Socially excluded localities revisited

JAKOB HURRLE[1], LUDĚK SÝKORA[1], LUCIE TRLIFAJOVÁ[2], PETR KUČERA[1]

[1] Charles University, Faculty of Sciences, Department of Social Geography and Regional Development, Prague, Czechia; e-mail: jakob.hurrle@natur.cuni.cz, sykora@natur.cuni.cz, petr.kucera@natur.cuni.cz
[2] Charles University, Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Public and Social Policy, Prague, Czechia; e-mail: lucie.trlifajova@gmail.com

ABSTRACT This contribution critically assesses the use of the term "socially excluded (Roma) locality" in politics and in the practice of the Czech public policy towards the situation of the Roma minority. The paper first offers an overview of the genesis of the term within the development of Czech public policy towards Roma. In its conceptual part, it discusses its relation to theoretical concepts of ghetto and social exclusion. An empirical study of four localities, which were denoted as socially excluded, reveals a surprisingly great variety of conditions within these places. The authors argue that there is a tendency of an inflationary use of this term, which is guided by the presence of Roma while often abstracting from the issue of social exclusion.

KEY WORDS socially excluded localities – concept – policy – case study – Czechia

HURRLE, J., SÝKORA, L., TRLIFAJOVÁ, L., KUČERA, P. (2016): Socially excluded localities revisited. Geografie, 121, 4, 544–565.
Received July 2015, accepted March 2016.

1. Introduction

The EU has been pressuring candidate and member states to improve the situation of the 10–12 million Roma in Europe, which were in a recent communication described as living "in extreme marginalisation … and in very poor socio-economic conditions" and facing "discrimination, social exclusion and segregation" (European Commission 2010, p. 2). However, international political pressure has often met limited commitment of national and local decision-makers, which reflects widespread public resistance to the objective of Roma inclusion. The efforts by the EU and other international institutions were hence not successful in substantially changing the overall situation (Barany 2001; UNDP 2003; Guy, Kovats 2006; Steward 2012; Guy, ed. 2013).

As the most disadvantaged Roma tend to live segregated from the majority population (Ringold, Orenstein, Wilkens 2004) one strategy increasingly promoted by the European Commission in order to improve the effectiveness of policies has been the application of territorial criteria. Using European funding, there have been attempts in a number of countries to identify these local concentrations of poverty and underdevelopment and address the situation of their inhabitants. In Slovakia, the evaluation of EU-funded projects had demonstrated that only a small share of resources reached municipalities with a very high share of segregated Roma (Hurrle et al. 2012). In order to improve the targeting of resources, the controversially discussed plans for the new operating programmes include so-called "take-away packages" for a predefined list of municipalities, in which the most underdeveloped and segregated Roma settlements are located (European Commission 2015; Marcinčin 2015). The identification of these locations is based on the results of country-wide mappings of *Roma communities* realized in 2003 and 2013 (Radičová 2004, Mušinka et al. 2013). Country-wide mappings have been realized also in Czechia, using the terms socially excluded Roma locality (2006) and socially excluded locality (2015; GAC 2006a, GAC 2015). A mapping of Roma communities was conducted also in Romania (Moisă et al. 2013). In Hungary, the government identified in 2007 the 33 most disadvantaged micro-regions, which were in 2007–10 targeted by two EU-financed development programmes. While this programme was not ethnically defined, one third of the Hungarian Roma population is estimated to live in the identified rural areas (Janza 2010, Gálosci-Kovács et al. 2011).

The main aim of this article is to analyse, discuss and question the use of the concept "socially excluded Roma locality / socially excluded locality" for the conceptualization of Roma exclusion and policy interventions in the area of Roma integration in Czechia. Introduced in 2006 by the authors of the above-mentioned mapping, this term has in recent years developed into a key concept in Czech public policy approaches towards the situation of the Roma minority. For instance, many of the programmes that address Roma are defined as targeting inhabitants of socially excluded localities. The existence of a socially excluded locality in a municipality or micro-region is also a crucial condition for the involvement of the state Agency for Social Inclusion, which was created to support inclusion on the municipal level. Similarly, in the 2008–2013 programming period a number of interventions supported from EU Funds were directed towards socially excluded localities and the planning of the new operational programmes foresees to reserve significant resources to municipalities with socially excluded localities (Úřad vlády 2015).

Our interest in this issue was initiated during the field research in Roma population concentrations in smaller towns and rural municipalities that in many cases were identified only recently in newer regional mappings as being socially excluded or threatened by social exclusion (Dvořáková 2013, SocioFactor 2013). Our research has shown that the use of the concept of socially excluded locality has limitations to capture the highly variable character of Roma concentrations. We found that in many cases, it was the Roma ethnicity of the inhabitants rather than the state of social exclusion that was the prime reason for marking certain places as socially excluded localities.

In this paper we will first overview the genesis of the concept of socially excluded locality and its development into a key instrument in the Czech policy towards Roma. Secondly, we discuss the term socially excluded locality in the light of related concepts of ghetto and social exclusion. Then, we present the study of socially excluded localities in four mutually different settings. While acknowledging the concept's importance, we argue that there is a problematic tendency of inflationary use, which contributes to the stigmatization of population living in localities marked as socially excluded.

2. Socially excluded localities in policy

The Czech government approved the first Concept for Roma Inclusion already in 1999. Updated versions of the Concept were issued in 2004, 2009 and 2015. While the government has been aware of the problems and created institutions to tackle them, the gap between Roma and non-Roma population did not disappear. At the same time, there has been a strongly developing trend towards the spatial concentration of Roma (Úřad vlády 2014).

