Future of post-socialist cities

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Why Post-Socialist?

Socialist city

- City shaped by top-down planning instead of market forces
- Disinvestment in the inner city
- Over-industrialised

Post-socialist city

- Lack of institutions and expertise for operating a market economy
- Deteriorated, “under-utilised” inner city
- Extensive brownfields

Two decades of rapid capitalist development

- Establishment of institutions
  - Parties, regulatory institutions, judiciary system
- Privatisation
- Decentralisation
- Deindustrialisation
- Capital investments

Still Post-Socialist?

- Spatial processes
  - Suburbanisation completed/in final stage
  - Gentrification advancing
  - Increasing segregation in the long run
- Rising rural-urban, centre-periphery disparities
  - Rise of new slums
- Governance fostering inequality
  - Race to the bottom for investments
  - Welfare policy targeting the (low-)middle class
  - Revanchism
  - Clientelism

~~Post-Socialism~~

Capitalism of the semi-periphery

Semi-periphery

Vision:

- Catching up with the core

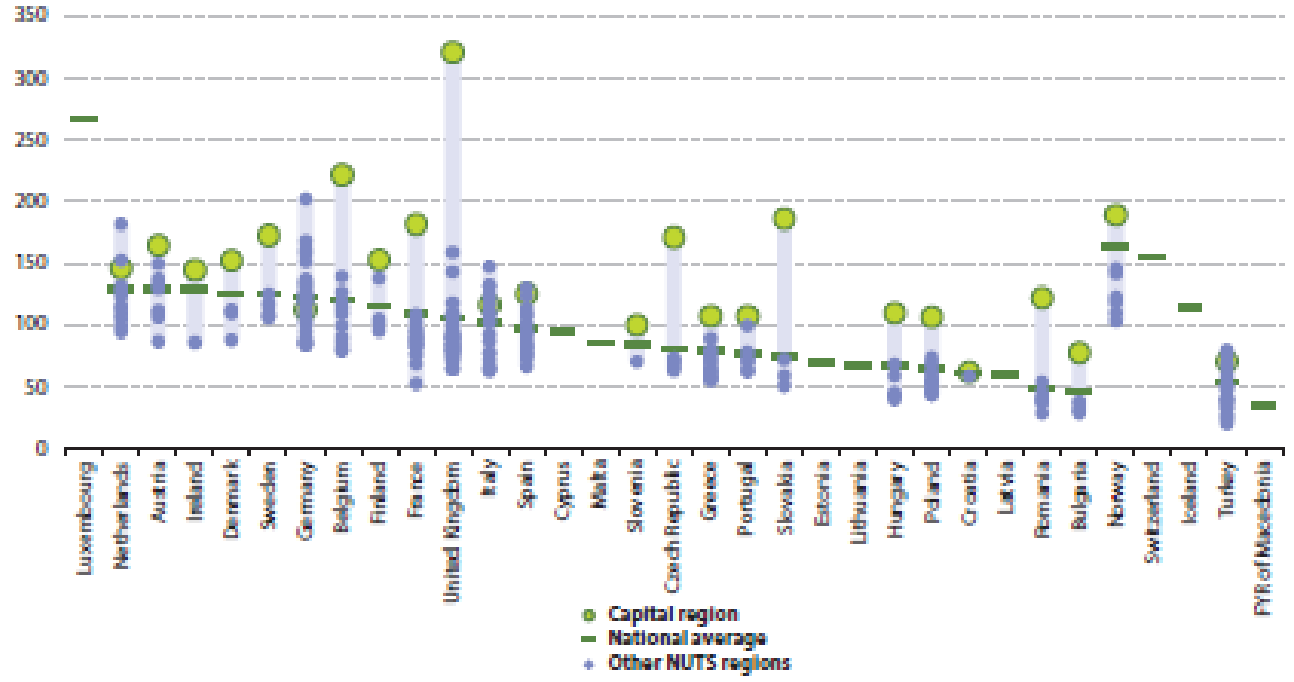
  → only some regions, localities

  → only some classes

- Competition for scarce resources
  - Low bargaining power with capital
  - Politics as entrepreneurship – clientelism
  - Redistribution of wealth to the sinking middle-class

Future of Central and Eastern European cities

- Uneven economic development
  - Rise of the tertiary sector
  - Rising real estate investment in the inner city, disinvestment on the periphery
- Growing socio-spatial disparities
  - City-level:
    - Attractive, liveable inner cities
    - Segregated and deprived periphery
- Politics as entrepreneurship
  - Conflict-avoidance and manipulation instead of representation & action
  - Intertwining of politics with domestic financial groups
- Growing social tensions
  - Punitive measures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Capital region
National average
Other NUTS regions

Effect of EU funds

- Social effect of territorially focused investments
  - Investments in the built environment do not trickle down
  - Housing problems
  - Focus on spectacular elements of projects
  - Neglect of social elements of the programmes
- Without the overhaul of public services EU funds remain ineffective
  - Too much rigidity for adaptation
  - Flexible enough to be abused by politicians and their clientele

Potential for change

- Change in global governance/politics
  - More transparent
  - More democratic
  - More egalitarian
  - Global regulation instead of local race to the bottom

Thank you for your attention.