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Perspektiven der sozialräumlichen Integration der Gated Communities: an einem Beispiel aus der postsozialistischen Litauen

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Introduction

1   The context of residential integration is one of the most difficult tasks in the development of a socially sustainable city (Blinnikov *et al.,* 2006; Borsdorf *et al.,* 2016; Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Čiupailaitė, 2014; Gelezeau, 2008; etc.). Despite the fact that socio-spatial integration is generally considered to be a priority dimension within the field of sustainable urban development, the segregation of modern societies is still increasing. Planning and development policies tend to emphasise integration and sustainability (Cruz, Pinho, 2009; Landman 2006), as well as the management of social diversity, as the main priorities of sustainable cities, all of which comprise the elimination of spatial segregation and social polarisation (Bitušikova, Luther, 2010). Unfortunately, social diversity causes the separation of undesirable neighbourhoods and creates an unsustainable model of urban development.

2   Gated Communities (GCs), as a special style of residential development, appear to be one of the symbols of territorial and social segregation in suburbs. The effect of increasing the number of GCs for residential integrity is evident and recognised by many urban geographers and sociologists who have analysed GCs in the context of social segregation (Atkinson, Flint, 2004; Blakely, Snyder, 1997; Borsdorf *et al.,* 2016; Coy, 2006; Cruz, Pinho, 2009; Le Goix, 2005, etc.). The majority of academic literature on GCs tends to link gating with social and residential segregation and to emphasise their negative effect on non-gated neighbourhoods. In most cases, GCs are criticised for residential exclusion, social

inequality, fragmentation of the city and the segregation of rich and poor. However, there is another perspective too. A smaller group of researchers (Salcedo, Torres, 2004; Manzi, Smith-Bowers, 2005; Sabatini, Cáceres, 2004; Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007; Le Goix, 2005; Roitman *et al.,* 2010) argues that GCs may have a positive impact upon poor neighbourhoods and even foster social integration. In certain cases, residential segregation in modern cities is beginning to gain new and paradoxical features.

3   Among such cases, the research on Santiago de Chile (Sabatini, Cáceres, 2004; Salcedo, Torres, 2004; Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007) and Belo Horizonte, Brasil (Chase, 2008) is significant, showing strong functional integration, mainly represented by job market opportunities and the improvement of urban facilities. Le Goix (2005), researching in Los Angeles, US, also presented the unusual statement that GCs are not always associated with social segregation. Strong functional relations between gated and non-gated residents are the most common indication of social integration, but other signs of this tendency have been identified. For example, whereas segregation processes comprise the movement of a wealthier population to lower social status areas (typically rural hinterlands), as a consequence thereof, the social mix within such areas increases, bringing them closer to the city average (Sýkora, 2009). Spatial closeness, not only to upper-class residents, but also to modern services and facilities, promotes the expansion of middle-class ideology (Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007). Likewise, the changes in accessibility caused by GCs for the wider population, not only wealthy upper-class residents (Blakely, 2007), might also cause an increasing integration of new gated suburban communities. Those circumstances may reduce the possibility of forming what Sabatini and Salcedo (2007) define as a 'ghetto consciousnesses'. Atkinson, Flint (2004) even noticed GC residents' concerns about their isolation from the locality and the lack of social interaction they experience, as well as the doubt they felt thereof regarding their choice to live in a GC. Examples such as these are rare but still very important in terms of a survey of the possibilities of social integration. The question arises as to whether it is possible to achieve the development of both existing and new GCs, and whether the positive impact would become more prevalent than the negative? What are the possible forms of this development?

4   Continuing with this issue, this article intends to discuss the assumptions of residential integration, especially the case of GCs. Could GCs be of potential use to the promotion of residential integration? Would it be possible to achieve social integrity upon the occasion of GCs' development? Even more, could GCs be expected to become 'sustainable'? The theoretical approaches behind the integration of GCs into city life are analysed, as well as recent social tendencies in Lithuania, which could contribute to the achievement of possible integration in the future.