The term socially excluded locality was first introduced in 2006 with the publication of the report "Analysis of Socially Excluded Roma Localities in the Czech Republic and Absorption Capacity of Entities Involved in this Field" (GAC 2006a). Conducted for the Ministry of Social Affairs, this so-called Gabal report identified 310 socially excluded Roma localities across the Czech territory. The survey has had remained an important reference source up to 2015, when a new country-wide update was published by the same team as “Analysis of socially excluded localities” (GAC 2015). The titles of both reports point to a major shift in the representation of these localities. While the 2006 report was mapping “socially excluded Roma localities”, in 2015 the word “Roma” disappeared.

Reflecting the findings of the Gabal report, the central government established the *Agency for Social Inclusion in Roma Localities* in 2008. Its main task is to support municipalities in developing strategies for the integration of the inhabitants of socially excluded Roma localities. In practice, the Agency is the most important state tool for approaching the issue of Roma exclusion. The existence of a socially excluded locality on the territory of the municipality is one official precondition for the support from the Agency and municipalities need to demonstrate this fact in their applications. In July 2012, the name of the Agency was shortened to *Agency for Social Inclusion.*

In 2010, the Strategy for Social Inclusion 2011–2015 was prepared by the Agency and approved by the central government in order “to support the social inclusion of people in socially excluded localities in the Czech Republic, which are currently mainly populated by the Roma” (Uřad vlády 2010, p. 2). The strategy contains 77 measures in six different policy areas (security; housing; education; social services, family, healthcare; employment, benefit systems; regional development).

At present, Czech policy towards Roma is hence guided by two different policy documents: the Concept for Roma Inclusion and the Strategy for Social Inclusion. While the Concept approaches the question of Roma inclusion from an ethnic perspective, the Strategy uses ethnically neutral language and focuses on socially excluded localities.

3. Socially excluded localities: the concept

The development of the political framework summarized above has been influenced by an important paradigmatic shift. While the issue of Roma exclusion was during the 1990s primarily perceived as a minority rights issue, the more recent terminology is dominated by ethnically neutral language. A new generation of social scientists questioned the validity of the ethnic approach arguing in favour of ethnically neutral policies that would tackle the most vulnerable Roma and persons of other ethnicity in the same situation with the instruments of social work (Moravec 2006). Some scholars even went so far to question the very existence of a shared Roma ethnicity (Jakoubek 2004). This school of thought strongly influenced the work of non-government organizations and the state administration.

The introduction of the concept social excluded Roma locality in the first Gabal report (GAC 2006a) was not only a reaction to the emerging new reality, in which

Roma lived increasingly spatially segregated, but also mirrored the critique of the ethnic paradigm. The advocates of ethnically neutral policies saw the application of spatial and social criteria as a way to avoid the problematic ethnic category while ensuring that the most vulnerable Roma would be better reached by general social policies. Defining the group of intervention by their place of residents would also permit to target both Roma and non-Roma living in the same locality. However, even the advocates of the new approach stressed that social exclusion occurs also outside of excluded localities. Moravec warns that it would be a mistake to simply replace "faulty concepts" like *member of the Roma community* or *of Roma ethnicity* with the "better, yet incomplete concept" *inhabitants of Roma localities* (Moravec 2006, p. 22).

One important argument for the introduction of the term socially excluded Roma locality in the 2006 mapping has been an inappropriate labelling of such places as "ghettos", which was popularized at that time also by a public campaign by the Czech non-government organization People in Need that warned of the dangers of Roma ghettoization: "The ever increasing usage of this popular (vulgar) label with obvious negative connotations by journalists, social workers and members of the academic community reproduces and further increases the negative perception of these locations (…). Calling a locality a 'ghetto' hence contributes to the deepening of the social exclusion of its inhabitants." (GAC 2006a, p. 11)

However, when an updated version of the mapping of socially excluded locality was published in 2015, even the more serious Czech newspapers, such as Hospodařské noviny (2015), used the term "socially excluded locality" and "ghetto" as synonyms. Apparently, the introduction of the term socially excluded locality / socially excluded Roma locality did not succeed to change the perception of these places by the general public.

We therefore also intend to explore, whether the term socially excluded locality describes a sociospatial formation that is different from the ghetto or if it is, as suggested by Toušek (2007, p. 21), merely a "euphemistic" term for the same phenomenon. Having criticized that social scientists were frequently lending the term ghetto from popular language in order to describe various forms of bounded urban formations without developing a rigid definition of the ghetto, Wacquant (2011) developed an analytic framework to distinguish ghettoes more clearly from other types of ethnic formations. He states that ghettoes are involuntarily inhabited by people of one ethnic or religious group and that ghettoes are characterized by constraint, entrapment, exclusivity, encompassment, inward orientations, and stigma. At the same time, however, he also stresses the other side of the "Janus-faced" ghetto, which offers its inhabitants protection in an otherwise hostile society.

While the above-mentioned characteristics define historical and modern ghettoes alike, a large number of studies described how deindustrialization and mass unemployment changed the character of segregation in the post-Fordist era (Wilson 1987; Wacquant 1994; Marcuse 1997; Musterd, Ostendorf, eds. 1998; Venkatesh 2000). The modern ghetto has lost its economic ties to the outside world. It further suffered by the loss of minority elites, who benefitted from new opportunities for social mobility and fled the increasingly turbulent minority districts. In consequence of these changes, todays "hyper-ghettoes" suffer under an "organizational vacuum" and are much more isolated than their historical predecessors (Agier 2009).

