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Interethnische Nachbarschaft
housing model
of Sozialbau AG in Vienna
(23rd District)

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Introduction

The integration of migrants is a continuous challenge in every city, for its citizens, its institutions and its economy, and this challenge always presents itself in new ways and - as today - in a new dimension.

In the process of integration a key role falls to limited-profit housing associations and co-operatives. Their housing estates provide a framework in which integration can take place. Where else? In fact here - still more than in the world of work - is everyday life. This is where people of different origins meet every day: children, young people, adults, the elderly, boys and girls, men and women.

The companies have long and wide-ranging experience of how integration can be successful. The question of how people from different cultures can live together as good neighbours is always present in the planning of new housing complexes and in the letting and administration of housing. Besides their “everyday business” some companies repeatedly try to gain new insights with innovative projects, because the new challenges we face all the time cannot be met with “it’s always been like this” and “that’s what we’ve always done”.

One such innovative integration project that has now been operating for many years is the “Interethnische Nachbarschaft” (“Interethnic Neighbourhood”) - also known as “Globaler Hof” (“Global Estate”) - run by Sozialbau AG in Vienna. The housing complex, that was ready for occupancy in 2000, was to have a proportion of Austrians to migrants of 50-50, with many ethnicities represented among the migrants. Sozialbau wanted to provide the structural framework - including many community rooms - as well as the social framework - highly qualified housing support. In a 2003 survey, three years after occupancy, 48% of the 140 households were in fact “non-nationalised migrants”, thus migrants - still - without Austrian citizenship.

This detailed 2003 evaluation allowed Sozialbau to establish if the Globaler Hof had achieved successful integration of migrants and ultimately also of Austrians into an open, tolerant, urban community (Herbert Ludl (Ed.): *Das Wohnmodell Inter-Ethnische Nachbarschaft*. Vienna/New York. 2003, author: Joachim Brech). The study investigated in great detail how and under what conditions integration was possible in this housing complex, and as it turned out it was extremely successful. Since then the housing complex has again and again been used as a reference for successful integration, also beyond Vienna. The Municipality of Vienna awarded the project the first Wiener Wohnbaupreis (Vienna Housing Prize) in 2009.

This new study, which is, however, not so comprehensive, is intended to examine whether this housing model has also still proved itself after more than fifteen years, not least under the impact of the virulent new integration challenges since 2015 on account of the massive wave of migration. Has this concept proven its worth?

Purpose of the Study

This study is intended to give an impression based on interviews with residents, the caretaker and the property management company. It should be emphasised that this is not a representative survey. However, based on qualitative interviews with residents in various life circumstances, this study provides an impression and an atmosphere that does indeed on the whole reflect the reality - of course without being able to describe the context in each individual case. The interviews did not give the impression that the majority of the - un-interviewed - residents would have said anything very different to the interviewees. The quoted statements add up to a plausible picture and reflect moods in the Globale Hof. Generalised statements may thus by all means be made.



Background

2015, 2016 and the coming years ...

With the “flood” of hundreds of thousands of refugees, the year 2015 brought decisive changes for all European countries. Certainties were destroyed and insecurity has taken their place. The familiar has been confronted by the foreign to an unexpected degree. And because it cannot be anticipated that the causes of this migration in the countries of origin - war, famine, oppression, poverty, lack of perspectives for young people - can even be partially remedied in the foreseeable future, European countries must adjust to the fact that further hundreds of thousands of people will seek refuge in Europe in the coming years. These countries will be faced with new challenges at a time when some of them face deep structural reforms themselves which on their own ask too much of many of their citizens. One just has to think of the problem of high youth unemployment.

Helplessness pervades the political, academic and economic elites. The number of migrants far exceeds any familiar limits. Assessments of the consequences of the current and future forecast migration movements run in many directions. Wide scope is given for political exploitation. Businesspeople sniff chances. The media have “the story”. The new arrivals cannot be stopped, they are put up in makeshift accommodation. The integrative power of cities appears to be soon exhausted.

In such a situation can such elaborate and sophisticated residential models like the *Interethnische Nachbarschaft* still play any kind of role at all? In view of the quantitative dimension of the new migration they surely seem like ‘relics from a better time’.

Migration is nothing new - but repeatedly something new

The European city has always been shaped by migration. No migration - no city. One should then think that cities have experience with the integration of migrants, also with very many migrants in a short space of time. Nevertheless migration is time and again felt by citizens to be an intrusion into their familiar way of life, their culture and their economy and as competition on the markets and is therefore unwelcome and many feel that it is imposed upon them. And this is of course mostly felt by those who are in difficulties themselves and live on the edge of urban society. They can see no benefit in migration. However, only those who find their own situation satisfactory can be tolerant and respectful. Foreign cultures will hardly be felt as an enrichment by those whose own life circumstances have become precarious and who must come to terms with loss of identity through slipping down the social ladder. However, many who are doing well also see their status threatened.

