
SOCIALIZATION SYSTEMS IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES UNDERGOING GENTRIFICATION

Collapse – stagnation – development

Summary

Humans' immediate environment has almost always been a key area of interest to educationalists, who attribute to it a particular role in the individual's development. It is in their immediate environment that, despite globalisation processes, the weakening bond between time and place and increased mobility, each person comes into contact with society's institutions. It is here that the socialization process takes place – an individual identifies and takes on their first social roles, learns and subsequently applies their societal ABC. Local society is the fundamental reservoir of special bonds, which are varied in nature and scope, thanks to which they become an irreplaceable source of support and control. In many cases, education and career paths starts from this local space, impacting on the individual's life for many years. These tasks and processes are realized within distinct structures, termed socialization environments, which can be viewed as forming a coherent whole directed towards common goals through implementing organised and ordered actions.

The local socialization environment, which, due to the theoretical point of view adopted in this article, I define as socialization systems, has been the subject of many studies and theoretical inquiries. This has led to a great deal of multifaceted, sound and empirically verified knowledge on the processes carried out within this sphere of socialization and nurturing. In analysing studies on the local conditions of these processes, my attention was caught by the complete lack of reference to the increasingly evident process of gentrification. This process can be understood as a sequence of changes at the social and demographic, physical-functional and cultural symbolism levels, the effect of which is to reverse the social gradient¹, the domination by middle- and upper-class members of society of space hitherto inhabited by the lower classes. In my view, the gentrification process impacts on the way local socialization processes function, and I show this in this book.

¹ J. Grzeszczak, *Gentryfikacja osadnictwa. Charakterystyka, rozwój koncepcji badawczej i przegląd wyjaśnień*, Warszawa 2010, p. 12.

There are at least two reasons why educationalists should be interested in gentrification processes. The first is quantitative. It is estimated that over 2 million Poles inhabit urban areas that have experienced revitalisation and gentrification². A similar number migrated from urban to rural areas in the early 21st century³; this process shows no signs of slowing and is expected to continue for the next two–three decades⁴. City centres remain and the country (particularly that on the outskirts of cities) becomes an important habitat and, at the same time, a space in which socialization systems function. This is where the second justification comes in. Changes associated with the gentrification process create new conditions in which socialization systems can act. The influx of members of the middle and higher social classes, with varied amounts of capital, for whom caring for a child is one of the most important tasks in life, which expresses itself in the tendency to make individual and collective efforts to optimise the conditions for society's youngest members. To many this influx seems a desirable phenomenon for inner-city and rural socialization systems. But is this really the case? Perhaps new users of the socialization system always give impetus for them to change? What is the nature and dimensions of these changes? These are questions which I seek to answer.

This book has a classical structure. The first three chapters deal with theory. Chapter One is entitled "Socialization systems as a subject in the social sciences and humanities", provides an introduction. Adopting an interdisciplinary approach, I describe social systems, and describe the socialization system as one variety of such a system, pointing at the same time to its indisputable significance. Taking into consideration the fact that scholars have reflected on these socialization systems for several centuries, I was struck me as justified to present them historically. In the chapters that follow I discuss socialization systems from the structural-functional point, constructivist, post-constructivist and postmodern points of view. In Chapter Two I present local circumstances and the systemic perspective on socialization environments. I also present updated portrait of selected socialization environments (former collective, commuter belt areas, inner-city enclaves of poverty, council housing estates and gated estates), and in doing so consider their typical character. Two of the environments described here (inner-city areas of a large city and suburban villages in the commuter belt) were used as the site of my research.

Chapter Three describes the gentrification process. In it I draw on historical themes, present the source of concepts related to urban and rural development, and focus attention on the modern-day understanding of these concepts. In addition to definitions, I strive to show how extremely diverse gentrification is. This is visible in the typologies quoted and in the attempts to establish a chronology of changes in communities experiencing this process. This chapter also contains portraits of agents of gentrification and of areas in which it is taking place. It is important to show the duality of this

² A. Muzioł-Węclawowicz, *Rewitalizacja dzielnic śródmiejskich*, [w:] W. Jarczewski (ed.), *Przestrzenne aspekty rewitalizacji – śródmieścia, blokowiska, tereny poprzemysłowe, pokolejowe i powojkowe*, Kraków 2009, p. 21.

³ Own calculations based on Local Data Bank.

⁴ Por. P. Szukalski, *Suburbanizacja obszarów wielkomiejskich w Polsce*, „Demografia i Gerontologia Społeczna – Biuletyn Informacyjnych” 2015, no. 4, p. 2.

process by referring to its positive and negative sides. The chapter closes by considering the course of this process in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Chapter Four opens the methodological and empirical part of the work. In this chapter I present the methodological basis for defining the subject and objectives, formulate problems and hypotheses, at the same time justifying the use of a systemic approach as a theoretical and methodological basis. This chapter also contains a model I have developed of the relations between the course of the gentrification process and how socialization systems function. In addition to this, there is information about the site of research and sample selection. The procedure, methods, research techniques are described, along with diagrams presenting how data were processed.

Chapter Five comprises my own research findings. These sought to explain which changes are occurring in the socialization systems of communities undergoing gentrification. The analysis focusses on the subsystems of primary socialization, which relate to families, peer groups and neighbours as being key to further subsystems: professional education, selection and preorientation, support and welfare, social control, and the free time of children and adolescents. In this chapter I also evaluate how socialization systems function from parents' and teachers' point of view. With regard to the assumption that the course and, in a sense, the effects of the socialization process are a measure of the quality of system's influence, I have devoted the final subchapter to defining which type we are dealing with in the systems being researched and what the consequences are for the individual, community and society.

The final part of the article is the conclusion.

Translated by Rob Pagett