

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESTRUCTURING AND GENTRIFICATION IN PRAGUE

LUDEK SYKORA

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This paper presents results from the research of gentrification in Prague. Conceptual issues concerned with gentrification research are discussed at the beginning. Main part presents results from empirical survey of physical appearance, functional use and ownership of houses in five inner city neighbourhoods. Revitalized and gentrified residential buildings were identified. However, gentrification as the process of neighbourhood change has not been developed yet.

1. INTRODUCTION: RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

Substantial changes in the internal socio-spatial structure of Prague are expected as the consequence of transition from command to market economy. New principles governing urban economy have already been established through government directed transformations (Sýkora and Šimoníčková, 1994) and the operation of market mechanisms have already caused important changes in urban environment. Commercial revitalization of the city center has become the dominant process of urban change in Prague. It has also been expected that revitalization processes will have a significant impact on changes in Prague's residential structure.

Based on the knowledge of residential restructuring in major West European, North American and Australian (western) cities and expectations of developments in Central and Eastern Europe a research hypothesis has been formulated. The hypothesis states that there is a potential for gentrification to occur in Prague. The main arguments are as follows. The introduction of a market economy will cause a substantial differentiation in incomes and demand for housing. Higher income people will be recruited from successful entrepreneurs, managers and other highly professional staff serving the business community as well as from foreign representatives of firms expanding to Central and Eastern European countries. This group

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of people is likely to share values of contemporary urban life in western cities characterized by a strong preference for residency location in central and inner city neighbourhoods. Therefore, there will be a demand from higher income people for living in central parts of Prague.

The central and inner city housing stock maintenance has been quite neglected under the command economy and its under utilization created a potential for redevelopment (Sýkora, 1993b). The new owners of privatized housing stock will attempt to redevelop it to uses that generate higher profits. Commercial revitalization, i.e. transfer of residential buildings to commercial use, will be the best option for change in use, the second best being residential revitalization, which is likely to take the form of gentrification. These changes will be furthermore enabled and facilitated by outmigration of central city residents from lower income groups, who will, due to the increase of living cost, seek cheaper locations for housing consumption.

There are theoretical expectations, formulated in the hypothesis, that gentrification may occur in Prague. A research has been designed to undertake an empirical investigation in selected neighbourhoods of central and inner city Prague aimed at finding properties which will show signs of gentrification. The main results of field research will be presented as the core information of this paper. Certain conceptual issues, namely what is considered as the process of gentrification, gentrified property and gentrified neighbourhood, had to be discussed and resolved before the start of empirical investigation.

2. GENTRIFICATION: DEBATE, CONCEPT, DEFINITION

There are two key areas of the gentrification debate. The first discusses the importance of gentrification for neighbourhood change in inner city areas. Smith and Williams (1986), Smith (1979, 1987), Ley (1981, 1994), Weesep (1994) and many others see gentrification as a new frontier of urban change, which is important from the qualitative as well as quantitative point of view. For them, gentrification has importantly changed inner city areas of major cities. Furthermore, it presents a challenge to traditional explanatory concepts used in urban studies. Bourne (1993a, 1993b) appreciates the gentrification process, but claims that it has not been the dominant process of neighbourhood change and the impact of gentrification has been exaggerated in urban literature. Berry (1979) argues that there are limits for inner city revitalization in US urban areas and there is further decline present in most inner city neighbourhoods. Marcusse (1993) offers an approach to the contemporary changes in the internal structure of cities, which places gentrification in the context of other processes of urban change, and Bourne (1993c) describes the complexity of inner city restructuring which can hardly be interpreted by using a single model of neighbourhood change.

The second area of the gentrification debate, concentrated around the interpretation of the main causes of gentrification and is the basis for more passionate discussion. Production versus consumption oriented explanations, economically versus culturally determined analysis, Marxist versus postmodernist explanatory framework are but a few examples of dichotomies in attempts to explain and interpret gentrification. Hamnett (1984, 1991), Ley (1986) and Lees (1994) offer discussion of dichotomies in explanatory and interpretative frameworks of gentrification (for Czech and Slovak readers, discussion is available in Sýkora, 1993).

Disagreement about gentrification is caused by having different concepts of the process when presenting empirical findings. Consequently, many scholars working on gentrification research (Hamnett, 1984; Rose, 1984; Beauregard, 1986; Caulfield, 1994; and many others) characterize gentrification as a chaotic concept, referring to Sayer (1992). According to Sayer (1992: 71) 'chaotic conception' is a poor abstraction that combines the unrelated or divides the indivisible. This suggests that gentrification is a term which combines a number of different processes induced by various mechanisms and characterized by several casual relations into one single concept.

