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EU 7 FP PROJECT GOVERNING URBAN DIVERCITY: CREATING SOCIAL COHESION, SOCIAL MOBILITY AND ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE IN TODAY'S HYPER-DIVERSIFIED CITIES (DIVERCITIES) – THE CASE OF WARSAW

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Urban places are principally considered to be diverse with respect to spatial organization, social structure and urban functions. In his classic essay "Urbanism as a way of life", L. Wirth, a leading German-born American Urban Sociologist, representative of the Chicago School of Sociology, identified heterogeneity as one of the four basic features of the city. He also stated that "*the beginning of what is distinctively modern in our civilization is best signalized by the growth of great cities*" (Wirth 1938), and that "*the city everywhere has been the centre of freedom and toleration, the home of progress, of invention, of science, of rationality*" (Wirth 1956). Urban social diversity is a complex and multi-layered phenomenon. While traditionally attributed mainly to class and ethnic divisions, its scope is being extended due to the growing

complexity of individual and group behavior, lifestyles and attitudes.

Today, diversity constitutes one of the key issues in the global discourse concerning cities and regions and becomes a buzz word characterizing urban socio-spatial structures. Diversity is an inherent feature of a contemporary metropolis - this is accompanied by a growing awareness of its intensification within urban societies. Diversity within the EU increases due to growing in-migration and spatial mobility; the phenomenon is becoming more elaborate owing to its complexity and constant change. New forms of ethnic diversification of cities result from factors that include: an increased level of population mobility (Syrett & Sepulveda 2011); increasing net migration and diversification of migration origin, ethnic and national groups concerned, their religion,

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languages, legal status and migratory channels (Vertovec 2007; Faist 2009); global and dynamic nature of migration, new social formations in the city; changing conditions and positions of immigrant and ethnic minority groups in the urban society (Vertovec 2010), as well as new power and political structures (Cantle 2012). Apart from these phenomena, our societies are becoming more heterogeneous due to demographic change (population aging), to the growing importance of the ideology of meritocracy, increasing recognition of diversified human identities and 'individualization' as a feature of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman 2000).

Aware of the above phenomena, on top of the term *super-diversity*, coined by Vertovec (2007) and referring primarily to cities with large shares of ethnic minorities, the DIVERCITIES project introduced the notion of *hyper-diversity*, meaning a diversification of population not only in socio-economic, social and ethnic terms, but also with respect to lifestyles, attitudes and activities (Tasan-Kok et al. 2014). Hyper-diversity covers gender and sexual preferences, 'race', culture, stages in the life cycle, class, education, socio-economic and family status (Fincher & Jacobs 1998). Lifestyles, attitudes and activities, becoming one of the most important challenges facing modern societies. It is often claimed in the literature that a well-governed social diversity may result in the development of cross-cutting social networks (Putman 2007), that it can contribute to creativity (Simonton 1999; Webber & Donahue 2001) and to economic growth, while immigration is important in conquering negative effects of population ageing.

Conceptual framework and research objectives

The 7th EU Framework Programme Project DIVERCITIES deals with urban heterogeneity at the neighbourhood level of fourteen cities, among which thirteen are European, and one North-American – Toronto, the latter constituting a model case of diversity governance. Seventeen scientific institutions have been

carrying out research for four years with the aim to answer the question whether *diversity works* if it is well-governed. The institution representing Warsaw and the Polish Partner was the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

The leading research question put forward in the project was: Under which conditions can urban hyper-diversity positively affect social cohesion, economic performance and social mobility of individuals and groups suffering from socio-economic deprivation?. To answer the question four basic research modules (work packages)¹ were constructed, each of them aiming at a comprehensive analysis of the research areas' social diversity. Again, the central question posed was whether social diversity is perceived as a positive phenomenon, rather a liability, or an irrelevant factor in the society's development.

The first analytical module concerned the issue of how policies deal with urban diversity. National and city-level policy discourses were analyzed – the development of diversity-related policy in the past decades was outlined with a focus on current local policies, bottom-up initiatives coordinated by public actors, NGOs, private persons or firms. The methods applied in this work package include a critical content analysis of policy documents, as well as in-depth interviews with policy-makers and representatives of city-level non-governmental organizations. The analyses in the following module basically refer to the success and failure of governance arrangements and initiatives in the cities under investigation. The projects looked at are aimed at enhancing social cohesion, fostering social mobility and strengthening the economic performance in socially deprived and diverse city neighborhoods. Interviews with representatives of the initiatives were carried out, and, where possible, direct on-the-spot inspections were made.