Conflicts therefore arise, particularly in apartment houses and on housing estates. Intervention is often ineffective if all of those involved are not willing or unable to communicate.

The fact that the integration of migrants is ultimately successful, even if often after long and conflict-fraught processes, is an historical experience in European cities. How integration can be unsuccessful - that too can be studied in European cities. But in today's concrete case these past experiences and sociological findings do not take us very far. We encounter foreigners everywhere we go. People have become used to it in a most positive way in the large cities, which often have populations made up of more than a quarter migrants. However, the history of migration movements shows that in certain urban quarters there are evidently barriers, too much proximity beyond which the encounter can become confrontation. And it also shows that this depends upon the reasons people have for coming and the cultural circles from which they originate - and upon the time at which they come. Whether the migrants are needed or whether people believe they will make a precarious situation even worse.

Influx into the cities

The migrants come into the cities. Administrative attempts to spread them equally throughout the country and also settle them in rural areas — whether it be from a need for a “fair” distribution of the burdens associated with migration or because there is housing standing empty or because land is very cheap in comparison to the prosperous cities — have not proved beneficial for the integration of migrants. The countryside lacks the necessary educational institutions and suitable jobs. And if in smaller towns and villages the proportion of natives to migrants shifts away from the natives, and when the migrants come from different cultures, today in fact from Muslim countries, conflicts can arise.

However, it is a special disadvantage that in rural regions migrants have no points of contact with compatriots who have already lived in the country for some time. There are no ethnic communities, no relatives or acquaintances from the same country who could provide a soft landing for the new arrivals who could get information or even find accommodation for the start and could breathe easily again after their frequently long journeys.

Cultural diversity is thus a central precondition for integration.

Migrants therefore come into the cities, understandably preferring prosperous cities with a comparatively high proportion of migrants and experience with the process of migration and integration. They come into various types of housing stock — private rental, old stock, subsidised rental, social housing. In Vienna this is mainly the mid to late 19th century privately-owned housing stock in densely built-up areas. Only after some time and under certain conditions do they become eligible for subsidised housing.

For Austrian and/or Viennese housing companies this means that their housing complexes have become important ports of call for migrants. However, here too there are already many

people with migrant backgrounds and if one ethnicity is predominant in a housing complex, this domination can increase — with all the negative consequences of social exclusion.

Segregation and social competence

Put simply, there are two different tendencies in dealing with migration in European cities: avoiding spatial ethnic segregation as much as possible and tolerating ethnic segregation. The paradigm in Vienna is: avoid ethnic segregation insofar as it can be influenced.

However, “segregation or dispersion” is all too often very much discussed from the perspective of the natives. How much foreignness can a neighbourhood take and how many foreign-looking people must be on the streets until the natives feel threatened? Some claim to know the ratios but these are highly individual assessments and controversially discussed in the academic community. We know that in segregated ensembles social and economic networks are formed which promote integration.

Segregation grants the wish to live with one’s own, it facilitates good neighbourly contacts and the development of help networks. It is thus particularly favourable for new arrivals - on the one hand. At the same time, however, segregation, as the name already says, can promote the formation of tightly closed societies, parallel worlds and archaic forms of community which do not conform to our democratic values. Integration is rigidly obstructed. It is thus





not segregation itself that is the problem but rather the way in which it occurs, its extent and its further development.

In a certain way this discussion can also be applied to the “microcosm” of a housing complex and also the housing model of the Interethnic Neighbourhood. Here too the question continually arises: how much “foreignness” can a neighbourhood take? Whereby “foreign” of course also works both ways: how much “nativeness” can a migrant take?

It would be fatal to want to draw definite lines here. The realities of life are far too differentiated and also too dynamic for this — which makes for the quality of our cities, residential areas and housing complexes. This also makes clear that integration is a challenge that applies equally to natives and migrants, that an appropriate framework must exist, but that integration is ultimately a challenge that must be met on the spot and over a longer period of time in everyday life. In the process social competence is the formula for integration. These aspects can also be illuminated in the everyday life of the Globale Hof.

At the time of its construction the Globale Hof was also a pilot project to break through the formal, financial and informal barriers to entry for people with migrant backgrounds looking for accommodation — at a time when, for these reasons, the proportion of these groups actually moving in to subsidised housing was still low. It was a matter of showing that a high level of mixing can be good for everyone.

Today the situation has changed. The stock of subsidised housing has steadily increased to an approximately similar degree but the groups seeking housing have changed: on the one hand the numbers have increased and on the other there are also more people with a migrant background. This is not only due to current migrants but also due to second and even third generations who have lived here for a long time and are now in the phase of starting families. On top of this there is also a noticeable crisis in the affordability of housing.

The question to ask is thus whether the original model of the Globale Hof has also been able to maintain and/or adapt its qualities over longer periods of time and whether it can still provide a practical answer to changed situations and requirements. It would be desirable in itself if the “model” were to become “just one among many” and “interethnic housing” a successful feature of everyday life.