For some academicians gentrification means the inner city resettlement by middle classes, for others gentrification must include a physical element of housing rehabilitation. There are scholars who would not accept that any gentrification happened if there had been no displacement of previous inhabitants, if new inner city residents had not moved in from non-inner city locations, or if new residents do not show certain cultural attitudes and life values. There are a significant number of very different views on gentrification. There are different concepts behind these views. No single definition exists. All together, gentrification debates create a spirit of 'chaotic conceptions'.

Prague's concept of gentrification had been formulated before any investigation started with the main aim to avoid future confusion. A few basic assumptions had to be accepted to lay ground for a definition of gentrification used in the empirical research undertaken in Prague. Gentrification is one of the urban revitalization processes. Gentrification is limited to housing and it is a part of residential revitalization. There are several mechanisms through which residential revitalization is proceeding. Only some of them can be associated with gentrification.

There are two primary and two secondary aspects of residential revitalization which characterize gentrification. First is the physical rehabilitation of dilapidated housing. Second is social change through the displacement of original lower social status inhabitants with new residents of a higher social status. The third aspect is a subject of a discussion, however, for Prague's empirical research is defined as central and inner city locations of gentrified properties. Fourth, gentrification is a process of neighbourhood change; while individual properties can become gentrified, gentrification as a process of urban change is constituted only when a substantial portion of houses (dwellings) in a neighbourhood are converted. Sum-

marized: gentrification occurs when a substantial part of dwellings (houses or apartments) in an inner city neighbourhood are physically rehabilitated and, at the same time, former residents are displaced by new residents with higher social status. It is assumed that physical rehabilitation is in relation with social change.

To assess gentrification, as defined for Prague's investigation, characteristics of individual dwellings and their inhabitants must be known. Aggregate data might be used only for a general description of areas where gentrification is being researched. The empirical research of gentrification must begin with an investigation of changes within individual properties.

3. GENTRIFICATION RESEARCH IN FIVE OF PRAGUE'S CENTRAL AND INNER CITY NEIGHBOURHOODS

The field research has been done in five of Prague's central and inner city urban units (urbanistické obvody). There were three subsequent phases. First was the selection of territorial units in which the survey will be done. Second was an empirical survey focused on functional use, physical appearance and ownership of individual buildings (privatization processes and current ownership structures) in the selected units. In the third phase, an attempt was made to trace changes of apartments (merges of flats, newly built apartments in loft or attic spaces, conversion of non-residential space into apartments, etc.) and occupants (reduction in number of households, exchange of households) in houses with particular characteristics, such as rehabilitated buildings, fully or partly in residential use and private ownership, with an aim to identify potential gentrification.

Prague has a very rich socio-spatial structure, consisting of a scattered pattern of various building types with people of different social status. However, five major concentric zones can be distinguished. There is the central city with traditionally higher than average social status. The inner city consists of neighbourhoods which in the time of their construction exhibited both working class and bourgeois status. The inner city neighbourhoods are characterized by rental housing stock (four to five story apartment houses with ten to thirty apartments) build in the second half of the nineteenth century and the 1920-30s. At the edge of the inner city there are garden town like communities, with the highest social status in Prague's social urban geography. The fourth zone is a ring of housing estates build under Communism using prefabricated technology. The fifth zone consists of villages and small rural communities.

Five areas were selected in central and inner city Prague to conduct the field research (Table 1). The areas were deliberately selected to exhibit certain features. They consist exclusively of apartment houses, but differ in their social status (meas-

ured by education level and profession classification of inhabitants). Two areas show above-city-average social status characteristics. However, they do not belong among upper social status areas, where we could hardly talk about significant urban change if gentrification of individual properties occurs. Urban units with most of housing in individual villas, semi-detached or row houses were omitted for similar reasons (already having high social status). Research areas consist of 5-10,000 inhabitants, 200-300 apartment houses and 2-5,000 dwellings. Each area is in a different neighbourhood with distinctive social and cultural characteristics. The basic description of research areas is given below.

* *Betlémský obvod* is a part of Prague's Old Town. It is located between the Old Town Square, Charles Bridge and the National Theatre and Můstek (Venceslas Square), in the heart of the city tourist area on busy routes from Prague Castle to the Prague's CBD. Many foreign firms have their business residences in the area or in adjacent streets. It has excellent public transport connections by underground (Metro) and trams. Car parking is difficult, but everything is in a walking distance. Most buildings were constructed prior to the 20th century and many were in quite a dilapidated state at the beginning of 1990s.

