

2. FULL REPORT OF RESEARCH ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS

LIVING IN THE SPACES OF (POST-)SOCIALISM: THE CASE OF NOWA HUTA (R000223246)

1. Background

The rationale for this project emerged from a perceived need to complement the macro-level studies of post-socialist transformations with accounts of how those large-scale processes of change are being experienced in communities across east central Europe and the former Soviet Union. It aimed to develop preliminary research carried out in 1998/99 and to parallel a growing body of anthropological research (see, for example, Burawoy and Verdery 1999b and Hann 2002) which impressively documents the micro-transformations of post-socialist life but is perhaps weaker at making connections to wider political economies. The project was located conceptually within a body of geographical work which draws attention to the social and cultural construction of the economy and the importance of institutions in shaping economic landscapes and aims to open discursive spaces to counter the apparent hegemony of the market.

The choice of Nowa Huta as a research location was based on the town's privileged location within socialism (that is, its explicit construction as a 'space of socialism'), its position at the forefront of the oppositional movements of the 1980s and its particular articulation with contemporary discourses of globalisation, marketisation and EU accession, shaped by the restructuring of its principal workplace (Huta Sendzimira, formerly Huta Lenina). Whilst far from typical, Nowa Huta presents an incredibly productive case study of the remaking of communities in post-socialism. Through this case study, the project attempts to contribute to wider debates over the nature, meaning and emergent geographies of post-socialism and the relationship between economic restructuring and social change, most particularly through the work/community relationship.

2. Objectives

The aims and objectives of this project are outlined in section 1 of the attached form; all of these aims and objectives have been met. The 'lived experiences' of transformation and their articulation with wider processes of marketisation and globalisation are explored throughout the Results section. The successful use of the intended methodologies is documented in both the Methods and Impacts sections. One slight shift in the execution of this research can be seen in the downplaying of empirical research into the historical development of the spaces of socialism. As the proposal suggested, this aspect (aim 2) was intended to function as background to the contemporary investigations and was included because, at the time of application, very little academic work was accessible in this field. In the course of the research, it became clear that more and more Polish and other historians have been working on this as archives are opened (see, for example, Janus 1999; Jarosz 1996; Lebow 2001). There is still much important work to be done on spatiality of these histories, but for the purpose of this project, this existing literature provided a very sound base. Within this project, then, emphasis was instead placed on the contemporary uses of history (developed in section 4.4) and on the institutional legacies of historical experiences (drawn through in all of the themes below).

3. Methods

The project employed a range of qualitative methodologies, based on the analysis of both primary and secondary source materials. Prior to departure for Poland, research was carried out in the archives of the UCL's School of Slavonic and East European Studies; through work in two archives with underground publications, newspaper clippings and reports from Polish and international organisations, a comprehensive picture of Nowa Huta's role in the growing opposition movements of the 1980s was put together.

The main phase of the research was undertaken during an extended, ten-month visit to Kraków and Nowa Huta from November 2000 to September 2001. In line with the project proposal, the principal methodologies were:

- a review of literatures on Nowa Huta, including reportage and propaganda, academic sociologies and geographies written during the socialist period, and contemporary academic work;
- 29 interviews with key informants in Kraków and Nowa Huta including representatives of the city and district councils, trade unions, labour offices, social services, regional development organisations and community groups;
- a continuous review of local and national newspapers and collation of articles on Nowa Huta, Huta Sendzimira, the steel industry and more general themes such as unemployment, the Labour Code etc.;
- a review and analysis of national and local statistics relating to economic structure and labour market shifts from sources such as Eurostat, the OECD and Poland's Główny Urząd Statystyczny (Main Statistical Office);
- 32 in-depth, interviews with residents of Nowa Huta, identified through existing contacts and 'snowballing'; these interviews ranged from 30 minutes to over three hours and followed an interview guide which explored relatively freely themes including work, home, social lives, relationships with friends and neighbours, Nowa Huta itself and Kraków; the interviewees held a range of subject positions within the community, chosen not so much for their representativeness but for their variety of experiences; their ages ranged from 18 to 87, many were connected directly with the steelworks, others only possessed the most tenuous links to work there;
- attendance at meetings of various bodies working in relevant areas, such as the Forum for Nowa Huta (a coalition of business, NGO and educational institutions) and the Association for the Establishment and Development of a Museum of Nowa Huta and Huta Sendzimira.

