

Studentification, youthification, and gentrification, all at once? New-builds, newcomers, and near-campus change in a post-industrial city

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Abstract. Higher education growth changes the neighbourhoods of university cities in multiple ways. The most evidenced way is studentification, although researchers also report youthification and gentrification. However, empirical studies on near-campus change through the tri-conceptual prism of studentification, youthification, and gentrification are recent and limited to North America. Therefore, we apply it to another context. In this paper, we look at Lodz, Poland, and its campus-adjacent, post-industrial area that is facing a housing boom. We describe the new-builds (their scale, types, and morphologies) and the newcomers (their demographics, residential choices, satisfaction and plans). As a result, we claim the change here is a gentrification-like hybrid of new-build youthification and studentification. Consequently, we suggest that boundaries between studentification, youthification, and gentrification can be fuzzy in particular locales. We also nuance previous findings about the near-campus change, especially the features of studentification and studentifiers, and the role of the campus itself in this process.

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1. Introduction

Higher education (HE) growth is among the most striking contemporary drivers of change in urban geographies (Moos et al., 2019). On a global scale, it floods university towns and cities with sizeable populations of young people who flock there to gain new knowledge and skills (Herbst, 2009; Sokołowicz, 2019). In this way, HE growth and the consequent 'pooling' of human capital accelerate particular locales and reshape urban hierarchies (Moretti, 2013).

However, on a local scale, HE growth also impacts the intra-urban geographies of university towns and cities. Indeed, it often spurs the change around Higher Education Institution (HEI) campuses. This change can play out as an array of physical, economic, social, and cultural consequences and unfold in different forms, such as studentification, youthification, and gentrification (Foote, 2017; Moos et al., 2019; Revington et al., 2023). However, such a tri-conceptual approach to thinking about near-campus areas is recent and rare. Consequently, there is a need to gain a more nuanced understanding of the near-campus change, with particular focus given to the linkages between studentification, youthification, and gentrification. It is also necessary to provide more empirical insights into this matter from various regions of the world.

Therefore, we employ such a tri-conceptual framework to study a campus-adjacent area in Lodz, Poland. We describe the new-builds and their residents, aiming to understand the nature of this near-campus change and to verify the usefulness of the studentification, youthification and gentrification labels in interpreting it. We begin with a review of the literature on knowledge economy growth and the consequent urban phenomena. Next, we contextualise our research by commenting on the Polish and Lodz realities before describing our material and methods. Following the presentation of our results, which contains a description of the new-builds and the newcomers, the last section discusses our findings.

2. Background

2.1. The knowledge economy and the geographies it makes

Recent decades were marked by the rising importance of knowledge for economic growth,

which is a key argument behind the concept of the 'knowledge economy'. It describes an economy that operates around the intensive production, accumulation, and exploitation of knowledge. Therefore, the need for the production of knowledge itself and the 'production' of people capable of using it led to the expansion of HE (Sokołowicz, 2019).

Geography plays a significant role in this economy (Moretti, 2013), putting towns and cities that host HEIs at the forefront (Moos et al., 2019). Indeed, due to the 'anchoring' feature of HEIs, companies, R&D parks, and incubators locate themselves in university towns and cities, lured there by the pools of human capital and opportunities to establish university-industry nexuses. At the same time, the impacts of HE growth on university towns and cities permeate their neighbourhoods in multiple ways. One of its crucial outcomes is a change around HEI campuses that results from attracting young adults, primarily students, but also recent graduates (Revington, 2022). Such changes are place-based due to their relationship with campuses, and they can unfold in different forms, such as studentification, youthification, gentrification, or a combination of them (Foote, 2017; Moos et al., 2019; Revington et al., 2023).

2.2. Types of near-campus change

The most evidenced type of near-campus change is studentification. This term was coined by Smith (2005) to refer to a multifaceted change in traditional neighbourhoods in British towns and cities due to the rapidly growing concentration of students in private, shared, off-campus accommodation. Following his conceptualisation, numerous researchers have since traced studentification in the UK and across the globe. Among the studentification factors, HE expansion and the consequent inflow of students to university towns and cities play indispensable roles. However, the driving force behind studentification is the lack of adequate provision of student housing by public authorities and HEIs. Indeed, in the age of neoliberalism, governments popularised HE and invested in teaching and R&D facilities, but they left solving the student housing issue to the private sector. Therefore, student accommodation quickly became a lucrative housing market niche. The market response usually took the form of HMO-isation, in other words, repurposing pre-existing older housing stock into HMOs (Housing in Multiple Occupation) for student rentals. It was then followed by PBSA-isation, i.e., constructing new-build, student-only accommodation called private

PBSAs (Purpose-Built Student Accommodation; Hubbard, 2009). As a result, numerous campus-adjacent neighbourhoods were transformed into 'student ghettos' (Smith, 2005).

However, the near-campus change may go beyond studentification when it is driven not by students alone but also by other young adults, especially recent graduates and young professionals. Indeed, their co-residence with students in rented, shared housing within studentified neighbourhoods can be explained by their precarious positions, which forces them to postpone transitioning toward 'grown-up' owner-occupancy in other locations (Smith & Holt, 2007). However, the fact that young professionals end up residing near campuses can also be a matter of lifestyle similarities between students and young graduates, as well as considerable employment opportunities for educated youth near campuses (Revington, 2022). These findings link to the recent debate on youthification, a term that describes the residential concentration of young adults in urban spaces. Youthification has already been evidenced in denser and central urban neighbourhoods (Moos, 2016) and adjacent to HEI facilities (Moos et al., 2019).