Applying Wacquant's analytical framework Stejskalová (2013), Růžička (2012) and Toušek (2007) have diagnosed the processes of ghettoization occurring in Czechia. They link the processes of sociospatial concentration to wider trends of labour market transformation, stratification of society and ethnization of poverty during postsocialism. While using the term "ghettoization", Růžička (2012) and Růžička and Toušek (2014) observed that the analysed Czech localities are smaller, partially ethnically mixed and have a relatively low level of criminality when compared with the American (hyper) ghettos. These differences bring us back to the issue of the universality of the modern ghetto, which Wacquant (2008) sees first of all as a North American phenomenon. Speaking of "anti-ghettoes", Waqucant criticizes the usage of the term "ghetto" for the disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the French *banlieu*, which are more ethnically diverse and less clearly separated from the rest of urban society. This line of argumentation suggests that "ghetto" is not the correct term to describe the character of the majority of ethnically segregated places in Czechia, which were listed among socially excluded Roma locality and socially excluded locality (GAC 2006a, GAC 2015).

However, the other question is: What conditions need to be fulfilled in order to call a place "socially excluded"? In order to approach this issue lets first scrutinize definitions of socially excluded (Roma) localities. The first report (GAC 2006a) emphasized that socially excluded Roma locality is an area (ranging from a single multi-dwelling house to a whole town district) inhabited by Roma. The authors of the report also stressed that "for a locality to be perceived as Roma, it is not at all necessary that Roma inhabitants form the statistical majority" (GAC 2006a). The other key aspect in the definition was that the population is "socially excluded". In the report, social exclusion is described as the process "whereby an individual or a group of individuals is hindered or completely denied access to the resources, positions and opportunities allowing participation in the social, economic and political activities of the majority society" (GAC 2006a, p. 9).

The report further emphasized the existence of both symbolic and physical frontiers between locality and its surrounding that are "recognised by both the inhabitants of the locality and those who live outside" (GAC 2006a, p. 10). Although the concept of social exclusion is central to the definition of socially excluded locality, no clear guidance was offered how to identify and measure the state and degree of social exclusion. The second report refers to "persons living in inadequate conditions (expressed by the number of welfare recipients)" (GAC 2015, p. 11). According to the interviewed authors of the study, the researchers were however not able to verify the assumed social status of the inhabitants in accordance with this definition as accessible data on welfare receivership were available only for larger statistical units. Reflecting this difficulty, we will refer in this article to the definition used in the first report.

Due to a lack of clarity in the use of the term of social exclusion in the above discussed reports, it is useful to recall the origins of the international debate on social exclusion. The term "exclusion" was coined in France during the 1970s and has been soon adapted in other Western European countries to grasp the essence of the new social situations that emerged in consequence of deindustrialization and economic restructuring. Even though the strong mechanisms for social protection of the Western European welfare states mitigated the worsening of the material situation of those who had lost their jobs due to these economic changes, the unemployed were described as suffering by the loss of opportunities to participate in society. "Exclusion" was hence described as the condition of those who were perceived as being left outside of society and outside the class system (Kronauer 2010). The interest in social exclusion has been closely related to the studies of new sociospatial formations that concentrated disadvantaged populations (e.g. Häussermann, Kronauer, Siebel 2004).

While the concept well reflected the changed character of employment, unemployment and poverty in contemporary societies, it was criticised for suggesting a contrast between "the society" and "the excluded": "The society appears than as a non-problematic unit whereas the poor are seen as 'outsiders' and 'problematic groups'" (Kronauer 2010, p. 18).

The discussion of three related concepts of "socially excluded locality", "ghetto" and "social exclusion" has shown that these concepts are not unambiguous. While social exclusion has been adapted to describe a new situation of disadvantaged population without stigmatizing it by a discourse of "othering" based on ethnicity or using the pejorative term "ghetto", the overview suggests that the labelling of a community as being "socially excluded" can also contribute to its perception as sociospatial concentration of outsiders, which are not an integral part of society. In the light of this discussion, it is important to analyze and asses how the term of socially excluded locality is used in practice, and whether its inappropriate use does not stigmatize population of places, which even do not fulfil basic criteria for social exclusion.

4. Socially excluded localities in practice: findings from four case studies

The idea to systematically address the concept and usage of the socially excluded locality was inspired by the experience gained during a number of research case studies of 'socially excluded localities' in various parts of Czechia. While our explicit goal was not to test the concept's appropriateness, the experience gained during the fieldwork and while interviewing residents, local public officers and politicians indicated that the use of this concept has limitations to capture the highly variable character of Roma concentrations.

In this article, we use examples from four regions to demonstrate what different types of localities have been designated as socially excluded localities in official studies and documents. We selected cases that differ in regard to their geographical location and the past and present employment structures (Table 1). We also sought to include localities of different sizes and with different ownership structures.

