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Ethnic Segregation within Cities

Structure, development and role of social work

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Abstract:

This paper outlines ethnic segregation in urban social space using the standard model of the Chicago School and complements recent empirical observations. Poverty areas, in particular, are ethnically highly segregated, while ethnic segregation has generally been declining for years. Starting points of social work are the promotion of education, counselling and sponsorship models as well as the promotion of participation in local political processes. On the one hand, they can mitigate the negative effects of ethnic segregation and, on the other, promote social advancement in a sustainable manner.

Keywords: Ethnic segregation, social space, education promotion

1- Introduction

Cities were and are places of immigration for both economic and political reasons. In recent literature, therefore, both historical processes and current developments have received increased attention (see, for example, the anthologies by Gesemann/Roth 2009 and 2018). Social work was and is in this context - think of Jane Addams' Chicago Hull House - often and from the beginning challenged. Due to its presence in the topic, Social Work has currently experienced a high public and political perception and recognition in the course of the immigration of refugees. This includes special challenges like education, housing, and successful access to labor market (Schönig 2017, 2018).

The following article focusses on the structure and process of ethnic segregation in urban social space and on reflections on the role of social work. The aim is to show connections and to classify their options for action in both theoretical and empirical perspective.

2. The Standard Model and its Current Relevance

Segregation in the social space is the spatial segregation of groups of persons according to their social status, age and ethnic origin. Accordingly, the more similar people are to their neighbours (baseline

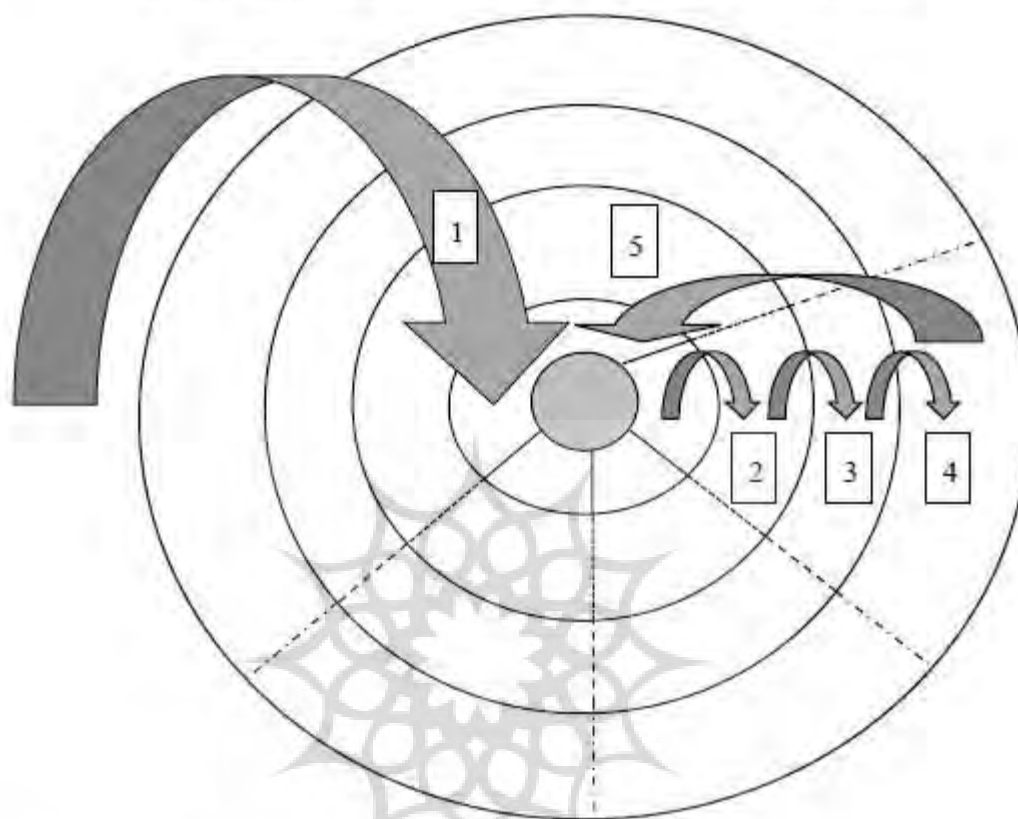
homophilia), the closer they tend to live to one another (base-line homophilia), and the longer they live in the same neighborhood (inbreeding homo-philia), the stronger this correlation becomes (Schönig 2014, 55ff; Schönig 2018a). Conversely, a large difference in social status, age and ethnic origin leads to an increase in spatial distance. In segregation, spatial proximity to the same and spatial distance to the foreign thus stand side by side.