Near-campus change may also unfold as gentrification when it brings neighbourhood socio-economic and physical upgrading. Notably, gentrification in such cases is often the outcome of actions taken by HEIs or municipal authorities. First, HEIs may facilitate gentrification, motivated by the potential rise in property values. However, near-campus gentrification may also be an unintended consequence of HEIs' 'civic' engagement in tackling the deprivation of adjacent areas. Second, local municipalities often perceive campus expansion as a regeneration opportunity and a growth vehicle. Such efforts are particularly noticeable in former manufacturing hubs weakened by deindustrialisation and transitioning into knowledge nodes (Cenere et al., 2023; Ehlenz, 2016).

Since the beginning of research into studentification and youthification, scholars have discussed their connections to gentrification (Revington, 2018). Initially, studentification presented some features that were contrary to gentrification, such as built environment downgrading instead of upgrading, the limited financial capital involved, and that it occurred in provincial towns rather than global cities. But what studentification and gentrification have in common is the (re)commodification of existing housing stock, displacement as their outcome, and the formation of class-based urban geographies (Smith, 2005). In a way, students adopted middle-class and

gentrifier-like attitudes as they experienced living in studentified neighbourhoods; hence, studentification was perceived as a 'gentrification factory' (Smith & Holt, 2007).

However, studentification has mutated since those early observations, and in some urban contexts, it has become even closer to gentrification. More precisely, there is research into students' rising residential expectations, which dictate the upgrading of the housing stock (Kinton et al., 2018). Moreover, studentification also unfolds today in global cities (Sotomayor et al., 2022), thus in settings associated more with gentrification. Above all, however, studentification often manifests as gentrification due to the exponential rise of the private PBSAs, i.e. the investments of corporate developers in the form of student-exclusive new-builds, often of a high standard and in prime locations (Holton & Mouat, 2021; Hubbard, 2009). In this way, studentification establishes links with new-build gentrification (Davidson & Lees, 2005; Sage et al., 2013). However, privileged, gentrifier-like backgrounds and trajectories should not be associated with the entire student body (Grabkowska & Frankowski, 2016; Gregory & Rogerson, 2019; Sotomayor et al., 2022).

In a similar vein, scholars now debate the connections between youthification and gentrification. Earlier works on gentrification considered young age as a common feature of gentrifiers, employing it as an indicator of gentrification. Today, however, gentrification is associated with people in different age ranges (Moos, 2016). In addition, the unfolding of youthification in denser neighbourhoods can be led not by the preference of young adults toward urban living but by the precarious conditions they navigate in the current job and housing markets (Moos et al., 2019).

Therefore, research by other scholars suggests looking at studentification and youthification as processes that can, but do not have to, play out as gentrification. Moos et al. (2019: 1089) put it simply: 'Not all students or young adults are gentrifiers, nor are all gentrifiers young'. Consequently, when researching the nature of change in university towns and cities, simultaneous consideration of all these three concepts, i.e., studentification, youthification, and gentrification, is reasonable. However, to the best of our knowledge, such a tri-conceptual approach remains the sole domain of empirical studies covering only some Canadian and US cities (Moos et al., 2019; Revington et al., 2023). It is thus intriguing whether the occurrence of these phenomena elsewhere can be approached in a similar way.

2.3. Higher education and urban change in Poland and Lodz

HE (Higher Education) expansion has not gone unnoticed in Poland, where it became a prominent vehicle of post-socialist change. The existing public HEIs expanded, and new private ones sprang up. The most prominent Polish HEIs operate in the capital city and regional hubs, so the popularity of HE and the consequent migrations of youth from the peripheries to economic power hubs can be interpreted in the Polish context as a kind of brain drain (Herbst, 2009; Sokołowicz, 2019).

Some estimates say that about a million students in Poland enter ‘[...] into tenancy agreements annually, most of which are in the private property market’ (Żróbek-Różańska & Szulc, 2018: 104). Therefore, it is not surprising that Polish researchers employed the studentification framework quickly after its conceptualisation by Smith (e.g., Grabkowska & Frankowski, 2016; Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al., 2014; Kotus et al., 2018; Murzyn-Kupisz & Szmytkowska, 2015; Rogatka, 2019). They evidenced students settling in urban neighbourhoods of different locations, but often in large post-socialist housing estates.

Meanwhile, the term youthification has not yet been consistently employed empirically in studies of urban change in Poland. Nonetheless, researchers studying Polish cities focused on young urbanites and associated them with some phenomena of post-socialist urban change, sometimes with contrasting implications, e.g., suburbanisation and reurbanisation (Kajdanek, 2022). In this context, some researchers have interpreted the growing number of young urbanites in the Polish power hubs as a rise of a new ‘bourgeoisie’ or ‘urban middle class’ (Kubicki, 2011).

HE expansion is part of the broader post-socialist restructuring of cities in Poland. Like other East-Central European states, Poland re-established a market economy in the 1990s. Although institutional reforms were rapid, their infiltration into the built environment took time. The land rent return, the privatisation of housing stock, price inflation, and land function changes played essential roles in the first stage of post-socialist restructuring (Marcinićzak et al., 2012). Therefore, there were expectations that this process would rapidly pave the way for gentrification. However, it did not happen instantly but emerged around the mid-2000s. Gentrification unfolded in Poland mainly through the construction of new-builds (Górczyńska, 2015), often in the form of gated communities. A more recent phenomenon,

however, is the gentrification of older, more central neighbourhoods in Polish cities (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al., 2014).