The material collated through these methods was analysed according to a set of themes identified as the research progressed. Interviews were transcribed and worked with over a period of months to draw out and interrogate the stories told, claims made and representations created. The themes and issues drawn out from the interviews were then triangulated with the others sources of information to support the results outlined below.

These methods were supported by close collaboration with local academic institutions, community groups and individual residents. All of the in-depth interviews were carried out with one of two local research assistants who provided language assistance when necessary, assisted in the organisation of interviews and worked with me to reflect on the material gathered in interview. I was lucky to receive a lot of support from local organisations, allowing me excellent access to local knowledges and institutions.

4. Results

The results are focused around four substantive themes, and a fifth strand which works across these, drawing together the wider conceptual contribution of the project. Reflecting the project's aims, the results constitute a set of theoretically-informed, empirical investigations of key social and economic tendencies which shape the remaking of everyday lives in the 'spaces of socialism'. The themes are characterised by a very strong focus on work and community and the changing relationship between these two. Though work and community were identified in the initial proposal as key foci, their interpretation was more implicit, i.e. within a wider focus on the relationship between economic change and the remaking of places, than explicit. In the course of the research, the meanings of work, class and community, and their articulation, became core concerns. It is this theme that is drawn through all of the four, substantive themes to connect to wider theorisations.

4.1 Labour and the Landscapes of (Post-)Socialism

A growing body of work within geography (see, for example, Herod 1998; Sadler and Thompson 2001) draws attention to the role of labour in actively shaping economic landscapes, challenging the more capitalocentric (Gibson-Graham 1996) scripting of economic geographies. In ECE/FSU, labour institutions have long played a central role in the construction of economies. Under socialism, trade unions and workplaces were charged with the responsibility for social provision and the transmission of political economic doctrine (Pravda and Ruble 1986). In socialist cities, the very tight relationship between workplaces and communities exaggerated still further the importance of labour institutions. In Nowa Huta, Huta Lenina was without doubt the central 'town-forming' institution. The work it provided, the facilities it supported and the trade unions it housed played a major role in shaping not only the built environment, but also the nature and scope of social, cultural, recreational and domestic lives.

The dominance of state-sponsored labour organisations began to be questioned as opposition to the socialist regime grew after the death of Stalin; the relationship between workers and the institutions which were supposed to support and represent them was faltering. In their place, new looser movements were emerging; Nowa Huta's workplaces, churches and homes developed into sites of resistance and organisation as informal networks arose to challenge the state and provide for the community's everyday needs in place of the state. The creation of Solidarity, and its later prohibition, was coupled with the established forms of work-community relationships to shape the role of workers' organisations within and beyond the sphere of traditional workplace politics. At the national and regional scales, Solidarity contested the policies of the communist regime, promoting and fighting for alternative economic strategies.

In the post-socialist period, the legacy of these movements is seen in the structures established or maintained to ease the community transformations which accompany the restructuring of the steelworks. The proliferation of workplace trade unions is just one example of the continued presence of labour organisations in Nowa Huta; the activities of these organisations beyond the workplace build on and reflect the history of community action practised both under socialism and during the Solidarity years. Whilst attention is still paid by the unions to issues within the workplace, recent threats to the steelworks' survival have reinforced the focus on the scale of the community. In a reversal of western forms of 'community unionism' (Wills 2001), in this case extra-workplace organising is oriented less towards the renewal of the union than the reproduction of the community.

4.2 Work and Community

The politics and practices of trade unions and their allied institutions are just one aspect of the work/community relationship. Across the former socialist world, work was afforded a central place in the lives of communities and became the basis for a particular form of paternalism (Domański 1992). A political economy of scarcity strengthened the socialist enterprise's control over the industrial town in the east and the extreme level of integration between production and social policy under the socialist regimes of east central Europe meant that there were rarely alternative providers of welfare, recreational or consumer services (Offe 1996). The rights and value of citizens were founded almost entirely on the relationship to production. This work contract was experienced in the region, and in Nowa Huta in particular, largely through certainty, security and social advance.

