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STUDENTIFICATION IN THE POST-SOCIALIST CONTEXT: THE CASE OF CRACOW AND THE TRI-CITY (GDANSK, GDYNIA AND SOPOT)

MURZYN-KUPISZ, M., SZMYTKOWSKA, M. (2015): Studentification in the post-socialist context: The case of Cracow and the Tri-City (Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot). *Geografie*, 120, No. 2, pp. 188–209. – For over a decade, the term studentification has been used to denote the process of urban changes linked with the presence of student populations in urban centres. This text broadens the geographic scope of research into studentification using two Polish metropolitan areas as case studies, analysing and comparing research results to existing findings referring to Western European and Anglo-Saxon settings. Using the example of Cracow and the Tri-City (Trójmiasto), two significant centres of higher education in Poland, the paper presents empirical evidence indicating that while some aspects of students' impact on Polish cities are similar to trends observed in Western Europe and non-European Anglo-Saxon countries, the colonisation of Polish cities by students nonetheless displays some unique features strongly influenced by the post-socialist context in which such cities and their student populations function.

KEY WORDS: studentification – university cities – urban change – gentrification – post-socialism – Poland.

1. Introduction

Universities have always contributed to the processes of urban change and shaped the character and uniqueness of the cities in which they are located, impacting on their spatial development, social milieu, and image, as well as on the local and regional economy (Harris 1997). Nevertheless, given that until a few decades ago higher education all over the world was quite elitist in nature and tended to be reserved for wealthier social groups, this impact was often limited to historic city cores, selected areas of university campuses, or the institutional and R&D potential of the universities themselves. The large and continuously growing number of university students in the period after World War II, coupled with growth in the number of institutions of higher education and democratisation of university studies, has in recent decades been attracting large numbers of young people to towns and cities all over the world. This led researchers, at first predominantly in Great Britain (Chatterton 1999; Smith 2005; Allinson 2006; Smith, Holt 2007; Hubbard 2008; Smith 2008; Munro, Turok, Livingston 2009; Sage, Smith, Hubbard 2012), but increasingly also in other national contexts (van den Berg, Russo 2004; Sabri, Ludin 2009; Woldoff, Decola, Litchfield 2011), to start paying attention to the social, spatial and economic consequences of the rapid and often spontaneous growth in the number

of university students and concurrent significant changes in the patterns of student accommodation and urban consumption during university studies (Tallon 2010). Despite that, as many researchers remark, studentification is still “an urban process which remains a relatively under-researched phenomenon” (Hubbard 2008, p. 214; see also Munro, Turok, Livingston 2009), especially taking into account that to date these processes have been analysed and observed mainly with respect to cities in Western Europe and highly developed Anglo-Saxon countries (van den Berg, Russo 2004).

The authors’ main goal is thus to broaden the discussion on studentification to include the issue of students’ presence in cities in Central Europe. By looking at university students as significant actors of urban change, the authors also want to contribute to a better general understanding of the dynamic social and spatial changes taking place in Polish cities since 1989. As such, the study should also be seen as an attempt to further the general discussion on the social and spatial restructuring taking place in cities in Central and Eastern Europe (Sýkora 2005; Brade, Herfert, Wiest 2009; Marcińczak, Sagan 2011; Marcińczak, Musterd, Stępnia 2012; Gentile, Tammaru, van Kempen 2012; Haase, Grossmann, Steinführer 2012). Due to the very dynamic growth observed in the number of people attending universities in Poland in the last two decades (Markowski, Drzazga, eds. 2008), in-depth research into the issue would seem to be imperative both in a comparative perspective, including the post-socialist Central European context of studentification, and on the national level, from a policy-making point of view. Although students have been mentioned as important actors of urban change in post-socialist cities (Steinführer, Haase, Grabkowska 2011; Grabkowska 2011; Haase, Grossmann, Steinführer 2012), very few studies explicitly focused on the spatial choices of young people attending institutions of higher education have so far been conducted in this part of Europe. Where such studies have been undertaken, they have tended to concentrate on the narrowly understood impact of institutions of higher education as seen from the perspective of institutional development and its spatial consequences (e.g. the spatial impact of new or modernized university buildings and university campuses) (Markowski, Drzazga, eds. 2008) rather than on consumption of the city by students (Gaczek, Kaczmarek, Marcinowicz 2006; Marcinowicz, Kaczmarek 2008; Dembicka 2010). In other cases selected aspects of urban consumption have been taken into account (e.g. cultural consumption of students in Gdansk, see: Kenera, Zbieranek 2010), or their economic survival strategies (Narvselius 2003).

Therefore, the aims of the article are twofold. First of all the authors undertook to explore the impact of students on the social and physical urban space by examining the spatial choices of those pursuing university studies in two important Polish centres of university education, Cracow and the Tri-City of Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot (Trójmiasto). Secondly, the authors analysed and compared research results obtained in Poland to findings on studentification referring to Western European and Anglo-Saxon settings to find out whether and to what extent there are analogies with tendencies already observed and if there are unique features to the studentification process visible in the post-socialist Polish and wider Central and East European context.

In order to fulfil these two objectives, the following research questions were asked:

- What are the preferences of university students in Poland with respect to places of residence during university studies? What type and quality of building stock do they inhabit? What features of residential environment do they find important?
- Do students tend to cluster in specific parts of Polish cities?
- What are the preferences of university students in Poland with respect to venues of extra-curricular activities, leisure and entertainment? Do they overlap with their residential choices?
- To what extent do these students behave as gentrifiers or pioneer gentrifiers in the urban context?
- To what extent do preferences expressed by university students in Poland match the spatial choices revealed in other parts of the world, particularly in Anglo-Saxon countries? Are there any specific aspects of students' spatial preferences linked with the post-socialist context in which the universities and their student populations function?

