



Spatial variation of in-migration to Moscow: Testing the effect of housing market



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ABSTRACT

The collapse of state socialism and the introduction of market relationships in Central and Eastern Europe resulted in profound changes of urban development. Evidence from Central and Eastern Europe indicates that the development of a strong housing market and growing material inequalities contribute to the socio-economic polarization of city districts and residential segregation. Based on empirical data, we analyze spatial variation of migrants' first residential choices within Moscow, i.e. intensity of in-migration to a specific district. We test the theory-driven hypotheses about the association between residential choices and housing prices. Our results show that there are some areas that attract migrants of specific socio-economic status. However, housing prices do not explain a substantial share of variance in the intensities of in-migration, at least at the level of city districts; quite a strong association is only evident for foreign migrants. Thus, we find limited evidence of the Moscow' socio-spatial structure polarization due to the residential choices of migrants.

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1. Introduction

More than two decades have passed since the collapse of the state socialism across countries of Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). The exposure to global market and neoliberal economic policies have had a noticeable impact on their urban and regional development, as well as the life of the society (Marcinićzak, Gentile, & Stępniać, 2013; Round & Williams, 2010). Neoliberal shift in economy increased inequalities in development, which have a pronounced spatial pattern. In other words, spatial development of the post-socialist countries is becoming increasingly polarized (Ehrlich, Kriszan, & Lang, 2012; Fischer-Tahir & Naumann, 2013). A characteristic feature of the polarized development is the intensification of migration flows from economically weak to economically prosperous areas (Weck & Beißwenger, 2014). The majority of the latter are capital cities and areas in their proximity that experience fast population growth (Ehrlich et al., 2012; Kashnitsky & Mkrtychyan, 2014).

Since the 1990s, the intensive in-migration to the post-socialist capitals along with the increased residential mobility within the cities have largely contributed to the substantial transformation of their residential areas, altering appearance and social structure (Haase, Grossmann, & Steinführer, 2012; Hess, Tammaru, & Leetmaa, 2012; Kährlik, Leetmaa,

& Tammaru, 2012; Kubeš, 2013). If under state socialism housing was distributed on the priority basis according to the decision of the authorities (Gentile & Sjöberg, 2006; Hess et al., 2012; Vendina, 2002), under market conditions the residential choices of households depend on individual needs/aspirations and are limited by the available resources (Mulder & Wagner, 1998). Previous research suggests that people of the same race, ethnic origin, and social status tend to choose housing in the neighborhoods where people alike live (Musterd, Marcinićzak, Van Ham, & Tammaru, 2015; Quillian, 2002; Schelling, 1972; Van Ham & Tammaru, 2016). Since residential choices are limited by the available to the household resources, then they to some degree associate with housing prices. Brasington, Hite, and Jauregui (2015) and Musterd et al. (2015) find evidence that low and high income households concentrate in different parts of the city. The inflow of migrants of different social status, ethnic origin and various income levels reinforces the preset differentiation of neighborhoods and districts as a result of the first residential choices (Bolt & Van Kempen, 2010).

The present study focuses on migrants' first residential choices within a post-socialist capital city. We investigate the spatial patterns of in-migration flows to city districts and test the association with housing prices. Such an association would be an evident sign of the polarization of city's socio-spatial structure. Our study builds upon previous research on post-socialist capitals and major cities - the ongoing residential changes and mobility within them (Haase et al., 2012; Hess et al., 2012; Kährlik et al., 2012), polarization and segregation (Marcinićzak, 2012; Sýkora, 2009; Vendina, 2002).

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The empirical evidence is drawn from Moscow, the largest and one of the most migration attractive capital cities of the post-socialist/post-soviet space (Makhrova, Nefedova, & Treivish, 2013). With a notable stability Moscow has been gaining roughly one million people each decade in the 20-th century (Denissenko & Stepanova, 2013) despite the social shocks¹ and persistent struggle of authorities to inhibit the process (Hausladen, 1985). In the post-soviet period the removal of administrative barriers restricting migration to the large cities as well as the economic stagnation, low wages, unemployment, and poor amenities in many Russian regions contributed to the intensification of migration to Moscow (Andrienko & Guriev, 2004). Besides economic stimulus, common motives for migration to Moscow include education and family reasons (Kashnitsky, Mkrtchyan, & Leshukov, 2016). According to the survey conducted by the Russian center for public opinion research, one fifth of Russians (19%) would like their children to live in Moscow (Zayonchkovskaya & Mkrtchyan, 2009). Thus, Moscow is an illuminating case study site for investigating migrants' first residential choices in the post-socialist capitals.

In order to answer our research questions, we analyze the types of migration flows in terms of sex, age, place of origin, and their intensities for 125 districts of Moscow, exploring variation by housing prices. The intensity of in-migration to Moscow's districts is in fact the amount of people who registered within a district for a period over 9 months – rented or bought housing; thus, its spatial variation provides information on migrants' first residential choices within the city. Until now, such research for Moscow was not possible due to the scarcity of data on migration. However, quite recently a detailed data set on migration flows for 2012 at the city district level was published (Federal State Statistics Service, 2012). Although the quality of data should not be overestimated, there is a hope that they are capturing the real process a bit better than they used to do previously (Kashnitsky & Mkrtchyan, 2014; Zayonchkovskaya & Mkrtchyan, 2009). A serious limitation of the dataset is that it is published for 1 year only; however, we believe that it would still allow to identify the main features of the phenomenon under study. All in all, the present research on Moscow at the level of city districts allows us to add up on the knowledge of urban development and population mobility in the post-socialist and especially post-soviet context, which is still underrepresented in the international academic literature.