All of the investigated localities had been identified by municipal officials in their applications for the co-operation with the Agency for Social Inclusion. In 5 of the 11 municipalities, the applicants were able to refer to the study of socially excluded (Roma) localities (GAC 2006a), which listed localities in Kolín, Spomyšl and Horní Počaply (both Mělnicko), Nové Město pod Smrkem and Bulovka (both Frýdlantsko). The only region omitted entirely in this study was Žluticko. However, two municipalities in this region were listed in a more detailed mapping of socially excluded localities in the Karlovy Vary Region (Dvořáková 2013). In the case of Frýdlantsko, localities in three additional municipalities were identified in a similar regional study for Liberec Region (SocioFactor 2013). The majority of the

Tab. 1 – Key characteristics of the selected regions and localities

Case	Type of location	Geographical, historical and social features	Number and character of localities analysed
Kolín	Industrial town	Well-accessible, urban, industrial	1 in city: several houses in central location, municipality-owned, 90% Roma
Mělnicko	Semi-rural region	Semi-peripheral, fertile agricultural land in combination with heavy industry	2 in villages: owned by inhabitants, highly problematic living conditions, 100% Roma
Žluticko	Rural inner periphery	Highly remote and sparsely populated, traditionally structurally weak, historically dominated by agriculture	4 in small town, 3 in villages: various types of ownership, varying degrees of separation / integration, in most cases less than 50% Roma
Frýdlantsko	Rural and post-industrial outer periphery	Geographically remote, strongly affected by deindustrialization	11 in small towns, 3 in villages: various types of ownership, varying degrees of separation / integration, varying proportion of Roma

new (or hitherto unreported) localities identified in regional mappings are also included in the newer study of socially excluded locality (GAC 2015).

In each case, we analysed official documents, media reports and discussions in social networks and conducted interviews during the fieldwork. The interviews were primarily conducted with residents of localities (20–30 per case). We also interviewed persons living in the surrounding of these localities (10–20 per region) and institutional actors with knowledge of the area and local social relations, such as mayors, social workers, directors of schools and kindergartens (20–30 per region). The purpose of these interviews was to learn about the genesis of each locality and gather information about the social and economic situation of households in the locality including their relationship to property owners and neighbours. We also sought to learn about specific issues, such as fluctuation among tenants or problems with debts.

We expected that places visited during the field research would comply with a common understanding of socially excluded locality, i.e. that they would be: "an area inhabited by a group whose members consider themselves to be Roma and/or are considered as such by a majority of people in their neighbourhood, and who are socially excluded" (GAC 2006a, p. 10). Furthermore, the locality would be "a single building in which several individuals or families live, or a whole town district consisting of several hundreds or thousands of residents" (GAC 2006a). An important feature distinguishing the locality would be "frontiers of such area", which "may be both symbolic and physical. In both cases, the frontier would be recognised by both the inhabitants of the locality and those who live outside" (GAC 2006a). And finally, the spatial concentration would have an important role in the process of social exclusion: "This area is both the place to which the 'excluded' people are segregated and the place which contributes to their exclusion" (GAC 2006a). In the following paragraphs, we discuss the situation in each of the cases.

4.1. Kolín

The development of the locality begun only in the 2000s, when the city government decided to concentrate "problematic tenants" in municipality-owned tenement houses in Zengrova Street (Vrána, ed. 2011, p. 52). In addition to this, the process of increasing segregation was apparently supported by informal practices of the city's housing administration. However, some local observers also pointed to the desire of relatives to move next to their family members contributing to a more spontaneous concentration dynamics. Soon the location was perceived as "Roma ghetto" and appeared in the 2006 Gabal report (GAC 2006b). In 2010, a new city government applied for a partnership with the state Agency for Social

Inclusion, which lasted from 2011 to 2014. The city was mainly interested in addressing the problematic situation in Zengrova Street, which was in the local media described as an exotic and even dangerous place. The perception of Zengrova Street as the city's socially excluded locality was at the beginning of the local partnership uncritically reproduced from the Gabal report in the so-called situation analysis, which was commissioned by the Agency for Social Inclusion and realized by an external team of social scientists (Vrána, ed. 2011). The authors of this analysis took the special status of Zengrova Street as a given fact without critically questioning how conditions in this locality would compare with other parts of the city.

Our interviews with the head of the local police did not confirm the street's perception as a crime hot-spot. The police perceived other town areas as more problematic. It should also be mentioned that Roma in Kolín do not live only in Zengrova, but are also dispersed in other parts of town.

At the time of our research in 2012, more than 90% of the locality's estimated 300–350 inhabitants were Roma with the remaining 10% being elderly non-Roma caught in the place due to their age, immobility and lacking financial resources. The visit of the houses and interviews with residents led to a mixed picture. On the one hand, technical conditions in most of the houses were good and have not differed significantly from other working class tenement houses in the city. While the common spaces showed signs of neglect, several of the flats visited were very well-kept and modernized by the inhabitants. Conditions were visibly worse in one of the houses, where relations among neighbours within the building suffered under intense conflicts. The social situation of the inhabitants was not homogenous. Some residents were unemployed and in interviews mentioned their problems with the payments for rent and electricity. Yet, others had regular work and have not seen themselves as "socially excluded".

The heterogeneity of conditions within the location was on the one hand side quite clearly in contrast with the one-sided negative public perception and media representation of the place. It also was at odds with our initial assumptions about the character of socially excluded localities. On the other hand, all interviewed residents emphasised the stigmatization of their street. Some of the better-off also expressed a strong sense of becoming victims of the city's discriminatory housing policy, which had forced them to accept housing in a place they did not like. This clearly is a very important issue, which distinguishes Zengrova Street from other localities in the city. Such stigma has negative influence on the identification of the residents with their location and brings additional disadvantages, for example when searching for employment.

4.2. Mělnicko

In Spomyšl and Horní Počaply-Křivenice, municipalities in the surroundings of Mělník, the investigated socially excluded localities are inhabited solely by Roma. In regard to the technical infrastructure, both localities are known to belong to the most underdeveloped in Czechia. At the time of our field investigation (2012), both sites included a combination of formal and informal housing structures built with simple methods from various materials. The living conditions are dangerous for the health of the inhabitants. In the case of Spomyšl there were serious problems with the quality of drinking water; in Horní Počaply many of the inhabited structures offered in winter only minimal protection against the cold. Being located over half a kilometre of the settlement requiring a walk along a busy road without sidewalks, the socially excluded locality in Spomyšl is physically separated from the rest of the village. The Horní Počaply socially excluded locality is located in the very centre of the tiny Křivenice village. However, the entire village is geographically separated from the rest of Horní Počaply by the vast industrial area of the Mělník power station.