The complex approach of GCs' socio-spatial integration

5   Current researches on residential integration usually concern ethnic inclusion, as well as the issue of economic or social integration. In such cases, the most important dimensions of integration include social-economic and social-cultural aspects (Musterd, Ostendorf, 2009), which focus on marginalised groups' inclusion in society. The process of integration can be defined as the gradual declining of the differences between separate groups in various fields, from inequalities in housing, education and job market

opportunities to ethnic, racial and other cultural differences (Bolt *et al.,* 2010). Social integration often is used synonymously with social assimilation (especially in American literature), both of which refer to 'engagement in daily activities with other groups' (Bolt *et al.,* 2010); however, in this relation, the term integration still comprises the preservation of distinctive cultural traits. Thus, integration can mean assimilation, or 'disappearing in society', or, contrarily, the preservation of a multicultural setting (Musterd, Ostendorf, 2009).

6   The latter approach can be closely related to the concept of social integration, as represented by Sabatini and Salcedo (2007), and applied to GCs. Authors have revealed social integration as being in a dialectical relationship with social exclusion and as always having positive and negative aspects. Accordingly, social segregation is considered not as a synonym of social exclusion, but rather as the mixture of integration and exclusion, creating various patterns of social relations. From this point of view, two groups can integrate with high degree of exclusion and discrimination (Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007).

7   Continuing with the complex approach to integration, the conception of social integration, as offered by Sabatini and Salcedo (2007), assumes a special place of importance. These authors distinguish three dimensions of integration (Figure 1), which they use as the methodological framework for their research of GCs in Santiago de Chile. As a factor of possible social integration, GCs are mostly considered through the concept of **functional integration**, which is based on functional and market relationships between GC residents and 'outsiders' (Salcedo, Torres, 2004; Manzi, Smith-Bowers, 2005; Le Goix, Webster, 2008; Youssef, 2015). In some circumstances GCs may create or foster greater functional economic integration, providing employment opportunities for surrounding low-income neighbourhoods, especially when GCs are located in close territorial proximity and there is high contrast between such social groups (Roitman *et al.,* 2010). The development of GCs is beneficial for surrounding poor areas economically, even if it brings only 'bad jobs' (such as service positions), as no jobs existed there before. It also means a significant improvement of living conditions in poorer neighbourhoods because of market expansion too (e.g. attraction of low-price supermarkets into the area) (Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007). Salcedo and Sabatini (2007) suggest this economic integration, which was evaluated according to residents' participation in the market, both as consumers and as workers. However, such functional relations may not always be strong and emerge more often in developing countries with high income differences and poverty (Roitman *et al.,* 2010).

Figure 1. Dimensions of gated communities' socio-spatial integration.
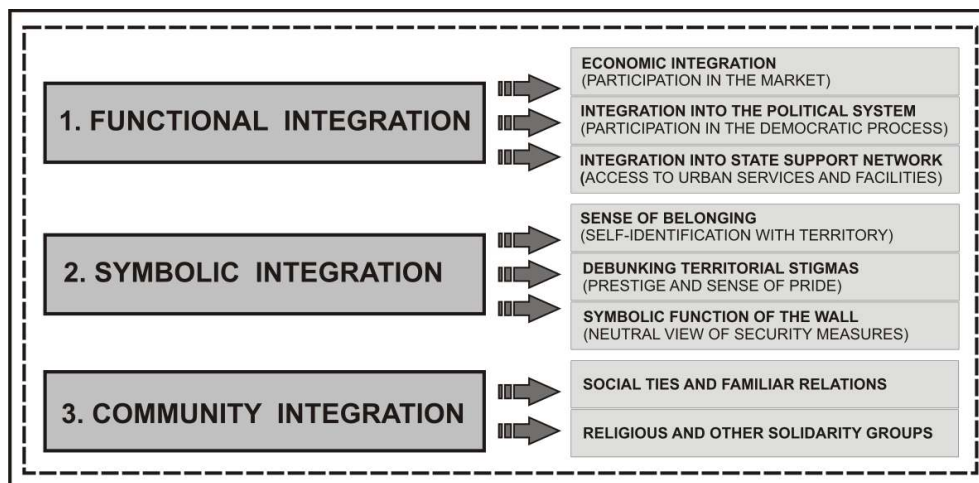
8   Without this economic co-existence, fostered by the GCs job market, the importance of participation in political and democratic processes is identified as a distinct aspect of functional lower-class residents' integration. With the arrival of GCs, indigenous residents obtain better protection of their political rights and attention from city governments and other state authorities. Likewise, integration into the urban environment occurs through the development of better access to public services and facilities, as well as the improvement and modernisation of the physical environment (e.g. roads, public transportation, etc.) that 'city planners had forgotten up to that point' (Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007).