2. Research methodology

As no in-depth studies of this type have been conducted in Poland to date, in order to answer the above research questions the authors decided to conduct a pilot questionnaire survey among students of two major institutions of higher education: one in Cracow (Cracow University of Economics) and one in the Tri-City (University of Gdansk). The questionnaire was 7 pages long and comprised 34 structured, close-ended and open-ended questions on the location of the student's place of residence, its type, quality, recently conducted repairs and improvements, reasons for choosing this particular accommodation type, number and type of roommates, as well as type of leisure activities, their frequency and spatial distribution. The survey was conducted in the first quarter of 2012 directly by the authors among full-time Bachelor's and Master's students representing all years of study in three faculties at the Cracow University of Economics (Faculty of Economics and International Relations, Faculty of Management, Faculty of Finances, N = 215)¹ and two degree courses in the Faculty of Oceanography and Geography at the University of Gdansk (Major in Geography and Oceanography, Major in Management, N = 200). Two important factors in the selection of these particular groups of students were the fact that they represented courses which fall within similar areas of study (i.e. social sciences)² and that both universities have only a very limited stock of university accommodation to offer them during their degree courses. In addition, although first-year students were included in the sample, the authors

¹ In Cracow the 215 survey participants represented 1.84% of the full-time student population of CUE and 0.2% of the total full-time student population at the city's public universities. In the Tri-City the 200 survey participants represented 13.5% of the full-time student population of the Faculty of Oceanography and Geography, 0.7% of the total full-time student population of the University of Gdansk and 0.4% of the total full-time student population at the city's public universities.

² Students studying oceanography were not included in the sample given that they represent a field of study outside the social sciences.

made sure that they were not overrepresented, as they are considered more prone to take residential decisions based on factors other than personal choices (e.g. advice from parents and siblings, initial ease of living in student halls) and are only slowly getting to know the cities in which they study. The questionnaires were distributed in person in paper form during classes to all students who participated in a given class on a given day. The ages of the participants ranged from 18 to 25 in Cracow, and from 19 to 29 in the Tri-City.³ In Cracow 73% of the questionnaire respondents were female; in the Tri-City women represented 63% of the total sample.⁴ The results of the survey were analysed from both the quantitative and qualitative perspectives, mainly using descriptive statistics. In addition, in analysing the survey results the authors also took into consideration similar existing published and unpublished studies on behaviour of students in the two cities in order to account for the possibility of different spatial behaviours of students of courses other than those studied in the survey presented in the article (Kenera, Zbieranek 2010; Jarzyna 2012; Murzyn-Kupisz, Działek 2014).

The structure of the remainder of this article is as follows. First the authors consider theoretical approaches to studentification, placing it within the broader context of research on gentrification. Next, they examine general tendencies with respect to higher education in Poland, and statistical data pointing to the significant potential of studentification in these two major Polish urban centres: Cracow and the Tri-City. This is followed by presentation of the results and analysis of the questionnaire survey conducted by the authors in both cities. The final section of the article contains closing remarks and conclusions, and a comparison of the results obtained in the Polish cities with those seen in their West European, particularly British counterparts, suggesting that a more nuanced approach to the impact of students on cities is needed, that would take into account the cities' unique social and spatial character resulting from their geographic location and historical development paths.

3. Studentification as a specific type of urban change

Large numbers of students living in rented apartments or houses in selected areas of cities (inner city districts or particular peripheral areas) lead to a symbolic but also real “takeover” of certain areas by students, which is reflected in issues including changes in the character and intensity of services offered,

³ Distribution of survey participants by age:

City	Students' age (%)					
	19 or younger	20	21	22	23	24 or older
Cracow	9	38	25	13	9	6
Trójmiasto	11	28	32	15	6	8

⁴ The uneven distribution of respondents' gender reflects general tendencies observed at universities in Poland, where in 2012 over 68% of all students were female (Central Statistical Office 2013, p. 59).

emergence of services dedicated explicitly to students, such as catering establishments (e.g. an increase in the number of fast-food outlets, and changes in the type and character of local pubs and cafes), retail (e.g. popularity of corner shops with a basic food assortment, and off-licence or liquor shops) (Smith 2005; Tallon 2010, p. 213). Accordingly, for over a decade the term studentification (Smith 2002) has been used to describe the process of the specific urban changes seen in cities with a university function and a sizeable student population which uses and consumes the urban space in particular ways. This population tends to concentrate in selected areas, leading to the evolution of visible enclaves or clusters of student life sometimes pejoratively referred to as student ghettos. Studentification may also be described as a specific type of colonization of the city by students and is reflected in aspects such as an increase in the percentage of students in the overall population in an area, and changes in the type of services offered there, especially the character and product mix of retail and catering establishments (Tallon 2010). Although it is usually a spontaneous, grassroots process, it may also be stimulated by decision makers, e.g. local authorities. The widely observed intensification of studentification processes is the result of factors including the democratization and less elitist nature of higher education since World War II, budgetary constraints of institutions of higher education, leading to their moving away from the previously developed model of a university campus comprising not only teaching and research facilities but also a diverse social infrastructure including student housing. Other factors contributing to studentification include changes in the preferences, life style and consumption patterns of students, as well as the rental gap existing in some areas of larger cities (Chatterton 1999; Smith 2005; Allinson 2006).

As a process, studentification impacts on urban space in diverse ways. Its economic impact is very important, often leading to significant changes in real estate prices, closing the rental gap and transforming the housing stock (e.g. apartments and houses formerly used by one-family households altered into student flats). As the result of this specific change in resident structure, a decreasing share of long-term residents living in their own apartments (owner occupied housing) may be observed, while the share of housing rented out by private house owners is rising. From a social point of view, studentification, as mentioned earlier, may lead to replacement and displacement of former residents by short-term tenants who may be termed transitory urbanities (Haase, Grossmann, Steinführer 2012) and who become significant actors of urban change in many cities. They are typically young, with a middle-class background. As such, studentification may also lead to creation of new patterns of spatial concentration and segregation and, last but not least, initiate cultural changes in an area. Spontaneous clusters of young people emerge who have the feeling of a certain “cultural affinity”, similar needs, life style, consumption style, linked with demand for specific types of catering, retail and services. From the perspective of housing stock renewal, on the one hand studentification may, especially in its initial phase, lead to improvement in the state of repair of buildings and apartments in an area and upgrading of its general appearance. However, in subsequent stages of studentification, as less demanding transitory tenants start to dominate, further improvements are very unlikely and degradation may be observed (Smith 2005, pp. 74–75). As follows, the existing

studies on studentification portray it as an ambivalent process generating both positive and negative effects in urban space, both of which should be taken into account by researchers and authorities (Universities UK 2006).