Die Zuwanderung in Wien – einige Daten

The population of Vienna has been growing again since around the end of the 1990s. Except for the 1st District (the historical city centre), it has been increasing in all districts, but to very different degrees. This is of course influenced by the availability of land for residential construction, but not only.

At the same time there has been a further increase in the proportion of the population with a migrant background. (1)

This proportion of migrants was already relatively high in 2000, the year in which the first residents moved into the Interethnische Nachbarschaft, and since then it has grown appreciably. In 2013 Vienna's statistics showed 38.5% of people with a “migrant background” (in 2007 it was 31.4%). Refugees and asylum seekers are not included here because the state is responsible for their care.

Measured by addresses, there have been spatial shifts. Besides the overall nett decrease, the number of Austrian households in the inner as well as various outer districts has stagnated. In some outer districts it has even decreased more markedly (10th, 20th, 12th, 13th, 19th, 16th). In a few outer districts it has increased, particularly in the 22nd as well as the 11th Districts.

As a result the number of residents with migrant backgrounds has increased to different degrees. The greatest increases are in outer districts: the 10th District (plus approx. 25,000 people), the 22nd (plus 15,000), the 21st (plus 14,000) and the 11th (plus around 11,000), also due to much housing construction in these areas.

Whoever knows Vienna will know that the outer districts include very differently structured

areas. For a long time this has also led to certain areas standing out as predominantly migrant quarters. Some 19th century working-class areas already had a proportion of 50-52% of residents with a migrant background in 2010 (such as densely built-up parts of the 16th and 10th Districts and all of the 15th District).

However, here we are interested in the 23rd District where the Globale Hof is situated. Recently (2013) the population increase as a whole over the previous six years was a moderate 4% (compared with +16% in the 22nd District and +12% in the 10th). And the proportion of the migrant population is now 24% (compare the 22nd District, periphery at 27%, but - see above - the 15th District inner-city old housing stock area near the Gürtel (the ring road dividing the inner districts of the city from the outer) is now at 51%).

However, all the 6,500 who came to Liesing (23rd District) over the last six years had a migrant background. Something is changing.

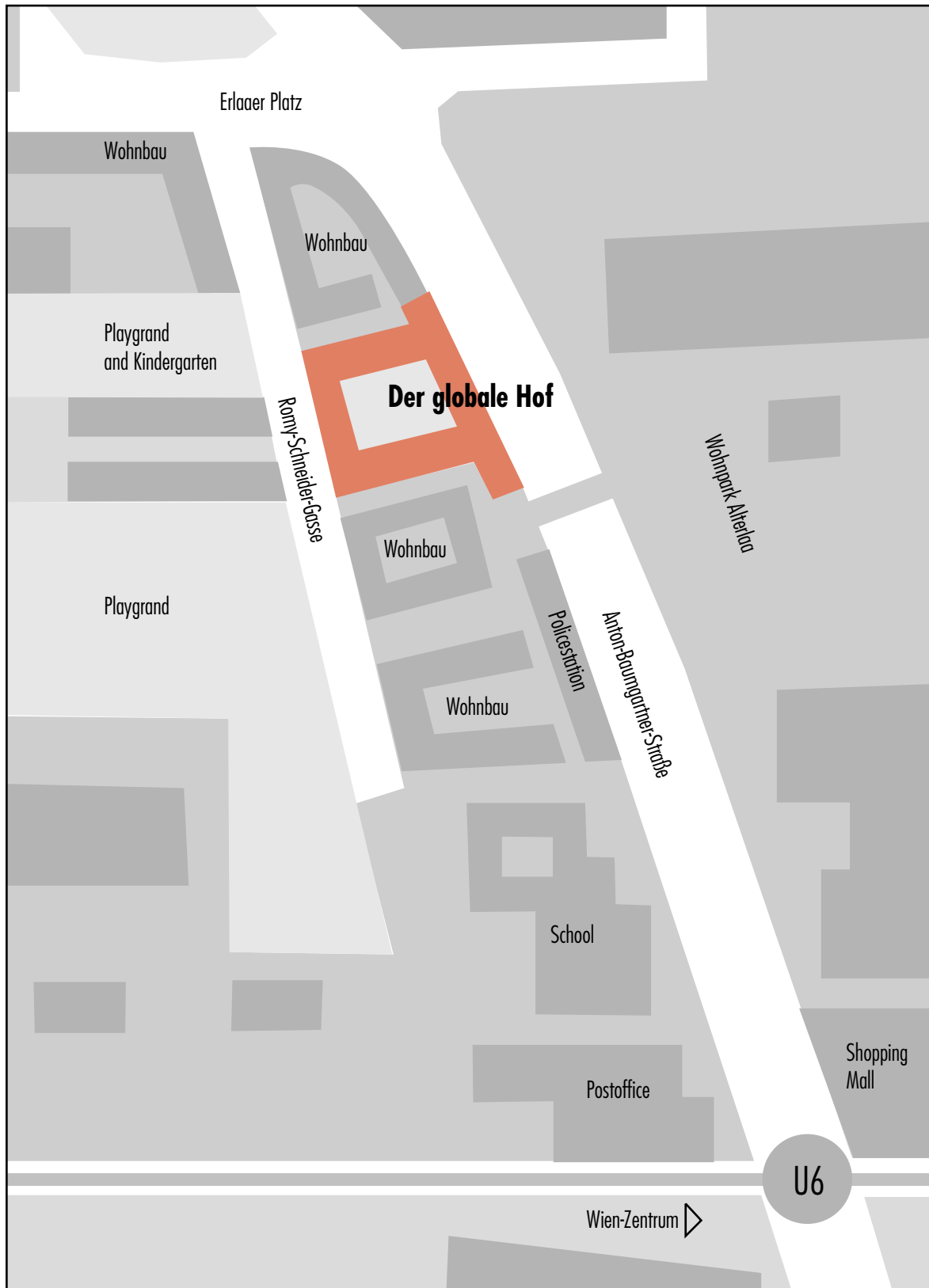
There have thus still been tendencies towards ethnic and social segregation in Vienna for quite a while. It is moving in the direction of more widespread distribution but in view of the rapid growth and the enormous demand for housing there is still a long way to go and the pressure is high. However, there is no other sensible solution in sight apart from diverse housing models.

