

FORMS OF SOCIAL AND SPATIAL DIFFERENTIATION IN TOWNS (BASED ON THE CASE OF MARIBOR)

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UDK: 911.37:711.5

COBISS: 1.01

Izveleček

Oblike socialno prostorske diferenciacije mest (na primeru Maribora)

Prispevek obravnava oblike prostorske diferenciranosti mesta, ki nastajajo ob zadovoljevanju človekovih potreb, in sicer socialnih stikov, oskrbe, kulture oziroma izobraževanja ter rekreacije. Socialno prostorska diferenciranost je najbolj očitna na področju socialnih stikov, oskrbe z oblačili ter kulture. Najpomembnejša socialna lastnost, zaradi katere nastaja prostorska diferenciranost se je izkazala starost ter materialni položaj. Pokazalo se je, da je velikost mesta ključnega pomena za socialno prostorsko diferenciranost.

Ključne besede

socialna diferenciacija, prostorska diferenciacija, Maribor

Abstract

Forms of social and spatial differentiation in towns (based on the case of Maribor)

This contribution discusses forms of spatial differentiation of the town, occurring while human needs are being fulfilled (social connections, supply, culture, education and recreation). Social and spatial differentiation is most noticeable in the area of social connections, clothing stores and culture. The most important social characteristics, responsible for spatial differentiation are age and material situation. Also, the size of the town proved to be crucial for social and spatial differentiation.

Key words

Social differentiation, spatial differentiation, Maribor

Uredništvo je članek prejelo 19.11.2012

1. Introduction

Modern societies show a rising trend of social heterogeneity of people due to pluralisation of lifestyles and ever growing social differences; both are apparently showing through larger spatial differentiation. Presuming that the spatial situation reflects social relations, one can imagine that a socially differentiated society also shows spatial differentiation. A town can therefore be understood as a “mosaic of social spaces” (Frey 2012, 507), in which each social group “claims” a certain part of town, street or a group of objects where it lingers in order to fulfil its needs. The Chicago school of urban ecology explains intertwinement of social spaces as consequence of aspiration for connecting members of similar social groups that have the same or similar social characteristics or a similar lifestyle. Towns thus show as intertwinement of different spaces (areas), defined by social characteristics of their inhabitants; to be more exact: social groups; as well as different economic activities. The situation of social and spatial differentiation has up to this point been based on cohabitation and several aspects of demographic and residual segregation. Taking this into consideration, the social differentiation of towns seems to be a consequence of national, religious and socio-economic characteristics of inhabitants. Social and spatial differentiation can be observed in all areas of human activities. If living creates differentiation of space, so does work, recreation, social care, education and communication. The consequence is that certain parts of cities (areas, quarters, streets, buildings or pubs) attract people with similar social characteristics. A more detailed observation shows that members of certain social groups gather at a certain location at certain times of the day, which means that the town space is not only socially differentiated, but also differentiated in the sense of time.

The purpose of this paper is to show social and spatial differentiation of town that occurs because of social connections, recreation, education and supplies of certain social groups. We want to show sites that fulfil the needs of such individual social groups of people. However, this paper does not so much focus on social and spatial differentiation of Maribor, as on checking the basis, work methods and possibilities of interpretation of collected data.

2. Work method

While collecting information about and analysing social and spatial differentiation of human activities, one needs to concentrate on data, obtained through questionnaires and observation. We are limited to unreliable data, to a relatively small sample of population and a short time interval for data collection which proved to be a weak element during the study of social and spatial differentiation of human activities. Due to the lack of primary data, we were forced to use indirect data, too.

A special methodological approach is the question “What social characteristics can explain the spatial differentiation of a certain activity?” Is spatial differentiation of different stores defined by gender, age or something else? Spatial differentiation cannot be treated as a result of all social characteristics simultaneously, but rather by considering only one characteristic. The selection of such characteristics was limited to age, gender and material status. Also relevant proved to be the lifestyle; however, due to its complexity, we were not able to define indexes for a suitable analysis.

