Gated Communities – by product of the lack of trust?

Pawel Waszkiewicz

Gated communities are housing areas that have been enclosed in one way or another, typically involving heavy use of surveillance technology (see Addington & Rennison, 2015). Such areas were first described in the USA and South Africa in the late 80s and early 90s (McKenzie, 1994; Blakely & Snyder, 1997). Since then they have been focal points of several research projects in different regions of the world (Low, 2003; Glasze, 2003). There is a significant number of publications covering the increasing number of gated communities in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) after democratization of formerly communist societies (Bodnar & Molnar, 2009). In the post-communist context, a general lack of trust, the increasing socio-economic polarization, fear of crime and the existential insecurity created in the democratization process have been forwarded as potential explanations for the rapid expansion of gated communities (Hirt & Petrovic, 2010).

Paper will present the results of the project Like Fish in Water: Surveillance in Post-Communist Societies that commissioned field work in Estonia, Poland, and Serbia (2014-15). A representative and probabilistic sample of 1000 respondents from each country were interviewed face-to-face on matters of trust, security, surveillance and a range of contextual aspects, among others gated communities.