This paper looks at Lodz, Poland’s fourth city by population (661,329 in 2022; Statistics Poland, 2023), a former manufacturing hub which rose due to the exponential growth of the textile industry in the 19th century. The city kept its predominant employment in textiles until the end of socialism. Then, it experienced an abrupt and severe decline due to the bankruptcy of the manufacturing sector in the first years after Poland’s transition from socialism to capitalism. The consequences were an exceptionally high unemployment rate, the abandonment of vast industrial brownfields, and population loss. However, since the mid-2000s, the fate of Lodz has gradually improved (Zasina et al., 2020).

One of the crucial local assets which helped Lodz navigate the deindustrialisation was public HEIs. Riding the wave of increased demand for HE, they significantly expanded in the 1990s and the 2000s (Sokołowicz, 2019). Although the booming years of HE in Lodz are gone, it now hosts around 65,000 students annually, making Lodz one of the leading academic centres in Poland.

Previous studies showed that gentrification in Lodz began in the mid-2000s, with private property developers playing an important role by closing the ‘functional gap’ of land (as conceptualised by Sýkora, 1993) by repurposing derelict industrial brownfields into residential uses (Holm et al., 2015). More recently, the public authorities have also invested heavily in revitalising the inner city, and newer research reflects the emergence of ‘green’ gentrification in Lodz (Łaskiewicz, 2023), with some traces of studentification also identified.

Previous studies revealed that the private, off-campus student accommodation in Lodz was scattered across many different inner city neighbourhoods rather than being strongly tied to the areas adjacent to HEI facilities (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz et al., 2014; Zasina et al., 2023). Nevertheless, our attention was brought to the area surrounding the campus of PŁ (Politechnika Łódzka – Lodz University of Technology), where numerous residential new-builds have mushroomed in the last decade, transforming this former industrial district. This observation became the point of departure for our research.

3. Material and research methods

We aim to interpret the nature of the near-campus change, which we associate with the construction of new-builds in the area surrounding the campus and the consequent inflow of newcomers. In doing this, we investigate the scale and features of the new-builds adjacent to the PŁ Campus and profile their residents using two main research methods.

The first method involved mapping the new-build residential developments, whether apartment complexes or private PBSAs, whose construction began or was completed between 2012 and 2022. The geographic scope of this research, which we describe as the 'Near Campus' area, covers urban blocks adjacent to the PŁ campus (Fig. 1). To capture the scale and features of the new-builds in this area, we ran field observations and then searched Polish real estate market and developers' websites for details. In this way, we identified 21 developments. Finally, we created and analysed this dataset in Excel and visualised it in QGIS.

The second method was a CAWI (Computer-Assisted Web Interview) survey conducted among the residents of the largest new-build development identified in the first stage of this research, i.e., the 'Nowa Przędzalnia' estate (Fig. 1). At the time of our study, it comprised 862 (in 2022) and 1285 (in 2023) housing units located next to some of the PŁ facilities. The questionnaire incorporated a mix of open- and closed-ended questions addressing a range of subjects, such as household characteristics, social life, residential choice and satisfaction attributes, and the advantages and disadvantages of living in this place. The questionnaire was available in Polish and English.

Initially, the invitation to the survey was distributed online between April 9 and May 7, 2022, via a local community group on its exclusive Facebook group and another web platform that the residents use. We then distributed paper invitations to the survey to all 862 mailboxes within the apartment buildings that form this estate. This time, we collected responses between July 13 and October 3, 2022. Since the estate was still expanding, we repeated the collection of responses through paper invitations between July 24 and September 7, 2023, when the number of mailboxes totalled 1285. The residents were instructed to provide only one response from each housing unit. In total, we collected 130 complete responses, i.e. an assumed response rate of 10.1%. However, the occupancy level of the housing units was unknown to us. Since the estate is a new-build, not all the 1285 housing

units may have been occupied during our survey, so the response rate may have been higher than our calculation.

In approaching the survey data analysis, we divided the respondents into three analytical groups, i.e., students, whom we call the 'studentifiers' (S); young adult, non-students, whom we call the 'youthifiers' (Y); and 'others' (O), for lack of a better word. The criterion behind the category of studentifiers was simply a positive response to the question about their HE student status, irrespective of age. The youthifiers were defined by age categories (18-24 or 25-34) and a negative response to the question about student status. The others included all respondents not assigned to the 'S' and 'Y' groups. As a result, our approach provides a more precise categorisation of the different sub-populations compared to some North American studies, where students were identified only by age group due to census data limitations (e.g., Foote, 2017; Revington et al., 2023). Finally, we analysed the survey data using Excel and SPSS, and visualised them in Numbers.

4. Results

4.1. The new-builds

We focus on the sites adjacent to the PŁ campus, which, for this paper, we call the 'Near Campus' area. PŁ is the second-largest public HEI in Lodz with around 10,500 students. Its campus is located southwest of the inner city, a 10–20-minute walk to the downtown. Numerous PŁ facilities have been built here on former industrial sites since the late 1940s when PŁ was established. Former factories were transformed into teaching and research facilities, supplemented with new, modernist buildings. The emergence of the PŁ campus in this location was one of the first and most prominent examples of repurposing industrial buildings into non-manufacturing uses in Lodz, although it took place a few decades before the city's actual deindustrialisation. Today, the campus also includes nine halls of residence, owned by PŁ, offering around 2500 beds. They were constructed in the socialist period and recently refurbished. The years after 2004 brought densification of the campus, which today comprises three primary parts and two smaller ones (Fig. 1).