In the standard model of the Chicago School (Park 1950), which continues to be a reference for the theory of ethnic integration in cities (Gestring 2014, p. 313), immigrants are initially placed in the so-called transit zone, i.e. in a ring of poorer and industrially shaped residential areas surrounding the inner city. For Park, these immigrant districts are natural areas that inevitably emerge and in which ethnically shaped communities are formed. In this model, the immigrants are initially arranged at the bottom of the hierarchy and move into ethnically segregated areas of the transition zone, partly voluntarily in order to use social networks there, partly unwillingly, because in other neighborhoods they have no chances on the housing market (Farwick 2014; Häußermann/Siebel 2001). The concept of cities and districts of arrival argues similarly today (Saunders 2011; Schönig 2018). In the ring-shaped transition zone, the individual migrant groups will thus occupy sectors that can be imagined as pie pieces, depending on their origin. These pieces of cake are highly segregated mono-ethnic

residential areas that experience per-manent immigration as a result of subsequent migration.

If the migrants succeed in social advancement, the successful immigrants will succes-sively move to better residential locations on the outskirts of the city and increasingly acquire residential property (Dangschat 2014, pp. 66 et seq.; see Hanhörster 2014, pp. 241 - 248 for the example of Turkish homeowners). It is then spoken of a cascade-like

migration of the newcomers to the outskirts of the city. The figure illustrates this overall process of ethnic segregation in the basic model. The first step is immigration into the transition zone, i.e. the ring around the inner-city center, also known as center business district (1). As social advancement increases, the successful migrants then migrate to the outskirts of the city (2 to 4). The further they are from the edge of the city, the less important are the ethnic boundaries that separate the individual sectors within the rings. These sector boundaries are therefore very dense towards the city center and very permeable towards the periphery. As a result of this migration of successful migrants, they live more widely scattered on the outskirts of the city and thus the ethnic segregation in the city as a whole decreases. Conversely, the less migrants succeed in social advance-ment, the less they will leave their mono-ethnic residential area and the more segregated they will live.

Figure: Ethnic Segregation in Chicago School's Classic Modell

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Recent research points out remarkable trends and effects that shape current segregation processes, especially in the context of migration (Terpoorten 2013, 31-34; Friedrichs 2014). For example, segregation is stronger where the housing market is comparatively relaxed (e.g. structurally weak, shrinking cities) because fluctuation allows more sorting. It is precisely in these problem cities that there is a fatal tendency to consolidate poverty and segregation. Conversely, a high

rent level in new contracts slows down mobility, so that the segregation trend tends to be weaker in rich, expanding cities with high rent levels.

It should also be pointed out that the standard model has only limited validity today, at least in the German immigration scene of prospering large cities, since its basic assumption - immigration and the permanent retention of initially status-low population groups - is questionable. Instead, empirical studies show a more ethnically and socio-economically diverse composition of immigrants. In the case of high social status, settlement takes place directly in higher-status residential areas and, in addition, there is a shorter stay until the respective city is reduced as an "intermediate stage" of international or transnational migration biographies" (Fina/Schmidt-Veltin/Siedentop 2014, p. 381). In contrast to the standard model, a much more differentiated process of segregation can be observed today "as a spatial manifestation of location patterns of specific immigrant groups" (Fina/Schmidt-Veltin/Siedentop 2014, p. 397) up to the gentrification of the transition zone, in which higher-status immigrants have a share (5 in the figure).

Overall, empirical studies show that ethnic segregation tends to lose importance (cf. the empirical findings in Helbig/Jähnen 2018, pp. 11ff. and 32-35); it is superimposed and dominated by socio-economic segregation. From this follows: The higher the social status of migrants, the better they are integrated and the more they are embedded in other social milieus, the lower the remaining ethnic

segregation: more than ever before, people move to a neighborhood that is socio-economic or demographically suitable and look less at the appropriate migration background of the inhabitants.