The issue of studentification often arises in discussions on gentrification. On the one hand studentification may be regarded as an important constitutive aspect of the broadly understood process of gentrification, or indeed a type of gentrification, as it often leads to increases in real estate prices and displacement of former residents. It is also frequently underlined that studentification may be a process preparing future gentrifiers (a “factory of gentrification”; Smith, Holt 2007) or may foreshadow classic gentrification (Davidson 2009). As such, like artists (Zukin 1989; Ley 2003; Cameron, Coaffee 2005; Działek, Murzyn-Kupisz 2014), students are seen as pioneers of gentrification, and studentification is considered a “laboratory of gentrification”. On the other hand, studentification may differ from classically understood gentrification. It may be regarded as a phenomenon separate and independent from gentrification, taking place in parallel to it. As mentioned earlier, it does not necessarily lead to the renewal of the housing stock; on the contrary, it may contribute to its further degradation. Students’ location decisions stem not only from the wish to benefit from the rental gap and price differences of real estate in different parts of the city but also, and often mainly, from their preferences in terms of consumption and life style. At the same time, studentification may not be confined to less prestigious, degraded or problem areas but may also occur in rather well-to-do middle-class quarters which do not require standard urban regeneration schemes yet still undergo studentification. Last but not least, studentification is not necessarily a process inspired by cultural capital, an important factor in the process of classic gentrification, or by greater resources of the financial capital that is key to financial gentrification.

4. Studentification potential in Cracow and the Tri-City

The neoliberal policy towards higher education visible, even though not explicitly articulated, in Poland after 1989, understood among others as the consent to a spontaneous, rapid increase in the number of institutions of higher education and number of students attending them (Markowski, Drzazga 2008), was accompanied by even more neoliberal policy with respect to student housing. The expansion of the educational offer of universities was thus rarely accompanied by the development of purpose-built student housing (student residences) owned and managed by universities or public authorities. Moreover, the noticeable withdrawal of universities from providing funding for students (e.g. residence allowances, general social aid; Narvselius 2003) meant that students were more likely to search for alternative places of residence during their student years, taking into account financial constraints and quality of housing. As the result of such changes, which were part of the socio-economic transformation, a systematic increase in the number of students seeking accommodation (rooms or apartments) on the private rental market could be observed.

These objective factors (lack of adequate and available university accommodation, its prices) over time seem to have led to a significant change in

students' attitudes with respect to the desired features of accommodation during university studies. This evolution was especially likely in the case of universities where rapid increases in numbers of enrolled students were not accompanied by increases in the provision of university-managed student housing or such accommodation was provided only on an *ad hoc*, temporary basis (e.g. the use by Cracow University of Economics of a number of former communal workers' housing facilities of a rather poor standard ("hotele robotnicze") in the Nowa Huta quarter as student accommodation in the 1990s). If at least up to the mid-1990s the decision to rent a room or an apartment from a private owner was usually forced and linked to the impossibility of obtaining a place in university accommodation (until 1990s perceived as the best opportunity to experience the "real" student life, Narvselius 2003), with time it often became a conscious, independent decision by students, motivated not so much by the lack of opportunity to live in university-provided accommodation as by the wish to live elsewhere, and make an individual choice with regard to the apartment, its standard, location, and roommates. After 1989, student consumption patterns with respect to leisure time, sports, retail, gastronomy and cultural services also seemed to evolve. Although some of such services are still supplied by universities or traditional establishments for decades catering to students, many are now offered on market terms by new, private firms in selected areas of the city (e.g. night life, gastronomy, sports services). We may thus venture the hypothesis that since there was a lack of well defined, visible, public policy on student consumption in the period of transformation, students started to impact on the functioning of university cities in Poland in a new, spontaneously evolving way, exerting significant impact on aspects of the housing market including rental prices, standard and quality of housing, social mix of particular apartment buildings and entire quarters, as well as their service functions.

It should, however, also be underlined that although such processes became visible in Poland with some delay in comparison to Western Europe, in many ways the context of studentification in Poland is not significantly different from that in other parts of Europe. In the 1950s and 1960s the development of universities in both Western Europe (linked with the expansion of the welfare state) and Eastern Europe (linked with the expansion of higher education in Communist states) was accompanied by the development of both infrastructure directly linked with the university function (namely lecture halls, laboratories, libraries and administrative buildings) but also extensive supporting housing, catering, sports and leisure infrastructure, quite often as a part of a comprehensive campus development. For example in Cracow an entire area dubbed "Student City" ("Miasteczko Studenckie"), to some extent as an antithesis to the former elite, aristocratic and bourgeois pre-war university tradition (Junes 2015), was developed west of the city centre, as well as smaller clusters of student accommodation and other university facilities in other parts of the city. Since the 1980s however, following general public budget constraints, a visible shift in the approach to the need for provision of student housing directly by universities seems to have taken place all over the developed world. With time, some universities not only started to move away from developing supporting infrastructure due to financial limitations, but actually began to view such infrastructural developments as unnecessary, in a way forcing students to

seek accommodation in the private rental sector.⁵ Again, in the case of Poland a similar *laissez-faire* attitude towards supporting student services could be seen in the transformation period (Narvselius 2003), although signs of it were already visible in the 1980s.

Both Cracow and the Tri-City seem to be cities well suited as case studies in studentification, with the potential to reveal any possible Central European specificity of the process, and reflecting opportunities and challenges linked with the dynamic increase in the number of university students in Poland after 1989. Both urban centres possess an attractive urban environment linked with their historic development and contemporary metropolitan functions.⁶ In 2010 in the Tri-City, which had a population of 742,000, over 96,000 people were studying at university level (Urząd Miasta Gdańsk 2011). Comparison of Cracow's student population with its total number of residents points to even greater studentification potential. In 2010 Cracow had an overall population of 756,000 and 207,000 students attending higher education institutions, 114,000 of whom were full-time students. At the same time, universities in Cracow had only 28,400 places in university-managed accommodation, which means that only one in four full-time students had a chance of university accommodation (Urząd Miasta Krakowa 2011). These data also indicate a significant change with respect to provision of student housing since the early 1990s. In 1991 the student population in Cracow was 50,000 (of which 40,000 were full-time students), and there were 19,300 places in university housing (Urząd Miasta Krakowa 1992).

5. Students in the contemporary urban space of Cracow and the Tri-City. Results of the questionnaire survey

5.1. Housing preferences

The results of the questionnaire survey conducted in the two cities for the purposes of this article point to similarities in the housing preferences and ways of spending leisure time among students in both urban centres. A similar, small percentage of students in both cities makes use of accommodation provided by their universities (9–10%).⁷ Thus, although almost every third respondent in Cracow still lives at home in Cracow or in its vicinity (allowing for relative ease of daily commuting within the metropolitan area), over half of them (55%)

⁵ Perhaps in the coming years we will see yet another change. For example, for some universities, Cracow University of Economics among them, after a period of withdrawal from providing student accommodation, building new campus-based student accommodation facilities may become a new priority in order to increase competitiveness and attract good students from further regions or abroad.