The recent breakdown of this labour contract and the loss or withdrawal of structuring institutions such as paid work in state enterprises, co-opted trade unions and the constitutional right to work have fed the emergence of unemployment and fragmented, insecure forms of work. Interviews in Nowa Huta demonstrated how growing insecurity, fear of job loss, increasing pressure to commit more and more of life to work and an erosion of domestic and social lives are seen to result from new forms of work. Work available today rarely offers the financial basis to support a family; the low level of pay and insecurity of employment restricts access both to the essentials of daily life and to social and cultural activities which are becoming increasingly commercialised. In addition to this financial deterioration, interviewees repeatedly noted that fear and envy at work is eroding the quality of personal relationships. As a result, the social lives built up around work are being destroyed and people are retreating to the home, reluctant to engage in activities of any kind in the wider community.

Much academic work in the UK and North America (see, for example, Sennett 1998; Bauman 1998; Beck 2000) has suggested that work is no longer as important in shaping people's lives as it was under the post-war regimes in both east and west. What my research in Nowa Huta has demonstrated is that the apparent 'end of work' paradoxically results in the persistent centrality of work, albeit manifested in very different ways. Despite the fact that work now no longer offers the security, benefits and community once experienced in Nowa Huta, many of my interviewees testified to the continuing dominance of their lives by work, the search for work or the absence of work. People are spending more and more time and energy working, to the detriment of their lives outside work; the absence, or low value, of work is shaping, particularly, young people's lives as they have limited access to other forms of stability; and the loss of work is ruining relationships built around it. Whilst stories of the 'end of work' echo through experiences in both ECE and the west, the remaking of communities in the former is reinforced by the concurrent 'end of socialism'. This dual ending exacerbates the challenges to both the material and ideological foundations of industrial communities in ECE, heralding as it does a double decline of communities built on the efforts of socialist labour.

Perhaps the most important effect of these shifts at the scale of the community has been the shifting commonality of experience. Many of my interviewees discussed the ties, both within and beyond the workplace, which bound the community together; their lives were connected to each other through routines and institutions established around the workplace. Today, the common experiences are more likely to be of job loss and insecurity than social progression and achievement, and they are less likely to be experienced collectively. What is more, the achievements of the new system – consumption, enterprise – are more likely to be experienced individually too. The wider political implications of this fragmentation means that it is more difficult to question and deal with the ongoing transformations, echoing Bauman's (2001) identification of a disintegration of citizenship. A further danger of current discourses of work

is that they erode the resources (both tangible and intangible) which contain the potential for meaningful renewal. The ends of work and socialism clearly have consequences and the ways in which these endings are narrated and understood shapes the opportunities/alternatives for the future; by ignoring or undervaluing the resources of an earlier era and ascribing to the contemporary forces of capitalism an unchallenged role (Gibson-Graham 1996), the spaces in which community futures might positively be created are themselves destroyed.

4.3 Access and Mobility

Much recent work has drawn attention to the new patterns of mobility and security emerging in the light of economic restructuring and globalisation. Authors such as Massey (1994) and Bauman (1998) have highlighted the uneven mobility of people in a globalising era, noting that whilst for some travel and social mobility are improved, others appear instead to be witnessing either the shrinking of their life-worlds or the expansion of horizons without the real possibility of reaching them. These stories of mobility and insecurity are especially interesting in Nowa Huta as a result of its history as a town of migrants. There is an apparent paradox in Nowa Huta now being characterised as a place of insecurity, declining mobility and uncertainty, in contrast to its earlier characterisation as a place of opportunity and stability.