Both socially excluded locality developed spontaneously. In the 1990s, Spomyšl settlement has begun to be formed as a squat of Roma, who lost work and accommodation in the nearby factory. At that time the squat was tolerated by the mayor of Spomyšl. The immigration of additional people and natural growth led to a steady increase of the number of inhabitants. The municipality decided later to legalize their residency by selling the property to one of the inhabitants. Today the property is jointly owned by 13 of the inhabitants, who belong to the same family. As all of the owners are indebted, there is a court-issued distress warrant on the property.

Even though the Spomyšl settlement is much more isolated and housing conditions are much more difficult than in the case of Kolín, the interviewed residents' attitude towards their home seemed more positive than in the case of Kolín. While criticizing the local municipality for allegedly treating the inhabitants of the settlements as second-class citizens when it comes to the provision of water or the collection of trash, the interviewed inhabitants declared that they would consider this locality as their home and expressed no interest in moving to another place. The example of Spomyšl points to the important, yet usually overlooked, question of the inhabitants' self-identification with their locality.

It seems likely that the genesis of the location, the degree of their autonomy and the experience of coercion influences how the place is perceived by its inhabitants.

While the interviews indicated that it might be possible to speak in the case of Spomyšl of a community of people identifying with their place, this seemed impossible in the case of Horní Počaply. The visit of the house and the interviews with residents led to the impression of a conflictual and also fragmented place, with isolated and lethargic inhabitants. According to the local consultant of the Agency for Social Inclusion, a number of residents had left the place due to prison sentences. It was not possible to verify or rebut this information in the interviews with the residents.

4.3. Žluticko

Two socially excluded localities in Žluticko region were indentified in the 2012 region-wide mapping commissioned by the Karlovy Vary region (Žlutice and Albeřice settlement within Hradiště army training ground) (Dvořáková 2013). In its 2012 application for a partnership with the Agency for Social Inclusion, the town Žlutice listed seven socially excluded localities in four municipalities (Žlutice-3, Čichalov-Mokrá, Valeč, Vrbice) and the Hradiště training ground (Žlutice 2012).

In the town Žlutice, the identified "localities" are individual tenement houses dispersed within municipality residential areas. It is very difficult to distinguish the identified houses from other houses in the area, as there is no visible barrier or visible differences in regard to the technical conditions. In addition to this, Roma account only for part of residents in these houses. The local situation was in discrepancy with what we thought to be a socially excluded locality. Also the interviewed political representatives expressed their uneasiness with the application of the concept, which they perceived as ill-fitting to the overall situation of the town, where a large proportion of the overall population is living in a difficult social situation.

According to the perception of the interviewed city representatives, the "real" socially excluded localities would rather be the locations in some of the rural municipalities listed above. As the result of housing privatization and the out-migration of population, some of the tenement houses that earlier belonged to collective farms have attracted new Roma inhabitants, who moved here usually from within the same micro-region or adjacent areas. While many of these places are perceived as Roma ghettos, our research showed significant differences among these locations in terms of their ethnic composition, quality of housing and social relations with original population. None of the locations was at the time of our research (2013) inhabited solely by Roma. Most importantly, the conflict lines seemed to develop less between ethnic groups, but rather between old-established households and recent immigrants. In most cases, both of these groups were ethnically mixed. According to a number of local residents, both from the majority and minority population, the ethnicity is of minor importance in case of the old-established residents. The unusually high number of ethnically mixed families seems to support this perception. However, the Roma ethnicity of some of the new inhabitants clearly influences the way how these places and their inhabitants are perceived. Paradoxically, the ethnic dimension was underlined by the concept of the "white Roma", by which a number of institutional interview partners referred to poor non-Roma who had moved into the localities to live there "in a Roma way".

According to residents and local officials, the stability of some of the locations was in recent years threatened by the emergence of "cyclic migrants", who were described as moving from location to location, often failing to pay their rent and behaving in problematic ways. While the emergence of these cyclic migrants had a major negative impact on the perception of the analysed locations by their surroundings, our attempt of mapping these cases indicated that the total number of such households was below ten in the entire micro-region.

4.4. Frýdlantsko

Our interest in the geographically remote Frýdlantsko microregion was driven by the growth in the number of reported socially excluded locality. Already in 2006, socially excluded localities were identified in two muncipalities (Nové Město pod Smrkem, Bulovka; GAC 2006b). The mapping of socially excluded localities realised in the Liberec region from 2013 identified localities in six of the eighteen municipalities within the micro-region (SocioFactor 2013). In the case of the two towns, Frýdlant and Nové Město pod Smrkem, this study identified in total 11 socially excluded localities dispersed over the territory of both towns.

In our analysis realized in 2014, we aimed at the investigation of the places identified in these reports. First of all, we have revealed that there are significant differences among these localities in terms of housing conditions and the degree of segregation. In Frýdlant, the region's administrative centre, there are four private rental houses inhabited exclusively by Roma (with the exception of one non-Roma family). Originally city property, these houses were privatized in 2005 to the highest offer. The owner acquired similar properties also in other municipalities in the Liberec Region. At the time of our field work (2014), the houses in Frýdlant were in disrepair and very bad hygienic conditions. While paying very high rent for substandard housing, tenants complained about disrespectful treatment from their landlord.