1) There are various definitions of "migrant background":

The parents of people with a migrant background were both born abroad, whereby members of the first generation were also born abroad but those of the second generation were born in Austria (Population with a migrant background since 2008, STATISTIK AUSTRIA).

People who either do not have Austrian citizenship or were born outside of Austria are categorised as residents with a migrant background (Handbuch der Stadt Wien 2015, Population according to city districts since 2007 – with migrant background).

The Globale Hof - the data



Globale Hof data

Location	Vienna 23rd District, Anton Baumgartnerstrasse
Architect	Arch. DI Peter Scheifinger, Vienna
Building	140 subsidised apartments incl. caretaker's flat
	Size of flats: 44 to 108 m ²
	Housing costs:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gross cold rent per m²: 7.53 EUR
	Mix:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 1-room • 61 2-room • 24 3-room • 46 4-roomi
	7 shops etc.: café, pizzeria, sport, hairdresser, chiropodist, gallery, kindergarten
	1 large communal room with kitchen, WC etc.: 312 m ²
	4 communal rooms on the roof, together 120 m ²
	4 communal closed loggias with around 180 m ²
	Children's play room, 51 m ²
	Storerooms 318 m ²
	Wellness 209 m ²
	Laundry 45 m ²
	Effective surface for funding: 10,860 m ²
	Communal area 1,236 m ²
	Basement car park with 146 spaces, 102 of them rented
Status	First occupancy: June 2000
	132 flats rented (January 2016)
	New tenancies since first occupancy, as of January 2016: 91 (including passed-on tenancies)
TV system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of stations: 117 • Number of foreign stations (incl. Germany): 95 • Every flat connected to the central receiver
Residents' organisation	Verein Miteinander e.V. (registered association)
	The housing association Sozialbau can give no information about the number of residents, forms of household or ethnic origin.

The interviews and the findings

At the time of the first occupancy of the Interethnische Nachbarschaft, migration was also already a “hot” topic in Vienna and Sozialbau, as one of Vienna’s most important housing enterprises (2016 managing 50,000 flats), wanted to provide answers and point the way, including with this pilot project. Happily, the 2003 evaluation showed that three years after first occupancy the Globale Hof was an example of successful integration. Can that be confirmed today?

The interviewees

Against the background of current developments, as outlined above, residents from six/seven households of the Interethnische Nachbarschaft were interviewed following guidelines. (Anonymity was assured. In order to preserve it no information is provided about social status or origin except for migrant / Austrian.)

Residents were selected:

- who had lived at the Globale Hof for several years or since the beginning
- who had lived at the Globale Hof for around one to three years.

Including

- Family, first generation migrants, two grown-up children, at Globale Hof from the beginning
- Family, first generation migrants, four children, at Globale Hof for three years
- Austrian woman pensioner living alone, at Globale Hof from the beginning
- A small family, parents and small child, international mixed origin, at Globale Hof for three years
- Resident, young, second generation migrant, living alone, at Globale Hof for one year
- Austrian family, pensioners, at Globale Hof from the beginning. Plus adult daughter (at Globale Hof for 12 years in her own flat). Interview with all family members

Others interviewed apart from residents:

- The caretaker, migrant from Afghanistan
- The Sozialbau staff member responsible for the management of the Globale Hof

The interviews with residents took place in their apartments. The caretaker and the Sozialbau staff member were interviewed on the telephone.

