Processes of Socio-spatial Differentiation in Post-communist Prague

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ABSTRACT   *This paper analyses processes which transform the socio-spatial pattern of post-communist Prague and describes major changes in the city's social geography. It begins with a brief introduction about the socio-spatial pattern of a socialist city and a discussion of methods and concepts of investigation of processes of socio-spatial change in contemporary Prague. Growing income inequalities and transformations in the housing system are examined as the main underlying causes of growing socio-spatial disparities. In the section concerning the mechanism of socio-spatial differentiation, attention is focused on the role of social mobility, migration, housing renovation and new housing construction. The conclusions summarise major changes in the social geography of post-communist Prague and discuss implications of central and local government policies for the growth in socio-spatial disparities.*

Introduction

Since the fall of communism, former socialist cities have been undergoing profound transformations, conditioned by the transition to a market society. The urban change in post-communist cities can be classified as a transition from socialist to capitalist cities. One of the most important distinctions between socialist and capitalist cities is the character and magnitude of socio-spatial differences. Despite the variety within groups of capitalist as well as socialist cities it can be generalised that the socio-spatial pattern of a socialist city was more homogeneous, with a lesser extent of segregation. This situation will change with the transition from a centrally planned society to a market society.

   The major aim of this paper is to analyse processes which are transforming the socio-spatial pattern of a former socialist city—Prague. Comparing the socio-spatial structure of socialist and capitalist cities, it is expected that the transformation of post-communist Prague will be characterised by growing socio-spatial differences. This change is determined by the introduction of a market system of resource allocation, which generates greater socio-spatial disparities than the former system of central planning. However, while the principles of allocation which influence the spatial distribution of different population groups can be changed suddenly and quickly, the transformation of spatial patterns is gradual and slower, as its pace is limited by historical inertia such as the built environ-

ment, the previous accumulation of wealth by households, emotional attachment families have to their place of residence, social welfare policies of the government, etc.

At present, it is too early to observe major results of on-going changes in the socio-spatial pattern of a post-communist city. However, new mechanisms that influence the spatial allocation of different social groups in urban space already operate and we can theoretically deduce models and empirically observe examples of processes which contribute to the socio-spatial differentiation and transformation of the previous socio-spatial pattern. The major factors which influence growing socio-spatial disparities in post-communist Prague are increasing income inequalities and newly introduced market-based mechanisms of housing allocation.

In the example of Prague, processes will be analysed which are currently changing the socio-spatial pattern of the former socialist city. The paper will begin with a brief characterisation of the socio-spatial structure of a socialist city and the mechanisms producing the structure. This will be followed by a discussion of the method and concepts used to analyse processes of socio-spatial differentiation in Prague. Following this, attention will be given to two major outcomes of the transition from a centrally planned to market society in the Czech Republic and Prague which have crucial impacts on the socio-spatial differentiation: increasing income inequalities and changed principles of housing allocation. Finally, the three most important mechanisms will be analysed which currently contribute to the growing socio-spatial differentiation in Prague. They include: (1) social mobility of households fixed in their residential locations; (2) internal migration within the existing housing stock (with special attention given to renovated properties); and (3) immigration to newly-constructed residential areas. The conclusions will summarise major changes in the social geography of post-communist Prague and discuss implications of central and local government policies for the growth in socio-spatial disparities.

The Socio-spatial Pattern of a Socialist City

The most explicit description of a model spatial structure of a socialist city was given by Hamilton (1979, p. 227). Szelenyi (1983), Smith (1989, 1996), Weclawowicz (1992), and many others discussed both spatial patterns and mechanisms which shaped the socio-spatial structure of socialist cities. The socio-spatial patterns within communist Prague have been analysed in Musil (1968, 1987, 1993) and Matějů *et al.*, (1979). To summarize, in socialist cities in general, and Prague in particular, the socio-spatial structure was relatively more homogeneous, with rather less socio-spatial differentiation, than is typical in capital cities. This situation was determined by communist income and housing policies.

Nevertheless, despite income equalisation and allocation of standardised dwellings to households in need, socio-spatial differences did exist in socialist cities. These were influenced by two major factors. First, there was the pre-existing socio-spatial pattern. Socialist cities were not created on an empty plain. They incorporated many urban elements from the pre-communist periods. Their inner spatial structure was composed of two distinct types of built-up areas: pre-communist inner parts and communist outer zones. Despite some measures used to alleviate the most striking differences in pre-communist dwelling stock, such as the subdivision and redistribution of large apartments of bourgeois

families, many differentiating features of residential structure were not changed by central planning nor could they have been. For instance, single family housing has never been nationalised. Therefore, dwellings in residential areas with better quality housing and higher social status of inhabitants could not be redistributed by communist allocation policy to working-class households. Even the relocation of tenants in rental housing did not fully alleviate disparities. Even though the magnitude of disparity in socio-economic status between former upper social status neighbourhoods and the rest of the city declined due to income equalisation and mechanisms of dwelling allocation, these neighbourhoods exhibited higher than average status measured by occupation or education throughout the entire communist period.

Second, residential differentiation was produced during communism through differences in newly-constructed housing and the unequal allocation of dwellings. The construction and allocation of state and co-operative housing, which accounted for most of the newly-built urban housing, created large, socially homogeneous areas. However, not everybody had equal access to new socialist housing or wished to live in places of mass standardised housing. It was the 'socialist middle class', who inhabited large housing estates, while many households remained in poorer inner-city housing or villages at city outskirts. Elite and well-off households were concentrated in small enclaves of luxury villas and single family houses. There were also remarkable disparities within co-operative housing, ranging from standardised high-rise buildings in huge estates to low-rise small-scale developments in excellent locations. According to Musil (1987), residential inequalities produced by the unequal access to housing and the differentiated housing supply increased after the 1960s.

To describe the distinctions in socio-spatial pattern between socialist and capitalist cities, three groups of population characteristics can be used: socio-economic, demographic and ethnic. Socio-economic status, measured by occupation and education, declined on the macro-scale from the city centre to the urban outskirts. This is in contrast with US cities, but shows common structural roots with Western Europe. On the meso and micro-scale, there were often socially stronger sectors, in particular, historically determined areas (such as the north-west sector of Prague; see Figures 1 and 2) and small enclaves of wealthy population scattered across the urban area. Social and physical decline characterised many inner-city neighbourhoods and old village-type settlements, whether swallowed by the city growth or standing outside of the compact city, where the population exhibited a lower education and a high proportion of manual workers (Figure 3).