* *Londýnská* is a part of Vinohrady, a traditionally upper social status neighbourhood built in the nineteenth century. Dilapidation of housing stock due to undermaintenance and decline in social status due to subdivision and redistribution of bourgeois dwellings to working class families changed the character of the neighbourhood during Communism. However, as educational and professional characteristics show, the neighbourhood partly retained its spirit through all the years under Communism. Excellent public transport (Metro, trams), proximity to city highway, possibilities for car parking on streets and inside blocks of houses, vicinity to the center, adjacent new office developments and structurally sound buildings makes this neighbourhood very attractive for potential investments in residential rehabilitation.

* *Sladkovského náměstí* is a part of Žižkov, a lower social status neighbourhood adjacent to Vinohrady. It is characterized by a higher proportion of working class people, romanes (gypsies), and the oldest, most dilapidated housing stock in Prague. However, it is located close to Prague's downtown to which it is linked with tram lines. Two Metro stops are within walking distance. Two universities are located in the vicinity: Prague School of Economics and Central European University (however, CEU is now moving most activities out of Prague). The neighbourhood offers cheaper accommodation for foreigners (often non-business people) and an alternative and very local culture in pubs and restaurants (U vystřeleného voka, Akropole).

* *Nuselská* is a part of Nusle, a predominantly working class neighbourhood, build during the first half of this century. A high proportion of working class people and a romany (gypsies) presence, busy square and retail strip, tram exchange and proximity to downtown form the general character of the area.

* *Náměstí Svobody* is in the Bubeneč neighbourhood build predominantly in the 1920-30s. It is adjacent to one of the most attractive residential areas of Prague, consists of apartment houses in good shape, has a population with higher than average education and with a higher share of employed in the tertiary sector. Two Metro stops and a busy retail strip makes the area attractive to inhabitants. Furthermore, a station on the expected rapid railway to Prague airport can furthermore increase the attractiveness of the neighbourhood. This area was deliberately added for comparison with areas characterized by dilapidated housing stock.

The oral description as well as Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate that only two areas can be accepted as locations where full conversion from a lower social status to an upper social status neighbourhood can be realized (Žižkov and Nusle). However, it is expected, that gentrification will rather start in traditionally higher social status neighbourhood thus reasserting the pre-war socio-spatial pattern of the city. These neighbourhoods are characterized by a certain decline in their social status and a substantial decline of their housing stock during Communism, thus creating potential for present redevelopment.

Table 1: Research areas

urban unit	neighbourhood	population	houses	flats
001 Betlémský obvod	Staré Město, P-1	5,721	286	2,410
017 Londýnská	Vinohrady, P-2	7,794	311	3,523
055 Sladkovského nám.	Žižkov, P-3	6,651	258	3,177
110 Nuselský obvod	Nusle, P-4	6,417	212	3,151
277 Náměstí svobody	Bubeneč, P-6	10,965	301	4,455
	Praha	1,214,174	83,267	516,293

Source: Census 1991 (SLBD 1991), Czech Statistical Office (ČSÚ), Prague's City Statistical Office (MSS)

In the second phase of the field research, functional use, physical appearance, privatization processes and current ownership have been identified for each individual building. The second phase has been divided into two parts. First, the functional use and physical appearance was identified through a simple questionnaire filled in during field research in each selected area. Second, the impact of privatization processes and current ownership was obtained mostly from the departments of local administration and public housing services corporations (PBH). Tables 3, 4, 5 and 6 present aggregate results for each area.

Table 2: Basic characteristics of age, profession and education of population and quality, age and size of dwellings in research areas (data are recalculated from the 1991 Census and are given as relative figures in per cents, sq m of dwelling size is an absolute number)

unit	60+	tert	work	univ	I	III+IV	-1919	1920-45	sqm
001	28.2	69.9	10.8	19.9	58.0	15.2	83.3	15.9	67.6
017	28.7	67.3	11.3	18.3	54.2	15.5	77.6	19.5	60.2
055	25.9	58.8	21.0	11.7	18.5	32.3	79.5	20.0	50.5
110	27.7	56.9	21.5	10.1	26.6	17.4	37.3	52.8	47.7
277	27.9	68.2	11.2	22.8	47.9	1.4	12.6	85.5	70.6
PRA	21.2	57.7	17.8	16.3	70.5	5.9	18.1	28.7	59.3

Notes: 60+: population over 60; tert: employed in tertiary sector; work: manual workers; univ: university education; I: first category dwellings (central heating, toilet and bathroom in dwelling); III+IV: third category dwellings (without central heating or without bathroom and toilet for sole use of occupants) and fourth category dwellings (without central heating as well as bathroom and toilet for sole use of occupants); -1919: dwellings build prior 1920; 1920-45: dwellings build between 1920-45; sqm: average size of apartments in square metres; PRA is Prague.