In contrast to the PŁ campus, the adjacent area remained large industrial tracts of land until the

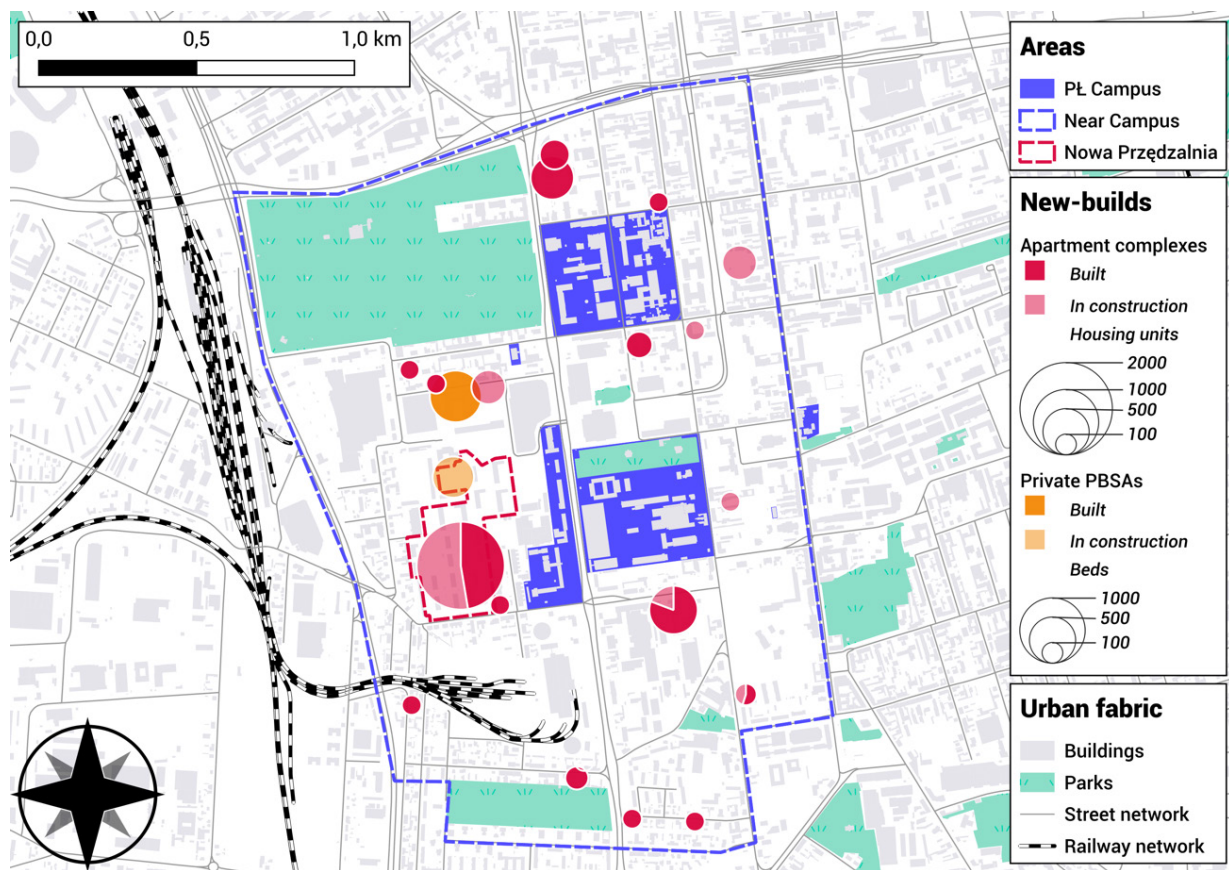


Fig. 1. Geographic distribution of the new-builds delivered over 2012–2022 in the Near Campus area

Source: Authors, based on an internet search and OpenStreetMap.

early 1990s, when most were abandoned due to the deindustrialisation associated with the collapse of socialism. For nearly two decades, the land remained wholly or partly unused and was the subject of real estate speculation. This led to the demolition of most of the historical, industrial fabric, paving the way for new land uses and buildings. Therefore, this area differs from some others in Lodz, where the old industrial architecture was saved and meticulously renovated for new uses. The Near Campus area is also not touched by the capital-intensive municipal regeneration programme financed by the EU that has recently spread over Lodz's inner city, nor has it been affected by any projects by PŁ itself.

Our mapping gives a sense of the scale and nature of the change in the Near Campus area over 2012–2022 (Fig. 1). It shows that among the 21 developments we identified, 19 are estates with blocks of flats, and only two are private PBSAs. Therefore, despite the area's proximity to the PŁ campus, it is not private, student-only accommodation that dominates the new developments in this area. In fact, private PBSAs are relatively novel investment schemes in Polish cities, although they are now

quickly expanding. Nevertheless, these two PBSAs are quite large since they (will) consist of 631 and 373 beds, respectively, and their standard should be considered 'premium' in the Lodz context. They are both located in the central part of our study area.

However, the dominant group of developments in the Near Campus area is apartment complexes, with 2885 housing units delivered within the decade 2012–2022. In late 2022, another 2033 housing units were under construction here. The largest existing and still growing estate is Nowa Przędzalnia, which we will profile in more detail in the following paragraphs. Beyond such large estates, the area also includes smaller developments, usually offering a few dozen housing units each (Fig. 1). All these developments reflect two broader and recent phenomena: the housing boom in Poland and the growing interest among developers to invest in the inner city of Lodz after years of suburban focus (Antczak-Stępnia, 2022).