Demographic characteristics of population were determined by new housing construction at the city outskirts, where younger households with children were concentrated, while the inner areas were characterised by an ageing population and a decreasing household size. Musil (1987) argues that demographic variables were more important in explaining the variance in the ecological pattern of socialist cities than socio-economic characteristics of population. This might be seen as an important distinction between socialist and capitalist cities. The cities of East-Central Europe were ethnically homogeneous, except for a small population of gypsies sometimes spatially concentrated in ethnic enclaves. There was no international migration like that which had influenced the development of socio-spatial patterns in US cities and after the Second World War in West European cities.
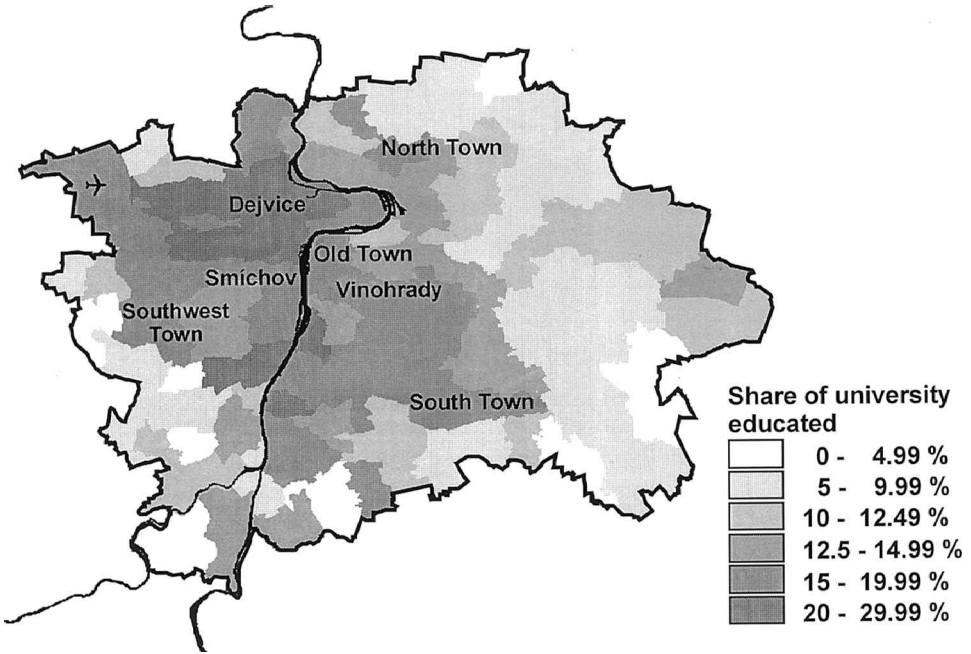
Figure 1. Prague: spatial distribution of the university educated population in 1991. *Source:* Czech Statistical Office, Census 1991.
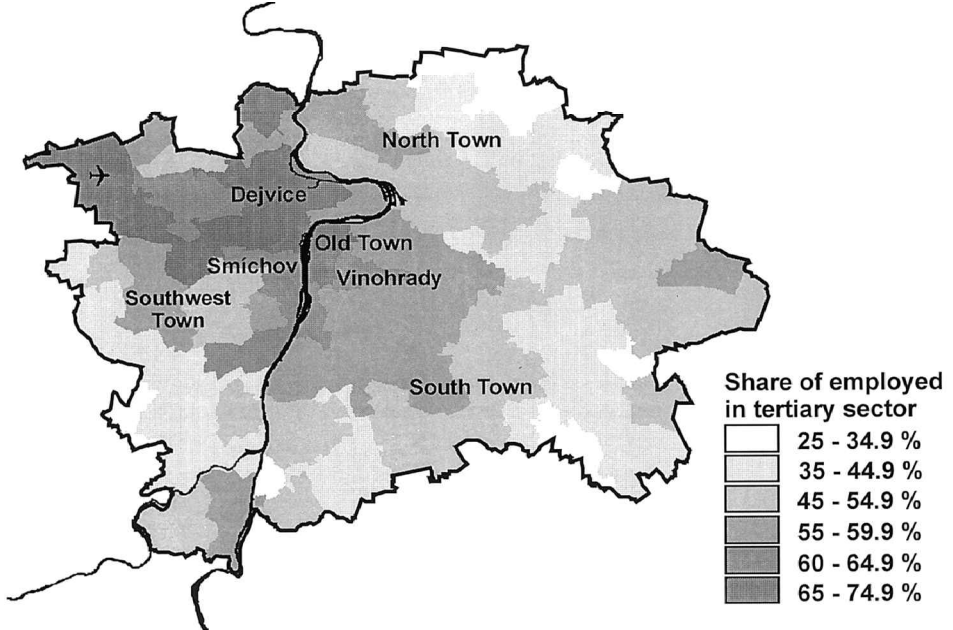

Figure 2. Prague: spatial distribution of the population employed in the tertiary sector in 1991. *Source:* Czech Statistical Office, Census 1991.

In post-communist Prague, the socio-economic status of population has begun to play a crucial role in residential differentiation. While there are no radical changes in the demographic structure of the population, there are rapidly
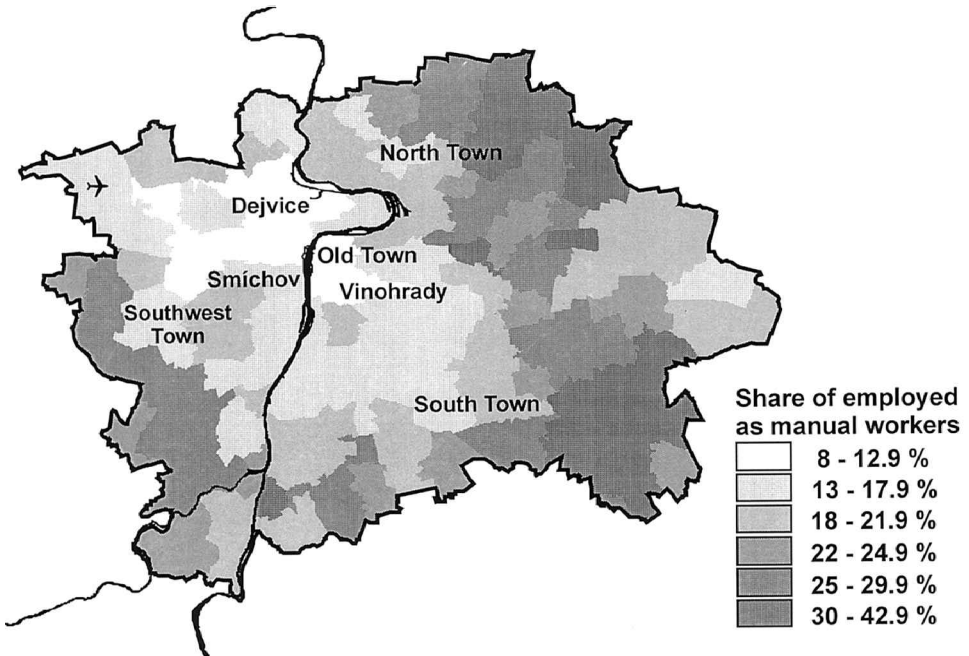
Figure 3. Prague: spatial distribution of the population employed as manual workers in 1991. *Source:* Czech Statistical Office, Census 1991.

growing disparities in the socio-economic strength of households. In the context of increasing international East-West migration, the Czech Republic is a country of transit rather than recipient country and now there are no significant ethnic minorities who would contribute to ethnic segregation in Prague. I consider the growing disparities in the socio-economic status of households as the most important force behind the changes in socio-spatial structure of post-communist Prague.