The contacts established during the above research were a point of departure for further field work within two modules – inhabitants

¹ Next to other work packages related to communication, organization, management, dissemination etc.

and entrepreneurs. Work package 'Fieldwork Inhabitants' aimed at describing and analyzing patterns of social cohesion and social mobility in the research areas. At least fifty in-depth interviews were carried out in each of the cities with the objective to find out what people moved into the area and whether the latter's specific local diversity was among the motives, how the residents use public space in the neighborhood and what types of social networks they established. The module 'Fieldwork Entrepreneurs' aimed at evaluating whether social diversity supported economic performance of the areas under study. Building on the evidence from forty in-depth interviews with local entrepreneurs, the structure of the clientele, development perspectives and relations with other firms were investigated.

The Warsaw case

The choice of the case study areas was in every city based on the same three criteria. The neighborhoods researched were to be socially diverse, socially deprived and at the same time characterized by a development dynamics. In Warsaw, the district of Praga Północ was chosen. Some research, however, was also carried out in Praga Południe and Targówek. Praga Północ, one of eighteen administrative districts in Warsaw, features large variations in social and economic status of its inhabitants, also showing signs of various aspects of social deprivation. Especially in the last years, the area is marked by dynamics, as evidenced by public and commercial investments, as well as an ongoing gentrification process. The specific 'vogue for Praga' is also stimulated by the availability of relatively inexpensive accommodation (in terms of rent and purchase cost), and a specific ambience with a touch of bohemian atmosphere and local folklore (Korcelli-Olejniczak et al. 2017; Korcelli-Olejniczak & Piotrowski 2015). Old Praga is an area where 'new residents' – students, artists, representatives of the middle class live side by side with long-term locals – the 'old residents'. In Praga Północ, poverty and other social dysfunctions, specific climate

and traditions encounter metropolitan development dynamics and vitality. Owing to these characteristics, Praga also begins to attract tourists (Derek et al. 2013; Korcelli-Olejniczak et al. 2016).

In three of the analytical project modules focus was put on Praga specifically, Work Package 4 which dealt with policy aims, considered the whole city, as well as a background national-level discourse. While researching initiatives and governance arrangements in Praga, emphasis was put on those projects which aimed at the enhancement of social cohesion. It was found that such initiatives were the most numerous in the area, while there was still a deficiency of projects focused on strengthening economic performance. In the research within 'Fieldwork inhabitants' and 'Fieldwork Entrepreneurs' modules, next to social diversity, the specificity of Praga Północ was considered – its inner-city location and social ambience as components of the area's development potential.

Results

The analyses carried out within the module focused on the governmental and non-governmental diversity discourse considered some basic characteristics and preconditions of Warsaw's historic development and the political context including the effects of socio-economic transformation of 1989 – the specificity of local social diversity, the legislative framework of the administrative system, the cultural/ideological background of national and local policy. Specifically, the following aspects were pointed to as those that shape the city's diversity and, consequently, also its diversity policy:

- Warsaw's ethnic and social composition, relative openness and accessibility of its society in the interwar period (1918-1939),
- the ideologically and politically restrictive closeness of the socialist era (1945-1989),
- the transformative process after 1989 which restores the idea of liberty and tolerance in the economic and political debate of interventionist and neo-liberal forces

Urban diversity policy in Warsaw is created under the conditions of a strong influence of the Catholic Church, a low ethnic diversity, but a large share of in-migrants from other regions of Poland, neoliberal forces within local government perceiving the city as an engine of economic growth, high level of human capital but a low level of social capital, trust and reciprocity within communities, population ageing and large socio-spatial polarization.