In Nové Město pod Smrkem, Roma live in a number of municipality-owned houses of which many are inhabited only by Roma. The largest concentration of Roma is in one large tenement house on the market square, which was listed in the SocioFactor study as socially excluded locality. There are, however, other municipality-owned houses of different sizes and character spread in many locations all-over the townscape that are inhabited by Roma. Even though none of these houses is in a good technical shape, conditions are similar to those in other municipality-owned houses in the city and much better than in the privately owned houses in Frýdlant. Some of these houses were listed in the study whereas others were left out. Interviewed Roma appreciated the good quality of inter-ethnic relations in the town. However, they criticized the municipal housing administration for intentionally creating a division between the houses for Roma and the rest of population. Another socially excluded locality included in the report is the municipality-owned emergency accommodation, which was at the time of our field research inhabited only by Roma and in a state of disrepair. The only heating possibilities were mobile electrical heaters owned by the tenants. The third type of socially excluded locality were prefabricated houses located in proximity to the town centre. Owned by large property management agency with nation-wide span, these houses were relatively well-maintained and only partially inhabited by Roma, with a maximum of two Roma families per one entrance. It was not clear at all for which reason these houses were in the study listed as socially excluded locality.

In rural municipalities like Bulovka and Višnova, Roma inhabit both private homes and rural tenement houses, which used to belong to collective farms. Some of the family homes in Bulovka local settlement Arnoltice and also tenement houses in the municipality of Bulovka were listed in the SocioFactor 2013 study. In our field work we found that some of the family owner-occupied houses were in bad technical conditions and the owners stated to be in a complicated social situation. In case of another building listed as socially excluded locality, the situation was much better. The building was owned by one of the inhabitants, who had qualified work in a Liberec-based factory. He renovated the building gradually together with his tenants. All of the inhabitants were Roma.

Another phenomenon observed in the rural municipalities is the rise of cyclic migration in a number of privately-owned tenement houses, which seemed to resemble the development in the Žlutice micro-region. While these houses and their inhabitants were identified by the interviewed local mayor as a source of conflict, we have not confirmed these problems during our visit of the buildings in question. This points to the high changeability of conditions in locations that are characterized by a high population fluctuation.

5. Implications of the Case Studies

The aim of the case studies was to analyse whether the places identified by reports and local governments as socially excluded locality complied with a common understanding of socially excluded locality. In order to answer this question let us first recall how the original Gabal report (GAC 2006a) defined socially excluded

Roma localities. Table 2 links the three key definitions used in the report with the findings from the four studied micro-regions.

During our field research, we found that the term "socially excluded locality" has been used to refer to places, which differed significantly in regard to social exclusion. From the 24 localities analysed in the four studied regions, 11 places did not met the definition of socially excluded locality used in the first Gabal report (GAC 2006a). There is a high variety of conditions among these places, which are the result of differences in their geographic setting (urban, rural), size, ownership structure and historical development.

More importantly, we found that while the ethnically neutral terminology of the term would imply that ethnicity should no longer be in the centre of attention, in practice, socially excluded localities are associated only with the concentration of Roma. This ethnic dimension is not so surprising, as the presence of Roma has been a key element in the use of the concept since its introduction. This points to a discrepancy between the symbolically used language and the real practice, which is characterised by a strong association between ethnic and social categories of Roma and social exclusion.

The introduction of the socially excluded locality into the Czech political framework was part of a general attempt to de-ethnize the practices of Roma inclusion. However, the findings from the four case studies demonstrated that the labelling of places as socially excluded localities is often not driven by a careful analysis of the inhabitants' social situation, but by the perception of their ethnic otherness. The blending of social and ethnic criteria is supported by the vagueness of the definitions of social exclusion that is leaving space for subjective interpretations.

Roma concentrations are interpreted as socially excluded even in situations where the actual social and economic situation of the Roma is not significantly different from the situation of the local majority population, when social tension and barriers were not registered and where it was hard to detect signs, practices and processes of social exclusion. In the territorial context of the rural and impoverished regions of Žluticko and Frýdlantsko social problems are widespread among local population and not related specifically to the Roma community. We found that in peripheral rural areas, poverty does not necessarily concentrate in particular localities inhabited by Roma, but threatens substantial parts of the local community.

A number of researchers and decision-makers interviewed during our research admitted that the term socially excluded locality often does not fit to the local reality. Nevertheless, they used the term as they felt a need to frame existing social problems into an established conceptual framework. However, the practices of the application of the concept of socially excluded locality leads to labelling, that may result in stigmatization and symbolic exclusion of places that do not conform to