Evaluation of the interviews was divided into the following topics:

- Identification with the idea of the Globale Hof
- Everyday life
- The communal rooms
- Religion and integration
- Architecture in everyday life
- The role of the caretaker
- Relationship with the Sozialbau housing management company
- Rent, operating costs and ancillary expenses



Identification with the idea of the Globale Hof

In “regular housing” apartment-seekers look for an adequately sized, affordable flat in a district that suits them. People look for and need a flat and not a housing concept. In contrast to the building associations, for example, for Globale Hof residents - with a few exceptions - an idea or a concept such as community living, intercultural housing or living without a car etc. was not at first important, or in any case not a reason to decide for a flat in this housing complex. (Many also knew nothing about the concept.) As a rule such programmatic projects are directed towards a defined social milieu.

The narrow concept serves to narrow down the milieu and isolate or exclude it. However, as shown at the Globale Hof, identification with a central idea can also come about in normal housing if housing companies provide a suitable framework and the idea is not too narrowly formulated.

The first survey (2003, after a very short period of residency) found that most of the apartment seekers applied for a flat in the Globale Hof because they needed accommodation (“First, of course, the flat - and the balcony”) and what was on offer - location, layout of the flats, quality (“presentable”) and price (“I’ve looked around, a lot higher, a lot the same”) - suited their requirements and possibilities. Sozialbau’s “50-50” idea, which was not at all highlighted in talks with possible tenants and sometimes not even mentioned, was nevertheless an inducement for some people to want to move there. But it was more or less incidental for most if they did not have a negative attitude to the idea. In fact, people could not imagine what it would mean for everyday life.

After the first years in the Globale Hof the assessment of the concept showed a predominantly positive opinion of the idea. And everyone said that the 50-50 mix was an enrichment but it was also good that there should be no dominant ethnic group among the migrants, and with this was meant migrants from Turkey.

Today little has changed. The interviewees were consistently positive about the idea of a “mix”. This was later accompanied by undifferentiated undertones: “Problems with people from a certain country.” People think that Sozialbau should pay attention to “a balance of nationalities” when selecting new tenants. However, Sozialbau gives no information about the concept of the Globale Hof to new tenants (which was lamented by some interviewees).

Some quotes:

- “We weren’t told about the aim. We first heard about it here. Sozialbau only said ‘different people.’”
- “We only heard about the ‘Miteinander’ association after moving in.”
- “I was astonished that Sozialbau hadn’t produced an information leaflet about the Globale Hof. I heard about the 50-50 from a relative.”
- “At first, when moving in, I didn’t know what the concept implied. Now I find it great. I have a lot of friends here. The mix is getting better and better. I’m very happy. But it can frequently be a struggle.”
- “I find it important that we are all ‘socially similar’. At the beginning there was one family whose children got up to a lot of ‘mischief’. Now it’s quiet. The housing



management mediated a lot.”

- “The diversity is enriching for me.”
- “When we moved in everybody was very friendly - when we were arranging the flat. We didn’t actually expect anything and were very impressed by the friendly welcome. Although our previous housing situation wasn’t bad either.”
- “People help each other in thousands of little ways, such as tokens for the laundry.”
- “We all know each other and get on with almost everyone.”
- “You get parties thrown by people from Turkey, Afghanistan, India, Spain, Asia, Africa.”

Man fürchtet aber, dass sich bei Wohnungswechsel die als ideal befundene Mischung nachteilig verändert:

- „Es wäre gut, wenn man bei Wohnungswechseln darauf achten würde, dass die Mischung erhalten bleibt. Die Mischung ändert sich durch den Wechsel negativ.“
- „Die Neuen tun sich schwer gegenüber den Integrierten.“

There is however the fear that what is seen as the ideal mix is changing for the worse as new tenants move in:

- „It would be good if they paid attention with new tenants that the mix

is maintained. The change has a negative influence on the mix.”

- “The new ones find it difficult in comparison to those who are integrated.”
- „Die Kommunikation funktioniert nicht. So habe ich mir das nicht vorgestellt.“

In the six interviews there was also one critical statement about the Globale Hof’s programme:

- “A lot has changed for the worse. Because of the many moves there’s now a surplus of foreigners.”

- “I wouldn’t actually describe the Globale Hof as a place with overall ‘good neighbourliness.’”
- “The communication doesn’t work. I didn’t imagine it like this.”

And working people who are hardly at home?

- “The fact that different people live here? It doesn’t really matter, I’m hardly at home and don’t have many contacts here.”
- “Good neighbourliness. I can’t complain.”

Identification is an abstract category. A question that sheds light on the topic of “identification” is: “When you have a visit from friends or relatives who have not yet seen the Globale Hof, what do you show them first, what do you especially point out to them? Is there something that you’re particularly proud of?”

Some of the answers:

- “Layout of the flats - super. Especially the 12 m² loggia.”
- “The roof garden. I walk round it with my visitors. (Unfortunately some of the gardens are not well looked after. Has that got to do with frequent changes of tenants?)”
- “The big community room.”
- “Number 1: the flat;
number 2: the garden on the roof;
number 3: the laundry. Then the safe playground.”