9   Another distinguished dimension of social integration is defined as **symbolic integration,** which can also be divided into three investigative aspects. Firstly, GCs may foster symbolic integration through reducing the territorial stigmas of poor neighbourhoods, with indigenous people feeling less stigmatised as poor or dangerous after the arrival of GCs (Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007; Tanulku, 2012). With the external consideration of their neighbourhood as a 'good and decent place to live' (or even better), we can talk about the emergence of a new sense of pride regarding the place in which the lower-class residents live, as well as their efforts to improve their living conditions or way of life. As Sabatini and Salcedo (2007) point out, this sense of the pride is the starting point in reducing the 'dominated consciousnesses' of the shame, as well as the possibility of 'ghettoization'.

10 This leads to the perception that a symbolic feeling of integration can be fostered via a growing 'sense of belonging' to the same territory. Sabatini and Salcedo (2007) explain this territorial self-identification by the fact that non-gated residents are usually indigenous inhabitants of the area and that their presence in the same neighbourhood as GC residents is an integral part of the place, even if they experience some kind of division or discrimination.

11 Furthermore, Sabatini and Salcedo (2007) have noticed an important transformation of residents' identity and the emerging importance of territorial belonging to class identity. 'Symbolic integration into a territory may debilitate other ways of constructing identities as prominent as class or race' (Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007). Thus, spatial closeness can

become a factor of social integration, especially when residents of gated and non-gated communities see each other not just as 'the others', but as people who belong to the same neighbourhood and share a common identity.

12   In this way the existence of gates and walls does not necessarily create social and psychological distance and, paradoxically, in certain cases, can increase social integration between groups on both sides. Sabatini and Salcedo (2007) explain this phenomenon with reference to Rappaport's (1978) statement about social integration between different, but homogeneous social classes, which are clearly defined as separate, but exist in close territorial proximity. This closeness creates the conditions for knowing each other and respect for each group's identity. Hence residents tend to accept the existence of the walls as a reality without having a negative view of such security measures, as the walls are directed not against them, but against people from other parts of the city. In this concept, the walls are considered as neither 'evidence of social exclusion' nor a 'synonym of problems' (Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007); they do not preclude functional relations, having a role that is more symbolic than literal.

13   The third dimension of GCs' integration includes **community integration,** which comprises the formation of social ties (even strong familiar relations and friendships) beyond those of a functional co-existence. Here a special role in integration is performed by solidarity groups, such as religious communities, for which gated and non-gated (or poor and wealthy) residents are equal. Community integration sometimes can be confused with symbolical integration (in particular, the 'sense of belonging'), but the difference is that the latter can be based on unequal relations. Undoubtedly, strong community relations between GC residents and outsiders are difficult or even impossible to form, but those circumstances do not complicate or weaken functional integration between them (Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007; Salcedo, Torres, 2004).

14   Using the complex evaluation of these three types of integration, we can find different combinations and patterns of possible GC integration (Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007). None of these different integrating factors are considered as primary or fundamental; also, none of them can replace each other or eliminate the effect of strong disintegration. The pattern of integration varies in different countries and regions, depending on individual factors, such as the local urban fabric, social structure or the historical pattern of a city and its suburbs.