Source: Own recalculation from Census 1991 (SLBD 1991), Czech Statistical Office (ČSÚ), Prague's City Statistical Office (MSS)

Table 3: Functional use of buildings (in per cent)

urban unit	001	017	055	110	277
residential use	(19.1)	(32.6)	(30.2)	(44.2)	(51.1)
apartment houses	19.1	32.6	30.2	44.2	51.1
single family h.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
commercial use	(26.5)	(15.4)	(4.6)	(9.6)	(6.6)
retail	5.9	0.9	0.8	4.2	2.3
offices	11.3	12.4	3.4	4.2	3.6
retail and offices	9.3	2.1	0.4	1.2	0.7
mixed use	(52.1)	(48.6)	(64.2)	(45.0)	(42.3)
res. + ret., off.	11.3	10.3	19.5	5.8	5.5
res. + retail	30.4	17.2	25.6	32.1	26.7
res. + offices	21.1	19.1	7.1	10.1	
non-determined use	2.3	3.3	0.8	1.2	0.0
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: field research, October 1994

Table 4: Physical appearance of buildings (in per cent)

urban unit	001	017	055	110	277
newly constructed	0.3	0.0	0.0	2.5	0.0
reconstruction	13.7	19.3	5.0	6.7	3.9
partial repairs	20.6	8.8	22.9	16.7	5.9
in reconstruction	11.9	6.3	4.2	2.1	1.0
solid shape, no change	45.4	53.8	58.4	62.1	87.9
dilapidated	8.2	11.8	9.5	10.0	1.3
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: field research, October 1994

Table 5: Privatization processes (in per cent)

urban unit	001	017	055	110	277
restitution	44.6	67.1	69.6	51.1	38.9
privatization 0.0	2.8	7.6	0.9	3.4	
public sector 36.5	28.6	17.5	28.4	34.2	
private sector 14.2	1.2	2.3	5.6	0.3	
cooperative	0.3	0.0	3.0	11.1	22.6
no information	3.1	0.3	0.0	3.4	0.0
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: field research, information obtained from local (city district) authorities, November-December 1994

Table 6: Ownership structures (in per cent)

urban unit	001	017	055	110	277
private individuals	46.7	51.7	71.9	52.8	39.6
private firms 7.2	17.5	4.0	3.8	0.3	
state	19.8	15.7	1.5	0.4	3.2
municipal	20.7	12.9	16.5	27.6	31.0
church	2.1	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0
cooperatives 0.3	0.0	3.0	11.1	22.6	
new coops of tenants	0.0	1.9	2.7	0.9	3.4
no information	3.4	0.3	0.0	3.4	0.0
total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: field research, information obtained from local (city district) authorities, November-December 1994

In the third phase, renovated houses in full or partial residential use were selected. In this sample, changes of apartments (merges of flats, newly built flats in attic or loft spaces, conversion of non-residential space into flats, ..) and occupants (reduction in number of households, exchange of households) were researched using interviews with owners or tenants of selected buildings. The summary of research results of this phase is given in Table 7.

Table 7: Residential revitalization and gentrification (number of houses)

urban unit	001	017	055	110	277
renovations	20	41	7	11	12
full reconstruction	3	11	0	5	3
under reconstruction	1	2	2	1	0
fully gentrified	0	3	0	0	0
partial gentrification	2	1	0	0	0

Source: field research, January-February 1994

The main research results are as follows. Substantial revitalization is present in all of the five units. However, its scope varies greatly, depending on the location of unit within the city and on the impact of change in the ownership. The most remarkable revitalization occurs in two areas, in Betlémský obvod of the city centre and in Londýnská at Vinohrady, the traditionally higher status neighbourhood. The extent of revitalization is much lower in the remaining three units.

Revitalization appears mostly in the form of commercialization of the current building stock, including change from residential to non-residential use. Changes within the residential sector are very limited. While a small number of gentrified properties were identified, it can hardly be noticed even as an embryonic stage of the gentrification process. No gentrified houses were identified in three areas. Three gentrified houses were identified in Vinohrady (Londýnská) and individual apartments in two houses in Old Town area (Betlémský obvod).

4. CONCLUSIONS

There are preconditions and potential for gentrification in Prague. This potential is, on the supply side, facilitated by two modes of rent regulation and deregulation. While the rent in housing sector is regulated, there has been a full deregulation of rent in commercial premises and rent paid for housing by foreigners (Sýkora, 1995). Nicholas Kirke, a director of a residential real estate firm operating in Prague, gives

a description of how houses are being gentrified at the present time. 'Buy a tenanted house in Prague, relocate the present tenants and relet at realistic rents with Western-style tenancy agreements. ... Recently, I relocated tenants from a two bedroom apartment of 80 square metres. Monthly rent was CZK (Czech crowns) 370. It was relet within six weeks for CZK 16,000 monthly, a 43-fold increase' (Kirke, 1995).

