabilities. The reform assumed the raising of the general educational level of the Polish society. Another objective of the educational reform in Poland was to eliminate poor teaching performance by motivating teachers to work harder and improving their qualifications.

6.2 Main activities included in the policy

As a result of the educational reform in 1999, the school network has been significantly reorganised in the two case studies. In both sites there are several public and private kindergartens, also including integrating ones designated for healthy and handicapped children. In Ursynów there are kindergartens exclusively for handicapped children and for children with special nutritional requirements. All kindergartens have to comply with the syllabus set by the Ministry of Education. Each of them is equipped with teaching aids to ensure an all-round development of the children. At the same time, on the request of the parents, English classes, corrective exercise sessions, as well as dance and music classes take place. All classes must be conducted by staff with appropriate qualifications. The kindergartens are excellent solutions for working parents. A programme of psychological aid for the youngest children and their parents is under way in Ursynów. Its aim is to explain any irregularities in the behaviour of children up to the age of seven and help correcting them.

At the beginning of September 1999, after the educational reform, secondary schools were divided into two stages, so that several gymnasiums, as the lower stage of secondary education, started to function at the Wrzeciono and Ursynów estates. The gymnasiums in the Ursynów and Wrzeciono sites participate in the 'Internet Access for Each Gymnasium' programme. All gymnasiums have been equipped with computer laboratories with access to the internet. Former common rooms for children were replaced with gymnasium clubs where pupils can spend their spare time. In order to improve teachers' and school managers' performance and prepare them to work in the reformed schools, districts' departments for education have run workshops and training courses improving their qualification and informing about new educational solutions. The reform also introduced many innovations in the school curriculum. The majority of schools have introduced various forms of innovation, such as extended mathematics and information studies, cultural studies and a history syllabus or foreign language courses. Physical education classes can take the shape of dance, fencing, basketball or swimming lessons. Teachers have been given the opportunity to develop and implement individual lesson programmes, especially in the fields of health, regional, ecological, and European education. In many schools so-called School European Clubs have been established where students together with teachers voluntarily prepare events popularising the knowledge about Europe: its countries, history, geography, art, science, famous people, institutions and organisations, and European integration processes.

6.2.1 Activities during out-of-school hours

In the Wrzeciono estate the main entity that runs cultural and educational activities for children after school hours is The Centre for Out-of-School Activities, with a history of more than 20 years. It directs its educational and cultural offer mainly to children under the age of 15. Among various activities, children can choose workshops organised by a model-making laboratory, which displays outstanding performance due to the engagement of participants. It has won several prizes in Warsaw and national competitions in modelling. The Centre for Out-of-School Activities also runs educational workshops even for very young children from the ages of three to five. There are also open workshops, in which both children and their parents take part together. All workshops take place once a week, unless a child is attending two or more different types of classes. Classes for the youngest children are organised in thematic blocks designed for groups of four-, five- or six-year olds. The main rule of all classes is to learn through playing. On the request of parents, the center also organises excursions for children or invites theatre groups that play spectacles.

In the Ursynów estate a similar cultural and educational offer is provided by the Art House established in 1984. From the beginning of its existence until the early 1990s it was under the management of the 'SBM Ursynów' – a big cooperative, which in those times embraced all dwellings in the Ursynów estate. Since 1993, the Art House has been under the patronage of the SMB Jary – one of the smaller cooperatives, which emerged after the division of the previous big 'SMB Ursynów' cooperative. In the first decade the activity of the Art House was financed by authorities responsible for culture in the Mokotów borough, which was, at the time, embracing Ursynów. In 1994, when Ursynów became an independent borough, the Art House was financially supported by the borough's cultural department. Currently after the centralisation in Warsaw the Art House has been financially supported in 20 percent by the cultural department for the Ursynów district in the city hall.

The Art House holds a theatre hall, cinema, gallery and ballet room in its premises. It provides a wide range of cultural and educational activities and events for children, youth, as well as for adults. It offers rich and ambitious theatre and movie repertoire. Moreover the folk group 'Jaromiry', Movie Club, and youth theatre groups operate within this cultural institution.

In both estates, in the framework of the 'Open Schools' programme there are also initiatives undertaken at school premises after lessons. During extra hours some teachers lead hobby circles where students can develop their interests and skills after obligatory lessons. During compensatory classes teachers also help students with particular learning difficulties for example pupils who have problems with dyslexia.