In line with the rising demand for flats (purchased to meet the needs of both owner-occupiers and property investors), the privatisation of extensive, state-owned post-industrial areas was undoubtedly

another factor that enabled developers to conduct large-scale housing projects here. The size of the post-industrial brownfields and the relative freedom in reshaping them (partly due to the weaknesses of local planning) made it possible to construct not only single buildings around the PŁ campus but also large estates that comprised a dozen or so buildings. Most of these new-build apartment complexes consist of residential-only, multi-family housing up to six storeys. Many of them can be described as gated or semi-gated communities.

Our further attention in this paper will be paid solely to the Nowa Przędzalnia estate. It stands out primarily due to its exceptional size (12 hectares) and the fact that one can still find the remnants of the industrial fabric, such as a tower, a factory building, and the front wall (Fig. 2D & 2E). Today's estate was developed on the site of a former 19th-century textile factory. This factory area had interested developers over the years, but none could bring their investment ideas to fruition. Eventually, a prominent Polish developer acquired the site, already cleared of most of the industrial facilities, and commenced construction of Nowa Przędzalnia in 2017.

In July 2023, the estate consisted of 14 buildings with a total of 1285 housing units. However, the estate is planned to comprise 19 buildings and around 1850 housing units in its final form. One of them will be a private PBSA managed by a Polish-wide chain (Fig. 2C). Of the other 18 buildings, 14 will be apartment complexes with flats to buy, while the last four will comprise flats to rent directly from the developer. The size of the flats varies from 26 to 65 square meters. The architecture of the estate is simple, since it consists of blocks of flats whose facades are painted white and are partially decorated by semi-bricks (as a reference to the architecture of the former red-brick factory, Fig. 2A). The layout of the estate is utilitarian, with the buildings surrounded predominantly by immense car parks (Fig. 2B), and some pavements, lawns, and modest playgrounds for children. The former industrial buildings of historical value have not yet been renovated and remain in a dilapidated state, although there were plans to turn them into commercial uses (Fig. 2D). Therefore, despite its large size, the estate is currently free of shops and services, although commercial venues can be reached in the adjacent neighbourhood. As a result, despite its central location, the estate has many morphological features of suburban developments.

In its current state, the estate seems to be an enclave isolated from its surroundings. Firstly, it is separated from the neighbourhood by the old,

dilapidated wall, reminiscent of the former factory (Fig. 2E). It is the main reason why the estate may be associated with the label of a gated community, although it can be penetrated by passers-by. Secondly, the image of the estate's buildings and residents starkly contrasts with its surroundings, which is a deprived neighbourhood (Fig. 2F).

4.2. The newcomers

We start profiling the newcomers residing in the Nowa Przędzalnia by looking at their characteristics featured in Table 1, such as age, education, socio-economic status, living arrangement, and tenure type. The sample structure in this table also works as our source for understanding the estate's demographics.

In this light, a noticeable group is the studentifiers (42 respondents), the population expected here due to the estate's proximity to the PŁ campus. The majority fall within the age bracket commonly perceived as 'student' (18-24 years), although the student status was also declared by older respondents (perhaps they continue their Master's or Doctoral programmes). The studentifiers living on the estate are usually childless couples or singles, and they perceive their socio-economic status as average or higher. Intriguingly, nearly half of them are already owner-occupiers. However, the dominant group on the estate is the youthifiers (68 respondents). They are predominantly HEI graduates of average or higher socio-economic status. They are also primarily childless couples or singles. Four youthifiers share a flat with a student. Similar shares of youthifiers own or rent the flat they occupy. Finally, the others are the smallest of the estate's sub-populations (20 respondents). They are primarily middle-aged and childless couples or singles of average or higher socio-economic status and with higher education. They are owner-occupiers. None live with a student.

Overall, the estate is socially and economically homogenous, and its residents have some classic features of gentrifiers (well-off, young or middle-aged, well-educated, childless, and often owner-occupiers). However, such homogeneity does not guarantee a conflict-free residential environment. Our respondents mentioned several issues they disliked about their neighbours, such as littering, noise, or illegally parking cars. Each subpopulation provided comments on these issues.

Our aim was also to understand what forces drew these newcomers to live here. We were interested in whether the proximity to the PŁ campus was



Fig. 2. The Nowa Przędzalnia estate and its neighbourhood
Source: Authors, 2022-2023

relevant in making residential choices. Additionally, we wanted to determine the extent to which they were satisfied with living in this place because the perception of a particular built environment can differ before and after moving in. Thus, this part of

our study was methodologically inspired by McGirr et al. (2015). They compared the importance of varied attributes in choosing a place of residence with the satisfaction with these attributes after moving in. This way, they talked about a 'surplus' or