⁶ For a comprehensive introduction to the specificity of Cracow see e.g. Ostrowski 1992; Zborowski 2005; Małecko 2008; to Gdansk and the Tricity see Tolle 2008; Bouzarovski 2009; Grabkowska 2012.

⁷ It is also worth pointing out that according to the survey results, first-year students do not behave significantly differently than older students, and choose non-university accommodation as frequently as their older peers.

indicated that they rent an apartment on market basis. Rather than renting a room (known as “stancja” in Polish), which was the traditional form of private accommodation rents by students in pre-socialist and socialist times, students now tend to rent independent apartments and share them with a small number of flatmates. In the case of the Tri-City, although the percentage of students living at home was higher than in Cracow (47%), the proportion of students renting apartments from private persons was still quite large (42%). In the case of Cracow the fact that a higher percentage of students live in an apartment owned by them or by immediate relatives is worthy of attention (6% in Cracow in comparison to 3% in the Tri-City). Most such apartments have been purchased in recent years with the clear intention of providing a comfortable place of residence for a young family member studying in Cracow while also making a good long-term investment. Such real-estate purchases coupled with the large number of new buy-to-let apartments bought with the student market in mind, have had a significant impact on the real-estate market in the city. In addition, in the case of older tenement houses in the historic city core and quarters surrounding it, students are often seen by owners who have claimed back ownership or management of properties since the 1990s as less troublesome, “easy to deal with” tenants than longer-term, older, more stable but also more demanding clients (Agence nationale de l’habitat 2008).

Among the factors decisive in students’ choice of apartment to rent during their university studies, in both urban centres price and location, i.e. easy access to the university on public transport rather than necessarily location in the immediate vicinity of the university, are the most important. Other significant reasons cited by students from both Cracow and the Tri-City include the possibility of living with friends, peace and quiet, comfort, convenience and a good standard of living, as well as an “acceptable” distance from the university. In both cities renting an apartment with two or three flatmates is most popular. In the case of Cracow a larger proportion of students declared that they rented with three other people, while in the Tri-City having two flatmates was more popular. In terms of smaller (renting individually) or larger numbers of flatmates (more than three) there are visible differences between the two cities. In Cracow 22% of respondents rented a flat with four or more other people. There were also instances of people renting a flat with eight and more people (similar to Western Europe), while very few students could afford to live alone. In the case of the Tri-City, renting a flat individually or only with one flatmate was more popular than in Cracow (in total 21% of respondents declared this rental option).

Renting of entire houses, which is popular among British students, was not declared in the Tri-City at all and only in a very few cases in Cracow, which is linked both to a lack of tradition of such a form of rent in Poland but also – and mainly – to the type of building stock available in Polish cities, i.e. inner-city tenement houses, or flats in buildings on socialist or post-socialist housing estates, in both cases at modest rental rates and in good locations with access to public transport (Szymkowska 2008, Jażdżewska 2010). With respect to the general features of an area (a quarter) desired by students, aside from the abovementioned issues of location and public transport accessibility, “peace and quiet” were also mentioned relatively often. This feature was slightly more

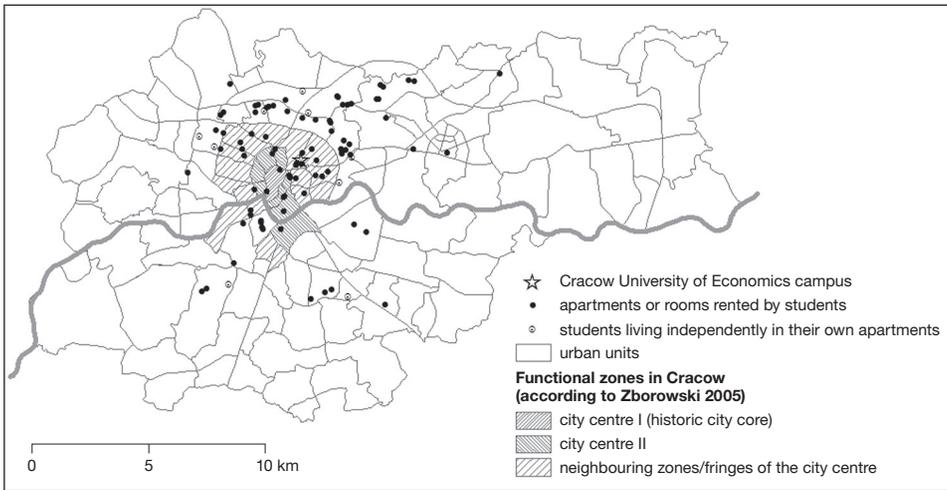


Fig. 1 – Location of apartments rented by students of Cracow University of Economics. Source: own elaboration based on a questionnaire survey.

important to students in Cracow than in the Tri-City. Unique architectural, landscape or ambience-related features of a quarter were very rarely mentioned by anyone. Moreover, among the features mentioned in both cities there was absolutely no direct reference to the “student” character or attributes of a quarter.

In the case of Cracow University of Economics (CUE), few students rent apartments in the immediate vicinity of the university campus (the historic quarter of Wesola, the inter-war quarter of Oficerskie estate, or Sadowa and Francesco Nullo streets, in total 9.3%; Fig. 1). 17% of respondents rented apartments in the most historic parts of Cracow (the inner city core, Kazimierz, Stare [Old] Podgórze, or Grzegórzki). A similar share (16%) of rented apartments were dispersed across the quarter of Krowdrza in the north-western part of the city. Visible clusters of CUE students could also be seen north-east of the city centre, including residents of 1960s and 1970s socialist housing estates (e.g. Ugorek). Several students rent in the area of the socialist housing estate from the turn of the 1960s and 1970s on the edge of the historic city (Podwawelskie estate), in Mały Płaszów – an area of new apartment buildings east of the city centre accessible via a new tram route – and in the vicinity of the new Jagiellonian University campus south-west of the city centre, also popular among students and accessible thanks to a new tram route. A certain tendency to live in the better located, older socialist housing estates which do not suffer from a particularly bad image is thus visible, coupled with a preference for living close to major public transport routes. New public investments in educational and public transport infrastructure (e.g. the new campus of the Jagiellonian University, Jarzyna 2012) are also shifting the topography of student rents.