The main aim of this discussion of the socio-spatial structure of a socialist city is to accentuate several points. First, the socio-spatial structure of socialist cities was relatively more homogeneous with rather less socio-spatial differentiation than capitalist cities. Therefore, with the transformation moving toward that of a capitalist city there will be an increase in socio-spatial unevenness. Second, there are already existing socio-spatial differences in socialist cities and they will play an important role in the formation of the socio-spatial pattern in post-com-munist cities. Third, the transition toward a market society will particularly influence changes in the socio-economic status of various population groups, and increasing differences in the socio-economic status will play a crucial role in residential differentiation.

Finally, there are some questions about developments in the socio-spatial pattern of post-communist cities. Will the processes of socio-spatial differen-tiation strengthen disparities within the existing socio-spatial pattern, i.e. the social status in areas with a wealthy population will increase, while declining in areas with socially weaker inhabitants? In other words, wealthy neighbourhoods would remain in the same zones and sectors while the geographical distribution

of the middle class and lower class population would not change. However, the disparities between neighbourhoods of different social status would widen.

On the other hand, the processes of socio-spatial differentiation could contribute to an alteration in the existing spatial arrangement, for instance through gentrification of formerly poor and dilapidated neighbourhoods, construction of luxury housing in suburban areas that formerly exhibited lower social status, or relative social decline in the previously 'socialist middle class' mass-produced housing estates. In this case, the urban social geography would substantially change and the increasing disparities between neighbourhoods would be accompanied by a substantial reshaping of the socio-spatial pattern of a post-communist city.

Spatial Pattern and Processes of its Transformation: Methods and Concepts

The major aim of this paper is to analyse processes which transform the socio-spatial pattern of post-communist Prague and attempt to outline major changes in the city's social geography. A useful starting point for such an analysis would be a comparison of socio-spatial characteristics of Prague's current urban structure with that at the end of communist period. However, current socio-spatial differences (the pattern of the spatial distribution of population according to various social characteristics) cannot be described using established quantitative techniques. There is a lack of information about the current social status of the population for smaller territorial units within the urban area. Data concerning education, profession, quality of housing or household equipment (TV, automatic washing machine, car ownership, etc.), which indicate the social status of the population are collected in censuses which are organised at 10-year intervals. The last census in the Czech Republic was held in March 1991. It can serve as a basis for the comparison of developments that happened since the beginning of the economic reform which was launched in January 1991. The next census will be held in 2001. In the meantime, no surveys which would provide information about the internal city differences in social status of population have been organised. Therefore, a direct comparison of spatial patterns from 1991 and more recent years cannot be made to describe the character of changes in the city's social geography.

However, it is thought that there is growing socio-spatial heterogeneity in post-communist Prague and there are arguments which support this hypothesis. Although the current socio-spatial pattern cannot be described using the aggregate quantitative data, theories can be put forward and evidence can be found about the trends of changes since the beginning of the 1990s. It is anticipated that the contemporary pattern is an outcome of socio-spatial differentiation (where disparities are increased and/or the geographical distribution has changed) in Prague's social geography during the period of transition. The socio-spatial differentiation is produced by several processes, each with its own distinct mechanisms and casual relations. An attempt will be made to examine the socio-spatial differentiation conceptually and look at the different forces behind transformations of urban social geography. This approach gives better insights into the processes creating divided or undivided cities than allowed by a simple comparison of socio-spatial patterns at two time points.

Why is it thought that there are increasing socio-spatial disparities in post-communist Prague? It can be asserted that the market system of allocation of resources creates greater socio-spatial disparities than the system of central

planning. The major factors which contribute to the uneven distribution of population in urban areas according to socio-economic status are first, a socially differentiated population and consequently differentiated demand for housing, including the place (geographic location) of residence and, second, differentiated housing stock according to its size, quality, price and, very importantly, location—since various different segments of housing are unevenly distributed in the urban space. With increasing social disparities within the population and growing differences within the geographical pattern of housing stock there will be an increase in socio-spatial disparities. The system of central planning was characterised by income equalisation and standardised housing supply. The establishment of a market system brings differentiation within both these spheres, creating preconditions for the increase of socio-spatial variability.

Since the start of economic reform at the beginning of 1990s, there has been a rapidly increasing differentiation of population according to wealth. Privatisation processes have created a new class of owners, some of whom are becoming very wealthy. Economic restructuring has impacted the labour market and brought a rapid differentiation of earnings. Income and earnings differentiation, emergence of unemployment and homelessness and transformation of the social welfare system contributed to growing social inequalities among households. Privatisation processes and liberalisation of prices in the real estate sector brought a quick establishment of property markets. Through the property market the attractiveness of housing, including its location within the urban structure of Prague, was quickly expressed in rapidly growing property price differences. The approach of the state to transformations in the housing sector further strengthened the growing differentiation in the affordability and accessibility of housing. Differentiated household incomes and differentiated prices and rents in the housing sector have created basic preconditions for the development of processes of socio-spatial differentiation. Both these fundamental factors will be more closely investigated in the following sections.

How do socio-spatial disparities increase? The differences are measured using the social-status characteristics of population in residential areas of the city. The disparity can increase (or decrease) through the social and/or spatial mobility of population. If there is a social polarisation of the urban population (i.e. wealthy groups are upwardly mobile and poor groups are downgrading) the socio-spatial disparity will increase (it is hypothetically possible to have social polarisation without socio-spatial differentiation, but it is very unlikely to happen in reality). In this case, the contrast in spatial pattern is strengthened, but the spatial distribution of population groups according to their social status is not changed. The role of social mobility can be important in such circumstances as is the transition from a centrally planned to market society with its rapidly developing social differences, or, in the context of social polarisation within global cities and cities influenced by globalisation, where it results in a situation described as dual city (Mollenkopf & Castells, 1991).

Socio-spatial differences can also be increased or decreased through migration of the population. If relatively wealthy people living in less wealthy areas move to more wealthy neighbourhoods and poor people move to poorer neighbourhoods, the socio-spatial disparity will increase. The mutual combination of social polarisation and this type of migration can generate sharp socio-spatial disparities in urban space, but without the change in spatial distribution of wealthy and poor population.