Another methodological problem refers to the question if it is possible to show differentiation of all activities through the same social characteristics. In our cultural environment it does not make sense to differentiate places of education on the basis of gender; also not suitable is differentiating areas with food supply on the basis of age. The selection of social characteristics, relevant for spatial differentiation, therefore needs to be made individually for each activity. What makes it more difficult is also the selection of categories for individual social characteristics. An example: one needs to define the question "What characteristics of lifestyle show in social and spatial differentiation." Or furthermore: what are the suitable age groups, relevant for social and spatial differentiation of places of provision? It is a known fact that young people have different provisioning and shopping habits and needs than the older people. However, at what age do "the young" turn into "older", an age factor, relevant for variety of provisioning? We were not able to find many examples and leads in literature; the following text is therefore also a methodological try for suitability of selection.

The work was done in three steps:

1. Inventory of areas where inhabitants take care of their needs for provisions, recreation, education and social needs; we made a list and a graphic presentation of all locations that carry individual activity.
2. Evaluation of areas from the point of view of social characteristics of visitors; individual locations were observed and notes were taken as to the structure of visitors, including their social characteristics, material standing, age and gender. In order to obtain a better and more detailed view on the social profile of visitors of individual areas, discussions were lead with visitors, staff in shops and pubs, cultural venues and recreation areas.
3. Defining areas where individual social groups linger; based on differentiation of activities and social characteristics of visitors to an individual location, areas were defined where individuals with certain social characteristics represent more than the average number. Concentration of such similar social characteristics was understood as an area (social space) where a certain social group operates.

While studying social differentiation, one needs to consider one more methodological limitation – social differentiation can be studied only on activities where the users have the chance to choose between different products, different locations and activities that serve the same purpose. In case the choice is not possible, which is usually connected to the size of towns, the social and spatial differentiation does not apply.

3. Social and spatial differentiation of towns

We presumed that we would be able to identify areas within the city centre that connect representatives of certain social groups. Regarding contents, this hypothesis is neither original, nor new. The question rather revolves around the fact whether and how it is possible to confirm it and with what data (elements). We limited ourselves to the wider centre of Maribor. Outside of the defined area, there are less such activities; differentiation therefore does not stand out anymore. We also considered some activities, the basic human needs, the way we know them from the Munich school of social geography.

3.1 Social relations (communication)

The area of social relations is very wide, we therefore limited the survey to representatives of social groups in pubs; analysed were pubs in the city centre, the offer of which is limited to cold and warm drinks. We presumed that people who mingle in certain pubs represent certain age groups: young, middle-aged, older. We could probably also add a social characteristic, such as lifestyle. However, the latter does not stand out well enough in the case of Maribor. We bring this back to the social structure of inhabitants which is not sufficiently differentiated (there are not sufficient representatives of diverse lifestyles that reflect in space). Also, the offer of pubs is not adjusted to individual lifestyles. It was furthermore presumed that the age structure of guests in some pubs changes during the day. We therefore tried to analyse the numbers of visitors of certain age within two time periods; between 10 and 11 in the morning, and between 6 and 7 in the evening. Visitors were also asked for reasons of their visit. Results confirmed our expectations; namely that the social equality of visitors seems to be an important reason for selection of the location where social relations and carried out.

Tab.1: Reasons for the visit of a certain pub among different age groups.

	Up to 25 yrs	26 - 55	55 and more
Access / reachability	11	12	14
Location	12	17	14
Diverse offer	17	20	15
Ambience, set-up	23	27	19
Social equality of guests	22	23	29
Other	15	1	9

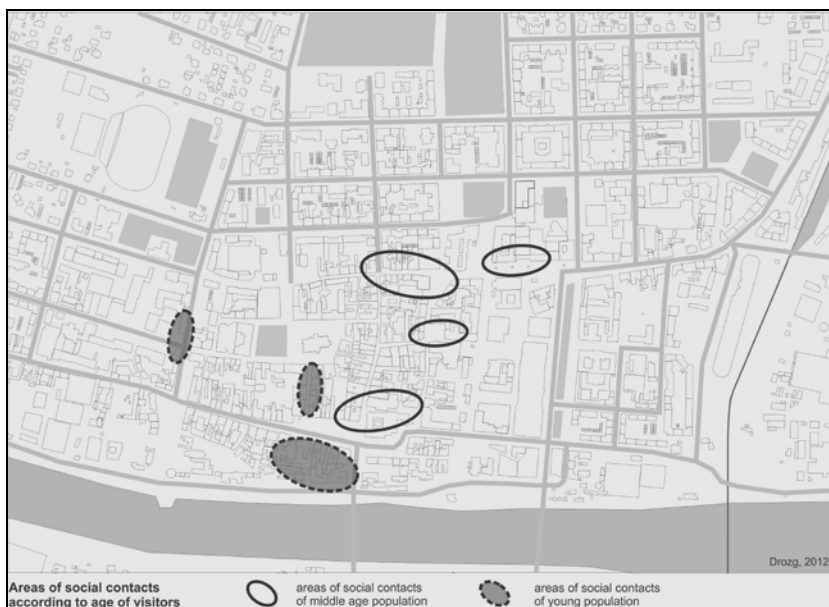


Fig. 1: Areas of social contacts according to age of visitors.