Some services in the field of education are also delivered by two non-governmental organisations. One of them, functioning in the Wrzeciono site, is the 'Gniazdo' (Nest) Society. It leads a centre where younger children can spend their spare time under the supervision of volunteers. Another organisation – the Youth Assistance Society – provides similar activities but it is rather directed to youths. Both organisations organise socio-therapeutic workshops for their young customers.

In addition, in both estates, during summer and winter holidays, citywide actions called 'Summer in the City' and 'Winter in the City' are organised. Every year these initiatives arouse great interest among children and youth who are invited to take part in varied workshops run during a whole holiday period from Monday to Friday, from 8.00 a.m. until 5.00 p.m.

The activities are prepared by local schools and cooperating cultural institutions and include dancing, painting, theatre classes, disco evenings as well as sports competitions or city tours.

6.2.2 Sport activities

In the field of sports the so-called School Sport Clubs are very active in both estates. They provide children with the possibility of taking part in various, supervised sport activities. These kinds of activities are very popular among children, especially among boys. Active members of the School Sport Clubs are involved in sport teams and participate in inter-school competitions and other sport events.

In order to promote sport activities among children and youth there were a few undertakings aimed at the improvement of the state of the sport infrastructure in the Wrzeciono site. School sports fields and gyms were extended, renovated and made available for practising sports after in-school hours. Some funds were also designed for the modernisation of the playgrounds to conform them to European Union standards. They were fenced and divided into two parts: one part for very young children and another one for older children. The grounds below the swings were laid out with a special, artificial surface.

At the Ursynów estate there are plenty of different sport and recreational activities. Happily, almost all mayors and cooperative managers of Ursynów were enthusiastic about sports. Thanks to them this part of the city has the most dense net of bike paths in Warsaw. There are also soccer fields, basketball fields, indoor and open-air tennis courts, swimming pools and other facilities. Every year different sports, recreational events and amateur tournaments are organised, so that plenty of young people take part in them. This type of activity is very important for social integration and preventing demoralisation. Of course, it needs concise and coordinated actions and initiatives undertaken by different kinds of associations, organisations etc. The agriculture university located just outside our selected area, where a modern swimming pool was built, also carries out sport activities. A large tennis hall and other sport facilities like a horseback riding school are open to all estate inhabitants.

Naturally, inhabitants complain that there are few places for sports and recreation, and that nice green spaces, are frequently not sufficient. But thanks to all the factors mentioned above, the general position of this estate in relation to others is really good.

6.2.3 Libraries

There are two libraries operating at the Wrzeciono estate. Recently they were moved to renovated buildings. Inhabitants of Wrzeciono can also make use of the central library of the Bielany district.

The public library at the Ursynów estate took over some of the duties previously realised by the Ursynów Cultural Centre. Currently the range of the library's tasks embraces not only gathering and disseminating volumes, but also the popularisation of reading among young inhabitants of the estate. The cultural and educational activity of Ursynów's public library consists in organising meetings with writers, lectures on interesting topics and theatre spectacles for children. Besides this, regular meetings of people who want to try their hand at literature creativity take place in the library. Moreover, the library made an effort to prepare a unique action in Warsaw, which promotes literature for children. In the framework of the series 'Reading for Children', the most famous books are presented. Authors, publishers, illustrators and interpreters read to the children during literature meetings.

The local mass media also play an important role in the informing and educating of the community of the estate. Four weekly magazines greatly influence the consciousness of all the Ursynów inhabitants about estate and borough problems. They are free of charge and give plenty of important information interesting to inhabitants. It is worth noticing that Ursynów was the first Polish estate equipped with local cable television.

6.3 Conclusion and evaluation

In both estates, besides public kindergartens and schools of all levels, there are other institutions acting outside the formal educational system, which play additional educational and cultural roles. Such institutions as the Centre for Out-of-School Activities in the Wrzeciono estate or the Art House in the Ursynów estate give the possibility to take part in various educational courses as well as cultural events. However, the range of educational propositions is quite often beyond the real needs, especially at Wrzeciono estate and should be extended. For example the neighbouring forest in Wrzeciono estate is an underused potential, of which local community could take better advantage by organising outdoor sports and recreational events for families or youth groups, that could contribute to a better integration of all generations. Some of these plans of developing these green areas however are still not fulfilled.

Besides this, it seems that in both sites there are still not many special offers directed to adults. Educational services embrace mainly children and youth but informal adult education is still not popularised enough.