Poland's immediate post-war years were marked by an ideology of construction which called on Poles to join the task of founding a new Poland, full of opportunities and offering long-term stability. It was within this context that Nowa Huta was founded; the town and steelworks were seen as a site of stability, opportunity and migration, offering possibilities for social mobility and (eventually) security. Material produced by Polish sociologists and geographers in the 1950s, '60s and '70s, explores the ways in which migrants to Nowa Huta swiftly embarked on constructing stable lives, spending their relatively high wages on 'domestic investment' (furniture, kitchen equipment, clothes, etc.) and rejecting the day-to-day uncertainty which had characterised their immediate post-war lives in favour of planning for tomorrow, building rooted social networks and forging a deep local patriotism. Nowa Huta's early years were characterised by a relatively small everyday geography; lives were focused on work in, and construction of, the town and steelworks; social networks, echoing the rural traditions of the migrants' home communities, were centred on neighbouring blocks; and a distinct division was maintained between Nowa Huta and Kraków. The provision of leisure opportunities through the workplace made trips to the cinema, theatre and opera, for example, accessible for all. In a community like Nowa Huta oriented to the needs of a strategically important steelworks and its workers, the diversity of social and cultural provision was particularly high, and embedded within the community's urban fabric.

In marked contrast, transformations since 1989 have led to the characterisation of Nowa Huta rather as a place of insecurity, restricted mobility and 'entrapment'. Mobility and access, rather than being founded on employment status and location, are undergoing a rapid commodification; opportunities for travel, consumption and recreation are no longer supported and subsidised by the steelworks but instead provided by a plethora of commercial actors. People no longer have to holiday in the workplace pension in the mountains or subsidised apartments on the Black Sea, but this also means that there are no longer any guarantees for travel. A vast range of new leisure facilities, such as multiplex cinemas, shopping malls and a water park, shimmers attractively on Nowa Huta's western edges, but only serves to highlight the exclusivity of leisure today. The loss of financial support from the steelworks and the growing commercialisation of social and cultural facilities have not only eroded levels of provision in Nowa Huta, but also the community's autonomy from Kraków. The increasing need, and desire, to visit Kraków for entertainment, education and employment does not however seem to have significantly reduced the strength of ties in Nowa Huta. Low levels of

housing mobility and the association of housing tenure with the workplace have meant that networks of acquaintance and friendship tend to be long-standing and stable. Such neighbourly networks form a significant, but almost taken for granted, source of support and reinforce the strength of attachment to community.

Two themes are important to pull through here. Firstly, as many commentators have suggested, that mobility is held to be a marker of contemporary life contrasts dramatically with the experiences of many who find themselves trapped by the commodification of opportunity. In the post-socialist context, the shift from ideology to economy in the shaping of life chances creates a motif of uncertainty and precariousness rather than mobility and opportunity. Secondly, these experiences shape an understanding of movement even when staying put, with a sense of dislocation emerging not from migration but from loss of the structuring institutions which shaped a community's place in the world. This notwithstanding, experiences in Nowa Huta and elsewhere suggest that the local is not only about 'entrapment' but also opportunity. The resources of communities – that is, the material and discursive sense of security constructed through networks of support and feelings of attachment – offer space for the voicing of alternatives and the protection of local lives from the erosion of commercialism. If these resources can be maintained and developed, communities can take advantage of the 'destructuring effects' of post-socialism and the spaces for "lifeworlds to stamp themselves on the emerging economic and political order" (Burawoy and Verdery 1999a, p.2). If, however, the stability of community is further eroded by the increasing commodification and polarisation of mobility and access, the picture is much more pessimistic.

4.4 Post-Socialist Heritage

Nowa Huta has been represented as many things in its relatively short history – a socialist city, a town of labour, a town of peasants and immigrants, a bastion of the Party, a city without God, a town of struggle, later a bastion of Solidarity. These debates surrounding Nowa Huta's history have become more important as the post-socialist decade, in Poland and elsewhere, has been marked by a re-writing of history and the promotion of 'communist heritage tourism' (Light 2000). There are a number of dilemmas which the promotion of this kind of tourism suggests. In some cases, we see a 'snipping out' of the communist period and a recourse to earlier, more palatable histories (Young and Light 2001). In others, we see the removal of the artefacts of socialist realism to a distant site, where they can be consumed as faintly ridiculous remnants of the past (James 1999). In places like Nowa Huta the questions are trickier – its embedded sites, buildings or communities, though important in their socialist and Solidarity era heritage, continue to be places in which people live. Nowa Huta is not a museum; it is home to 250,000 people.