The state of affairs in the Tri-City is somewhat different. Since the university faculties in which the questionnaire was conducted are located in Gdansk, in the survey this city dominates as a location of student rented accommodation. 81% of the respondents had selected rented accommodation in Gdansk, 11% in

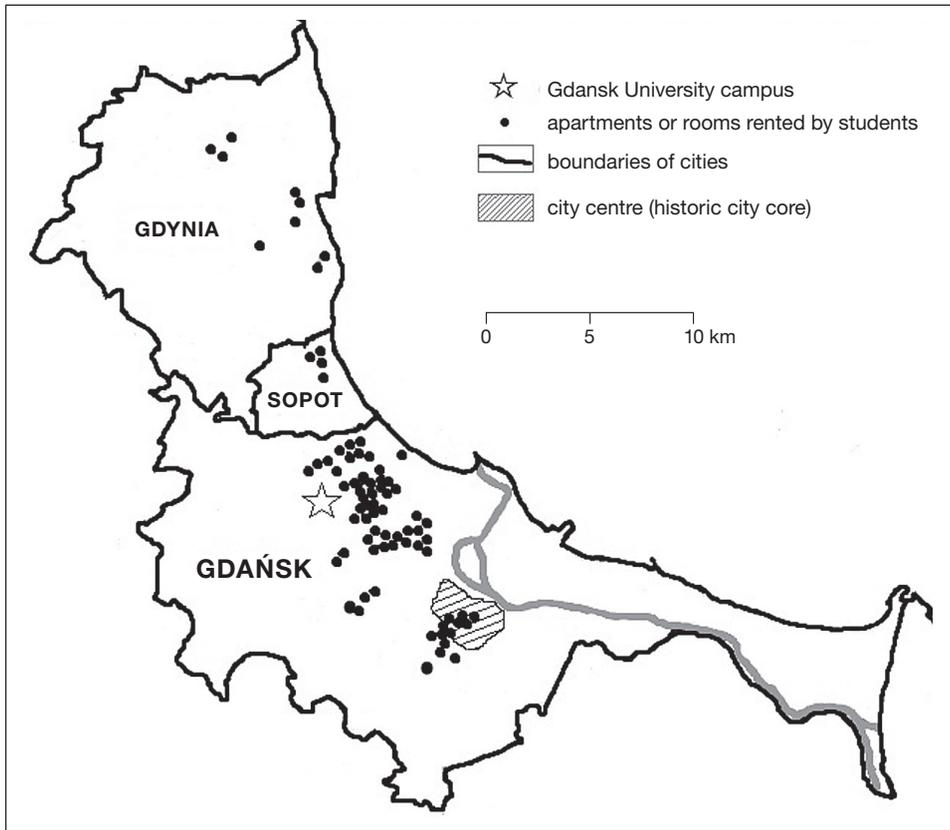


Fig. 2 – Location of apartments rented by students of Gdansk University.
Source: own elaboration based on a questionnaire survey.

Gdynia, 7 % in Sopot and only 1% outside the three urban areas (Fig. 2). Within Gdańsk, attention should be paid to the concentration of rented student housing in the vicinity of the university campus (the adjacent quarters of Przymorze, Oliwa and Strzyża were cited by 21% of respondents renting apartments) as well as to the fact that one in four students surveyed rented an apartment in quarters slightly further away, neighboring the abovementioned (Zaspa, Żabińska, Morena), in which post-socialist housing blocks dominate, and rented apartments are relatively less expensive and in good technical condition. Over one-fifth of students (21%) selected the quarter of Wrzeszcz, which offers good access both to the university and to the historic centre of Gdańsk. Living in the historic inner city of Gdańsk was not as popular (only 5% of respondents rented apartments there) due to its more distant location from the university campus. Likewise, only one in ten students decided to rent an apartment at a greater distance from the university in the peripheral quarters of Chełm, Siedlce and Orunia. Moreover, as revealed by other subsequent studies, the housing preferences of students of art majors are fairly similar to those of their colleagues studying social sciences (Murzyn-Kupisz, Działek 2014, p. 76).

5.2. State of repair of the housing stock

Another issue often mentioned in Western literature is the rather poor or continuously deteriorating state of repair of the housing stock rented by students. Research in Cracow and the Tri-City showed that in the case of Poland at present both the general state of repair of buildings and in particular the state of repair of rented apartments are evaluated by students as fairly good (Fig. 3). Even taking into account the largely lower expectations of students, as a transient population, with respect to the quality of the housing stock, it seems telling that as many as 43.5% students in Cracow evaluated the technical state of repair of the flat they rent as very good, and a further 35.7% as good. In the case of the Tri-City these figures were similar, although the percentage of apartments evaluated as in a barely acceptable or very bad state of repair was greater (in total 33.5%). The difference in opinions between Cracow and the Tri-City, less favourable in the case of the second urban area, is even more

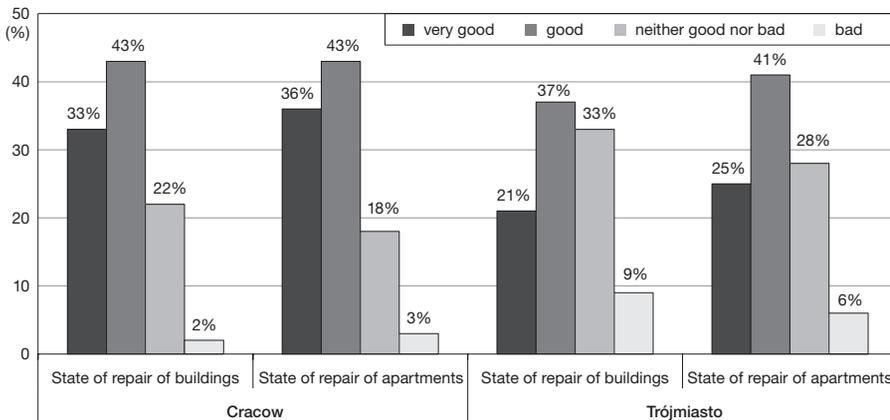


Fig. 3 – State of repair of apartments rented by students and the buildings in which they are located. Source: own elaboration based on questionnaire survey.