15   In this methodological framework we can distinguish different directions of integration. Some of those dimensions (e.g. integration into a political system and a state support network) are designated for the poor residents' integration *into* a wealthier and modern environment more than integration *between* both groups. Less considered in this and other theoretical perspectives is GCs residents' integration into the surrounding environment. Atkinson and Blandy (2005) propose a critical point of view and dispute why the concentration of poor is considered as problematic, while the concentration of wealthy is not. In any case, we consider social integration as the process of mutual and reversible relations between gated and non-gated residents.

16   The degree of GCs' interaction with outside neighbourhoods often depends on the degree to which GC residents are integrated on the inside. Usually, a strong inner community and the availability of all facilities and services within the GC reduce the demand for interaction outside the gates (Grant, 2007; Atkinson, Flint, 2004; Balakrishnan, 2001). Such socially appreciated inner features of a GC can have unappreciated effects for

neighbourhoods and become an object in the study of socio-spatial integration between GCs and neighbourhoods.

Perspectives of Gated Communities' integration in post-socialist Lithuania

17 Since the 1990s the tendency has appeared that former, quite evenly formed soviet cities transform into complex and segregated post-socialist neo-liberal metropolitan areas (Borén, Gentile, 2007; Brade *et al.,* 2009; Sýkora, Bouzarovski, 2012). Such transformations are common to all post-socialist cities; however, actual patterns differ substantially in various countries (Marcińczak *et al.,* 2015). The most recent study carried out in Lithuania (Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Krupickaitė, 2016) reveals increasing segregation in both the inner city and the suburban zone of the city. Furthermore, the trend of separation is in generally inherent to all new residential developments, not only to those which are physically walled or detached (Čiupailaitė, 2014).

18 Intensive suburbanisation and a growth in the number of new settlements and GCs in the metropolitan areas of post-socialist countries suggest growing spatial segregation (Marcińczak *et al.,* 2015). The increasing development of GCs is also emphasised in the studies of most post-socialist East and Central European cities (Bitušikova *et al.,* 2010; Bodnar *et al.,* 2010; Brade *et al.,* 2009; Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Gąsior-Niemiec *et al.,* 2009; Gentile, 2012; Hirt, 2012; Hirt *et al.,* 2010; Marcińczak *et al.,* 2015; Polanska, 2010; Sýkora, Bouzarovski, 2012; Stanilov, 2007; Stoyanov *et al.,* 2006; etc.). Investigations and case studies of GCs in Poland (Gądecki, 2013; Kotus, 2008), Hungary (Hegedűs, 2009; Kovacs *et al.,* 2014), Bulgaria (Smigiel, 2013), Serbia (Hirt *et al.,* 2010), Lithuania (Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Krupickaitė, 2016) and the Czech Republic (Sýkora, 2009) have revealed increasing social segregation and tensions, as well as a lack of social cohesion and a sense of community within GCs and local society. This new pattern of segregation, which has developed as a 'dominant cultural ideal' (Hirt, 2012), has to be analysed when considering the socio-economical changes of post-socialist societies. In general, the countries of this region lack public spirit and a sense of community (Berényi, 2007; Olivo, 2011; Walker, Stephenson, 2012). Unfortunately, studies of GCs in post-socialist countries are commonly confined to the identification of the segregating effect. Even though the necessity for the elimination of residential segregation and socio-spatial differentiation is emphasised, the possibilities of gated suburban neighbourhoods' integration into city are rarely discussed.

19 Society in Lithuania can be defined as having social integration problems that are common to different post-socialist countries. Recent studies of the Lithuanian metropolitan areas, carried out in 2015-2016 by the Lithuanian Social Research Centre, focused on social development and the process of residential segregation (published (Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Krupickaitė, 2016) and unpublished results are used for the analysis of the segregating and integrating factors of GCs in Lithuania). Field research, conducted in the sprawl zones of three major cities – Vilnius, Kaunas and Klaipėda – included observations of the situation and interviews with local representatives of municipalities. Part of this research was focused on GCs, which we distinguish as a residential or mixed-use house group with the following characteristics: 1) the land is fully fenced and the entrance is limited to cars and pedestrians and 2) the territory is under video surveillance or protected by security staff. Such settlements are

privately managed and their residents are usually bound by contracts and commitments (Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Krupickaitė *et al.,* 2014; Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Krupickaitė, 2016).