Correspondingly, when referring to Warsaw as a diverse city, focus is rather put on *urban divisions* (Bridge & Watson 2013) relating to class, economic and social status, sex/gender, age, disability and religious affiliation, than on ethnic diversity. The research carried out in Warsaw considers such aspects of social diversity as: socio-economic differentiation; generational diversity and family status; and cultural diversity related to lifestyle, options, choices, attitudes, and sexual orientation (Korcelli-Olejniczak et al. 2017). One of the major socio-demographic trends which contributes to social differentiation in Warsaw is related to the diversification of family biographies, identities, individual norms and lifestyles, a general ideological turn towards a 'liquidity' of values. The demographic patterns standing behind such processes, described as the Second Demographic Transition, in general lead to a decrease in birth rate and more differentiated forms of family arrangements.

The project's findings indicate that while the use of the term 'diversity' relates mainly to economic, cultural and ethnic aspects associated predominately with migration issues, there is no explicit policy strategy on diversity in Poland. The transformation of 1989 has brought about the emergence of a new division line within the Polish society – one between the 'winners' and the 'losers' of the transformation process. This division line applies to various societal categories and to space. Policy responses to the phenomenon include a rather liberal provision of unemployment benefits, disability pensions, early retirement schemes, and family support measures.

Since early 2016 a generous child benefits scheme was introduced – the 500+ program, directly dedicated to families needing social support or such with at least two children.

The discourse highlights integration as the most complex area of diversity policy. The focus on inclusion finds some reflection in the profiles of city-level governmental programs and in the allocation of resources. The discourse analysis conducted unveils the formal character of the former, the focus on non-discrimination and equal treatment, especially in gender, age and disability issues which evolved under the direct influence of EU legislation and recommendations. It is evident that there was a transfer of solutions used in the 'old' EU to Polish migration and integration policy and that the character of migration and cultural policy in Warsaw is clearly still very general.

The following types of diversity-related phenomena are identified and ranked according to their importance in the political discourse:

- socio-economic differentiation,
- inter-generational diversity,
- disability-based diversity,
- ethnic and cultural diversity,
- sex/gender-based diversity,
- diversity of lifestyles.

Based on these dimensions, there are three basic policy areas identified: *integration via education and cultural activities*, *inclusion via social support and housing policies*, and *active pro-diversity policy*. Referring to three logics of social planning introduced by Fincher and Iveson (2008), the analysis classifies examples of operational programs and other policy measures (Tab. 1).

Out of the presented, *Integration via education* should be considered the most complex area of diversity policy in Warsaw, as it corresponds to all three social logics as presented by Fincher and Iveson (2008), i.e. redistribution, recognition and encounter. It proposes various kinds of arrangements and programs that regard different social groups including children, elderly people, foreigners, disabled population, and students (Korcelli-Olejniczak et al. 2017).

Table 1. Diversity policy programs in Warsaw

	Planning for redistribution	Planning for recognition	Planning for encounter
Integration via education and culture	Warsaw Educational Development Program, Warsaw Cultural Education Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operational Programs Family and Seniors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The European House of Encounter for the Youth – a public institution which supports and initiates international cooperation of young people; - The Warsaw City Programme <i>Summer/Winter in the City</i>
Inclusion via social support	OP: Housing Policy aimed at groups with diversified housing needs, OP Development, Activeness, Self-reliance (social mobility), Local Systems of Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warsaw Program for disabled Population - Assistance to foreigners within social policy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Network program Universities of the Third Age
Active pro-diversity policy	International project: "Study in Warsaw", supports the recruitment of foreign students, internationalizing educational institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Policy programs in elaboration: Diverse Warsaw, Warsaw for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warsaw Multicultural Center

The research carried out in the framework of Work Package 5 – *Governance Arrangements and Initiatives* analyzed examples of bottom-up and top-down initiatives in Praga Północ and Południe. Out of the dozen projects presented, the majority aimed at enhancing social cohesion via integration and educational activities. An international cross-evaluation of all projects in 14 cities pointed to at least three initiatives which could constitute model cases, both with respect to their organization and goals achieved. Those were the Social Street Circus, organized by the Association Mierz Wysoko, the Neighbourhood Libraries project, and the Local Systems of Support governance arrangement, based on a cooperation between the city authorities and a consortium of highly qualified NGOs.

