



The evolution of spatial patterns of residential segregation in Central European Cities: The Łódź Functional Urban Region from mature socialism to mature post-socialism

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ABSTRACT

Two themes dominated the study of socio-spatial change in Central Eastern Europe (CEE) after 1990. One was that the development of urban regions in CEE after the demise of socialism is characterized by suburbanization. The second topic raises the issue of growing residential segregation. Unfortunately, studies on patterns of residential segregation are still scarce in the CEE context, in particular those that employ traditional measures of segregation. Relying on solid empirical materials from the 1988 and 2002 National Censuses, the purpose of this paper is to map and analyze the patterns of residential segregation in the Łódź Functional Urban Region, an old industrial urban region in Poland undergoing a rapid deconcentration and shrinkage of the core area. This contribution concludes that the first decade of systemic transition resulted in decreasing residential segregation, as gauged by global measures of segregation.

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Introduction

Two main contentions dominate the study of socio-spatial change in Central Eastern Europe (CEE) in the last two decades. The first is that the development of urban regions in CEE after the demise of socialism is characterized by a substantial deconcentration of population (Borén & Gentile, 2007; Tammaru, Kulu, & Kask, 2004); although the social composition of suburbanizers still reveals heterogeneity (Kok & Kovács, 1999), recent studies indicate a more selective character of the process (Leetmaa & Tammaru, 2007). The second decade of systemic transition triggered a legible growth of medium to high social strata among the new inhabitants of suburban zones (Hirt, 2007; Tammaru & Leetmaa, 2007). Accordingly, by virtue of conspicuous population change, suburbanization influences the pace of socio-spatial segregation in the region.

The second contention is that residential segregation is increasing. Consequently, concepts such as social exclusion and social inclusion have been put forward to describe emerging socio-spatial inequalities (Węclawowicz, 1997). Although the majority of existing publications point to the rapid growth of socio-economic and ethnic/racial inequalities and, thus, of social and ethnic segregation, systematic empirical studies on patterns of segregation are still missing (van Kempen & Murie, 2009). Curiously, however, the few existing investigations that utilize traditional measures of pattern analysis point to a lowering level of segregation (Sykora,

2007). Therefore, in light of contradictory arguments and the virtual lack of comprehensive segregation studies, it transpires that more longitudinal research on the patterns of post-socialist residential segregation is warranted to draw more solid conclusions on socio-spatial segregation in CEE after 1990.

There are two common understandings of the meaning and measurement of segregation (Johnston, Poulsen, & Forrest, 2009; Kaplan & Woodhouse, 2005; Reardon, 2006): (1) segregation as pattern—the degree to which members of different groups are spatially segregated from each other, and (2) segregation as process—the processes by which spatial segregation is produced. As the processes generating social segregation in CEE after 1989 have already been widely discussed in the literature (cf. Borén & Gentile, 2007), the aim of this paper is to investigate the global and local patterns of residential segregation in a large CEE urban region after 1989 and thus, to shed some more light on social segregation after the collapse of socialism. For the purpose of this paper social segregation may be defined as a separation and concentration of the population according to their social or socio-economic position (cf. Musterd, 2005). Since measurement is fundamental to the understanding of segregation (Simpson & Peach, 2009), the emphasis is empirical, with a concentrated focus on the Łódź Functional Urban Region (FUR)—an old industrial area in Poland that undergoes a rapid deconcentration and shrinkage of the core area. Using the Łódź FUR as a case study allows to trace the pace of social residential segregation in the context of a non-capital post-socialist urban region and, eventually, to add to our knowledge of modern urbanization in CEE.

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Residential segregation under socialism and after

Unlike in Western Europe where, mitigated to some extent by welfare state principles (van Kempen & Murie, 2009), urbanization was led by free market forces, central planning dominated the organization of the social life and spatial development of cities in CEE under socialism (Borén & Gentile, 2007; Sýkora, 2009). In the absence of a housing market, the state-controlled distribution of goods, especially of housing (housing policy), as well as of services and privileges was a decisive factor that contributed to the emergence of socio-spatial inequalities. In particular, the priority given to industrial growth, especially to some branches such as military industry or heavy industry, paralleled by the constant shortages of labour force contributed to socio-spatial divisions (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2010a, 2010b). The level of residential segregation was argued to be lower than in capitalist cities (Węclawowicz, 2002), however, the phenomenon constituted an inherent feature of the socialist city. The access to different quality housing depended not only on the socio-economic characteristics of the population (Smith, 1989), but also on its ethnic origins (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2006; Gentile & Tammaru, 2006; Ruble, 1989).

Regarding the spatial arrangement of social divisions, according to Szelényi (1983), a distinctive macro-order could be reported that distinguished the socialist city from urban areas in Western Europe—the major difference was that, unlike in the capitalist city, both the city centre and peripheral zone of CEE cities were inhabited by lower social classes. People with higher social status tended to live in the socialist era apartment blocks as well as in the high quality, pre-socialist villa neighbourhoods. Finally, though an initial development of suburbanization was first noticed in CEE in the early 1980s (Tammaru, 2001; Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz, 2002), the socialist city was generally devoid of a suburban fringe, as it was understood in the ‘Western’ context (Bertaud & Renaud, 1997; Szelényi, 1983).