20   The phenomenon of GCs is not very prevalent in Lithuania; however, it still creates the precondition of spatial segregation (Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Krupickaitė, 2016). Most of new settlements built in suburbs are like welfare islands, in which the communities are quite active. A case study of the 'Neries kilpos' GC in a suburb of Vilnius (Krupickaitė *et al.,* 2014) showed that the socio-demographic structure of it was quite homogeneous. The majority of the residents belong to the upper-middle class, most of them have a university degree, are employed or free-standing high-quality specialists, businessmen, medical doctors, etc. The family structure is also typical: in most cases, families consist of two adults and two children. These settlements do not really face social problems and those that emerge are solved by the community. Meanwhile, the opposite situation appears in the adjacent (mostly rural) territories, which are poorer and struggling with various unsolved financial, social and other problems. Segregation between 'new' and 'old' residents is also high due to differences in lifestyle and mentality, as well as other social characteristics.

21   Nevertheless, the relation between those two groups can be diverse. The relation is mostly negative and of a cautious nature, as GC residents and local representatives of municipalities tend to maintain the *status quo,* even if there are a lot of problems, such as local infrastructure. On the other hand, it is they who initiate the improvement of the physical environment, which brings benefits to the surrounding residents too. A neutral relation is noticeable when there is less communication with the local community and both groups live separate lives. Meanwhile, a positive relation appears under conditions of extremely deep social differentiation, where even the smallest positive change promoted by the newcomers is exceptionally significant.

22   An investigation into the residential differentiation and segregation of suburban areas in Lithuanian cities (Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Krupickaitė, 2016) revealed different aspects of GCs' impact on the population inside and outside such settlements. From the psychological, social, economic, natural and barrier dimensions of external impact that have been distinguished (Burneika *et al.,* 2017), we can deduce some aspects and perspectives of disintegration or possible integration tendencies. Among prevalent negative effects inherent to post-socialist cities, we identify some features of GCs' external impact, which could be beneficial to the encouragement of the process of socio-spatial integration.

23   For example, the **psychological** effects of GCs on the neighbouring areas, observed during the research (Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Krupickaitė, 2016), are identified as an emerging sense of safety, the increasing prestige of adjacent territories (this can encourage a 'sense of pride' or even a 'sense of belonging') and the changing lifestyle or mentality of local rural residents.

24   An especially strong effect emerged in the **social** dimension of impact, mainly represented by community-building and the growing importance of the community 'outside the gates'. New residents are often more active in the initiation of the improvement of the physical environment and successful in dealing with local problems, thus becoming an example of civil society and community formation. These new settlements become catalysts, promoting a more active approach in terms of both the municipal representatives and the local communities when dealing with problems, as well as when organising common leisure activities. Moreover, it is noticeable that, as a

consequence thereof, old rural residents tend to become more active in the organisation of common events or in building relationships. Such new active communities are going to become factors of the reduction of social exclusion in metropolitan areas. The other significant positive social aspect is described as 'social dilution' (Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Krupickaitė, 2016), which is when wealthier settlers move into rural suburbs with a lot of social problems, thus promoting the improvement of the social environment. Support for the local religious community is also noted as an important social factor that can tend to encourage integration with local communities.

25   An increasing population promotes the development of local infrastructure, such as roads and other communications, waste collection or social infrastructure (e.g. kindergartens). Likewise, the **economic** integration impact of GCs is also represented by economic relations between 'old' and 'new' residents, especially in terms of purchasing food products from local residents and employment possibilities during the construction of GCs.

26   The identification of a slight **barrier** impact (excluding the limited access for urban services) is based on the emerging tendency to take care of the external territories that GC residents use and visit (Burneika *et al.,* 2017). This could reflect a neutral view of the security measures and a more symbolic function of gates and walls.