However, migration can also transform spatial patterns in terms of the distribution of various groups of population according to their social status in urban space, such as in the case of gentrification of formerly socially weaker neighbourhoods. The social upgrading of gentrified neighbourhoods is created by immigration of wealthy households, which displace less wealthy households that move out from gentrified areas. There are signs of gentrification in some inner-city neighbourhoods within the former socialist cities and it is expected that this process of urban change will affect socio-spatial rearrangement of their urban space. In contrast to this, there are the voices of politicians and urban planners, who expect that some communist housing estates, which now have an average social status profile, will become immigration zones of socially weak families.

The above mentioned cases were examples of intra-urban migration, which can bring redistribution of population within the city and thus change the socio-spatial patterns. However, the internal urban structure is also influenced by immigration to or outmigration from the city. For instance, the immigration of socially weaker groups, often ethnic minorities, to recipient areas of inner cities might have a significant impact on urban social geography. The declining social status which increased with distance from the city centre, which characterised socialist cities, can be reshaped by the suburbanisation of rich households, which are now developing around Prague, Budapest and other post-communist cities.

Growing Social Inequalities in the Czech Republic and Prague

The socio-economic status of a population can be described by various indicators, such as education, profession or income. Income is often understood as the best indicator of well-being (remaining aware of the role of accumulated wealth in terms of property, savings, etc.), while the other characteristics can serve as a reasonable substitute when income data are not available. Education can significantly influence professional chances for an individual and profession influences the level of his or her income. However, university education does not assure that an individual will have a high standard of living. Contemporary society sees the level of well-being closely associated with the possibilities for consumption of goods or services sold on markets. It is income, which allows the realisation of consumption desires. Therefore, income characteristics can be seen as the most integral or aggregate expression of a potential for the realisation of well-being.

While income was not a major differentiating force within the population during communism, its role has been rapidly increasing during the transition to a market society. Income has been the characteristic of the social status of population most influenced by economic transformation. In my view, the rapid growth in income disparities in Czech society has been the most important factor behind the processes of socio-spatial differentiation in Prague. Therefore, there will be a focus on income characteristics in the following paragraphs. Unfortunately, the data about household incomes, which are most relevant for the analysis of socio-spatial differences in well-being, are very scarce. Furthermore, they are not available for smaller geographical areas, only for the whole country. They can, however, demonstrate the general process of social differentiation and polarisation in Czech society.

Table 1. Growing disparities in net monthly household incomes in the Czech Republic 1992–96

Income category	Income in CZK		Rel. to median		Income growth	
					nominal	real
	1992	1996	1992	1996	%	%
Bottom decile	2729	4457	0.41	0.37	63	− 12
Median	6697	12 150	1.00	1.00	81	6
Mean	7480	14 425	1.12	1.19	93	18
Top decile	13 046	27 303	1.95	2.25	109	34

Source: A study of MPSV (Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs of Czech Government), quoted in daily MF Dnes, 3 June 1997.
Notes: Incomes of bottom 10 per cent of households are lower or equal and incomes of top 10 per cent of households higher than incomes for bottom and top deciles given in Table.
CZK = Czech crowns.

Information about social differentiation in earnings in Prague, can be gained from figures for the employment of individuals. Earnings data have certain limitations as they show inequalities within the economically active population, abstracting from the inactive and unemployed. They also do not include incomes from other sources, such as property or bond ownership, or welfare payments. However, they do act as an indicator of social differences in Prague. Unfortunately, they are not available for geographical areas within Prague. However, they are broken down according to economic sector, occupational status and education. This allows us to formulate a conceptual relationship between the pattern of distribution of population according to employment and education in Prague, described with Census data from 1991 and the differentiation of earnings in Prague in 1996 according to economic sector, occupation and education, and outline a mechanism of increasing socio-spatial disparities in post-communist Prague. This will be dealt with in detail later in this paper.

Some of the evidence on increasing social disparities in the Czech Republic will now be presented, assuming, that the differentiation in Prague has been of the same or even higher rate. The inter-decile ratio of net monthly household income (ratio between income of the lowest and the highest decile) in the Czech Republic has increased from 4.68 in 1992 to 6.09 in 1996 (MPSV, 1997; Souček, 1997). Surprisingly, the inter decile ratio for 1996 was higher than in the UK five years earlier, where, in 1989–91, it reached 5.95 (Hamnett, 1996; inter decile ratio was calculated from gross normal weekly household pre-tax income), and much higher than in the Netherlands, where in 1994 it reached 4.23 (CBS—Regional Income Survey, quoted in Kruythoff *et al.*, 1997, p. 140). Table 1 shows increasing household income inequalities between 1992 and 1996 in the Czech Republic. While in 1992, 12 per cent of the households had incomes in a range plus or minus 10 per cent from the median (or 90–110 per cent of median), it was only 7 per cent of all households in 1996 (MPSV, 1997; Souček, 1997). The ratio of bottom decile to median income has decreased from 0.41 in 1992 to 0.37 in 1996 and the ratio of top decile to median income has risen from 1.95 in 1992 to 2.25 in 1996. While the income of bottom decile has decreased in real terms by 12 per cent, the income of top decile increased by 34 per cent.

Table 2. Average gross monthly earnings of employees in the regions (first half of 1997)

Region	Gross monthly earnings	Ratio to average %
Prague	12 438	121.8
Central Bohemia	10 252	100.4
South Bohemia	9 244	90.6
West Bohemia	9 551	93.6
North Bohemia	9 714	95.2
East Bohemia	8 951	87.7
South Moravia	9 283	90.9
North Moravia	9 690	94.9
Czech Republic average	10 208	100.0

Source: Czech Statistical Office.
Note: Gross monthly earning is given in Czech crowns.

Concerning Prague, employees in the capital city have the highest gross monthly earnings of all Czech regions (Table 2). However, not all Prague citizens benefit from these higher earnings. Some segments of the population, such as the unemployed, retired or those dependent on other social security benefits, have the same level of income as in the rest of country. Consequently, higher earnings in Prague indicate that individual income disparities will be higher in Prague than in any other region of the Czech Republic. The income differences would be even bigger if we included a strong group of affluent Western foreigners brought to the city by internationalisation and globalisation (Drbohlav & Sýkora, 1997; Sýkora, 1994). If we accept that higher income differences create better conditions for the development of socio-spatial disparities, Prague could become the most socially segregated region in the Czech Republic.