7 Health and well-being

In Poland, in the decade of the 1990s a strong trend toward diversification and deregulation in the health care system occurred. In 1989, the majority of the previously established Integrated Health Care Management Units, the so-called ZOZs were dismantled, especially in big cities and urbanised areas. As a result hospitals separated themselves from ambulatory clinics, and social care, under separate administration, lost its links with health care.

In the 1990s the management of public health care was decentralised; many health care public providers got the status of independent entities. The private sector developed rapidly.

In the beginning of 1999, all public health care providers changed their status from budgetary units into independent public health institutions in order to be able to contract health services with the newly created Sickness Funds, which became main public money holders.

In 2002, the Polish health care system underwent its next radical change. A newly declared health policy, again recognised integration as a priority. The Sickness Funds were abolished and the system was to be centrally managed and controlled with the predominant role of the Ministry of Health (Sobczak, 2002).

The attempts of the two last governments to reform the Polish health system only threw it into total confusion. The responsibility of authorities and providers of health care has been unclear. Also the future direction of the evolution of the Polish public health care services is still not clearly defined.

7.1 Main aims included in the policy

In the post-communist reform period, the long-term goal of the Polish health policy was a conversion of state budget-supported socialised medicine to a privately administered health system supported by a universal obligatory health insurance fee. Polish policy makers made an effort to reduce bureaucracy in health care units. Besides this, they tried to shift financial resources to more efficient departments and stream admissions and diagnosis procedures.

7.2 Main activities included in the policy

In the Warsaw housing estates there are primary health units (financed by boroughs). However, there is a problem with the availability of many specialists, for example oculists, dentists or

surgeons. Sometimes people go for consultations to hospitals or medical cooperatives or private practitioners.

A regular health examination system does not exist. Only some employers require a basic set of medical tests from new workers. On the other hand there are some prophylactic actions, which are very popular and worthy. One of them is the Ursynów Health School, which leads a series of lectures on different health problems (cancer, overpressure, cardiology, stress, etc.) connected with some kinds of tests, which are free of charge. This cycle has been organised and financed by the borough and about 10,000 people (so far) have participated in these courses.

There are two main health and social problems in both of the estates under consideration: alcohol and drug abuse. On the base of the Act on Alcoholism Counteraction (1982) different administrative units – public, NGOs and organisations – act in this field (Act on Upbringing in Sobriety and Counteracting Alcoholism, 1982). For example in 1999 in the framework of anti-drugs and anti-alcohol state policy, thousands of debates with school children about different actions and policies and their effects were organised. In the Ursynów estate this debate embraced about 1,200 pupils aged between 13-15. They evaluated different types of actions and here are some of the conclusions the best results can be obtained by:

- letting them know how to refuse to drink alcohol under conditions of insistence from other people;
- letting them know how to help colleagues, school-fellows with drug or alcohol problems;
- advising how to surmount different life difficulties without alcohol;
- letting the parents know how to talk to the child and help them;
- creating playgrounds and other amusement places – without alcohol (Prajnsner, 1999).

Recently the Ursynów borough council has continued the prophylactic and solutions of the Alcohol Problems Programme and also the anti-drug prophylactic (material from the Social Pathology Counteraction Team, Ursynów Borough, Warsaw, 2000; Regulations on the placement of outlets selling alcohol, 2002).

An anti-alcohol prophylactic is very important in the Ursynów estate. In 1999, the Ursynów borough implemented as one of the first boroughs in Poland a pilot aid programme for families with alcohol problems (material from the Alcohol and Drug Problems Solution of Ursynów Borough Commission). Through the integration of different institutions (joined activity and funds) they achieved better results helping children from alcoholic families. These interdisciplinary teams included tutors, house-fathers, teachers, social aid workers, policemen, court wardens etc. In 2001, special borough agents began their summer activity, controlling whether shop assistants sell alcohol to teeneagers (Attention, please. Agent. Ursynów anti-alcohol action, 2001).

In the sphere of acting against drug abuse there are plenty of different organisations, NGOs, churches, private firms and funds in Warsaw. One of them is the outpatients clinic 'Marathon' in the Ursynów estate, established in 1998 in cooperation with the state Bureau of Drug Abuse Prevention. There are different forms of their activity. For example students of psychology or pedagogy have been working there since 2001. They say that the best results can be achieved by 'street work'. They work in pairs in limited areas, informing children of the help they provide. They act and spread information on streets, at school or by posters and leaflets.