The graphic display shows a “social” differentiation of pubs in the city centre. This can be seen especially in pubs closer to education establishments and in the part of town that is known as “the entertainment area” (Lent); this shows through a relatively larger part of younger population. On the other hand, pubs, located in the central downtown area show predominantly older visitors (age groups 25 – 55 and older population). Especially the first group consider the Ambience as an important issue, the same goes for the older population. It was presumed that the share of the older population would stand out more in certain locations / certain venues; however, the empirical data does not support this hypothesis. Findings show that pubs with predominantly younger generation do not report many visitors from the older generation. On the other hand, pubs with predominantly middle-aged group of people, also show a larger number of older visitors.

3.2 Supplies

Individual social groups would normally get supply in certain stores or certain parts of the town. A more detailed view shows that what also matters is the time when the establishments are open. Judging by the offer of goods, supply seems to be an issue of social and spatial differentiation of the city centre. We considered places with daily supplies (food) and clothing shops. Regarding the first, the selected indexes do not show differences between locations of supply providers and the social characteristics of buyers (material standing, gender and age), we therefore cannot speak about the social and spatial differentiation. We could perhaps describe the social and spatial differentiation as the consequence of buyers’ lifestyles; however, the obtained empirical data does not confirm this. A similar survey about the social profile of buyers at ecological markets shows that the eco markets are visited mostly by people who are aware of the advantages of eco and bio products, which is definitely an element that reflects the lifestyle (Čukec 2012). This kind of differentiation cannot be said about shopping centres. In Maribor, the supply of goods between different providers is very similar in terms of price and in variety. The selection of the shopping centre (location) is therefore rather linked to access (logistics), benefits that the shop keepers offer to buyers and other shops in the shopping centre, than to social characteristics of buyers. One needs to consider that selection of goods in shopping centres covers wishes and needs of different buyer segments, which neutralizes the social segment of supplies. However, one should perhaps also not forget the type of goods bought by different social groups. This was not subject to our primary research. We, however, presume that differentiation among buyers also touches the types of goods that are bought. Another relevant aspect of social and spatial differentiation was shown through the time getting supplies. Shopping centres display a rather large heterogeneity of buyers throughout the day; the morning hours show a larger density of older population, while in the evening the share of the older population is smaller. Exactly the opposite could be said about the younger generation; the latter lingers around especially in the evening hours and hardly ever in the morning.

Tab. 2: Age structure (%) of buyers in the shopping centre Europark at different times of the day (n=268).

	8.00 - 12.00	14.00 - 17.00	18.00 - 20.00
15 – 25	9	14	18
26 – 40	19	29	37
41 – 60	28	42	33
over 60	44	15	12