The value of Nowa Huta's heritage works at two, intertwined levels. The valuing and promotion of community heritage plays a part in the attraction of external capital, but perhaps more important than the external projection of the town's identities is the perception of such images internally. The stereotyping and negative representation of Nowa Huta by outsiders undoubtedly has an impact on those living in the town. Whilst the town's particular histories have without doubt engendered a very clear 'local patriotism', the use this could be put to in supporting initiatives for community development is undermined by the defensiveness often invoked by derision from outside. In her work on the Welsh coal mining valleys and their heritage, Bella Dicks distinguishes between two different ways of talking about and presenting communities. A more political view sees "community as a resource for future-oriented political action" (Dicks 1999, 362); a more anthropological view focuses "less [on] the potential for communal action, and more in the enterprise of documentation and preservation" (ibid., 363). The former aims to shape the future, the latter simply hopes to represent the past.

Recent plans to promote Nowa Huta's heritage and develop the tourist potential of its history have taken a number of forms, which reflect both these representations of community. The plans of the Association for the Establishment and Development of a Museum of Nowa Huta and Huta Sendzimira aim to present the economic and social significance of the town and steelworks against the wider political and economic context of Poland and Europe whilst also promoting a development programme for Kraków East; the city council's tourist trails present an interesting, but fairly narrow image of Nowa Huta's history and the plans for SocLand (a foundation created by some of Poland's cultural elite including the film director Andrzej Wajda) aim to establish a multimedia museum not to tell the story of Nowa Huta but to caricature socialist realism and "create something like Disneyland". Whatever the other rationales behind these programmes, the promotion of Nowa Huta's future development is an important aspect of each. Each of these projects involves a range of actors, from members of the community, to district and city councillors, representatives of Huta Sendzimira, the European Union through offers of funding to SocLand, private investors and potential visitors from the rest of Poland and beyond. The extension of these debates well beyond Nowa Huta and the conflicts fed by the politics of the communist past make the challenge of constructing productive, future-oriented projects very difficult.

These debates highlight a quandary for the management of post-socialist heritage sites; tourists are unlikely to visit to see prehistoric relics and medieval buildings. Europe is full of these. What Nowa Huta and other 'spaces of socialism' offer to visitors are examples of socialist urban planning, Stalinist architecture and the physical expression of a socialist way of life. Nowa Huta's attraction lies precisely in those representations for which it is in other circumstances derided. These communities face the challenge of capitalising on the legacies of socialism, using their socialist heritage in the construction of capitalist futures, whilst downplaying those legacies in other spheres. The general derision of the projects of socialism coupled with the recognition that many of the spaces of socialism were also key sites in the contestation of socialism makes representing these histories for popular consumption very difficult; how can representations of Nowa Huta as a town of socialism and hero workers be balanced with a rich story of diversity and the complexity of everyday life? The success with which these conflicts are resolved and the extent to which these developments contribute to the regeneration of Nowa Huta in practice are open questions.

4.5 Work, Class and Community in Post-Socialism

The more general theme which runs through these findings relates to the changing shape of communities in the 'spaces of socialism'. This research has drawn attention to the centrality of class, work and workplace in structuring lives in/of communities, noting how, whilst there have been shifts in the forms and meanings of work and class over time, their centrality is persistent. Industrial work, once the basis of citizenship and social policy, is now eroded by economic shifts and more likely to be the basis of social exclusion than inclusion. Particular working class histories, once a source of pride and propaganda, are now likely to be derided, or caricatured for economic gain. Working class communities and their institutions are characterised less by the construction of a hopeful new reality than the alleged mistakes of a misguided attempt at reconstruction.