There was research carried out in the years 1996, 1998 and 2001 among about 1,000 young men in recruiting points in the Ursynów borough. General conclusions from the research

were that on the contrary to the country as a whole, most of the indicators about drug abuse stabilised in the Ursynów borough diminished sometimes during this period, especially with regards to dangerous drugs like heroine and amphetamine (report on the research on drinking alcohol and taking drugs by youths, 2001). Another type of prophylactic is a wide range of sport and recreation actions.

The management of Ursynów borough has spent a lot of money on recreation and sport. Different sport associations, small clubs and societies get year by year subventions for their activity. They organise meetings, summer performances, tournaments, camps, excursions, etc. Local sports clubs and other institutions introduced an interesting form of sports entertainment in which parents and children participate together. Family football games, ping-pong contests, bonfires and picnics are regularly organised. In 2001, for these purposes, the borough spent about EUR 90,000. In the same time they built new sports and recreational halls, a swimming pool, a fitness centre, tennis courts and sport fields.

7.3 Organisation of the policy

According to the Act on Alcoholism Counteraction (1982) all the alcohol problems and prophylactic actions should be undertaken at the borough level. This activity can be financed partly by symbolic tax (about EUR 0,2) from every bottle of alcohol sold in the given borough. For example in 2002 it was about EUR 160,000, in 2003 – about EUR 130,000. Different organisations act in this field: NGOs, private firms, individual specialists working for public or private bodies, teachers, students, etc. In each school there are nurses popularising a healthy life style and helping to deal with drug or alcohol problems (Testers will help in drug abuse counteraction. Prevention action in Ursynów, 1999).

All experts working with young people are informed very precisely what to do in difficult cases, they know the procedures step-by-step and which organisation addresses the children at risk, in order to help them.

7.4 Conclusion and evaluation

The realisation of each policy depends mostly on executors. In the case of the Ursynów borough (and also the estate) the opinion of observers in anti-alcoholic clinics, hospitals and so on, was that the share of patients from this area dominates in these health units. It is probably true, but it is not the result of a high percentage of addicted people living in Ursynów but rather an effect of seeking for them, good health care, a higher consciousness and the good work of teachers, policemen, doctors, social workers etc. The differentiation of institutions playing their roles in this sphere: whether public, private or NGO is very important.

We should stress the great influence of the sport and recreational activities in the whole borough and in the Ursynów estate especially, not only for the health of the inhabitants. It is a very important factor for behaviour and the formation of manners. The inhabitants have more possibilities for spending their free time.

People connected with drug problems in hospitals and clinics had an impression that plenty of Ursynów inhabitants are there on treatment. It seemed that drug abuse is widespread in

this housing estate, but this fact shows that the system of prevention and prophylactic is more effective there than in other parts of the city.

Municipal and local governments and communities face significant challenges with respect to the complexity of social problems occurring in the estates. The most significant problems are associated with social differentiation. Inequalities have a broad impact on the social well-being because they reflect the inability of some inhabitants to participate fully in the community and share in activities leading to the improvement of health or educational attainments. Urban poor people lack access to various services including safety and affordable housing. Ageing of the population, especially at the Wrzeciono estate, is also a growing social concern. There is recognition among policy makers that social policy includes in particular aspects of educational, safety, health and housing policies. There is also recognition that social problems must be tackled through holistic and integrated approaches rather than sector specific, short-term strategies. The sections below provide an overview of adopted strategies, which aim at addressing the set of social problems concerning the most vulnerable social groups in the given urban areas.

Ursynów was from the beginning inhabited by people with a relatively higher social status: journalists, municipality or government officials, film and theatre actors, scientists and different artists. They were mixed with industrial workers, shop assistants, taxi drivers etc. The cooperatives – in those times practically unique managers of the estate – realised the importance of provoking highly active well-educated inhabitants for work focused on the development of the estate. There were plenty of different performances, sport and recreational tournaments, spectacles and permanent courses in art, photography, dance, languages and other activities. Most of them were organised for children and later for young people, which grew up in a relatively good atmosphere.

8.1 Main aims included in the policy

The general aim of the social policy at the Wrzeciono estate is the improvement in the quality of the life of Wrzeciono's inhabitants (Programme for Improvement of Life Quality of Wrzeciono Inhabitants, Board of Bielany Borough, 2001). The wide-ranging focus is on mobilising local community activity and on reducing poverty as well as other risk factors such as alcoholism and drug abuse. In order to guarantee the well-being of the Wrzeciono residents, priority is also given to the formation of institutional and informal alliances to carry out specific actions and provide services for inhabitants.