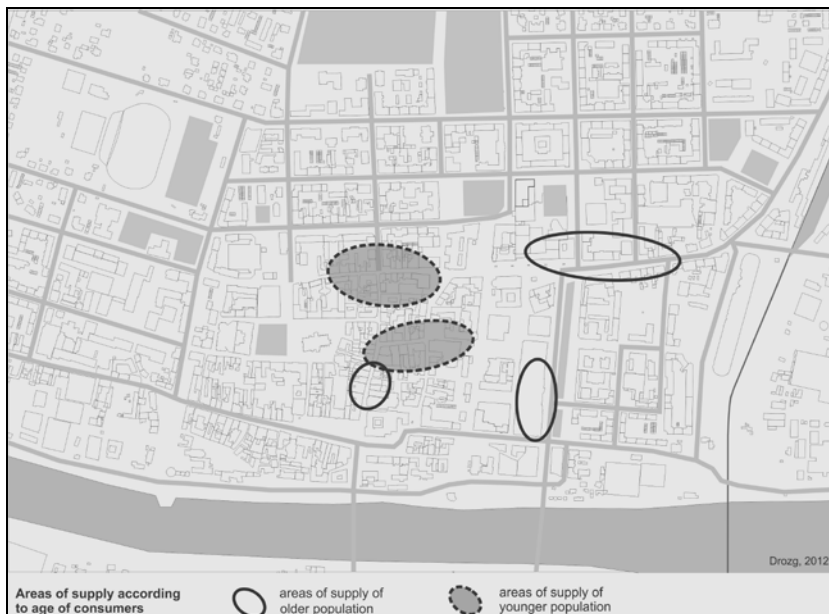


Fig. 2: Areas of supply according to age of consumers.

Regarding places – clothing stores; we differentiated between those, predominantly visited by younger people and other, meant primarily for middle-aged and older people. Data on age structure of buyers was obtained mainly from sales staff. Young people seem to prefer smaller stores that specialize on certain brands or certain styles. It is interesting to see that this type of stores dominates the offer. The older generation prefers department stores from the past; those that are rather larger and offer a wide variety of clothes. We were not able to define any spatial pattern for set-up of those two different types of stores. However, we split stores into low-price and high-price while presuming that there is a rational ratio between social characteristics of buyers and the price of goods that speaks of buyers' material status. This data was obtained through comparing prices of individual articles in different stores as well as from staff. We believe there is no real connectivity between the price-class and buyers' age because it was noted that high-priced stores also attract many young visitors and vice-versa. We also noticed that difference between the most expensive and the least expensive article in the store are not large, which we believe to be a sign of economic homogeneity or else a small economic heterogeneity of buyers. Placement of stores in Maribor considering the price-range does not show a distinct social and spatial differentiation of a certain street or part of town, where one would find a larger proportion of high-price stores and consequently buyers with more buying power and of higher social class. We believe the reason can be found in the size of the town, perhaps also in the social and economic standing of the population that does not have a huge buying power. One also needs to consider that the higher-priced stores can be found in shopping centres in the city outskirts and not in the city centre.

3.3 Culture (education)

For this chapter we took cities with cultural activity that includes music, arts, film and theatre in the widest sense of the word; official and alternative culture, including cultural and open-air entertainment offer. Culture can be understood as a form of education, because it offers new ways of communication with the world and life for all generations. We believe the visit of cultural events be linked to the lifestyle and age. Cultural venues were split according to the average age of visitors; we also distinguished between places, visited by predominantly young people of up to 30 years of age and older. Results show that the social and spatial differentiation does not relate to the type of cultural events; one must differentiate between official and alternative cultural production. The former attracts predominantly older visitors, the latter primarily younger visitors. The spatial pattern of the social and cultural production in the city shows that the official venues, visited primarily by middle and upper social class can be found in the city centre, while the alternative culture positions itself at less fancy and less central areas of the city centre.

We also checked if social and spatial differentiation of cultural activities can be guided by material standing. For this purpose the material situation visitors of cultural event was analysed. One could mention two extremes: the theatre as a place where one can find primarily upper social classes and open air venues, visited primarily by middle and lower social classes. An enquiry asked theatre goers and open-air visitors how often they went to "the other type of cultural events". The "Theatre" group results showed that 63% of people also attend other cultural and entertainment events in the city; while the open-air group reported only 12% as theatre goers. We understand this as a typical proof of social and spatial differentiation of the cultural offer in the city.

3.4 Recreation

We considered locations where recreation requires certain expenditure (entrance fees, membership fees) and where it happens in closed spaces or at organised open-air areas (playgrounds). We were not able to define indexes at other locations that could define social and spatial differentiation.

Differentiation of recreational areas that have to be paid for is definitely connected to the material status of the individual, and often also to the individual's age. Considering this, we tried to analyse the social characteristics of tennis court users, since this seems to be the only form of recreation that is suitable for the set criteria. Results show that the majority of users can be assigned to the age group 30-55; they have tertiary education degrees, work in services, live in a one-family house.

As to the question Why this form of recreation and a certain tennis court, the most common answers stated the following: a similar social standing of other players, acquaintances and friends and popularity of this sport. Reasons for Why this particular tennis court: access and proximity, friends and other people. We then used the same approach when analysing amateurs at two football fields. Results showed the age-group between 25-40; secondary education, living in blocks of flats. This tells us that the form of recreation can be partly socially tagged; in some forms the share of certain social groups might be larger than in others. The spatial pattern of discussed recreational areas does not tell us much.

