

Summary

Relations between the development of innovative activities and the processes of gentrification in the urban space

Gentrification processes and the development of innovative activities in cities are global phenomena, but they depend on local conditions. The concentration of innovative activities in the urban space, especially in the downtown area, is related to the formation of innovation districts, which in turn affects the resources of these districts and thus affects the gentrification processes. On the contrary, gentrification can provoke the emergence and development of innovation districts by attracting companies and their employees.

The subject of the thesis is the development of innovative activities and gentrification processes and the mutual relations between them in the city, with particular emphasis on these relations in the area of the naturally occurring innovation districts. The main aim of the thesis is to capture and explain relations between the development of innovative activities and gentrification processes in the urban space.

The specific objectives are answers to the following research questions:

Research question 1: How do the choices of companies and other entities related to innovation activities and their employees affect gentrification?

Research question 2: How does gentrification affect the distribution of innovative activities in the city?

Research question 3: How can innovation districts support the development of innovative activities and socially acceptable gentrification, considering the changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used, in accordance with the contemporary tendency to use mixed methods in socio-economic geography and spatial planning as well as urban studies. A spatial analysis was carried out in order to identify clusters of innovative activities and areas subject to gentrification in Kraków and Warsaw. On this basis, the naturally occurring innovation districts where both of these phenomena occur have been designated – Zabłocie and Krowodrza in Kraków and Wola in Warsaw. The relations between the development of innovative activities and gentrification processes were analysed both at the level of the entire city thanks to in-depth interviews with experts and an online survey, and at the level of selected innovation districts thanks to in-depth interviews with employees of innovative companies and a survey conducted among the local vendors. Thanks to the unique

possibility of conducting research before, during and after the global pandemic, it was possible to consider its impact on the researched relations and innovation districts' potential.

Thanks to the conducted research, it was possible to answer the first research question on how the choices of innovative companies and other entities related to innovation and their employees affect gentrification. Due to the fact that the most important factors when choosing an office for innovative companies are the location and the price per square meter, companies by choosing relatively central locations with relatively lower prices influence changes in their vicinity, including gentrification processes. The power of influence is exerted not only by companies choosing the location of the office, but also employees in their everyday choices and expectations of high-quality space in the vicinity of the workplace. Although location and price are the most important factors for innovative companies, for employees the most important features of the workplace include transport accessibility, an extensive gastronomic and service offer, the presence of green and recreation areas as well as social infrastructure. The presence of innovative companies and their employees affects the creation of these facilities in the area. However, employees of innovative companies in the examined cities still largely separate their place of work and place of residence, which limits their impact on the housing market in the vicinity of the workplace.

The conducted research also allowed to answer the second research question of how gentrification affects the distribution of innovative activities in the city space. The downtown and post-industrial nature of the area is particularly attractive to employees of innovative companies. Post-industrial areas allowing for the construction of a new real estate stock are subject to gentrification processes faster than areas with typical downtown buildings. It is the new real estate resource that attracts companies, their employees and residents. What is more, new service premises in the new real estate stock allow for the creation of an offer addressed to new residents, employees and users. Service premises that have been created or developed as a result of gentrification, thanks to the creation of meeting opportunities, become networking resources and thus affect the flow and development of innovation. It is the quality of the place that influences the choice of specific locations by innovative companies and their employees. However, for employees in Polish cities, a specific job is still the most important thing, not the office or location of the company and its surroundings. The neighborhood does not have enough strength to attract, while a neighborhood that does not meet the expected basic features may discourage and lead to rejection of a job offer. Gentrification is changing the face of space and, as a consequence, individual areas are becoming more and more desirable by companies and innovative employees with high financial resources.

Thanks to the conducted research, it was also possible to answer the third question of how innovation districts can support the development of innovative activities and socially acceptable gentrification, considering the changes resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The adopted hybrid work model resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic currently affects the frequency of use of employees of innovative companies with catering and services in the vicinity of the workplace, and thus the premises offering these services. Changes related to the work model and the relation between the place of residence and the place of work slowed down the gentrification processes in the central areas of the city. At the same time, they may cause changes in typically residential areas further away from the city centre. Innovation districts can support the polycentric development of the city by reducing the time needed to move between the place of work and the place of residence. Thanks to their multi-functionality, they are more flexible than other models of clusters of innovative activities and can more easily be based on a hybrid model of work.

A better understanding of the processes of gentrification and development of clusters of innovative activities and the mutual relations between them may allow to minimise the negative effects of gentrification and to maximise the positive effects of the development of innovative activities, and thus may be helpful in building policies responsible for the development of cities, in particular innovation districts. With the emphasis on inclusive innovation districts, which allow only socially acceptable gentrification in their area and in their vicinity, the development of innovative activities and innovation districts can serve also existing residents, users and businesses.

Keywords: innovative activities, innovation, gentrification, socio-economic change, innovation districts