The strategic aim of social policy in the Ursynów borough is to limit the processes of social marginalisation through supporting the process of integration and reintegration of the families in crisis situations, social and professional integration of handicapped people, women, young and older inhabitants, counteracting long-term unemployment.

8.2 Main activities included in the policy

8.2.1 The strategic planning approach of the estates

In order to achieve adopted goals the council of the Bielany borough prepared a strategic agenda for the Wrzeciono estate called the 'Improvement of the quality of life of Wrzeciono estate's inhabitants' (Development Strategy for Bielany District until the year 2014). The programme is to be realised in combination with other programmes run by different departments and entities functioning at the site. In order to effectively diagnose area problems and key issues, the emphasis was placed on gaining the understanding of the local context. The external and internal factors and trends (opportunities and threats) that affect the functioning of the local community were analysed. Stakeholders (both private persons and professionals) who are directly and indirectly involved and could be affected by the strategy were identified and consulted. The information was gathered during workshop meetings with individual inhabitants and members of residents' councils. Outcomes of specifically conducted research on the well-being of Wrzeciono inhabitants were also taken into account. Moreover, the representatives of local institutions were involved in consultations. On the base of collected data, the tasks for the years 2002-2006 were worked out. These tasks relate to the spheres of education, health, safety, civil participation, and housing. Examples of already undertaken and fulfilled initiatives are presented below.

Psychological and legal assistance in the libraries:

Inhabitants of the Wrzeciono estate are offered the opportunity to seek professional psychological advice and aid in an advisory station situated in one of the estate libraries. Such an untypical placement was chosen in order to limit the fear of visiting a psychologist, therefore to ease access to psychological consultancy. Everyone in need is eligible to apply for advice free of charge. According to psychologists on duty people usually share and express their problems concerning family disorders, alcoholism, unemployment and illnesses. Sometimes support gained from a psychologist helps them to undertake decisions and find solutions to difficult situations by themselves, but in more complex and specific cases they are informed where to apply for special help' (Kowalczyk, 2003).

Another estate library offers free advice on legal issues. People who want to consult a lawyer can get help at the Civil Consultancy Station.

As the Wrzeciono estate is inhabited by the elderly in a relatively high percentage there is a need to propose some forms of activities for older people. For this purpose, the Senior Club was established. The club is placed in a recently renovated building, which is situated in the area, where the concentration of elderly is the highest. The building is accommodated for the needs of older people. It is equipped with a special infrastructure for handicapped people. The building is divided into a few parts. One of them is designed for recreational activities, another one constitutes a place where people can meet each other and chat. There is also a kitchen pantry so that they can prepare meals for themselves. The poorest people are served meals in

the middle of the day. In the afternoon hours the Senior Club is opened for meetings and cultural events.

From the very beginning of the existence of the Ursynów estate, different forms of social integration and social aid were created. Groups of psychologists were employed to help families with their problems, also with their children.

In 2003 the board of Ursynów district proposed a strategy: 'Ursynów's Social Policy in the Scope of Counteracting Social Exclusion' (Maksymowicz, 2003). The strategy constitutes a proposition of potential possible actions, rather than a closed catalogue of concrete projects. The starting point for the strategy was the diagnosis of the problems of people belonging to risk groups (children and youths from dysfunctional families, handicapped long-term unemployed and women are mentioned in the first place). The strategy assumes providing these people with various forms of assistance, which helps them to overcome life's difficulties and increases their self-reliance. Programmes outlined by the strategy embrace training and preventive and therapeutic activities. The institutions involved in the strategy offer care for children, contemporary or completely devoid of parental supervision; they also provide additional educational workshops, for example foreign language and computer courses. The strategy also focuses on aspects of unemployment, especially among youths, women and handicapped people. Actions that aim at improving the access of these groups to the job market are highlighted as crucial in counteracting social exclusion. The social policy strategy also stresses the necessity to develop and improve the system of interdisciplinary cooperation between different institutions acting on behalf of excluded persons or individuals endangered by exclusion. There is an idea to draw up rules and procedures of cooperation of these institutions and diffuse a guidebook including addressing data of these institutions. Also initiatives derived from mutual assistance are pointed out in the strategy as very important.

Before the social policy strategy was prepared in the Ursynów estate there were previous attempts to build an effective, interdisciplinary system of assistance for children and families in critical situations. Interdisciplinary teams of specialists in different fields i.e. social workers, pedagogues, teachers and police officers were responsible for watching over and helping the particular cases of children at risk.