Table 1. Sample structure

Variable name	Variable attributes	Total sample	S	Y	O
N / n		130	42	68	20
Age	Less than 18	0	0	0	0
	18-24	43	30	13	0
	25-34	66	11	55	0
	35-44	13	1	0	12
	45-54	7	0	0	7
	55-60	0	0	0	0
	More than 60	1	0	0	1
Gender	Female	71	29	33	9
	Male	55	11	33	11
	Non-binary	0	0	0	0
	No response (Prefer not to say)	4	2	2	0
Completed education level	Primary	0	0	0	0
	Secondary	35	17	13	5
	Tertiary	93	23	55	15
	No response (Prefer not to say)	2	2	0	0
Self-assessed socio-economic status	Lower than average	1	0	1	0
	Average or close to average	67	27	33	7
	Higher than average	42	9	23	10
	No response (Prefer not to say)	20	6	11	3
Living arrangement	Living alone	31	9	16	6
	Living with a partner	82	24	46	12
	Living with a child/children	11	2	7	2
	Living with a flatmate/flatmates	12	8	4	0
	Living with a parent/parents or a parent in-law/parents in law	2	0	2	0
	Living with another person/persons	2	1	1	0
	Living with (another) student	19	15	4	0
Tenure type	Owner-occupancy	72	19	36	17
	Tenancy	58	23	32	3
Residential plans	Stay in here	68	27	32	9
	Move out elsewhere	38	9	23	6
	Hard to say	24	6	13	5

Source: Own elaboration

'deficit' of satisfaction. In the same way, we used a close-ended set of 19 attributes of the estate and its neighbourhood. Figure 3 presents the importance scores, and Figure 4 illustrates the satisfaction score. In each figure, we provide arithmetic mean values.

The results reveal some general tendencies. Despite slight differences in the assessment of attribute importance between the studentifiers, youthifiers, and others, the ranges were relatively

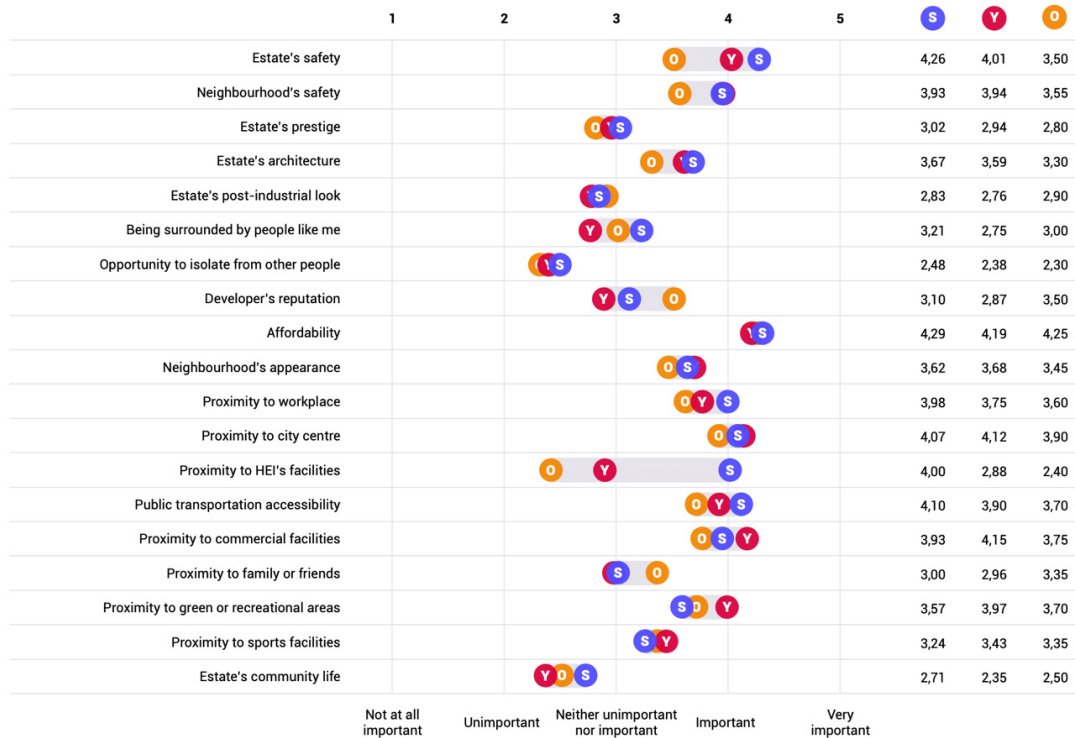


Fig. 3. Assessment of the importance of key attributes in choosing the Nowa Przędzalnica estate as a place of residence
Source: Authors, based on the survey research. Note: Mean values