27   Relating to these factors of impact, we distinguish the basis of a three-dimensional concept of integration (Figure 2). In all cases, new settlements bring certain changes that require the higher or lower integration of 'new' and 'old' residents. The signs of possible **functional integration** are noticeable in many cases (especially in terms of infrastructure and economic sub-dimensions), even though the role of this integrating dimension is relatively small. The purchase of food products from local residents and employment possibilities during the construction of GCs are the main factors of integration, as well as the improvement of roads and other communication networks due to newcomers. Although the political sub-dimension of integration has not been investigated in the research of GCs, changes in electoral behaviour (Baranauskaitė *et al.,* 2015; Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Savickaitė *et al.*, 2013) and emerging tensions indicate growing political disintegration, especially in the suburbs of Vilnius.

Figure 2. Gated communities' external impact to the process of socio-spatial integration.
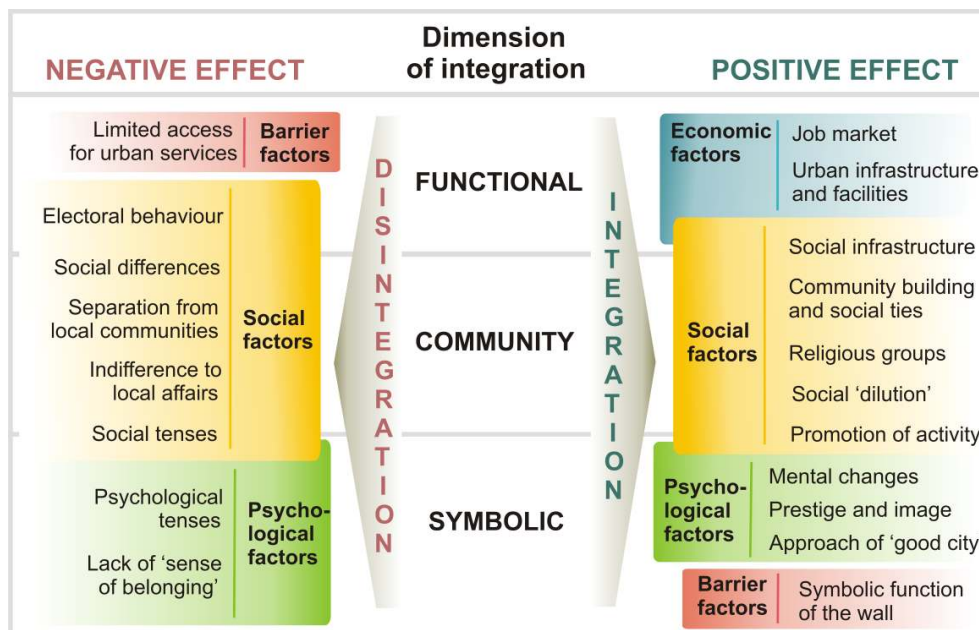
Based on Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Krupickaitė, 2016

28   Survey data (Burneika *et al.,* 2017; Pociūtė-Sereikienė, Krupickaitė, 2016) has revealed the significant importance of **community integration**, as reflected mainly by communication through common events and activities, as well as increasing community-building and the importance of community in general. Accordingly, social factors have the most significant influence on community disintegration, e.g. separation and indifference to local communities and affairs. Social differences between 'old' and 'new' residents cause social and psychological tensions, while local people are sensitive to newcomers' indifference. The absence of self-identification with the common vicinity is noticeable in cases when newcomers did not want to identify themselves with the name of the old local settlement (as in the case of the 'Neries kilpos' GC), which identifies **symbolic** disintegration. Nevertheless, the growing prestige and image of the vicinity may stimulate positive integrating tendencies from the side of the 'outsiders', as well as a symbolic view of the separating security measures. Despite the increasing number of GCs and the growth in separation tendencies, residents still create the definition of, and approach to a 'good city' based on sustainable city features (Steikūnaitė, 2015), which could be seen as an indicator of residential integration and the development of sustainable suburbs.

29   Consequently, the analysis of economic, social, psychological and barrier factors and their impact upon integrating or disintegrating processes shows a paradoxical tendency. The impact of GCs on residential integrity tends to be ambiguous: despite increasing residential segregation (there often being a lack of relations, or even growing social tensions between old and new residents), the signs of possible integration do appear. In Lithuania, social factors of impact are most significant in this process, and should therefore be highlighted in suburban development. It is possible that strengthening the positive effects of GCs may turn such settlements in a medium for social homogenisation and spatial integration.