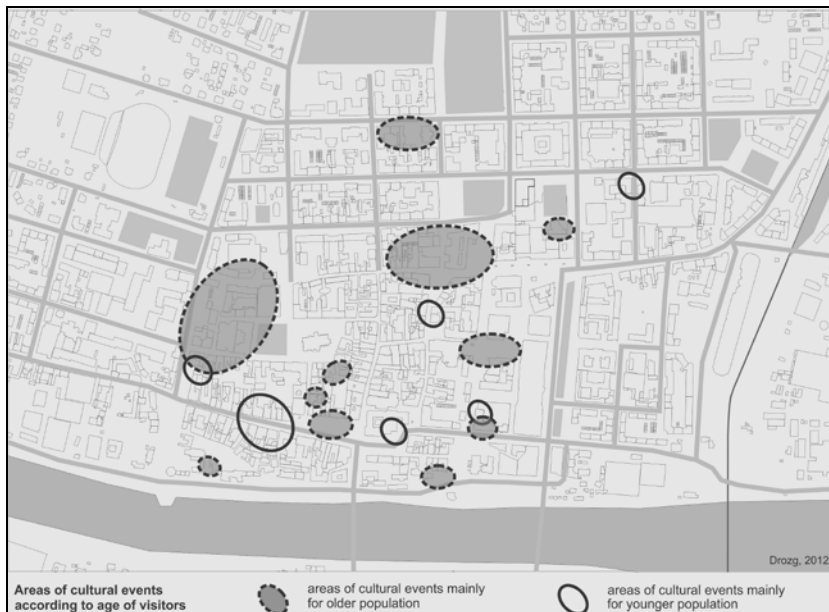


Fig. 3: Areas of cultural events according to age of visitors.

4. Findings

1. We can talk about social and spatial differentiation of towns also in relation to other human activities; not only in relation to the living area. All analysed activities (social contacts, education, culture, supply and recreation) show elements of social and spatial differentiation of the town space.

2. The most noticeable among analysed activities is social and spatial differentiation according to age and material status. Social and spatial differentiation could not be defined in certain activities (like food supplies). We believe to have found the reason in the size of the town. This does not mean that social differentiation would not define the spatial differentiation; but that the social and spatial differentiation can show in many ways – apart from WHERE, we have WHEN and WHAT as very important (in the sense of what to buy) or HOW (in the sense of how to buy).

3. Spatial differentiation is not so visible in Maribor; it cannot be assigned to certain parts of the town or certain streets because it does not include more than a group of objects or parts of the street. This can also be assigned to the size of the town and the diversity of the demand and supply for individual services. The size of the town can often be linked to a diverse social set-up of inhabitants, which means a higher number of diverse activities.

4. Spatial pattern of places / areas where individual social groups fulfil their needs does not show characteristics that could define the law of location (excluding the fact that all activities and services are concentrated in the wider city centre) or the law of spatial differentiation, seen as a consequence of territorial and functional connectivity between members of social groups. Empirical data proves that a major

part of service users decides on the basis of impression and belonging to the clientele of a certain place, location or venue (especially visible when choosing the place of lingering with friends - social connections).

5. Social and spatial differentiation of the town is most visible in the area of social connections. Certain streets close to places of education have a large number of pubs, visited by primarily young population. The city centre, on the other hand, shows a larger number of pubs and restaurants, frequented by middle-aged and older people. The motives among the latter are linked to the central location, proximity of other identity-related objects and other activities.

6. Social and spatial differentiation can also be seen on the case of supply, especially clothing stores; what stands out most are stores for the younger and those for upper-class population. It was noticed that the latter can hardly be found in the city centre. Due to the rather small size of the city, we did not notice areas with a large number of stores, intended particularly for upper class buyers.

7. Differentiation of the city is also noticeable among visitors of cultural events; in this case we considered age and material standing of visitors. Analysis showed that the structure of people, visiting the official cultural events, differs greatly from those, visiting alternative, open-air events (alternative culture).