8.3 Organisation of the policy

The council of Bielany borough initiated the programme 'Improvement of life quality of Wrzeciono estate's inhabitants' in 2000. The programme patterned upon similar initiatives undertaken in another city, Wrocław. Besides this, the programme was based on two acts introduced by the Bielany borough. One of them lays out the guidelines of social policy while another one is concerned with safety issues. Particular departments of the Bielany borough were supposed to be responsible for the planning, realisation and monitoring of activities issued from their competencies. Since the administrative reorganisation in Warsaw, some of the previously undertaken actions are being continued. However new authorities have ceased some initially intended plans.

8.4 Participation in the policy

The process of preparing the strategy agenda for the Wrzeciono estate was conducted in a participatory manner and was based on the consensus between the deciding bodies and receivers of the programme. The programme was prepared in the way that actions were adjusted to the needs and expectations of inhabitants involved in local activities. The aspect of the information flow was stressed so that it would enable the coordination of actions between different institutions. Authorities also raised the problem of informing the community about possibilities of engaging in different actions on the Wrzeciono site. Promotion of the participation of the local community includes not only individuals but also organised groups, which constituted one of the main assumptions of the strategy and therefore non-governmental organisations were also invited to cooperate.

The analysis of the different policies and actions concerning Warsaw, particularly large housing estates and those elements of the national policies which have had a direct impact on the situation in housing estates, leads to at least five most important conclusions:

- There is no single, direct urban or housing policy aimed at the improvement of the large housing estates in Polish cities. The housing policy, in the situation of a permanent shortage of dwellings on a national and urban scale in particular, is still oriented towards the production of housing units. The issue of rehabilitation of the existing stock still has a secondary importance. All post-1989 legislation has shifted the largest part of the responsibility for solving the housing problem from the central level to the local government level without the provision and allocation of adequate resources. It also partly concerns social, education, health and safety policies.
- There is an increasing conflict of interests between the main actors operating in the housing estates (i.e. cooperatives, private investors and owners, local interest groups) and the local government. This conclusion is particularly important in the case of Warsaw. The three administrative reforms during one decade created a non-stable situation. In addition, not fully completed processes of privatisation and re-privatisation of housing stock in some cases generate problems of proper governance and maintenance. The constant problem is the coordination of actions between different institutions.
- There is an increasing social polarisation within housing estates. Although unemployment, on a scale of whole Warsaw, is not the most important problem, the employment policy is relatively well-organised. The unemployment and low skills generate problems of poverty particularly in the Wrzeciono estate. On the other hand, a good location of the Wrzeciono estate in the functional structure of the city generates an inflow of developers, which 'produce' gated condominiums in the traditionally working-class housing estate.
- There is an increasing out-migration of wealthy people from large-scale housing estates particularly from the prefabricated ones. There is a constant process of the migration of the winners of the transformation, from the state housing sector and cooperative housing sectors to the private housing sector. The improvement of housing conditions and filtering-up in the housing hierarchy is the first indicator of the individual success that is connected with the change in the status symbol.
- The market value of dwellings in large housing estates will decrease over the next few years. The current, relatively high level of market value of dwellings in Ursynów is generated by the location in the vicinity of the new subway line, but the short distance from the centre constitutes an asset of the Wrzeciono estate. However, the permanent out-migration of

the wealthiest people, and the accumulated delay in the reconstruction of the prefabricated construction sooner or later will cause degradation of these estates.

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List of people interviewed

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- Borzyszkowska, Z., plenipotentiary of the cooperative 'Ursynów' Board
- Czarnecka, A., councillor of Bielany district, chairman of the Commission for Family Affairs
- Kołodko, K., president of the cooperative 'Ursynów, (former president of the great estate belt)
- Kretkiewicz, G, vice-president of the cooperative 'Jary', Ursynów estate
- Lisowska-Przesławska, A., psychologist and therapist in Ursynów district
- Maksymowicz, M., head of the Department for Social and Health Affairs in Ursynów district
- Pawelczyk, J., head of the Department for Social and Health Affairs in Bielany district
- Pindor, Z., advisor to the Department of Spatial Planning in Warsaw City Office
- Puciłowska, W., director of the Social Assistance Center in Bielany district (former borough)
- Sęk, P., head of Housing Stock Department of Bielany district
- Sieminski, W., former head of the council of Ursynów borough
- Wójcikiewicz, J., former deputy mayor of Bielany borough
- Żuk, S., president of the cooperative 'Stokłosy', Ursynów estate