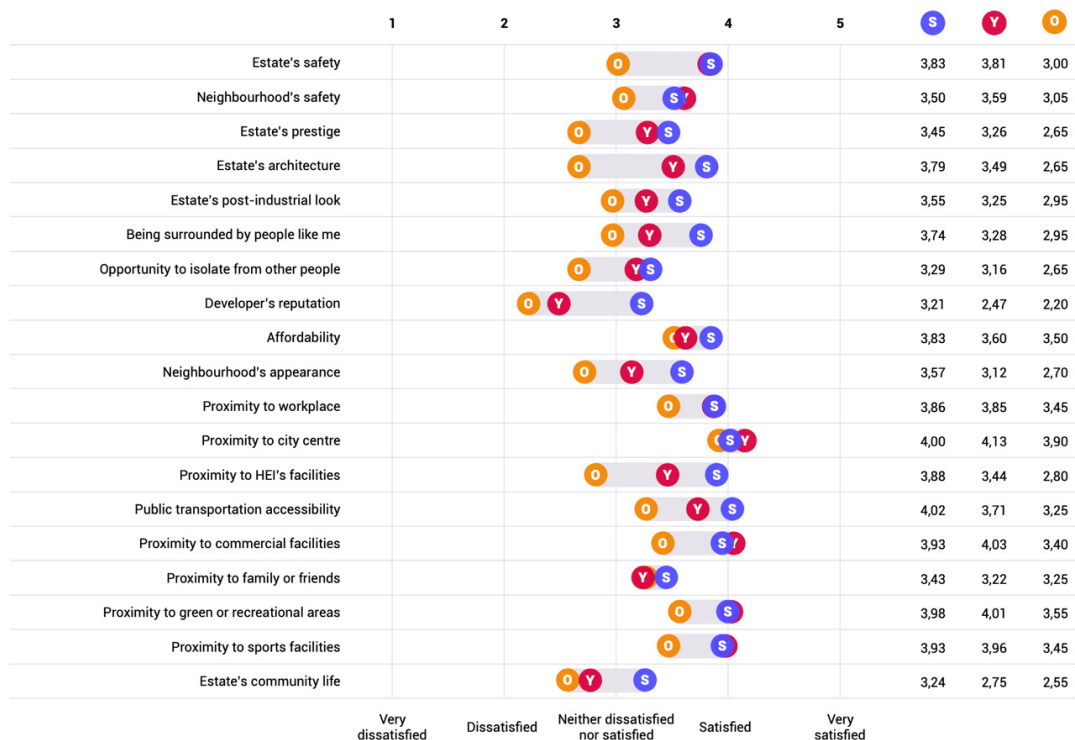


Fig. 4. Assessment of satisfaction attributes from living on the Nowa Przędzalnica estate
Source: Authors, based on the survey research. Note: Mean values

small in most cases. For example, each subpopulation valued the affordability of the estate as the most important attribute, followed by proximity to the city centre, public transportation accessibility, proximity to commercial facilities, and proximity to green or recreational facilities. The data demonstrate that these residents expected a location in an urban space that would provide convenience in managing their daily affairs. At the same time, none of the subpopulations were attracted by estate prestige, the post-industrial look, or community life. However, the exception to these common patterns is the proximity to the HEI facilities. Only students were attracted to the Near Campus area due to proximity to the HEI; this issue was irrelevant for the other groups.

A more nuanced view provides the assessment of satisfaction with living in Nowa Przędzalnia. In most cases, the studentifiers declared the greatest satisfaction, followed by the youthifiers and the others, who were usually the least satisfied subpopulation. Moreover, the studentifiers and youthifiers displayed a kind of 'surplus' of satisfaction over importance scores (in 10 and 11 attributes, respectively) than the others (five attributes).

At the same time, the highest-ranked satisfaction attributes within each subpopulation were relatively similar. Namely, what satisfied them most was usually proximity to the city centre, sports facilities, green and recreational areas, and commercial facilities. This finding is somewhat paradoxical, as our respondents assigned high scores to these attributes, although there is no such infrastructure on the estate. However, shopping malls, fitness centres, gyms, and public parks are reachable in the neighbourhood.

There were some attributes in which satisfaction differed noticeably between the subpopulations. Namely, proximity to the university's facilities was satisfying for the studentifiers but neither dissatisfying nor satisfying for the others. Furthermore, the studentifiers and the youthifiers rated the estate's safety and architecture much more positively than the others.

The attitude of the developer and property managers was the topic of the most serious concern in our respondents' comments. They expressed anger about the low quality of construction work (e.g., technical faults or the thin walls through which neighbours hear each other), the low quality of spaces between buildings (e.g., poor greenery, car-oriented design), and the lack of interest in solving these issues. They also blamed the developer for not fulfilling the declaration to renovate the

historical, industrial buildings and repurpose them for commercial uses.

Finally, we asked our respondents about their residential plans. Half of them intended to stay in Nowa Przędzalnia. Studentifiers were most keen to stay, which aligns with their relatively high satisfaction with living here (Tab. 1).

5. Discussion

In this section, we look at the results through the prism of our theoretical background. In particular, we investigate whether studentification, youthification, and gentrification are appropriate labels for the change in the Near Campus area.

5.1. Studentification, youthification, and gentrification, all at once?

Our observations suggest that this change should be called studentification. Indeed, one-third of our respondents were students, and such a considerable proportion is a clear mark of studentification, based on the evidence from the UK, where even smaller proportions were associated with high concentrations of students in some neighbourhoods (Duke-Williams, 2009; Hubbard, 2008). However, classifying this change as studentification requires additional comments since it deviates from the cases covered by the prior studentification literature in two key areas, i.e., the housing type and the studentifiers' profile. Given the construction time and form of the housing stock used here by students, this process can be called new-build, vertical studentification (Holton & Mouat, 2021), since two large private PBSAs were (will be) delivered in this area following the recent patterns of global expansion of such student accommodation types. However, in our case, numerous students are accommodated in flats in the new-build apartment complexes, so a kind of housing which is not usually perceived as particularly 'student-like'. Second, these students have different social arrangements than those associated with 'studenthood'. More precisely, they are not typical student households with friends sharing a rented flat. Instead, they are singles or couples. They are also often owner-occupiers, despite their young age, and intend to stay in this location in the future. Therefore, typical labels of studentifiers, such as 'tenant' and 'transitory' populations, are somewhat inadequate in this case.

Considering the demographics again, the youthification label seems even more appropriate. The dominant type of people who reside in the estate are non-student young adults, but proximity to the university facilities does not work as an essential attribute that attracts them to this area since they settle here for other reasons. Importantly, this process of near-campus change does not fit the youthification pattern as post-studentification, so as a change progressing sequentially in previously studentified neighbourhoods, as in some Canadian contexts (Revington, 2022). Here, studentification and youthification occur simultaneously with the delivery of the new housing.