8. Differentiation of the recreational space stands out less, because most of the recreational areas can be found on the outskirts of the city, therefore spatially very dispersed. Furthermore, there is not enough sports infrastructure for a more detailed study, because the existing infrastructure does not give us a clear social differentiation of individual locations. What we noticed indeed, was the social differentiation of recreational forms; some of them being used by primarily people of higher social status.

9. The areas of social and spatial differentiation of individual activities do not overlap; they also don't complement each other, which would turn certain parts of the town into distinct social characteristics (age, social status, etc...). This characteristic can also be attributed to the size of town and small social diversity of its inhabitants.

10. Suitability of such findings (social differentiation of the town) cannot be objectively evaluated. On one hand, findings seem to be relatively tautological, which probably derives from selection criteria. On the other hand, the interpretative possibilities of social differentiation are limited to plain facts; and this leads us back to the small size of the city. The most relevant aspect of spatial differentiation proved to be the age. "The city of the young" and "the city of the old" are perhaps the most obvious forms of social and spatial differentiation in a mid-size town.

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OBLIKE SOCIALNO PROSTORSKE DIFERENCIACIJE MEST (NA PRIMERU MARIBORA)

Povzetek

V sodobnih družbah se povečuje socialna heterogenost zaradi pluralizacije življenjskih stilov in vse večjega socialnega razlikovanja. Oboje bi se naj odražalo v večji diferenciranosti prostora in nastanku območij - delov mesta, kjer se pogosteje zadržujejo pripadniki določenih socialnih skupin.

Mesta se kažejo kot preplet različnih krajev (območij), ki jih označujejo socialne lastnosti prebivalcev, natančneje – socialne skupine, in različne gospodarske dejavnosti. Dosedanji prikazi socialno prostorske diferenciacije so praviloma sloneli na bivanju oziroma na različnih vidikih demografske in rezidualne segregacije. Socialno prostorsko diferenciacijo pa lahko sicer opazimo tudi pri drugih človekovih dejavnostih, katere upoštevamo v socialni geografiji. Tako kot bivanje ustvarja diferenciacijo prostora, jo ustvarjajo tudi delo, rekreacija, oskrba, izobraževanje in komunikacija. Posledica tega je, da se v določenih delih mesta zbirajo pretežno pripadniki s podobnimi socialnimi lastnostmi. Natančnejši pogled odkrije, da se pripadniki določenih socialnih skupin na določenem kraju zbirajo v določenem delu dneva; prostor mesta ni le socialno diferenciran, temveč tudi časovno.

Namen prispevka je prikazati socialno prostorsko diferenciacijo mesta, kakršna nastaja ob socialnih stikih, rekreaciji, izobraževanju in oskrbi določenih socialnih skupin.

Delo je potekalo v treh korakih: 1. inventarizacija krajev, kjer prebivalci mesta zadovoljujejo potrebo po oskrbi, rekreaciji, izobraževanju in socialnih stikih. Popisali smo lokacije posamezne dejavnosti in jih grafično prikazali. 2. ovrednotenje krajev iz vidika socialnih lastnosti obiskovalcev. Na posameznih lokacijah smo opazovali in beležili strukturo obiskovalcev ter njihove socialne lastnosti, predvsem spol in starost. 3. Opredelitev območja delovanja posamezne socialne skupine.

Glavna spoznanja so naslednja: O socialno prostorski diferenciaciji mesta lahko govorimo tudi v povezavi z drugimi človekovimi dejavnostmi, ne le v povezavi z bivanjem. Pri vseh obravnavanih dejavnostih (socialni stiki, izobraževanje-kultura, oskrbovanje in rekreacija) smo opazili elemente socialno prostorske diferenciranosti mestnega središča. V obravnavanih dejavnostih je najbolj opazna socialno prostorska diferenciranost glede na starost uporabnikov ter glede na materialni položaj. Prostorska diferenciacija v Mariboru ni tako izrazita (obsežna), da bi obsegala posamezne dele mesta ali ulice. Več kot skupino objektov oziroma dele ulic skoraj ne obsega. To lahko pripišemo velikosti mesta oziroma raznovrstnosti ponudbe in povpraševanja po posameznih storitvah. Socialno prostorska diferenciranost mesta je najbolj očitna na področju socialnih stikov, deloma še na področju oskrbe, natančneje pri trgovinah z oblačili, pri čemer najbolj izstopa diferenciranost trgovin za mlade in tistih, ki so namenjene kupcem višjega socialnega položaja.