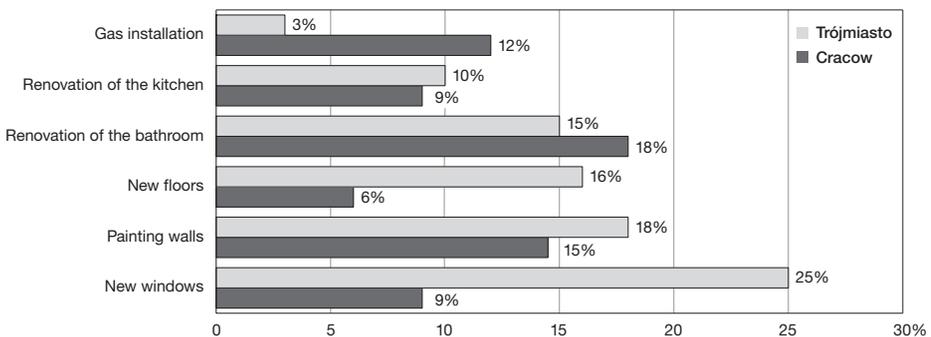


Fig. 4 – Modernization and renovation work undertaken by apartment owners in recent years (percentage of respondents who indicated a given modernization activity). Source: own elaboration based on a questionnaire survey.

visible with regard to the overall state of repair of the buildings in which the apartments are rented. On the other hand, one major reason for such differences in opinions is most likely the fact that as many as 42% of respondents renting in Cracow live in newly built buildings (defined as built less than 20 years ago), and in some cases (3) current student residents are actually the first tenants in completely new apartments.

Similarly, the landlords of student-occupied apartments in both Polish cities relatively often do modernization work to improve their standard and state of repair. This includes above all work on bathrooms, walls, windows, floors, kitchens or gas installations (Fig. 4). Moreover, with the predicted decline in the number of university students due to the overall demographic changes in Poland and growing saturation of the employment market with higher education graduates, the modernized housing stock is likely to become available to other non-student tenant groups in the two cities in question.

5.3. Dichotomy between residential and leisure preferences

The survey results point to a visible dichotomy in the way students approach urban space. With regard to the place of residence they display preferences typical for more settled residents, valuing a quiet, peaceful setting, tending to “blend in” with the urban space rather than producing signs of presence or behaviours visibly different from other resident types. As follows, our research indicates a clear division in the way students view the private sphere (their place of residence, used for individual study, relaxation, contact with intimate friends) and the public sphere, where a larger range of social encounters take place, and where they behave in a way “expected of” or “typical” for young people, frequenting those parts of both urban areas popular with other younger residents and tourists, including a predilection for areas where cultural and entertainment functions are concentrated.

This differentiation between places of residence and places of entertainment also translates into a lesser likelihood of conflicts between students and their non-student neighbours. In the opinion of students from Cracow and the Tri-City, the attitudes of residents towards students are generally positive (40% and 54% of students participating in the questionnaire respectively) or indifferent (43% and 36% respectively). Visible dislike or negative attitudes towards students among settled residents are perceived by only 3% of respondents and are usually explained by respondents as partly “justified” and linked to excessively loud behavior on the part of students.

5.4. Gentrification potential

Another issue is the potential of university students to gentrify certain areas in the classic sense – their willingness to remain more permanently in the flats and, more especially, quarters where they lived during university studies. In both cities students tend to be willing to stay on and continue to live in the

same quarter, with as many as 91% wishing to do so in the case of the Tri-City, and 75% in the case of Cracow. The main factors stated in the desire to stay in a given quarter, however, do not point to students acting as pioneers of gentrification or apprentice gentrifiers; on the contrary, they are indicative of their satisfaction with their earlier, non-gentrification linked choices. They tend to choose relatively safe, quiet and calm quarters, with a generally positive image, well located, and with public transport links to the city centre. “Interesting aesthetics” (Cracow) or “picturesque setting and ambiance” (the Tri-City) were rarely mentioned as a reason to remain in a particular quarter.

5.5. Shopping, dining and leisure preferences

With respect to daily food consumption, in both cases students seem to impact more on the local food trade in smaller grocery shops than on local catering establishments. Over two-thirds of respondents from Cracow and almost two-thirds from the Tri-City declare that they regularly do basic grocery shopping in the vicinity of their place of residence, which apart from small local shops also includes the discount food stores present in many places in Polish cities and very popular also among the non-student population (Table 1). Conversely, due to financial limitations, students either prefer to eat meals at their family home (39% of the Tri-City students and 28% of Cracow students) or, if they live away from home, to cook their meals themselves (eating self-cooked meals was declared by as many as 70% of respondents in both cities). Newly established private diners and cafes at universities are usually too expensive for regular, daily use by students, though they are frequented from time to time. In the case of Cracow, a slightly higher share of students said they frequented the university canteen, due to its convenient location on the CUE campus.

Leisure was another interesting aspect of the questionnaire survey. Students use their rented accommodation and its immediate vicinity mainly for social bonding in small groups, relaxing in peace and quiet, or doing sports. They do not generally use any specific entertainment facilities in the quarters where they live. For night life, entertainment and cultural services, specific areas, especially the historic city cores, are preferred in both urban areas. In the case of Cracow, students go out in the Old Town, Kazimierz, parts of Old Podgórze, and Zabłocie – the medieval city centre and the adjacent historic towns and quarters between the historic town core and the outer ring road. In the Tri-City, in turn, students most like to spend their free time in the Old Town in Gdansk, the shopping precinct in Wrzeszcz, the central part of Sopot with its nightlife facilities and seaside resort ambiance, or in the traditional leisure areas of Sopot, Gdynia and Gdansk, including beaches and walking trails. The majority of students in Cracow declare that they often go for walks in the city centre (over half of respondents at least once a week), engage in sports, and visit cafes and pubs. Students in the Tri-City, in addition to the activities already mentioned, relatively often declare that they spend time on hobbies and getting together with friends. Although both urban areas offer a diverse range of cultural activities, not too many students take advantage of this opportunity. Among cultural activities, going to the cinema at least once a month is most

Table 1 – Students’ preferences in terms of grocery and convenience shopping

Places for grocery and convenience shopping	Students from Cracow (share of answers in %)	Students from the Tri-City (share of answers in %)
In the immediate vicinity of the place of residence (small shops and local discount stores)	67	78
Further away from the place of residence (larger supermarkets and shopping centres)	27	21
Near the university/university campus	5	1
In another city/municipality	1	0

Source: own elaboration based on a questionnaire survey

Table 2 – Most frequent places for eating daily meals

Place	Cracow students (number of indications)	Tri-City students (number of indications)
Self-cooked meals at student’s university residence	150	135
Meals cooked by other family members at student’s family home	59	76
University cafeteria or other catering establishments at the university	44	14
Fast-food outlets and diners	25	16

Source: own elaboration based on a questionnaire survey

popular (almost half of respondents in both cases, though without naming any specific location or mentioning multiplexes in shopping centres). Visiting museums and galleries and going to the theatre or other cultural events are far less frequent. Students in Cracow are more likely to visit museums and galleries than their counterparts studying on the Baltic coast, while those in the Tri-City cite shopping more frequently as an important leisure activity.

