

Towards a Theory of Residential Differentiation in Post-communist Cities

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The paper discusses research on residential differentiation in Central and Eastern European cities since their transformation from state socialism. It sums up the most interesting findings and suggests a framework for understanding the phenomenon and explaining the variation.

The research so far can be divided into two broad categories. The first one consists of studies on how the socio-spatial pattern of these cities have changed as they have departed from the state socialist system – i.e. how their development has contrasted the features of ‘a socialist city’ since transformation. The second category consists of studies that focus on the processes of change and policies. Summing up the results, the attention is drawn to the reversed location pattern of new housing investments, the gradual relocation of social groups according to their wealth, the changed character of public intervention, the economic factors decreasing the pace of change, and the continuation of socio-economically mixed character of most urban areas. Given the apparent and increasing differences among the cities, the research interest has gradually shifted from the influence of a state socialist past to the question why are post-communist cities currently developing differently.

Contributing to this discussion, I suggest a framework within which analyse and understand the variation. Two topics are raised above other. Firstly, the question of social stratification should be taken up in urban analysis in a more rigorous way. To explain variation it is important to elaborate the link between class structure and opportunities in the housing market. Secondly, the role (and characteristics) of public intervention is important in residential differentiation processes. Questions like which income groups (or social strata) have been supported in access to housing or how and where housing development or renovation has been promoted are particularly interesting.

Method considerations when carrying out a survey in a small post-Soviet city: the Stakhanov Health Survey

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New spatial patterns of social differentiation in Prague: the case of socially weak population in the centre of Prague

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Under the socialism, the distribution of population in the city was differentiated rather by demographic attributes than socio-economic status. Since 1990 new economic and social forces have contributed to the change of the socio-spatial structure of Prague metropolitan region and they have been continually redistributing inhabitants according to their socioeconomic prospects. The most visible shifts have undergone in the centre and the inner part of the Czech capital, where commercialisation and gentrification processes have pushed on residential function particularly on housing of poorer population. Consequently, Prague experiences new spatial patterns of socially weak inhabitants, which however have not been covered by detail empirical research so far, therefore, these patterns are unknown to large extent. Hence, our paper aims to contribute to the identification of the nature of spatial distribution of social-economic weak people within Prague by employing a unique dataset of social housing allowance. The data is analysed on three geographical scales. First, the level of municipalities and cities of the Czech Republic is engaged to illustrate that social housing allowance data can help to identify spatial distribution of population with lower socioeconomic status. Second, detail scrutiny of housing allowance on the level of the Prague city quarters is provided. Third, the scale of individual houses of the Prague city centre is explored. We believe that social allowance data can serve to point out localities of increased concentration of socially weak inhabitants and that results of the research is of a key importance for social policy practice for both the city and the national public administration. Finally, we believe that the analyzed data can help to our understanding of continuous transformation of social environment in both the central part of Prague and the entire city.

Actors shaping the future of post-socialist large housing estates in Central Europe

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The scientific debate on the future of large housing estates erected by industrial housing construction in the so called post-socialist countries is dominated by what we call the decline-hypothesis. From the beginning of the transition period, the expectation of social decline and decay in post socialist estates is present in the literature (eg. Szeleny 1996, van Kempen et al. 2005). Instead, we will argue that the present of large housing estates in post-socialist Central European countries is characterized by diversification. Their development within the past 20 years did not follow one common trend that would have been determined by the common physical structure of the estates. We argue that estates face highly differing futures depending not least on urban actors. It is inhabitants, owners, developers, local representatives, the media or even artists who take decisions, show agency, indifference, interest or disgust and thereby shape the respective futures of large housing estates. The behaviors of urban actors, however, are highly determined by the contexts of estates, by national and even European Policies, and by overarching discourses on urban development.

We will provide empirical evidence from Eastern Germany and the Czech Republic, showing different pathways of large housing estates in relation to actors and context. The variety ranges from highly stable, prestigious middle-class milieus in a refurbished, upgraded environment to declining estates that have not seen investment but do see vacancies, social, economic and environmental problems. Still, as examples show, the agency of stakeholders can increase or diminish future prospects.