1.1. Post-socialist socio-spatial city structure and population mobility

The socio-spatial structure of cities under socialism was argued to be less polarized and segregated than in a typical capitalist city of the same time period (D. M. Smith, 1996; Szelenyi, 1987; Weclawowicz, 2002). Socialist cities were developing under central planned economic model. The absence of an open market – i.e. state-control over housing, goods and services – insured their distribution to different population groups, as was mentioned above, on the priority basis (Borén & Gentile, 2007). Inequality in the access to housing existed, albeit, of different nature; social status was the indicator of being privileged in the society (Vendina, 1997). The privileged social strata consisted mainly of party nomenclature, military, scientists, as well as individuals who represented the country on the international arena (e.g. sportsmen, musicians, artists, diplomats). Thus, despite the income equalization, the above mentioned social groups had an access to better housing (Szelenyi, 1978).

According to Sýkora (1999), the creation of the socio-spatial differentiation within socialist cities was driven by two main factors. The first one is that the inner structure of those cities, that were not founded under socialism, was composed of districts build up in different era –

pre-socialist and socialist. The high quality pre-socialist quarters usually housed people of higher social status measured in terms of occupation and education (Marcinićzak, 2012; Sýkora, 1999). The second factor is associated with newly built housing estates. The priority-based differentiation of economic activities had also an impact on residential patterns; people of different occupations got housing in certain newly built areas of the city. Naturally, those of higher social status acquired newly built housing of higher quality with a better access to infrastructure (Dangschat & Blasius, 1987). Yet, the barriers between the social strata were generally not too rigid, i.e. people of different status could still be living side by side in the same houses and neighborhoods (Vendina, 1997).

In the post-socialist period, with the loosened state control, households received unprecedented freedom in housing choices. It became possible to make an individual choice, which was driven by the households' needs and desires (Clark, 2009; Mulder & Wagner, 1998). The individual needs and desires vary depending on the households' life course stage, socio-economic background, and cultural orientation (Clark, Deurloo, & Dieleman, 1984; Kährlik, Temelová, Kadarik, & Kubeš, 2016). The choice of housing is therefore influenced by infrastructural and spatial characteristics of the area: the accessibility of amenities, workplaces, distance to family members and friends (Kährlik et al., 2012; Karsten, 2007). The reputation and perceived image of the area are also important in making residential choices (Sørensen, 2014). Naturally, income inequalities play a crucial role mediating these choices (Gentile, 2015; Marcinićzak, 2012; Marcinićzak, Musterd, & Stepniak, 2012) and limiting the opportunities for low income households (Kährlik, Leetmaa and Tammaru, 2012, 2016; Musterd et al., 2015). Thus, the development of socio-spatial structures within post-socialist capital cities is characterized by contradictory processes (A. Smith & Timár, 2010). Some districts face hominization, i.e. ghettoization of the rich and the poor citizens, while the others face heterogenization, i.e. newly built or renovated elite housing estates attracting high-income households could be located in the proximity of crumbling and abandoned buildings (Gdaniec, 2005). Yet, the inequalities formed under socialism, e.g. variable housing quality, differences in service provision, reputation and prestige of certain districts, are the starting point for shaping inequalities under market conditions (D. M. Smith, 1996). And these preset inequalities are still largely visible, as urban development is largely limited by historical inertias (Vendina, 2013).

Migrant households that make their first residential choice within the city of destination are no exception to the above guidelines; they choose housing according to personal preferences and available resources. However, the association of migrants' first residential choices and housing prices is complicated: both way influence could be argued (Mulder, 2006). For example, analyzing 20 cities of Italy, Accetturo, Manaresi, Mocetti, and Olivieri (2014) found that in-migration raises average housing prices at the city level, while it reduces price growth in the districts mostly affected by migration inflow.

For particular migrant groups, such as temporary labor migrants, housing prices may play even a more important role. Not only they delimitate their housing choices, but also define whether to move alone or together with their families (Demintseva & Peshkova, 2014). The residential patterns of ethnic minority populations (mainly immigrants from other countries) may be influenced not only by housing prices but also by the housing market discrimination that impose additional restrictions on the residential choice (Bolt & Van Kempen, 2010). As long as the inflow of migrants to post-socialist capitals is largely fostered by economic stimulus such as unemployment or low wages in the areas of out-migration (Fischer-Tahir & Naumann, 2013; Hess et al., 2012), it is natural to assume that migrants may prefer less prestigious, relatively cheap neighborhoods and districts, at least at the moment of the first residential choice. In line with this argument, the inflow of migrants would then contribute to the social-spatial polarization of the city structure, since areas of migrant concentration would increasingly become low income enclaves.

¹ Moscow population reduced from 2.04 mln to 1.03 mln during the Revolution and Civil war of 1917–1920. Similar outcomes happened during the Second World war when Moscow population dropped from 4.2 mln in 1940 to 2.0 mln in 1942 (Vendina, 2012).

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