The more recent concept of transnational urbanism is of significance, as it were, as a counter thesis to the loss of significance of ethnic segregation. This approach also assumes that cities are extremely diverse from an ethnic point of view. However, ethnic segregation is not in the process of disappearing, but is strongly linked to the issue of an increasing polarization of society. Thus, the focus of transnational urbanism is on a new, ethnically influenced, very diverse and multi-problem urban underclass (Williams 2016, p. 20). Due to its complex problems, this ethnic segregation also poses a new challenge for the municipalities and social work in this massiveness. The ethnically extremely diverse neighborhoods and their cohesion (super diverse neighborhoods; Dahlvik 2017, Geldof 2016; ICEC 2018, Wacquant 2014) must first be understood before they can be helped: Their diversity is becoming increasingly diverse (diversification of diversity). Ultimately, if the migrants succeed in social advancement, they will tend to leave their transition zones and settle scattered throughout the urban area; then ethnic segregation will lose its significance. If, on the other hand, social advancement is not successful, they remain in ethnically segregated, socially disadvantaged and disadvantaged urban districts.

3. Local politics and the role of social work

Against this background, municipal policy approaches to ethnic segregation are theoretically well founded. "From the models of Simmel and Park, fields of action for integration policy at the local level can be directly derived" (Gestring 2014, p. 314), especially with regard to housing, education and labor market policy. However, the municipalities in each of these three prominent policy fields are clearly limited, since other actors (the states in the school sector, the various housing providers on the housing market and commercial employers on the labor market) pursue their own interests. The municipalities are therefore often referred only to a moderating role in the context of a governance concept (Gestring 2014, p. 322; Dahme/Wohlfahrt 2009, p. 63ff.). On the other hand, the special, targeted promotion of ethnically poor areas and the people living there has long been the political starting point of the European Union, the Federal Government and the States (Kocks 2014).

A central topos of local politics in the context of ethnic segregation is the different ability of local residents to deal with conflict. In residential areas of the upper middle class, resistance to the settlement of refugees, for example (as has recently been the case against housing construction for young families and students) is massive and politically very effective due to personal ties and resistance. The population living there in fact has "a kind of veto power" (Häußermann 2006, p. 19)

against unpleasant decisions. For ex-ample, a study on the distribution of refugees in the Cologne city area (Janecek 2016) shows a concentration of high proportions in exactly that transition zone around the city center in which many poor areas also lie - an abomination that was certainly not the aim of local integration policy. As a result, it is precisely those parts of the city that bear the brunt of the integration work that are low in status and resources as poverty-stricken areas.

In the ethnically segregated and as a rule also lower-status districts, the municipality reacts with peace and communication concepts in which social work in particular is in charge or at least integrated. This opens up a broad field of activity for municipal policy in various fields such as education, cultural, social, youth and labor market policy, with the focus here on educational segregation (Schönig 2016). This only applies, however, if the municipality is financially capable and willing to act. It is often unable or unwilling to act with the necessary determination due to a budget security concept or ideological blockades, especially since other groups of actors (citizens' initiatives, volunteers) have different effects on this governance process in different phases and make a coherent overall concept all the more difficult (Gestring 2014; cf. the case studies in Speth/Becker 2016, pp. 16-34).

4. Sketch of individual courses of action

The multitude of approaches to social work in the context of ethnic segregation cannot be exhaustively discussed here. With regard to the findings of segregation theory and empirical research, however, some approaches can be highlighted as central



a first aspect is the promotion of education. Ethnic segregation is particularly problematic if it is also educational segregation, i.e. if the formal educational status in the ethnically influenced districts is lower than that in the city as a whole. To reduce educational segregation, there is a double strategy (Morris-Lange/Wendt/Wohlfahrt 2013, 22 - 48): Successful action plans are based, on the one hand, on the targeted promotion of districts and schools with a high burden type. Here, additional resources are provided in the social space, in the school environment and in the school equipment, which are intended to compensate for the high social burden and the lack of social capital. On the other hand, action plans should be based on pedagogical concepts in schools. This does not amount to additional offers and resources, but to a different, life-world-oriented way of working together with the pupils and their parents. More than ever, it is the task of the schools to participate in the local educational landscape, to integrate the specific social capital locally and to hope for long-term success - the schools are connected with their social space and the other local actors in a kind of community of fate (Schönig 2016).