Stability and mobility:

According to Sozialbau the Globale Hof has a quota of new tenancies that is comparable with other housing complexes. It could be supposed that to a certain extent the idea wears down over the years. It is not upheld by the Sozialbau administration or even by the caretaker. Even in group housing projects where the idea of the communal is the motive for setting them up, the enthusiasm cannot be maintained at its initial level over years because the life circumstances of the residents change over time.

There are indications of this in the interviews:

- “Word of mouth” is a phrase often heard in the interviews. It can be supposed that many new tenancies come about in this way.

Conclusion:

The identification of all interviewees with the idea of the Globale Hof is strong - measured by the sometimes almost euphoric words “everything super”. It could have been expected that the microcosm of the Globale Hof would also reflect the widespread judgments and prejudices, opinions and fears that are prevalent on all sides, particularly since 2015. However, inside the housing complex the events “out there” seem to have no effect on its inner life. As in the first survey there is also a high degree of approval today and the success of the mix is emphasised. People see a definite benefit for their personal lives in the diversity and especially for the children growing up here. Getting to know other ways of life is seen as enriching. The achievement of this level of identification can be attributed to the following factors:

- Its voluntary nature: there appears to be no - tacit - pressure on individuals to participate in any kinds of activities.
- The 50-50 mix and the diversity among the group of migrants with the variety it brings prevent one group segregating themselves or being segregated.
- The residents are proud of many provisions within the housing complex.
- Despite its size the whole complex with about 140 flats is differentiated due to being divided into four building elements that are accessed by four separate entrances and staircases so that sub-neighbourhoods can form.

Identification with the concept also of course depends on the social status and the sensitivities of the residents. The mix does not go so far that the social status of the residents is very different, the opposite is rather the case.

In comparison with “normal” housing complexes in recent times the turnover of flats is not out of the ordinary but is nevertheless a burden for the concept and also the ‘Miteinander’ association that supports it. It is difficult to get new arrivals to join. This harms social life.

Everyday life at the Globale Hof

How residents evaluate everyday life in a housing complex can be judged from two points of view: what forms of neighbourly assistance are there? And: are there conflicts between neighbours?

The common causes of conflicts between residents in housing complexes are well known: the noise of children and youngsters, loud parties at night - too little peace and quiet; a lack of cleanliness and order on stairways and corridors or in the laundry, vandalism, the unpleasant smells of cooking or barbecues etc.

Another level of annoyance is the feeling of being disadvantaged because, however well a housing complex is planned, there are always "better flats", which of course the others have.

When migrants and Austrians live in a housing complex, very different behaviour patterns exist closely side by side. Not only do the migrants have different lifestyles but even the Austrians practice various styles of life in one and the same building.

The interviewees consistently judged relations with neighbours in the Globale Hof as positive. People greet one another and the wide entrance corridor invites "village pump" conversations. "People can also put their flowers there." The housing complex provides many opportunities for informal encounters. And: "Where somebody comes from is secondary." "Those who've been here for a long time are on first name terms."

However, one critical aspect emerges on the theme of neighbourhood: the change of tenants. There has already been a change in 91 of the 140 flats since first occupancy. (Whereby transfers are included. It is supposed that increased rents caused by higher operating costs are a frequent reason for moving out.) The question as to how much change a good neighbourhood can tolerate cannot of course be answered. But several of the interviewees would rather see less change.

Another topic raised by interviewees follows on: isn't the housing complex already too big for neighbourliness? In the interviews the "Stiegen" (i.e. the building elements with their own entrances and staircases) were referred to again and again. This was already the case in the previous survey. At that time there was talk that individual communities form in the different parts of the building. These were also defined, for example, as "the people from Stiege 4."

As people said, the shops also contribute to good communication: "The Turkish supermarket is great. Cheap, their range of goods is okay. You can also have something delivered." "We meet at the Turk's." Also the restaurants in the building: the pizzeria, "the Chinese".

Opinions on neighbourliness:

- “The Globale Hof is in any case a building with good neighbourliness.”
- „A few older people. A neighbour needs a hand. Someone has a handicapped child. You pop by. We know each other.”
- “I got to know the neighbours above me because of water damage. He comes from (x-country)... No problem despite the damage.”

And of course the question of whether neighbourly contacts are rather with families or people from the same country:

- “We’re good neighbours, no matter where the neighbours come from.”
- “Not an issue.”

Conflicts? The usual: noise from children and youngsters. “In summer there’s a lot of music in the building. You’re virtually deluged with culture. The building has the effect of an ear trumpet.” But: the caretaker arranges things to everyone’s satisfaction. If it gets too loud people speak to their direct neighbours themselves. Conflicts do not flare up about big things but about small ones. For example, tenants who live above the pizzeria complain about the kitchen smells.

And how are conflicts resolved - or also not?

- “There are a lot of small children - and that’s also good. If the children are a nuisance, we talk with them. Language? No problem.”