Tab. 2 – The analysed cases in relation to definitions used in GAC 2006a

Case	Definitions used in GAC 2006a			Conclusion: Are the studied places socially excluded Roma localities in the meaning of GAC 2006a?
	a) a single building in which several individuals or families live, or a whole town district consisting of several hundreds or thousands of residents b) inhabited by a group whose members consider themselves to be Roma and/or are considered as such by a majority of people in their neighbourhood c) and who are socially excluded	both the place to which the "excluded" people are segregated and the place which contributes to their exclusion	frontiers of such area as important distinguishing feature, which may be both symbolic and physical and are recognised by both the inhabitants of the locality and those outside	
Kolín	a) yes (group of buildings) b) yes c) yes (with some exceptions)	Yes, inhabitants considered stigmatization of area as key problem	Yes, high level of stigmatization and negative media perception	YES
Mělnicko	a) yes b) yes c) yes	Yes, even though some residents distinguished between complaints concerning perceived discrimination and a principle satisfaction with life in their secluded community	Yes, both symbolic (both localities) and spatial (Spomyšl)	YES
Žluticko	a) yes b) yes, but Roma constituted only minority in most localities c) problematic claim if understood in relation to local majority population	While the extent and effects of the concentration differ from place to place, the more important factor is the disadvantaged geographical position of the whole municipalities	Houses inhabited by Roma are locally recognised as being Roma-inhabited, yet, clear symbolic division between village and locality was identified only in one case (Valeč)	Concept of socially excluded locality does not fit well in most of the cases
Frýdlantsko	a) yes b) yes, but Roma constituted only small minority in some of the localities c) in some cases problematic claim if understood in relation to local majority population, in other cases this is the case due to the strong stigmatizing effect of the locality itself	Frýdlant: yes Nové Město pod Smrkem: only in case of one neglected building Rural municipalities: more important factor is the disadvantaged geographical position of the whole municipalities	Frýdlant: yes Nové Město pod Smrkem: only in case of the minority of identified buildings Rural municipalities: relevant only in one case	Adequate for situation in 4 Frýdlant localities, one building in Nové Město pod Smrkem and one rural locality. It is not fully adequate in the other cases.

basic criteria of exclusion. The widespread and uncritical use of the concept and its misinterpretation hence calls for the revision of its use.

One additional issue to be discussed is the underlying assumption of the negative effect of ethnic segregation. While the term socially excluded locality is a Czech invention, there is a rich stock of international literature dealing with the spatial dimension of exclusion (e.g. Wilson 1987; Häussermann, Kronauer, Siebel 2004). The crucial question is whether the life in segregated places further strengthens exclusion and marginalization. The so-called neighbourhood effect has been widely discussed without a clear resolution (e.g. van Ham et al. 2012). Yet, while it is generally accepted that socio-spatial dialectics (Soja 1980) reinforces social effects in situations of spatial coexistence, these effects might not be only negative and leading to a downward spiral. As Kronauer points out spatial concentration can have positive effects such as in the case of ethnic enclaves and asks whether spatial concentration always worsen "the situation or could there be circumstances where they help at the opposite to master the effects of social exclusion?" (Kronauer 2010, p. 216).

While references to usury, drug usage, prostitution, etc. are at the heart of Czech discourse, positive potentials of supportive networks and solidarity within disadvantaged and spatially confined communities are rarely mentioned. Some Czech authors justified this focus on the negative aspects of ethnic concentrations with the alleged absence of ethnic solidarity in Roma culture, which would in difference to other ethnical groups be characterized by the dominance of family structures and the absence of a shared ethnic consciousness (Jakoubek 2004). In view of the fluidity of any national or ethnical consciousness and the obvious discrepancies between proclaimed and daily practiced solidarity in all kind of national or ethnic groups (including the ethnic Czechs), we argue that it is not possible to omit the solidarity among neighbours in a "locality" solely by referring to these alleged cultural traits.

While inhabitants of some localities complained about the pathological behaviour of some neighbours (drug and alcohol abuse, criminal activities), which put great strain on the relations, our research also identified functioning community relations and solidarity among neighbours. Such positive findings were more common in the rural localities. They involved both people of Roma and non-Roma ethnicity and people living inside and outside the "locality". Examples include the joint organizing of activities for children (Albeřice settlement, Žluticko; Bulovka, Frýdlantsko), the sharing of vegetables from own production among neighbours (Žlutice), the organizing of shopping trips by car or joint rides to places of employment (Žlutice, Frýdlantsko), or the involvement of tenants in the reconstruction of a building (Bulovka-Arnoltice, Frýdlantsko). In the light of these cooperative relations it seems inappropriate to describe these people and their residential places as "socially excluded". We point to a mechanical application of the term of socially excluded locality, which brings misleading representations and risks of creating ambiguities.

Although the choices for Roma on the housing market are often limited by discriminatory practices and limited economic means, the discourse and analyses on socially excluded localities have only rarely considered to what extend might be the Roma concentrations also the result of their voluntary choices. We should recall in this context Wacquant's statement on the two faces of the ghetto, which is both a place of oppression and a safe haven in a hostile environment. While such effects are likely to be more relevant in larger localities, family bounds are one factor that clearly drives processes of ethnic concentration. Especially in the case of very small "localities", which are in often hardly more than a house that contains two or three families, it is difficult to draw a line between justified concerns about segregation and intolerance towards visible signs of otherness.

6. Conclusion

At the beginning of this article we have documented that the concept of "socially excluded locality" plays a central role in the Czech institutional response to the exclusion of Roma. There have been various attempts to map these places and develop policy strategies and funding schemes to address their situation. Our research in four different regions revealed that the term has been in inflationary usage. While the concept is too broad to capture various local challenges, it was used in many situations that have not complied with the definition of social exclusion. While the concept was supposed to de-ethnize the debate on Roma poverty, our research has shown that 'the socially excluded' is commonly understood as a synonym for Roma and socially excluded locality as the designation of places where Roma live, more or less independently of the actual social situation of these people. The practices in the use of the term socially excluded locality do not prevent stigmatization. On contrary, they contribute to the negative labeling of Roma, even in case when we can hardly speak about social exclusion from the local population.

We do not plead for the abolishment of the entire concept, whose value is in place based policy intervention. The research confirmed that there are highly stigmatized places of involuntary territorial confinement with deteriorating technical and poor hygienic conditions, which require specific attention. Social exclusion has many dimensions and spatial concentration and segregation of socially excluded is a crucial aspect that strengthens the other dimensions. The negative impact of living in these socio-spatial formations thus requires the use of specific place based measures in addition to broader and universal social policies to effectively tackle the root causal mechanisms of the exclusion process.