At present, individual gentrified properties can be found in the central and inner city neighbourhoods. However, the spatial pattern is very scattered and gentrification as a form of neighbourhood change does not exist at all. Prague's gentrification is in an embryonic stage. Gentrification of a neighbourhood is a process which usually takes several decades, therefore, Prague's findings are not any surprise. Whether gentrification as a process of neighbourhood change develops in coming years and what forms will it appropriate is a question for years after the turn of the century.

It is likely, that gentrification of individual houses will be concentrated in neighbourhoods with traditionally stronger social status (such as Vinohrady), while working class areas of the inner city will be omitted. This kind of gentrification will bring a reemergence of the old sociospatial pattern of prewar capitalist Prague, rather than radical remodification of inner city sociospatial structure. This trajectory of neighbourhood change will not be very surprising. However, it will not fit well the view of gentrification as a reversal of processes which formed the socio-spatial structure of cities in industrialized countries through most of this century.

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Ekonomická a sociální restrukturalizace a gentrifikace v Praze

LUDĚK SÝKORA

R e s u m é

Příspěvek je založen na hypotéze, že v důsledku transformace dochází k vytváření podmínek vhodných pro vznik gentrifikace v Praze. Vzhledem k nejednoznačnosti konceptu gentrifikace v zahraniční literatuře je nejprve koncept definován pro použití při empirickém výzkumu. Hlavní část příspěvku přináší přehled výsledků terénního průzkumu v pěti pražských urbanistických obvodech. Na základě získaných údajů o funkčním využití a fyzickém stavu budov, o privatizačních procesech a současných vlastnických poměrech jsou vybrány rekonstruované domy sloužící k bydlení. Terénní průzkum ukázal, že většina opravených domů slouží výhradně komečnímu využití, zatímco v sektoru bytovém jsou fyzické změny velmi omezené. K gentrifikaci došlo pouze u několika individuálních staveb ve dvou z pěti šetřených lokalit. V současnosti nelze hovořit o existenci gentrifikace v Praze.

RÄUMLICHE (GEOGRAPHISCHE) ASPEKTE DER GRENZÜBERSCHREITENDEN ZUSAMMENARBEIT ZWISCHEN TSCHECHIEN UND DEUTSCHLAND

MILAN JEŘÁBEK

MILAN JEŘÁBEK: Geographical aspects of transborder cooperation between Czech Republic and Germany. Acta Facultatis Rerum Naturalium Universitatis Comenianae, Geographica Nr. 37, 1996, Tab. 3, Ref. 8.

Since the beginning of the nineties, borderland territory (especially on the border with Bavaria) is changing its peripheral and economically depressed position. This space is now more transitional, enabling the penetration of "western" patterns of thinking, doing and behaviour. We are confronted with doubled influence of current changes. On the one side as "internal" transformations of society, and due to the opened border toward Europe, with influence of "big and rich" neighbour. The subject of our study are social changes analysed by sociological survey. In this article we selected from wider comparative research the some spatial issues, including euroregional cooperation, and the transborder cooperation obstacles.

THEMATISCHE UND HISTORISCHE EINLEITUNG

Die verlaufenden sozialen Veränderungen im tschechischen Teil des tschechisch – deutschen Grenzgebietes sind ein Gegenstand, der im Rahmen des Projekts "**Tschechisches Grenzgebiet im Prozeß der europäischen Integration**" realisierten Forschung, die in den Jahren 1993 – 95 von der Förderagentur der TschR (Grantová agentura ČR) gefördert wird. Die Grenzgebiete werden nach der Europäischen Charta der Raumplanung (vom J. 1983) für einen spezifischen Raumtyp erklärt. Regionale und lokale Verbindungen, wirken außerdem wie eine Reaktion auf die Zentralisierung, in bestimmten Masse so wie "Laboratorien" des einheitlichen Binnenmarktes. **Unter unseren Bedingungen** handelte es sich immer um Räume, die mit ihrer ökonomischen Entwicklung, sowie mit der nationalen Zusammensetzung der Bevölkerung, markante Differenzen aufwiesen. Neben entwickelten Gebieten (z.B. aufgrund ihrer Bodenschätze) gehörten auch strukturschwache Gebiete mit einer hohen Auswanderungsrate, mit tschechischen bis rein deutschen Teilgebieten dazu. Der