Gross monthly earnings from employment are differentiated by the economic sector, occupational status and education. The impact of age is less significant and plays its role primarily in the differentiation of earnings of individuals with more than secondary education. Tables 3 and 4 give the average gross individual monthly earnings of employees in selected economic sectors in the Czech Republic and Prague. Tables 5 and 6 give an insight into the differentiation of

Table 3. Average gross monthly earnings of employees in selected sectors of Czech economy (first half of 1997)

Sector of economy	Gross monthly earnings	Ratio to average %
Financial intermediation	17 758	173.96
Public administration	12 184	119.36
Construction	10 425	102.13
Transport and communication	10 775	105.55
Manufacturing	9 904	97.02
Retail, wholesale, repair	9 896	96.94
Health and other public and social services	9 740	95.42
Education	9 249	90.61
Agriculture	7 922	77.61
Average	10 208	100.00

Source: Czech Statistical Office.
Note: Gross monthly earning is given in Czech crowns.

Table 4. Average gross monthly earnings of employees in selected sectors of Prague economy (first half of 1997)

Sector of economy	Gross monthly earning	Ratio to average %
Financial intermediation	18 219	146.48
Public administration	13 610	109.42
Retail, wholesale, repair	13 340	107.25
Construction	12 652	101.72
Manufacturing	12 536	100.79
Real estate, renting and other business servicess	12 489	100.41
Other public and social services	11 276	90.66
Transport and communication	11 138	89.55
Health	10 819	86.98
Education	9 872	79.37
Hotels and restaurants	9 034	72.63
Agriculture	8 071	64.89
Average	12 438	100.00

Source: Czech Statistical Office.
Note: Gross monthly earning is given in Czech crowns.

earnings according to status of occupation (using International Standard Classification of Occupations ISCO-88) and the highest attained education.

Table 5 shows that occupational status is a very important (probably the most important) determinant of earnings disparities. Legislators, senior officials and managers have on average 3.4 times higher earnings than employees in elemen- tary occupations. Table 5 also shows gender inequalities in terms of incomes. Female employees generally have 20 per cent lower incomes than male employees. The impact of gender on disparities increases with growing occupational status.

Educational status has also begun to play an important role (Table 6). Earnings of employees with a doctoral degree are on average 2.8 higher than those employees with the lowest education (unfinished primary). In general, only employees with more than secondary education have above-average earnings (there are differences between male and female employees in the category of full secondary education).

The residential pattern in the city and socio-spatial differentiation are an outcome of household location behaviour. It can be expected that income differentiation of households will be higher than disparities between earnings of individuals (cf., Hamnett, 1996, Tables 2 and 9). Information presented in Tables 2–5 which shows the impact of regional geography, economic sectors, occu- pational status and education on disparities of earnings, is presented as an insight into factors that contribute to household income inequalities.

Transformation of the Housing System and Socio-spatial Differentiation

Why is housing so important for socio-spatial differentiation? The housing stock is differentiated according to its affordability to various social groups (and many other characteristics) and such types of housing are unevenly distributed in urban space. We can find areas with expensive villas, suburban single family houses, inner-city neighbourhoods with dilapidated tenement housing or

Table 5. Average gross monthly earnings of employees in Prague (1996) according to International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO-88)

Occupational status	Total		Male employees			Female employees		
	CZK	Relative to total average %	CZK	Relative to male average %	Relative to total average %	CZK	Relative to female average %	Relative to total average %
Legislators, senior officials and managers	25 279	193.49	28 001	196.80	214.32	19 643	167.96	150.35
Professionals	17 697	135.45	20 344	142.99	155.71	15 772	134.86	120.72
Technicians and associate professionals	13 292	101.74	15 437	108.50	118.16	11 727	100.27	89.76
Clerks	10 865	83.16	12 577	88.40	96.26	10 506	89.83	80.41
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	9 439	72.25	10 430	73.31	79.83	8 391	71.75	64.23
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	7 217	55.24	8 294	58.29	63.48	7 019	60.02	53.72
Craft and related trades workers	10 865	83.16	11 122	78.17	85.13	7 807	66.76	59.76
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	10 511	80.45	11 141	78.30	85.27	8 063	68.94	61.71
Elementary occupations	7 421	56.80	8 513	59.83	65.16	6 469	55.31	49.51
Total	13 065	100.00	14 228	100.00	108.90	11 695	100.00	89.51

Source: Czech Statistical Office, Survey of earnings of employees, 1996.
Notes: (1) Data for employees with 1700 and more paid working hours. Prague's sample was 72915 persons.
(2) CZK = Czech crowns.

Table 6. Average gross monthly earnings of employees in Prague (1996) according to the highest attained education

The highest attained education	Total		Male employees			Female employees		
	CZK	Relative to total average %	CZK	Relative to male average %	total average %	CZK	Relative to female average %	total average %
Unfinished primary	8 097	61.97	8 917	62.67	68.25	6 951	59.44	53.20
Full primary	8 117	62.13	9 238	64.93	70.71	7 196	61.53	55.08
Secondary vocational without GCE	10 280	78.68	10 970	77.10	83.96	7 927	67.78	60.67
Secondary without GCE	9 750	74.63	11 132	78.24	85.20	8 459	72.33	64.75
Secondary vocational with GCE	11 053	84.60	11 888	83.55	90.99	10 327	88.30	79.04
Secondary general with GCE	12 962	99.21	14 588	102.53	111.66	12 025	102.82	92.04
Secondary specialised with GCE	13 060	99.96	14 460	101.63	110.68	11 865	101.45	90.82
Post-secondary	14 937	114.33	16 431	115.48	125.76	14 117	120.71	108.05
University—master	20 878	159.80	23 078	162.20	176.64	17 186	146.95	131.54
Postgraduate—doctoral	22 535	172.48	24 150	169.74	184.85	18 815	160.88	144.01
Total	13 065	100.00	14 228	100.00	108.90	11 695	100.00	89.51

Source: Czech Statistical Office, Survey of earnings of employees, 1996.
Notes: (1) Data for employees with 1700 and more paid working hours. Prague's sample was 72915 persons.
(2) CZK = Czech crowns.
(3) GCE = General Comprehensive Examination.

districts with flats in high-rise council housing. The existing structure of housing creates conditions for the residential choice of the population. These conditions have different meanings for different social groups. Affluent households can see them as an opportunity to find a nice place to live in. However, with decreasing wealth households become more and more constrained in their residential choice.

The spatial distribution of various housing types changes with time and influences the spatial distribution of opportunities for residential choice within the population. Residential properties have a certain life span. During their life they can be kept in a good order or deteriorate rapidly. Sound housing can fall into disrepair and, in social terms, filter down from middle-class occupants to poor families. Housing can be demolished and replaced by new structures or renovated. The impact of urban renewal and gentrification on the changing urban social geography has been widely discussed in the urban and housing literature. Construction of new residential areas in the suburban zone is another process of urban change, which reshapes the spatial pattern of housing and conditions for residential choice. Therefore, in this analysis of mechanisms of socio-spatial differentiation in Prague which will be presented in the next section, special attention will be given to the supply of new and renovated housing.