Conclusion

30 The majority of scholars describe GCs as a definite form of social segregation, and this widespread approach is both established in theory and proved empirically. However, a more **complex** understanding can be created through the study of the relations between the residents of GCs and those who are left outside. This constructive approach to GCs includes not only a conception of the dimensional composition of the integration process, but the relation between integration and segregation too. Considering Sabatini and Salcedo's (2007) interpretation of social segregation as a mixture of integration and exclusion, we propose that social integration can exist within segregated urban patterns. This leads to the standpoint that not all forms of segregation are necessarily 'socially damaging' (Salcedo, Torres, 2004) and not all GCs have the same effect on their surrounding neighbourhoods. In some circumstances, GCs could have a positive impact upon the urban environment, whilst reinforcing historic segregation patterns in other (Le Goix, Webster, 2008; Sabatini, Salcedo, 2007). This doesn't mean that the prospect of integration eliminates the negative effects of GCs; still, the complex approach could contribute to a deeper understanding of this relation and, in Chase's (2008) words, an examination of 'new forms of interaction – with people and with places – that erase the boundaries that their walls represent'.

31 Applying this complex approach of analysis, ambiguous tendencies are being observed in the suburbs of Lithuanian cities. Without social problems and separated from poor rural neighbourhoods, GCs tend to became welfare islands. On the other hand, as post-soviet societies are characterised by problems of social co-existence, public spirit and a sense of community, those active newcomers to communities could become examples of community-building, civil society and democracy. It is likely that the promotion of these, and other such positive effects can lead GCs to be beneficial not only for 'inside' residents (safety, community building, etc.), but also to contribute to the welfare of society as a whole.

32 Recent social tendencies in suburban areas should be further analysed in the future, and efforts should be made to find new forms and ways to reduce the negative effect of GCs. None of the investigated positive factors are strong enough to deny the intense disintegration inherent to the suburbs of post-socialist cities. Nevertheless, even preliminary signals of possible integration could stand as the starting point for positive change, and contribute to the achievement of a wider and deeper socio-spatial integration in the future.

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ABSTRACTS

As a new style of residential development, gated communities appear to be a reflection of territorial and social segregation in the suburbs of post-socialist cities. Even though the phenomenon of gating is not prevalent in Lithuania, it still inheres spatial segregation as a precondition. Researches in Lithuania have shown that, despite strong segregating effect, in some cases gated communities may have an ambiguous impact on the population outside such settlements. A complex evaluation of this integration process, conducted via a three-dimensional integration model, as well as an examination of the psychological, social, economic and barrier factors of gated communities' impacts, may ascertain the directions and perspectives of possible integration thereof. It is likely that the promotion of those prominent effects and the search for new ones can lead gated communities to become more positive for society as a whole and achieve stronger integration in suburban areas.

Gated Communities als die neue Wohnungsform reflektiert die territoriale und soziale Segregation in den Vororten auf postsozialistischen Städten. Obwohl dieses Phänomen in Litauen nicht sehr verbreitet ist, schafft es dennoch die Voraussetzungen für sozialräumliche Segregation. Die Forschungen in Litauen haben gezeigt, dass Gated Communities nicht nur Segregationseffekts aber mehrdeutige Auswirkungen auf die Bevölkerung außerhalb dieser Siedlungen haben können. Die komplexe Bewertung des Integrationsprozesses durch dreidimensionales Integrationsmodell und Psychologische-, Soziale-, Ökonomische- und Barrierefaktoren des Einflusses kann Richtungen und Perspektiven einer möglichen Integration bestimmen. Es ist wahrscheinlich, dass die Förderung dieser bekannten Effekte und die Suche nach neuen Möglichkeiten für die gesamte Gesellschaft positiver werden und stärkere Integration in Vorstadtgebieten erreichen kann.

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