The evidence collected within Work Package 5 shows that such issues as the integration of ethnic minorities or the social mobility of women and elderly people find less reflection in local activities. While in the case of ethnic questions this only reflects the still low share of ethnic diversity in the case study

area, the underestimation of the question of professional mobility of the female population is to be treated as a considerable deficit. Social mobility is usually approached within initiatives directly combating poverty and social exclusion – homelessness and unemployment. Examples of such projects are carried out by the Open-Door association, the Salvation Army or the Job Centre for the Youth.

Although the above analyses show a certain difference in the public and non-public approach, the actions should rather be treated as complementary than contradictory.

Research within *Fieldwork Inhabitants* focused on how the case-specific social diversity of Praga Północ impacts the area's development and whether it can directly or indirectly be used by local authorities and other actors to enhance social cohesion and foster social mobility. Related to their everyday activities, functional ties and emotional attitude toward the area of residence, the research identified various groups of inhabitants, tracing their social networks and social solidarity patterns. In the first stage, specific

groups within the categories of 'old' and 'new residents'² are identified, such as *the ex-territorials, the alienated or the engaged*, characterized by different patterns of behavior, lifestyles and attitudes, as well as relation to their surroundings and co-residents. Searching for sources of social capital, the latter expressed by networking, cooperation and integration between the two diverging categories of residents. The analysis then distinguishes certain groups of inhabitants whose behavior and attitudes indicate such potential. It is found for example that there are specific functional relations established between the residents, based on basic needs and daily activities. These activities bring together *parents* of small children, and *dog-owners*, becoming the ground for seeking 'the common' and not 'the different'. Similarly, an emotional attitude toward the area of residence expressed by *wanderers*, who stroll around and explore while gradually developing a feeling of attachment, may lead to the formation of 'absent' or even other social ties (Korcelli-Olejniczak et al. 2017).

The fieldwork within Work Package 7, consisting of forty interviews aimed to answer the question: how the area's social diversity may support local economic performance. The research highlighted the situation of entrepreneurs in old Praga, their struggle with economic and social preconditions, the local social context, the type of clientele and overall changing consumer habits. As observed, the process of early-stage gentrification, as well as public and commercial investments and the Integrated Revitalization Programme implemented contribute to the dynamics of social,

economic and spatial change. The study shows both advantages and disadvantages of these processes, providing additional arguments to the discussion on social measures in urban planning.

Conclusions

Despite any criticism levelled at the project, DIVERCITIES should be treated as an extremely valuable contribution to scientific knowledge on urban communities and a meaningful input to applicative knowledge. Its significance is related to the way the difficult and sensitive aspect of urban social diversity is approached and how broadly its scope is understood, while reaching beyond common divisions according to class or ethnicity. The opportunity to conduct research on a sub-local level has allowed to collect original evidence about people and space, and then, to confront it with findings from other research areas. The 'learning from the other' aspect, despite context-related differences is an important achievement of the project. DIVERCITIES has proved to be successful in terms of its organizational instruments. The project's Policy Platform consisting of public and non-public consultants has supported the research at all its stages. It has also enabled a more direct dissemination of the project's results which see the light of day in discussions on urban policy at the city and district levels.

The research carried out in Warsaw allowed to elaborate a context-specific concept of local *hyper-diversity*, one that evades simple divisions based on socio-economic and demographic parameters. Such hyper-diversity, expressed by a complexity and dynamics of individual and group identities is a component of Warsaw's development potential. The city authorities can use the project's findings as a *stimulus* for more comprehensive activities aimed at diversity recognition and encounter.

The study of Praga Północ is a comprehensive field-work analysis presenting interesting, and often unexpected findings. The latter

² The 'old residents' are described here as those who have lived in Praga for at least 25 years (since before 1989), or are off-springs of such residents. Accordingly, the 'new residents' are those who have moved to the area later than 1989 from other districts of Warsaw, regions of Poland or from abroad. The two categories are a priori treated as typically different in terms of the level of cultural and human capital. The study, however, not only unveils similarities between the two categories, but shows how diversified they both are with respect to their attitude toward the surroundings and co-residents.

relate to the development potential of the area, its specificity and unique social diversity. Although the Warsaw authorities have already recognized the district's assets and started a process of its social and infrastructural revitalization, a deeper insight of social patterns may allow for a better utilization

of the local capital, for the sake of the city, all its resident groups and visitors.

Editors' note:

Unless otherwise stated, the sources of tables and figures are the authors', on the basis of their own research.

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