In modern societies, housing is understood to be an important condition of life. Governments declare political responsibility in the field of housing, ranging from the protection of certain legal rights (for instance, concerning eviction) to active involvement in the form of rent policies, financial support to housing consumption or direct provision of public housing. One of the major reasons for government intervention in housing is to achieve and maintain a certain level of social justice, especially in terms of assuring access to housing for disadvantaged groups. Governments have also become aware of residential segregation. A certain level of socio-spatial disparities is often seen as undesirable, and policies favouring dispersal are applied in response. Public intervention can have various forms, such as zoning in the local physical plan, municipal land allocation policy, provision of infrastructure, care for the residential environment or the construction of public housing in particular areas. Housing policies and other instruments used by governments are often used to mitigate the impact of the natural, market-based processes that increase socio-spatial differences and segregation of various social groups.

In the context of post-communist countries, transformations in the housing system and changing priorities of housing policy have an important impact on residential choice by the population, and thus shape the character of processes of socio-spatial differentiation. While communist housing policy attempted to reduce differences in access to housing (through rent and price regulation and government intervention in dwelling allocation in the rental sector) as well as to homogenise housing supply (through the provision of standardised dwellings in state and co-operative housing), transformation policies, which aimed to alleviate public intervention and create conditions for market-based housing supply, assumed that it is natural that housing is differentiated according to desires, preferences and the financial strength of its inhabitants. There was an implicit philosophy that the market will bring adequate and efficient allocation of housing and will stimulate correct forms of new housing production.

The transformation of the housing system has been shaped by privatisation, rent deregulation and a withdrawal of the state from direct housing provision

(Eskinasi, 1995; Reiner & Strong, 1995; Sýkora, 1996b; Sýkora & Šimoníčková, 1994). The role of the newly formulated housing policy is: (1) to provide support for housing consumption in the form of subsidies orientated to housing pur- chase by the affluent and housing allowances for the low-income population; and (2) to provide public housing directly only to the most disadvantaged population. The public policy in housing creates conditions which stimulate the increase of socio-spatial disparities. Some examples of how contemporary Czech housing policy contributes to processes of socio-spatial differentiation will now be presented.

Rent policy is one of the fields which has a direct impact on socio-spatial change. Rent is regulated in the case of unlimited leases signed during commu- nism for Czech citizens in public and private rental housing. Market rents can be charged for newly-built housing, for leases to foreigners and for newly signed leases after a flat is vacated. In Prague, nearly 60 per cent of the total number of apartments are at present under rent control. The rent ceiling has been deregu- lated step-by-step and deregulation will continue until the market level is reached in all locations. In Prague, the rent ceiling increased more than 14 times in 1991–98, involving nearly a 500 per cent increase in real terms. From the socio-spatial segregation point of view, rent deregulation has stimulated internal migration within the city. Low-income households are seeking smaller flats in locations where the rent is not likely to increase as much as in the city centre. It has been argued by Czech politicians that households should find housing that corresponds to their level of income. Rent deregulation stimulates growth in socio-spatial disparities and the pace of this process depends on the speed of rent ceiling increase.

There is another way in which rent policy influences socio-spatial change. Since the early 1990s, there has been a duality between regulated rent in the housing sector and deregulated rent for non-residential spaces. Another duality has existed between the regulated housing rent of the domestic population and the market rent paid by foreigners. The lease of non-residential space or luxury housing to foreigners brings many times higher revenues than regulated hous- ing rent. The private owners of properties are sensitive to such disparities, which have particularly developed in attractive locations in the city centre and some inner-city neighbourhoods. Consequently, valuable properties become the sub- ject of renovations and refurbishment into offices or luxury housing, which often includes the removal of all original tenants. Commercialisation, i.e. the replace- ment of regulated housing by offices and shops, has reduced the proportion of the less affluent population in attractive locations. Gentrification, i.e. the replace- ment of the original population by high-income people, especially foreigners, substantially contributed to a change in the social profile of neighbourhoods. The operation of the price mechanism within the re-established property market revealed the gap between the highest possible revenues and the current incomes (Sýkora, 1993), stimulating physical redevelopment and a change of functions or tenants, which directly influences socio-spatial restructuring.

The other factor that has influenced processes of socio-spatial segregation, has been tenants' rights protection, which is relatively strong. Most lease contracts are unlimited in time. They date from the pre-1989 period and the government has hesitated to change their status to standard lease contracts for a given period. These contracts concern both public housing stock and reprivatised rental housing. Landlords cannot terminate the contract unless there is a serious

reason, such as rent payment deferrals or sub-leasing of the flat without the landlord's approval. In these cases, the landlord must obtain a court order to evict tenants. However, owners can move out tenants from an apartment, for example if they intend to renovate the building and change it to large luxurious apartments leased or sold on an open market, but they must provide a replacement dwelling of the same standard for removed tenants. Tenants can refuse to accept replacement flats and both sides then seek court resolution. The protection of tenants' rights has inhibited forced migration and slowed down the pace of socio-spatial segregation.

Changes in housing finance, such as the withdrawal of the state from direct housing provision, termination of support for the new construction of co-operative housing and preference given to subsidising mortgages have impacted on the social status of newly-built residential areas. Despite mortgage interest subsidies, newly-constructed private housing is affordable only to the highest income group of households, because there is a huge disparity between prices of residential real estate and incomes of the population. The non-existence of state support for non-profit housing is another factor that contributes to the one-sided character of new housing that is built mainly for the most wealthy population (with the exception of a small segment of municipal social housing).

At the municipal level, local governments often apply measures which strengthen socio-spatial disparities. Some local governments allocate vacated municipal dwellings to households, which offer the highest rent in a competition. Often, a sum equal to an annual rent is required to be paid in advance. In such a case, there is no difference between the operation of a market and allocation of municipal housing. Households with high incomes acquire the best municipal housing in the best locations.

Concerning newly-constructed municipal housing, apartments are often allocated to households that are willing to cover part of the construction costs because of the lack of finance in local budgets. There is also a case in which the city of Prague behaved as a private investor. It financed the construction of a residential district in which the housing units were not offered to households on the waiting list, but sold on an open market. Housing was purchased by affluent people. Besides this being a very unusual relation between public housing and wealthy people, municipal government has actively produced an example of separation by social status.

Processes of Socio-spatial Differentiation in Post-communist Prague

The aim of this section is to analyse the main processes which contribute to the socio-spatial differentiation in post-communist Prague. These are:

(1) social mobility of households fixed in their residential locations;
(2) internal migration within the existing housing stock (with special attention to the segment of renovated properties);
(3) immigration to newly-constructed residential areas.