The last label to consider is gentrification. We refer here to the commonly cited definition by Davidson & Lees (2005), who provided the four core elements of gentrification, i.e., (1) the reinvestment of capital; (2) the social upgrading of the locale by incoming high-income groups; (3) landscape change; and (4) direct or indirect displacement of low-income groups. In this light, our evidence from the Near Campus area shows that the new-builds have been delivered by capital reinvestment by redeveloping derelict post-industrial sites into apartment complexes and PBSAs. Furthermore, the proliferation of such housing dramatically alters the cityscape in this part of Lodz. Along with this change, the area has already attracted new residents, whose living standards contrast with those who lived in the neighbourhood before the housing boom. Although our study does not provide empirical evidence of the displacement, we predict an indirect displacement scheme due to the size of the new-build housing estates and the population of the newcomers, which already outnumber the prior population and the housing stock.

Moreover, the evidence from the Nowa Przędzalnia estate suggests that the newcomers can be considered gentrifiers. Indeed, their socio-economic characteristics show that they are middle or upper-middle class. A number of locational advantages attracted them to this location, such as proximity to the city centre and workplaces, and different sorts of urban amenities. These insights are of particular significance for the debate about studentifiers. Students are often considered 'apprentice gentrifiers', so the expectation is that HE works as a formative time for them as future gentrifiers (Smith & Holt, 2007). However, in our case, students seem to be 'actual gentrifiers'.

At the same time, we find counterarguments when considering the change in this area to be gentrification, especially when the focus is narrowed to the estate we described in detail. In fact, it was

among the cheaper new-build housing options available in this area of Lodz at that time of our study, and the issue of affordability was of the highest importance for our respondents in their residential choices. Questions can also be raised about the utilitarian architecture and layout of the estate. Although its newness contrasts with the deprived neighbourhood, and it can be considered a physical upgrading of the area, at the end of the day, it seems to be nothing 'more' than mass housing. The elements aimed at increasing the visual quality of the estate, i.e., the architectural remnants of the former factory, remain dilapidated. Keeping them in this condition makes the residents feel deceived. Considering all these issues, the estate's image is far from prestigious, which sometimes operates as a mark of gentrification.

5.2. Local context matters

However, all the issues we raised should be viewed carefully with the local context in mind. The fact is that the housing boom evidenced by us in this area of Lodz is part of a broader trend involving financial capital returning to Lodz's inner city (Antczak-Stepniak, 2022) during decades of knowledge-economy growth that has come after the collapse of socialism and rapid deindustrialisation. This urban change, a kind of reurbanisation, occurs near the campus of a prominent local HEI, but it is not triggered solely or predominantly by the campus existence. The people settling in this area now are students and young graduates, who are undoubtedly 'products' of the HE sector in Lodz. At the same time, however, the role of campus proximity in the non-studentifiers' residential choices is limited, and PEs investments in this area do not go beyond the physical borders of the campus.

Therefore, the near-campus urban change described in this paper seems to be driven predominantly by a market game of housing demand and supply at a time of neoliberal urbanism. On the demand side, this area has already been chosen as a place of residence by newcomers looking for a relatively affordable and central urban location and some of its benefits. On the supply side, the developers are taking advantage of the opportunity to invest in this area of Lodz due to the easy opportunity to capitalise on the functional gap by transforming former industrial sites into more profitable residential use.

6. Conclusions

This paper looked at the change in a former industrial district of Lodz, Poland, in the middle of which is the campus of PŁ, one of the prominent HEIs in this city. We termed this area Near Campus, and we investigated it since it has become one of the focal points of Lodz's restructuring, marked by a housing boom. Based on the literature review, we hypothesised that this change might involve studentification, youthification, and gentrification. Aiming to determine the nature of this near-campus change, we mapped the residential developments in the area adjacent to the PŁ campus and described the newcomers who live in the largest new-build housing estate here.

Due to its proximity to the campus, the Near Campus area was expected to undergo studentification, as confirmed by our research indicating a sizeable student population settling here. However, the mutation of studentification in this location does not fit into the dichotomous patterns widely covered by the literature, such as HMO-isation or PBSA-isation, because students reside here not only in PBSAs but also in new apartment complexes. Moreover, this near-campus change transcends typical studentification, exhibiting characteristics of a hybrid between new-build youthification and studentification. Indeed, the new housing stock has been populated in this area mainly by youthifiers and studentifiers, who are usually well-educated and relatively well-off young adults. Moreover, they are often already owner-occupiers despite their relatively young age. Consequently, we view this manifestation of new-build youthification and studentification as gentrification-like.

As a result, our study suggests that the boundaries between studentification, youthification, and gentrification can be fuzzy in particular locales. However, from a methodological point of view, it also demonstrates the empirical usability of the tri-conceptual approach towards a proper understanding of near-campus change. Our study also shows that in the era of the knowledge economy and neoliberal urbanism, the nexus of studentification, youthification, and gentrification is not just the domain of North American cities, but it plays out in other regions as well, such as East-Central Europe.

However, this example of the near-campus change deserves an additional comment about the role of the campus itself. In brief, although the change here is related to the campus, the campus is

not the sole determinant of this change. Therefore, researchers approaching similar studies elsewhere should keep in mind that there can be more place-specific consumption and production explanations of near-campus change than campus proximity alone.

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