What is important here is that the schools - especially among the ascension-oriented migrants - enjoy a special trust that is a pound, but also a burden. They should be aware of this when they act in the social space. Politicians have systematically strengthened the position of schools in recent years (afternoon care, expansion of school social

work, etc.). In addition, in view of the competitive pressure on the labor market and the pressure on grades at universities, parents with a migrant background demand that schools act consistently in order to give their children better opportunities. In this context, school social work is of particular importance. With its social space orientation, it takes up local problems and resources on the one hand in order to use them in case work with pupils and parents. In addition, it can also become more involved in local networks and make problems a public issue in the sense of social work policy. Local educational landscapes, as propagated by the German Children and Youth Foundation (2013) since the mid-2000s and accompanied with remarkable effort, are a good starting point to concentrate on educational resources, problems and segregations.

In addition, counselling and sponsorship models are possible and meaningful in individual cases, as they give children and young people access to the world outside their ethnically segregated district. Here - as with the Kölner Coach e.V. (2013) - the targeted promotion of skills among pupils ideally goes hand in hand with parental work. In this way the parents are involved in the support and can make it their own concern. Without the support of the parents, the counselling concepts and sponsorship models will fail and enormous opportunities will open up with their support.

In addition, sponsorship models are a suitable approach for the targeted promotion of socially disadvantaged young people in deprived districts (Schönig/Knabe 2010, p. 150). However, the aspect of peer group work is crucial. In addition to the classic sponsors from the educated middle-class milieu, it makes sense to involve successful young people from the same district, following the example of the 'grand frere' (big brothers) in France's Banlieues. Although these successful, resilient former youths have often moved away from the problem areas, they are still a good educational role model. Therefore, the concept has to be more about how to get those people to participate and how to connect their work with social work in a supportive way so that the 'big brothers and sisters' don't get frustrated and discouraged.

General participation promotion in local political processes of ethnically segregated districts is only successful if it specifically addresses specific obstacles, such as language difficulties, formalizes rituals of public discourse or general skepticism towards political institutions. All in all, the problem of promoting participation in ethnic segregation is similar to that in poor areas, which results in analogous recommendations for action (Schader Foundation 2005, pp. 42 - 43, pp. 50f; Schönig 2015). It is helpful not to focus too much on abstract verbiage, but rather on concrete actions, themes and personal relationships with groups. Tenants' councils (which solve concrete problems), personal contacts (through gestures and the spoken word),

addressing groups (which convey self-confidence) and public festivals (involving mediators) are important elements of a culture of participation.

Proven methods of social work such as the activating survey and community organizing can be used fruitfully here. It is absolutely necessary to take ethnic conflicts seriously, since they shape every socio-spatial-ethnic segregation. Often unpleasant prejudices emerge in the conflicts, which have to be taken up and not dismissed. In addition, the public sphere occupies a prominent position. On the one hand, it is a general meeting place and stage for public life; on the other hand, it is an extension of private living space into the public sphere, especially for immigrants. Public space must therefore be kept open to all, even if some ethnic groups tend to claim it as their exclusive territory. With the approaches of communal conflict counselling (Berndt/Lustig 2014) and the concepts of communal meta-culture and stress management (Schönig 2016a; Schönig 2016b), relevant approaches and practical experiences are available.

5. Summary

Ethnic segregation in urban social space can be well described and explained by resorting to the standard model of the Chicago school, with recent developments being classified as additions to and critiques of the model. Accordingly, ethnic segregation follows patterns and is

itself dominated by socio-economic segregation. As social status increases, ethnic segregation becomes less important. As a result, poor areas are highly segregated ethnically, while ethnic segregation has generally been declining for years.

For local politics and social work, these reliable findings can be used to formulate state-ments on their options for action. Although the latter - like all municipal approaches - are structurally limited, good results can be achieved at the operational level of concrete work in the district and in individual cases. Starting points for this are above all the promotion of education, advisory and sponsorship models as well as the promotion of participation in local political processes. They can mitigate the negative effects of ethnic segregation and sustainably promote social advancement.

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