- “There are people who keep out of the way of others. Sure. But it’s those who some keep out of the way of who are my friends.”
- “There are the old enmities: for example between former Yugoslavs.”
- “There was once trouble. People collected signatures and laid the sheet in front of the ‘opponent’s’ door with a small gift of biscuits. ‘Let’s bury the hatchet.’ And it was done.”
- “There are also a few racist Austrians here. Older ones. They ‘slag us off’ when they’re among themselves.”
- “Something unpleasant happens from time to time but it gets resolved. There are no extreme wars between neighbours.”

And of course cleanliness, a central issue in many housing complexes:

- “Very satisfied” - the predominant opinion.

Security? Not a big issue. However, rumours, like everywhere:

- “Everything can be seen well, it’s well lit. It’s okay.”
- “It’s a hundred percent safe, we all know each other and talk to people we don’t know. Unfortunately too many changes of tenants.”
- “If someone we don’t know comes in we ask them what they’re doing straightaway.”
- “Apparently the daughter of a tenant was once molested in a lift by a stranger.”

Conclusion:

In the Globale Hof neighbourly help is taken for granted, probably in no different way than can also be the case in many “normal” housing complexes. However, the decisive point is that the neighbourly help is to a certain extent international and ethnicity is thus not a barrier “if everything else is okay.” “You can’t be friends with everyone.” As in the first study it was also shown this time that there are evidently different “Stiegenmilieus”; “The people from staircase 2.” The fact that there are also tendencies towards withdrawal - for example from Austrians who have lived in the Globale Hof from the beginning and from new arrivals who place less value upon neighbourliness in general or due to their way of life - is a very normal process that has little to do with a lack of agreement with the concept.

The conflicts which occur, as in other places, when people live relatively closely together should be distinguished from each other. Whether something, such as a barbecue, can lead to a conflict depends on many factors: age, general opinion of foreigners, life circumstances or form of family, even on the passing mood of the person who feels disturbed. It is also decisive whether and how conflicts can be resolved. At the Globale Hof the caretaker has the pivotal role.

The communal rooms

Communal rooms - laundries, children's play rooms, rooms for residents' parties etc. - have made a substantial contribution to the social quality of Viennese housing, even if some projects have more and others less funds available for communal rooms.

With "good" planning the interior layout of the building can also be more than a functional space in order to reach the apartments as quickly as possible, it can in fact also be a space for communication. The open spaces can also be places for meeting as long as the interests of the residents of the adjacent flats are protected.

The interviewees are especially proud of the communal rooms in the Globale Hof, even if in some cases they only rarely use them or not at all. The fact that those who use the communal rooms ('laundries, and rooms for residents' parties') must pay for using them themselves separately is seen as positive.

- "The roof-garden 'does it'."
- "The roof-gardens are great for making contact: there's a barbecue once a week. There are bigger barbecue parties two or three times a year."
- "We enjoy making use of everything. Also the party room. For parties, birthdays. You put your name down with A. (the caretaker), collect the key and he checks the final cleaning."
- "Gymnastics, painting - the lot."
- "The laundry: a vehicle for contact. I once showed a newly arrived Turkish woman how to use the washing machines and then she told me her whole life story."

Negative:

- The fact that the planning of the communal facilities overstretched the mark, such as with the Turkish bath, is a handicap that evidently lasted through the years. There were complaints about high additional costs. In the meantime it has been closed.

Conclusion:

There is no doubt that the communal facilities are the structural precondition for successful integration at the Globale Hof, however not only their large number and variety but also their clever layout within the building.

Savings could certainly have been made with the areas but this special feature seems indispensable. Besides this are the wide corridors between the building elements conceived as communication areas. The residents are proud of this and they and the residents association 'Miteinander' use the communal facilities intensively. The opening of the large communal room for external events should also be seen positively, not only due to the income but also because of the image of having such a large room. Despite this the communal facilities are also mentioned when operating costs are being discussed because they are considered to be too high.

Religion and integration

It would be a wonder if the current discussion of Islam and Islamism stirred up by the media did not change the atmosphere in housing complexes. It can be supposed that the headscarf and the burka or niqab, symbols of the Islamic faith, will now be looked upon with different feelings than was the case some years ago. People had actually become used to such symbols. Other religions - Hindu, Sikh, Jewish - also have their special symbols but they are hardly seen. For Austrians the question of religion does not even arise as there is no outer sign. However, the headscarf is seen everywhere. Austrians probably hardly used to take any notice if a woman known to them as a good neighbour was wearing one, seeing it differently to a woman on the street. But could that have changed?

The question: “It cannot be denied that there is now increased tension between the cultures and religions. How is it at the Globale Hof?” did not surprise the interviewees. It would be unlikely that the ambivalent attitude of Austrians - regardless of social status - towards Islam were not also reflected at the Globale Hof.

In the interviews the question of whether tensions have arisen at the Globale Hof due to “religion” was therefore put quite openly.