However, can we reconcile the existing contrast between the intent to use the ethnically neutral concept and the reality of the Czech discourse and practice, in which socially excluded localities are understood as a phenomenon related to the Roma? In our view, this implicit ethnical dimension embodied in the usage of the term shall be acknowledged. We suggest that studies of such localities, which are explicitly dealing with Roma, shall directly refer to socially excluded Roma localities. At the same time, the concept shall be also open for application to such socio-spatial formations, whose inhabitants are socially excluded, while not necessarily being Roma. This for instance concerns spatial concentrations of migrant workers or geographically isolated settlements with a high proportion of senior citizen. Yet even in those cases, where the usage of the term socially excluded locality / socially excluded Roma locality is appropriate, we should be aware of the fact that the designation as socially excluded (Roma) locality brings additional stigma for the place and its inhabitants.

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SHRNUTÍ

Přehodnocení pojmu sociálně vyloučené lokality

Příspěvek kriticky hodnotí užívání termínu „sociálně vyloučená (romská) lokalita" v praxi českých veřejných politik vůči Romům. V úvodní části se zaměřuje na diskusi pojmu sociálně vyloučená (romská) lokalita v kontextu politik zaměřených na řešení narůstající deprivace Romů. Termín byl zaveden autory celostátního mapování takto označených lokalit v roce 2006 (tzv. Gabalova zpráva). Od té doby se stal klíčovým konceptem v přístupech českých veřejných politik k Romům. Podpůrné programy zaměřené na Romy jsou obvykle cíleny na obyvatele tzv. sociálně vyloučených lokalit. Existence sociálně vyloučené lokality je také podmínkou pro spolupráci obcí se státní Agenturou pro sociální začleňování, jedinou státní institucí, které komplexně řeší otázky sociální inkluze na úrovni obcí, a také častou podmínkou pro žádosti o čerpání financí z fondů EU. Zavedené užití termínu posiluje zájem úřadů veřejné správy tyto lokality identifikovat a mapovat.

V navazující části se proto příspěvek zaměřuje na koncepční vymezení termínu sociálně vyloučená lokalita, a to zejména ve vztahu k souvisejícím teoretickým konceptům ghetta a sociálního vyloučení. Zavedení pojmu sociálně vyloučená lokalita bylo původně odůvodňováno stigmatizací, kterou s sebou označení „ghetto" nese. Sociálně vyloučená romská lokalita byla v tzv. Gabalově zprávě definovna jako „prostor obývaný skupinou, jejíž členové se sami považují za Romy a/nebo jsou za Romy označováni svým okolím, a jsou sociálně vyloučeni". Při snaze o odetnizování otázky došlo posléze k úpravě termínu na sociálně vyloučená lokalita. Přes tuto snahu jsou ale termíny „sociálně vyloučená lokalita" a „ghetto" v mediálním diskurzu často používány synonymně.

Po teoretické části následují případové studie několika lokalit, které byly v předchozích zprávách označeny jako sociálně vyloučené. Lokality se nacházejí ve vzájemně odlišných geografických prostředích. Zengrova ulice v Kolíně je příkladem městské koncentrace v průmyslovém centru Čech. Další dvě lokality – Spomyšl a Horní Počaply – se nalézají ve vesnicích v okolí Mělníka, tedy v ekonomicky relativně stabilním regionu. Zbývající lokality se nacházejí ve strukturálně znevýhodněných regionech. Žluticko je zemědělským regionem ve vnitřní periferii s dlouhodobým nedostatkem pracovních příležitostí. Frýdlantsko, je příkladem pohraničního industriálního regionu Česka, kde došlo ke zhoršení sociální situace v důsledku propadu textilního průmyslu. Prostřednictvím studií lokalit ilustrujeme vysokou různorodost míst označovaných termínem „sociálně vyloučená lokalita“. V některých případech jde o větší prostorové celky (ulice, skupina domů), v jiných se tak ale označují jen jednotlivé domy. Spojujícím znakem lokalit je především prostorová koncentrace Romů. Právě na základě přítomnosti Romů jsou lokality označeny jako sociálně vyloučené, často bez podrobnějšího ověření stavu sociálního vyloučení. Použití pojmu se jeví jako nejproblematičtější v případě malých obcí v periferních oblastech, kde se sociální a ekonomické problémy zdaleka netýkají pouze míst prostorové koncentrace Romů a kde je sociálním vyloučením ohrožena podstatně širší skupina obyvatel.

Autoři poukazují na inflační trend v používání pojmu. Tento problematický trend je důsledkem nedostatečného konceptuálního vymezení pojmu a zejména pak praktik při jeho používání, jež se přizpůsobuje současnému politickému a institucionálním rámci. Do jisté míry uměle jsou označována i místa, v nichž podstata sociálního vyloučení obyvatel není naplněna. Označení lokality jako sociálně vyloučené bohužel ale přispívá k negativnímu vnímání a stigmatizaci jejích obyvatel, a může tak stimulovat rozvoj procesů vedoucích k sociálnímu vyloučení.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to acknowledge the support from the Grant Agency of the Czech Republic project No. P404/12/0648, “New socio-spatial formations: Segregation in the context of post-communist transformations and globalization” and from the Grant Agency of the Charles University in Prague project No. 1576214, “Double marginalization. Determinants of exclusion and potentials for inclusion of Roma in rural Czech municipalities”. The paper also reflects empirical insights gained during field work which was partly conducted in the form of research assignments for the Czech Agency for Social Inclusion.