6. Final remarks and conclusions

The considerable number of university students in relation to total population size in major Polish cities, including the two analysed urban areas, means that they may and indeed do exert a significant impact on urban space, including the real-estate market, especially the housing market, services and retail. In this respect, visible analogies to the results of studies on studentification in the Anglo-Saxon context may be observed, such as the impact of students on the real-estate market, especially rental prices and the type of rental (temporary residents, shorter-term rental), the importance of moderate prices, and location preferences with respect to places of residence on the edges of the city centre. Although more dispersed throughout the city, students in Poland also

constitute a threat of displacement of other social groups from some quarters (historic city centres and adjacent quarters, more prestigious and well located socialist housing estates) and from the rental market in general.

At the same time, research in Poland points to the uniqueness and complexity of the process in the two cities, which is different from “classic” studentification as defined in the Anglo-Saxon context. First of all, with respect to the housing stock, no particularly visible new clusters or enclaves of student life have emerged in recent years, even though students are more likely to rent in certain areas. Instead a partial, step-by-step, fragmentary “colonisation” of entire cities and their larger parts by students may be observed. In addition, Polish students are visibly present in those former socialist housing estates which are not typical problem or degraded areas, are often well located, and have public transport links to the university campuses and historic quarters, while they tend to “avoid” peripheral, problem areas and tend not to select more centrally located but less comfortable dwellings in historic tenement houses. They are not likely as such to become pioneers of gentrification of truly degraded areas, though they may contribute to the improvement of the demographic situation in the aging former socialist housing estates, and thus to go some way to preventing their potential future degradation or even to contribute to the revaluation of their residential attractiveness.

The financial constraints experienced by students, but also the post-socialist character of the housing stock explain why students tend to rent relatively small apartments in apartment buildings, predominantly in small groups of two to three people, and not single family housing or larger apartments. In addition, in contrast to traditional images of student accommodation in Great Britain, the relatively good state of repair of the buildings and in particular apartments rented to students deserves attention, as well as the broad range of renovation and modernization work undertaken by landlords in recent years. In the case of Cracow the relatively large proportion of rented apartments that are in new developments should also be mentioned, which makes the Polish case more similar to some examples of foreign student impact in Australia (Fincher, Shaw 2011), or the most recent developments in England (Chatterton 2010).

Even if conflicts arise between students and other residents, they are not a major issue. This is partly because the most important and sought-after features of a place of residence for Polish students, such as peace and quiet, comfort, and high standards, are not typical for “classic” actors of studentification. Polish students seem to impact on their surroundings in the immediate vicinity of their accommodation more through local convenience shopping than through night life or catering services. In selecting a place to live and impacting on its surroundings, they thus tend to behave more like regular residents and blend in rather than stand out in particular quarters.

If studentification is interpreted as visible clusters of activities and services aimed at students, however, such processes are more pronounced and visible with respect to night life and entertainment services in selected quarters and areas of Polish cities. In the way they spend their leisure time, especially in terms of entertainment and night life, Polish students seem to be in symbiosis with other temporary users of urban space such as tourists, to some extent artists, and other young adults. There are thus many analogies and links between

entertainment-related studentification, touristification, and transformation of some areas into cultural or artistic quarters (Działek, Murzyn-Kupisz 2014). Entertainment-linked studentification and touristification of selected quarters that act as “urban playscapes” (Chatterton, Hollands 2002) may take place in parallel with each other and overlap, as is visible in the quarter of Kazimierz in Cracow (Murzyn 2006, Murzyn-Kupisz 2012) and to some extent in Sopot in the Tri-City.

The exploratory study conducted by the authors points to the need for further research of the issue, accounting for factors including possible differences between students of various majors and universities depending on campus location, specialisation and housing provision by particular universities within a given city, as well as features of a particular university city, including urban centres of different sizes and development paths, and located in different Polish regions. For example, in Cracow the model of a “student life style” may differ significantly depending on the university that a given student attends⁸, and the location and infrastructure of its university campus. Thus while the tendencies described above are visible in the case of students attending universities which concentrate on provision of more narrowly defined teaching and research infrastructure, or offer student accommodation more dispersed across the city (the majority of higher education institutions, including CUE and Jagiellonian University), they are not as pronounced with respect to students of AGH University of Science and Technology in Krakow, which is located on the edge of the city centre and has a large campus, a major part of which is the abovementioned “Student City”. As this university continued to develop and upgrade student facilities in its student area after 1989, AGH student life to a much greater extent remained concentrated there.

Notwithstanding such caveats, the analysis of processes linked with the presence of students in Polish cities seems to point to the specificity of such processes in post-socialist countries stemming from national and cultural contexts and considerations. The dominating built tissue of multifamily blocks of flats, the tradition of cooking and eating meals at home that is still much stronger in Poland than in Western European countries, the visible division between places of residence (dispersed across the city) and places of entertainment (concentrated in areas attractive from a leisure and tourism point of view), and the lack of stronger impulses to create a larger range of services dedicated explicitly to students outside such areas, invite the conclusion that some of the social processes of change which take place due to the presence of thousands of students in Polish urban centres are quite different from these observed in Western Europe, and deserve to be researched further in the future.

⁸ This issue is to some extent in the process of being addressed by a currently conducted research project on spatial choices of artists, including students in art majors in Cracow and Katowice entitled “Activities of artists in post-socialist cities: socio-economic underpinnings and implications” conducted in 2013–2016 and financed with a grant awarded by the National Science Centre, Poland, grant agreement no. UMO-2012/05/E/HS4/01601. While recognizing specificity of art students, its preliminary results confirm general tendencies described in this article.