Ethnic segregation in everyday mobility patterns: Estonian and Russian communities in Tallinn

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Ethnic and racial segregation is one of the key topics in contemporary urban and population geography. Many social problems in the 21st century stem from it in both developed and developing countries alike. Ethnic segregation remains an important issue in Estonia and other former Soviet countries because of the Russian-speaking minorities.

The aim of this study is to identify the differences in the everyday spatial behaviour between Estonian- and Russian-speakers in Estonia. The Russian-speaking minority in the country is comparatively large, and segregation is marked in terms of where they live. Socially and culturally there is little communication between the two communities. The study is designed to determine whether the everyday spatial behaviour of the Estonian- and Russian-speakers living side-by-side in the Tallinn district of Lasnamäe is different or shares similarities and whether the communities are segregated solely at the level of communication or also in terms of their use of space. The study area, district of Lasnamäe, is characterized by Soviet-era apartment buildings (predominantly constructed in the 1970s and 1980s) and is one of the biggest districts in Tallinn where more than 50% of the population is Russian-speaking.

According to a new mobility paradigm (Sheller & Urry 2006), activities associated with social networks and recreation can be clearly discerned in the growth in people's everyday mobility. The location of places of residence may be segregated, albeit in some cases representatives of different communities live together, as in Lasnamäe. Everyday, routine movement between primary anchor points (work, home and service centres) may be largely the same in different segments. According to the new mobility paradigm, differences emerge in movement connected to freedom of choice and in recreation-based spatial use. Within this framework, people make choices and are set apart by their language, nationality, values and social networks. Events play a significant role in the realisation of choices.

Ethnic segregation is generally examined on the basis of information related to work places and places of residence, and modern censuses and registers allow these parameters to be comprehensively analysed. Less data is available regarding segregation in terms of everyday spatial movement for which travel journals and observation are used. In this study we use mobile positioning, i.e. social positioning data (Ahas & Mark 2005; Ahas et al 2008), which is an effective way of obtaining information about people's everyday use of space. This method was developed within the Department of Human Geography of the University of Tartu in cooperation with spin-off company Positium LBS.

The study makes use of passive mobile positioning data, and a random sample was selected comprising 500 Estonian-speaking and 500 Russian-speaking telephone users who were living in Lasnamäe in January 2008. Analysis was conducted about these 1000 users for January 2008 and July 2008 with regard to the locations of their telephone calls based on the precision of mobile technology. Every network cell within which a telephone made a call on any given day was entered into a database. The matrix thus produced provided the basis for the spatial use analysis of the two ethnic communities.

The initial results of the analysis show that the majority of activities (calls) took place in the callers' home county, Harjumaa (Estonians 85% and Russians 92%), particularly within the City of Tallinn (Estonians 68% and Russians 73%). There is a marked difference in the amount of time spent in the home district: Russian-speakers spent 50% of their time in the home district in January and 41% in July, while Estonian-speakers spent 43% of their time in the home district in January and 32% in July. There are also notable differences in spatial use between weekdays and weekends. On working days, the location of both Estonian-

and Russian-speakers is closely connected to Tallinn and the surrounding area, with few differences. However, on weekends and during summer holidays in July there are differences in the spatial use of the two communities: free time places of Estonian-speakers are more dispersed throughout the country while Russian-speakers are concentrated more in the Harjumaa and Ida-Virumaa regions. Moreover, Estonian-speakers visit Ida-Virumaa rarely during their spare time. Statistically reliable differences between the two communities in terms of spatial movement can also be seen in the analysis of the average distances of calls made. In July the calls made by Estonian-speakers are made on average much further from home than those made by Russian-speakers: 23.0 km and 13.3 km, respectively. The difference in January is much smaller: 11.1 km and 8.8 km, respectively.

This study supported the hypothesis regarding spatial segregation in recreational choices. Use of space at other times requires more detailed study and an improved method of analysis.