These processes have distinct mechanisms and possess their own, specific set of casual relations.

Their impact on the growth of socio-spatial disparities is different. The first contributes to the growth of disparities but does not change the spatial distribution. In other words, it sharpens contrast in the existing pattern. The two

others reshape the social geography of Prague. The second contributes to the change by rearranging the existing pattern (an extreme and rather hypothetical case can be an inversion in the pattern). The third changes the spatial distribution by the addition of new areas with a distinct social character of their inhabitants.

Social Mobility of Households Fixed in their Residential Locations

The first mechanism of socio-spatial differentiation is produced by upward or downward social mobility of households which is not simultaneously accompanied by a change in residential location through migration. With growing income differences between households of highly educated people working in better paid sectors of the economy and households of people with lower education and elementary manual occupations in low-paid sectors of the economy, there will be increasing disparities in socio-economic status (measured by income) between areas with higher concentration of these groups. Many neighbourhoods are socially mixed and there will be households with upward as well as downward income mobility. Nevertheless, in areas with a high proportion of well-educated population employed in the tertiary sector, upward mobility will prevail, while in neighbourhoods with a high share of manual workers and lower education of the population the downward trend will be stronger.

There are two preconditions for the operation of this mechanism: an increase in income disparities and an uneven distribution of population according to social status in urban space. Both these conditions have been fulfilled in post-communist Prague. First, since the beginning of economic reform in the Czech Republic, there have been growing income disparities between better and less educated professionals and manual workers, etc. Second, despite the homogenisation during communism, Prague has always had distinct socio-spatial patterns. Figures 1, 2 and 3 show the spatial distributions of university educated people, those employed in the tertiary sector and manual workers in 1991, right at the beginning of economic reform. These figures, which are based on data from the Census in 1991, present spatial patterns at the end of the development of a socialist city and at the beginning of the influence of transformation policies.

I assume, that the above-described mechanism generates growing income disparities between areas in the north-western sector of Prague, characterised by a concentration of the well-educated population and in the tertiary sector employed population and areas in the north-east, south-east and south-west with higher proportions of manual workers and people with lower education. Therefore, this mechanism of socio-spatial change sharpens disparities within the existing socio-spatial pattern.

Migration within the Existing Housing Stock (with Special Attention to the Segment of Renovated Properties)

Migration of population can contribute significantly to changes within the existing socio-spatial pattern, provided that populations which move in and out of an area differ in their social status. There are two distinct model situations. First, affluent people move to already wealthy neighbourhoods and poor people are driven to less wealthy areas. In this way, the contrast in existing socio-spatial differences is sharpened. Second, rich people displace low-income households in

neighbourhoods that are the subject of reinvestment and renovation and that are upgraded from formerly lower status areas to luxury residential districts. This process of gentrification can significantly change the position of such an area within the urban social geography.

The redistribution of people differentiated in their social status in urban space is determined by the operation of the housing system and the housing market in particular. The introduction of property market mechanisms to some segments of housing and deregulation programmes of housing policy have stimulated migration, which contributes to the increase in socio-spatial dispari-ties in Prague. In the following paragraphs, several examples will be given relating to the transformation in the housing system and the social status of migrants.

Less affluent households, who live in private, municipal and co-operative apartment houses, are constrained in their residential choice. They cannot purchase a house or apartment or rent a vacant apartment for market rent. The operation of the property market does not allow their migration to areas with homes in ownership or districts with renovated apartments. Therefore, it is very unlikely that the social status of wealthy districts will decline due to immigration of less affluent people.

Often, the only option for the migration of less affluent families is to exchange flats with another household. However, the exchange has to be approved by landlords. Landlords often condition their approval on the change in lease contracts. Most current leases date from pre-1990, are unlimited in time and rent is subject to government regulation. Landlords require time limited contracts and indexed rent, that would be, for example, double the regulated level. The more attractive the neighbourhood, the greater the requirements of landlords concerning lease length and rent. The operation of the price mechanism selects households which can afford to move to particular areas within the city.

The usual reasons for exchange include moving from a smaller to a larger flat in the case of a growing family or moving from larger to smaller flats in the case of a pensioner, who cannot pay a high rent for a large apartment occupied by a single person. Real estate agencies in Prague and other large cities in the Czech Republic report that with an increasing rent ceiling, there is a growing desire to exchange large flats for small ones. Rent deregulation presses low-income households to move out from large central city apartments into smaller flats in less expensive areas. The government rent policy thus contributes to the socio-spatial differentiation in Prague.

Although the formal arrangement of flat exchange does not include any form of financial transfer, informal financial compensations between households paid for extra rooms are a part of many transactions. The location of apartments has important implications for the price. Compensations are higher in attractive neighbourhoods than in less desirable places. The sensitivity of compensations to urban ecology is another example of price mechanism that constrains some households in their residential choice.

There is a very specific process of population change within the segment of properties that are being renovated (reasons for reconstruction have been discussed earlier in this paper). The reconstruction often involves the removal of households with lower incomes to replacement flats in less attractive areas, usually to high-rise apartment blocks in estates built during communism. Refurbished apartments are then leased or sold to wealthy people, often to

foreigners. The process of gentrification is limited in the city-wide scope, however, it brings radical social as well as physical changes in certain neigh- bourhoods (Sýkora, 1996a). Gentrification is concentrated to particular small areas in the inner city and significantly changes the social profile of their inhabitants.

The social upgrading of certain neighbourhoods is strengthened by commer- cialisation, in which housing with regulated rent is replaced by offices, shops and restaurants, often focused on high-income customers. The original popu- lation is displaced by commercial uses, while the population of higher income gentrifiers increases further. Commercialisation also contributes to increasing living costs and stimulates outmigration of the least wealthy households. In areas which are being gentrified and commercialised, a duality of population can be observed: indigenous local people are contrasted with newcomers-gentrifiers, mostly foreigners employed in offices in renovated formerly residential buildings.

Gentrification and commercialisation have developed in areas which had a higher social status in pre-communist times, and despite certain decline in their relative position within urban social geography during communism they belong to the better residential addresses in Prague. Therefore, gentrification in Prague contributes to the reshaping of the socio-spatial pattern, but does not produce an inversion in the spatial distribution of the wealthy and poor population.

Immigration to Newly-constructed Residential Areas

Significant changes in socio-spatial differences can be generated by new housing construction, provided that the social status of people who move into new housing differ from the existing pattern. In post-communist Prague and its hinterland, there are two forms of new housing which deserve attention. First, the construction of suburban single-family houses for the rich. Second, apart- ments for sale in condominiums, that are constructed in the inner city to fill in gaps in the existing built environment. Condominium apartments are accessible only to people with high incomes.