It is generally endorsed that the systemic transition and growing exposure to globalization contributed to the increase of social and ethnic residential segregation in CEE (Kovács, 1998; Ladányi, 2002; Sýkora, 1999; Węclawowicz, 1998). The sharpening of socio-spatial divisions is argued to result from the growth of income inequalities, differentiation of housing supply, withdrawal of the welfare state, and transformation of the housing system (Ruopilla, 2005; Sýkora, 2009). The emerging spatial patterns of post-socialist residential segregation involve the socio-spatial outcomes of such processes as: suburbanization, selective gentrification and residential filtering-down. It should also be emphasized that the context matters, since historically developed functions of cities shape their current development trajectories (Bontje & Musterd, 2008). This is especially evident in Poland, where the pace of systemic transition was argued to be much faster in the large multifunctional urban regions of Warsaw, Cracow and Wrocław than in the old industrial mono-functional regions of Łódź and Katowice (Węclawowicz, 2004). As with the pace of systemic transition, new socio-economic inequalities have been the most acute and legible in the capitals and the more prosperous cities (Smith & Timar, 2010).

Whereas the socialist era pre-fabricated housing estates have largely retained their medium social status (Kährlik & Tammaru, 2010; Marcińczak & Sagan, 2011), the most visible signs of growing social inequalities have been noted in city centres and suburban zones, areas inhabited by the lower social strata before 1990. Inner-cities and the historical city centres of large and more prosperous cities have been subjected to initial gentrification (Brade, Herfert, & West, 2009). So far, unlike in Western European cities, post-socialist gentrification is still spatially limited and usually proceeds in piecemeal fashion (Sýkora, 2005). As exemplified by the recent empirical studies (Enyedi & Kovács, 2006; Kovács,

2009), socio-spatial segregation in the central zones gradually started to intensify, however, the spatial scale was still limited.

Contrary to gentrification, residential suburbanization led to much more legible outcomes. This process has been argued to be the dominant migration process in the metropolitan areas of the CEE countries and the contributory factor to the development of socio-spatial segregation at the city-suburban scale (Leetmaa, Tammaru, & Anniste, 2009). Whereas newcomers to the suburbs were mainly characterized by socio-economic heterogeneity in the first decade after transition (Kok & Kovács, 1999; Ouředníček, 2007), a legible growth of the better-off has been reported since the turn of the millenium (Hirt, 2007; Tammaru & Leetmaa, 2007). Apart from the migration to the pre-socialist and socialist era housing stock, the majority of high-income newcomers usually move to newly constructed detached or semi-detached houses as well as to fenced and well protected condominiums (Kährlik & Tammaru, 2008; Stoyanov & Frantz, 2006). According to Leetmaa et al. (2009), post-socialist suburbanization smoothed the former inequalities in metropolitan space and at the same time created new inequalities between different suburbs.

Despite a growing number of publications revolving around processes conducive to post-socialist segregation, systematic empirical studies on the changing patterns of residential segregation after socialism are missing (Sýkora, 2009; van Kempen & Murie, 2009). This lacuna in empirical research is manifested by the absence of studies that employ traditional measures of segregation, which would allow to assess the evolving patterns of post-socialist segregation comprehensively, and to engage in the contemporary debate on social residential segregation on both sides of the Atlantic. Sýkora (2007) in his so far unique investigation into the changing geographical patterns of residential segregation in the Prague metropolitan region between 1991 and 2001 argued that spatial unevenness in the distribution of particular social groups was rather low and decreased during the studied period. This process temporarily leading to growing social heterogeneity was coined as the paradox of post-socialist transition.

Research design

Łódź Functional Urban Region

The rapid development of textile industry in the second half of the 19th century contributed to a substantial concentration of population in the Łódź FUR (Fig. 1). Until 1918, when Poland regained independence, there were no functional links (commuting, industrial cooperation, etc.) between Łódź and its neighbouring mono-industrial textile mill-towns. The Socialist phase that started in 1945 resulted in a further concentration of population in urban areas of the FUR, especially in Łódź (Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz, 1997). This was a direct outcome of further industrialization that also petrified the mono-industrial structure of production. In the first half of the 20th century Łódź still lacked a suburban zone (Straszewicz, 1954). The situation virtually did not change until 1989.

Systemic transition has given rise to a substantial change in the direction of population flows since 1990. Similar to other large cities in CEE, Łódź witnessed a process of steady population decline (cf. Turok & Mykhnenko, 2007). From 1988 to 2002, the city lost almost 10% of its population and became one of the most rapidly shrinking cities in Poland. Closer inspection of Table 1 reveals a consistent pattern of deconcentration. Depopulation mainly concerns major cities of the core and, especially since the beginning of the 21st century, also the peri-urban zone. In the small towns

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