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S h r n u t í

STUDENTIFIKACE V POST-SOCIALISTICKÉM KONTEXTU: PŘÍPADOVÉ STUDIE KRAKOVA A TROJMĚSTÍ (GDAŇSK, GDYNĚ A SOPOTY)

Termínem „studentifikace“ se již více než desetiletí označuje proces městských změn spojených s přítomností studentské populace ve velkých městských centrech. Cílem článku je tak rozšířit akademickou diskuzi o pohled na zkušenosti měst střední a východní Evropy. Vzhledem k dynamickému nárůstu počtu studentů v Polsku po roce 1989 si téma zaslouží pozornost v národním i mezinárodním kontextu. Přestože studenti jsou často zmiňováni mezi důležitými aktéry urbánních změn v post-socialistických městech, velmi málo studií se v této části Evropy vyloženě věnovalo působení prostorového chování mladých návštěvníků institucí vyššího vzdělávání. Autoři se nejprve věnují teoretickým přístupům ke studentifikaci v kontextu širšího tématu gentrifkace. Dále se soustředí na dopad studentů na městské prostory prostřednictvím analýzy jejich prostorového chování ve dvou významných centrech polského univerzitního vzdělávání: v Krakově a v Trojměstí (zahrnující Gdaňsk, Gdyni a Sopoty). Vzhledem k tomu, že žádná hloubková studie tohoto typu nebyla v Polsku před rokem 2012 provedena, autoři se rozhodli pro pilotní dotazníkový výzkum mezi studenty dvou významných vzdělávacích institucí: jedné v Krakově (Ekonomická univerzita v Krakově – CUE) a jedné v Trojměstí (Gdaňská univerzita – UG). Šetření probíhalo mezi studenty denního bakalářského a magisterského studia na CEU (N = 215) a UG (N = 200) v roce 2012. Analyzované prvky zahrnují zejména preference studentů ve vztahu k ubytování (lokace, typ, stav), vzorec nakupování a trávení volného času a také případné rozpory mezi preferencemi s ohledem na ubytování a právě volnočasové možnosti. Nakonec autoři porovnali výstupy šetření v Polsku s výsledky studií ze západní Evropy a anglosaského prostředí, aby bylo možné určit případné analogie či specifika podmíněná polským či post-socialistickým kontextem.

Studie ukazuje, že díky svému vysokému počtu (relativně vůči zbytku populace) dokážou studenti výrazně ovlivnit městský prostor obou polských metropolitních oblastí, zejména s ohledem na služby, obchod, či trh s ubytováním. V tomto ohledu lze vypořovovat jasné analogie s případy studentifikace z anglosaských zemí, primárně vliv studentů na trh s bydlením, zejména na nájemní ceny a typy nájemního bydlení (dočasní rezidenti, přechodné urbanity) nebo na význam dostupných cen a preference bydlení na hranicích městských center. Přestože jsou studenti v polských městech více prostorově rozptýlení, ohrožují některé jiné sociální skupiny vytlačení z konkrétních městských čtvrtí (zejména historické centrum a přilehlé čtvrti, či lépe lokalizovaná socialistická sídliště) nebo z nájemního trhu obecně.

Zároveň však šetření v Polsku poukazuje na unikátní procesy, které se od klasické studentifikace známé z anglosaského prostředí odlišují. Zejména se nevyskytly žádné zřejmé klustry nebo enklávy studentského osídlení, přestože studenti často určité oblasti preferují. Místo toho lze sledovat postupnou fragmentovanou „kolonizaci“ celých měst či jejich větších částí studenty. Polští studenti jsou navíc zřetelně viditelní v lokalitách socialistických sídlišť, které se neřadí k problémovým či nějak degradovaným, mívají dobré dopravní spojení s univerzitními kampusy a historickým centrem. Studenti se naopak vyhýbají periferním, problémovým oblastem a málokdy se rozhodují pro centrálněji položené avšak méně pohodlné staré činžovní domy. Těžko je tak lze považovat za pionýry gentrifikace, přestože mohou alespoň zlepšovat nepříznivou demografickou situaci na stárnoucích socialistických sídlišťích a do jisté míry tak brání jejich degradaci či ztrátě sídelní atraktivitu.

Omezené finanční možnosti studentů, stejně jako specifika post-socialistického trhu s bydlením, vysvětlují tendenci studentů k pronájmu relativně malých bytů ve skupinkách po dvou či třech, a nikoliv rodinných domů či větších bytových jednotek. Na rozdíl od případů studentského ubytování známých například ze Spojeného království je potřeba vyzdvihnout zejména relativně dobrý stav budov a bytů pronájemných studenty, stejně jako velké množství renovací podnikaných majiteli nemovitostí v posledních letech. V Krakově je potřeba zmínit relativně vysoký podíl bytů v nově postavených domech na všech studentských pronájmech, čímž se situace v polských městech přibližuje známým případům studentského osídlení v Austrálii či novým trendům v Anglii. Studenti v obou městech dávají přednost ubytování charakterizovanému poklidnou atmosférou, komfortem a standardem vybavení, čímž se odlišují od tradičních účastníků procesu studentifikace. Polští studenti na své okolí působí především běžným nakupováním, spíše než nočním životem či využíváním služeb. Ve výběru ubytování a dopadu na své okolí se studenti příliš neliší od ostatních obyvatel, spíše splývají s prostředním, než že by z něj vyčnívali. Pokud bychom chtěli studentifikaci chápat jako viditelné klastrování aktivit a služeb orientovaných na studenty, pak bychom tyto procesy našli v některých oblastech polských měst zejména ve vztahu k nočnímu životu. S ohledem na náplň volného času se studenti shodují s dalšími dočasnými uživateli městského prostoru, zejména turisty, částečně s umělci a dalšími mladými lidmi. Existují proto četné analogie mezi studentifikací volného času, turistifikací, nebo transformací některých oblastí v kulturně orientované čtvrti. Tyto procesy vzniku „městských hřišť“ se mohou odehrávat paralelně a viditelně se překrývat, tak jako v krakovské čtvrti Kazimierz, nebo (v menší míře) v Sopotech v Trojměstí. Pilotní výzkum provedený autory zejména upozornil na potřebu věnovat tématu další pozornost, hlavně s ohledem na možné rozdíly v chování studentů podle zvolených oborů či univerzit s ohledem na lokaci kampusů, specializaci, či podporu ubytování. Stejně tak je nutné se soustředit na specifika jednotlivých měst různé velikosti a s odlišným historickým vývojem a polohou v polských regionech.

Obr. 1 – Lokace bytů pronajatých studenty Ekonomické univerzity v Krakově.

Obr. 2 – Lokace bytů pronajatých studenty Gdaňské univerzity. Zdroj: vlastní zpracování na základě dotazníkového šetření.

Obr. 3 – Stav bytů pronajatých studenty a budov, kde studenti bydlí z hlediska oprav. Zdroj: vlastní zpracování na základě dotazníkového šetření.

Obr. 4 – Modernizační a rekonstrukční práce provedené vlastníky bytových jednotek v nedávné době (podíl respondentů, kteří uvedli modernizační aktivitu). Zdroj: vlastní zpracování na základě dotazníkového šetření.

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