Suburbanisation in Prague and its metropolitan region is not a massive process, in which large numbers of single family houses would be constructed for the middle classes. The development of residential suburbanisation has been very slow, limited by the low purchasing power of the population. Suburban housing is affordable only to affluent households. Even the introduction of mortgages, which are supported by state contributions that cover part of the interest, has not stimulated massive development of suburban family housing. Mortgages for new single family houses are available only to households with very high incomes.

The absolute number of newly-built suburban homes is low. However, it must be seen in the context of the radical decline in new housing construction in the Czech Republic after 1990 (Sýkora, 1996b). Luxury homes for rich people account for a substantial share in new housing construction and they are concentrated in particular areas, namely in the suburban zone of Prague. The intensity of housebuilding in Prague's hinterland is the highest in the country.

Suburbanisation has developed around several small settlements in the outer parts of Prague and behind the city administrative boundary. Whole new residential districts with expensive housing are established as attachments to

villages and the existing residential environment is filled in with individual luxury villas. The suburban settlements with newly emerged residential districts now consist of two very distinct types of areas with a contrasting population— rich newcomers and lower income and less educated indigenous inhabitants. It depends on the scale of our perspective, whether we assess this development as segregation within suburban settlements or as a creation of a social mix.

In an analysis of migration between Prague and its hinterland, Šritr (1997) confirmed that the suburban zone is now gaining a better educated population with high incomes, who move there from the core of the Prague region. Residential suburbanisation contributes to a reversal of the traditional socio-spa-tial pattern of the socialist city with the socio-economic status of the population declining with distance from the centre.

For some, new construction of houses with apartments for sale (condomini-ums) in inner-city neighbourhoods and some housing estates from communist times create a viable alternative to suburbanisation. This form of living particu-larly attracts a generation of local 'yuppies', who have relatively high earnings, prefer urban life linked to their professional career and value the vicinity of urban cultural opportunities. This kind of housing is affordable for only a small segment of affluent people, such as entrepreneurs, managers, professionals and well-paid employees in foreign firms. However, it can be purchased by a broader income group of population than suburban single family homes.

Condominiums are usually built in neighbourhoods which already have an average or higher than average social status. However, their construction is dispersed, and not clustered in small areas, as in the case of gentrification of old properties. The local property developers in this segment of the residential market as well as their customers (mainly wealthy Czechs), are less sensitive to the existing ecological pattern in Prague than foreigners in the case of property renovation and gentrification. On the micro-scale, new residential complexes form enclaves of a well-off population in the existing ecological structure of the city. On the macro-scale they strengthen existing socio-spatial disparities.

Conclusion

The social geography of post-communist Prague is characterised by increasing socio-spatial disparities. The major factors behind processes of socio-spatial differentiation are the rapid increase in income inequalities and the transform-ation in the housing system, particularly the growing impact of property market operations on housing. The increase in socio-spatial disparities is produced by three mechanisms. First, social mobility of households fixed in their residential locations sharpens disparities within the existing socio-spatial pattern. Second, internal migration within the existing housing stock strengthens the existing pattern. In the case of gentrification, the relative position of neighbourhoods in the social geography of Prague have changed. However, it does not produce an inversion in the spatial distribution of wealthy and poor population. Third, immigration of affluent people to newly-constructed residential areas of subur-ban homes or urban condominiums creates segregated districts of a wealthy population in the existing ecological structure of the city. While new residents of condominiums strengthen existing socio-spatial disparities, suburbanisation con-tributes to a changing social-status relation between a traditionally stronger urban core and weaker outer urban districts and surrounding settlements.

Social upgrading has been especially strong in the case of neighbourhoods that exhibited high social status prior to the communist period (Moscheles, 1937) and declined during communism (the decline was often accelerated by the subdivision of large apartments of wealthy bourgeois families and their redistribution to working-class households and by under-maintenance of these properties that followed (Sýkora, 1993). Since 1989, the social status of these neighbourhoods has been increased by the social mobility of its indigenous population, through gentrification of renovated properties and infills of condominiums. From a geographical point of view, this includes the central city, some inner-city areas and the north-west sector of Prague, whose traditional position within the social geography of Prague has been strengthened.

Social upgrading has been very selective and concentrated, affecting only some inner-city areas. However, most of the inner-city population lives in neighbourhoods characterised by stagnation or decline. The communist housing estates, in which about two-fifths of Prague's population is concentrated, have not been subject to major social changes. However, their relative position within the urban social geography has declined. Furthermore, there are signs of their differentiation. While at some housing estates new apartment houses for a relatively affluent population are being constructed, residential districts with higher concentrations of manual workers and with worse accessibility by public transport show signs of decline.

The outer city and suburban areas have undergone important transformations. Provided that suburbanisation of affluent people continues, the social status of population in the suburban belt will upgrade relative to other urban zones in Prague. In this case, the socio-spatial pattern can be reshaped on the macro-scale. The most affluent people will live in the centre, in some inner-city neighbourhoods, especially in the north-west, and in suburban areas, while the lower-social status population will occupy large zones of the inner city and housing estates from communist times. However, the built environment and the social geography of Prague is very heterogeneous on the micro-scale, and this might weaken the impact of macro-trends in the urban socio-spatial restructuring.

Socio-spatial differentiation can be slowed or reversed by public intervention into housing provision and allocation. At present, the growing socio-spatial differences are understood by politicians, urban planners and the general population as a natural outcome of market mechanisms. Segregation is not perceived as a problem and is not a theme of public discussion. It is not dealt with in either the master or strategic plans of the city of Prague nor in municipal or government housing policy. There are no programmes which are explicitly designed to influence socio-spatial differentiation and to combat emerging segregation and separation. On the contrary, many transformation policies in housing were governed by implicit assumptions that social differences are low and the market will find the accurate balance, including the distribution of population in urban space. Privatisation of housing and rent deregulation create conditions for the growth of socio-spatial disparities. Through mortgage subsidies, the central government supports housing consumption of the affluent population and stimulates their separation in luxury residential districts. Local governments often behave as private landlords, with their main interest being to increase revenues from their property ownership and thus actively support residential segregation.

With the rapidly increasing income disparities and uncritical faith in the role

of the market in urban development and housing allocation, the relatively homogeneous socio-spatial structure of the socialist city has been transformed to a transitional city with increasing social divisions in urban space. However, according to the definition outlined by the editors of this special issue in their introductory paper, Prague cannot be considered as divided city now because the socio-spatial disparities are not considered to be a problem. The growing scepticism of the population about the unregulated market as the most accurate allocation mechanism can stimulate the concern about residential segregation in Prague. When this happens, it will be the right time for short-term, populist voices of politicians to take up the issue, discuss spatial concentration of poverty and wealth and propose programmes aimed at reducing the negative outcomes of segregation in urban space.

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