By narrating the history and geography of a community from the perspective of labour and founded on the everyday experiences of its populations, it is possible to identify and validate spaces outside 'the system' (be it socialist or emerging capitalist). Both before and after 1989, Nowa Huta has been (and remains) home to a range of institutions, formal and informal, which, though shaped by their relationship to the plan or market, possess a relative autonomy

which reflects and encourages 'lifeworlds', mediating individual experiences of political economic systems and their transformation. Thus, for example, friendships formed in the workplace extend beyond the workplace and offer families access to, amongst other things, knowledge about employment opportunities and networks of reciprocity; regulated but 'grey' market retail spaces develop to fill the gap between the discourse of consumption and the material realities of family budgets.

These spaces often rest on familial and community relationships which though articulated with contemporary formal institutions testify to a strong element of both continuity and hybridity in the repeated transformation of east central European societies. To use an earlier lexicon, what we are witnessing in post-socialism is both uneven and combined development. The unevenness of the development of capitalism feeds a fragmentation of experience. The political representation of the working class is disjointed; the collapse of social networks, destroyed often by the costs of transformation, is reflected in a wearing away of collective action and a celebration (or, more often, begrudging acceptance) of individualism and new patterns of exclusion are emerging in the region as gender and ethnicity become significant markers of poverty and marginalisation. These experiences echo western stories of individualization (Bauman, 2001; Beck and Beck-Gersheim 2001) and social exclusion and suggest that we should learn lessons from the erosion of community experienced in the west. This research has demonstrated the presence and value of a range of structures and institutions in the reproduction of communities; the challenge now is to formulate policies which, rather than eroding these resources still further, allow them to be used as building blocks for a secure set of futures.

5. Activities

In addition to the conferences and seminars listed in section 2a, the project has also involved a number of other academic and related activities. Answering the methodological aim of the project, in May 2002 I organised an interdisciplinary workshop on "Post-socialism, ethnographies and everyday life" which focused on conceptualising and practising ethnographic work in post-socialist states, and has fed into a number of wider projects.

In November 2002, I undertook a trip to Poland to feed my preliminary research findings back into the local and academic communities. In the course of this trip I met with colleagues at the Institute of Geography, Jagiellonian University of Krakow, the Institute of Architecture, Krakow Polytechnic and the Institute of Sociology, University of Silesia. Beyond academia, I met with a number of community leaders and organisations (many of whom I had initially met in the course of my research). This included meetings with the Forum for Nowa Huta, the Association for the Development of Nowa Huta (formerly, the Association for the Establishment and Development of a Museum of Nowa Huta and Huta Sendzmir), and with representatives of the Malopolska Cultural Institute.

6. Outputs

The first paper from this project has been accepted for publication in *Antipode*. A structured and ongoing dissemination strategy is outlined in Section 2: Dissemination on the attached form.

Much of the ongoing work derived from this project is being published on a dedicated and developing website (www.nowahuta.info). The website includes abstracts and draft versions of papers, an extended bibliography, photographs from Nowa Huta and links to other relevant websites.

Interview transcripts have been offered to Qualidata for deposit.

7. Impacts

Following meetings with the Forum for Nowa Huta, forum members are beginning to engage in a 'community audit' process and to develop policies to support the activities of informal local networks. My research report and discussions with these organisations were picked up by Nowa Huta's local paper, *Głos - Tygodnik Nowohucki*, and, through this, by a number of other individuals and organisations. The Małopolska Cultural Institute has used my report in work with local higher education students and in the development of local education projects. I have become involved in a retrospective photographic exhibition of life in Nowa Huta produced by the Krakow Photographers' Club and will be writing text for the exhibition album.

8. Future Research Priorities

- A deeper exploration of mobility, with a twin focus on the labour and housing mobility, linking patterns and understandings of mobility to more formal analyses of the development of housing and labour markets, asking how growing mobility will affect the form and value of the local networks identified throughout the research.
- An exploration of the variety of alternative economic strategies, from household production of food to employment on the black market, which have taken the place, at least in part, of secure and paternalist work. A collaborative and comparative proposal is being prepared.
- The creation of an international, comparative research symposium on steel towns, their representations and labour geographies with colleagues working in the UK, US, Germany and Italy.
- Further theorisation of the meanings of work and class in post-socialism, developed not only through further research but through a developing research network, supported by an application to the ESRC's Seminar Competition Programme.

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