

Excluded. The reproduction of multiple marginalities in the CEE industrial periphery

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Currently, studies on spaces of economic restructuring focused on key agents' strategies and powerful transformative mechanisms driving growth have been scrutinized and amplified by critical research on multiple forms and spaces of inequalities produced by global flows of capital. In this paper, we unpack the interrelated processes of Central East European peripheral re/industrialization put forward by neoliberal (central and local) state policies and the production of socio-spatial marginalities in local spaces. We focus on entangled and conflicting institutional strategies that promoted economic restructuring in old industrial regions favouring the interests of (dominantly global) capital thus, gave way to structural changes that marginalized the unskilled and the poor as labour force (confined to precarious and underpaid segments of the market), as consumers (having no access to basic goods) and also as citizens (limiting their access to public assets/goods).

Our key arguments are:

- (i) The socio-spatially marginalized status of urban poor is produced and maintained by the mechanisms of post-socialist economic recovery and the subsequent waves of semi-peripheral industrialization in CEE.
- (ii) The spatial lock-in position of the poorest is embedded in the institutional strategies of the unfolding welfare state that turn systemic conflicts to local problems, to silence the marginalized, to distance formal (institutionalized) market-driven processes and the world of poor moreover, provide cheap labour reservoir for future growth primarily, for domestic capital (SMEs).
- (iii) Racialization is mobilized by various institutions as a narrative strategy for dividing social groups (workers), disciplining the poor and implementing selective social (e.g. housing) institutional strategies. We relate our analysis to the critical concept of space and the ongoing debates on spatiality of state power to reveal changing and intersecting institutional strategies that supported socio-spatial polarization and the spatial lock-in of poor in an old industrial town recovered from structural crisis in post-transition Hungary. We grasp the spatial logic of CEE semi-peripheral capitalism through institutional practices that fixed marginality in space along with 'outsourcing' state social care functions to an NGO that undermined the social status (rights rooted in citizenship) of urban poor. Our analysis rests on a fieldwork we conducted in a former mining town that has been a scene to industrial recovery since the 1990s, yet also to the reproduction of class, ethnicity, and also place-based marginalities in former mining colonies on the edge of the town.