Statements:

- “Yes there are one or two women here who wear burka... Otherwise there are no strict Muslims here. But I don’t want to be seen as right-wing.”
- “Tensions? Not really. There’s only a separation at barbecues. The Muslims don’t eat pork so we simply have a choice.”
- “It’s good for the children that a lot of different people live here. They get to know other idiosyncrasies.”
- “We go to church, they go to the mosque. It’s never been an issue.”

One statement, “Yes, it is problematic with the Muslims,” did not refer to life at the Globale Hof, it was referring to the climate created by events in recent years.

Conclusion:

At the Globale Hof it appears that no resident, and particularly no female resident, sees a problem in the religious affiliation of neighbours in the building. This is also shown by the parties where signs of the Muslim faith are worn with no misgivings. The only woman in the building who wears a burka was mentioned as evidence of the tolerance practiced. However, undertones can certainly be heard.

Tolerance towards the religion of others is a central indicator of integration, which should be seen from both sides, for Austrians as well as migrants. And since the opinions found in the interviews can certainly be applied to the Globale Hof as a whole, one can speak of successful integration.

In doing so a distinction must be made between internal tolerance and possibly diverging opinions on immigration in general, and that too on both sides. At the Globale Hof it is a matter of the relationship between individuals while outside it is about ideology, politics etc. .

Secondly, the preconditions must be taken into account. At the Globale Hof there are neither excluded Austrian nor excluded foreign residents, they are rather all of a similar social status. This seems to be an important factor.

Architecture in everyday life

Residents naturally judge “architecture” from a completely different perspective to specialists, and differently among themselves, which is also the case with professionals. As users the residents, especially the women, evaluate “the architecture” pragmatically in relation to its suitability for everyday use and often with applicable arguments.

As a rule the following aspects are particularly important for residents:

- That the uses to which the rooms and various parts of the building are put should not disturb others.
- The privacy of the flats and their outdoor spaces should be protected from prying eyes.
- Practical and unproblematic use - no thresholds you can trip up on, sufficient ventilation.
- Details and choice of material - it should look good
- Special features such as roof garden, swimming pool, play areas - amenities “one can be proud of”.
- Form/design: there is no desire for an extravagant architectural style nor should it be absolutely banal.



In the first survey at the Globale Hof in 2003 several interviewees criticised the facade, said the inner courtyard was ideal for children, found fault with one or two pieces of playground equipment, praised the roof garden etc. and saw architecture mainly in its functionality.

In the current survey some of the interviewees really let rip when it gets down to detail and they say what has proved itself in everyday life and where they see that is not the case:

- “Floor plans not up to much: long tube, no niches, no storage spaces.”
- “Sound comes via the chimney.”
- “You hear the people in the flat above us walking around. I need earplugs at night.”
- “The outdoor stairways are slippery in winter.”
- “Noise from the roof gardens in summer.”
- “Generally bad soundproofing.”
- “A bumpy ride for prams outside because of the gaps between the concrete paving.”
- “We had mould in the bathroom. There should be better information about ventilation.”

Two of those questioned put forward a whole list of suggestions for improvements, both in the flats and outside. They may all be “small details” but are important for the atmosphere. All of them are concrete suggestions for structural and cost-neutral improvements that could be taken into consideration in future planning.

Conclusion:

The Globale Hof was awarded the first Vienna Housing Prize in 2012 particularly because here the functional layout of the individual areas - flats, communal rooms, open spaces - combines its design - unpretentious but not banal - with its social intentions in such a simple but well-thought-out way. As a walk around the Interethnische Nachbarschaft shows, another contributing factor is that the attempt has been made to reduce the potential for conflicts with functional layouts and the selection of materials.

At the time of its initiation the project contrasted with the dominant forms of construction influenced by architectural and political ambitions. In this sense it is still relevant today.

As a rule residents hardly commented on general architectural topics, but as users they put forward long lists of individual improvements that could be made. Most of these suggestions are relatively cost-neutral. Even the housing management company says, “Well... a bit too much grey.”

The role of the caretaker

Nowadays apartment houses no longer have a "Hausmeister" (concierge). The jobs that concierges used to do have been passed on to service companies. Today the caretaker is - as the word implies - someone who takes care, responsible for all large and small concerns. His qualification: social competence. Higher demands are now made of caretakers, not least due to the high proportion of migrants in the housing complexes of limited-profit housing enterprises. A proportion of 50 percent migrants in a housing complex is no rarity. However, this proportion does not mean much. It depends from where and why the migrants come, whether a single ethnicity is dominant etc. . .

The caretaker of the Globale Hof, Ahmadschah Akrami, who is himself a migrant from a Muslim country, has a key role in the "functioning" of the interethnic community. He has been the caretaker since the first occupancy and also lives there himself with his family. Many residents see him as 'the soul' of the Globale Hof. Some of the interviewees are concerned about what will happen when he retires.



What he has to say is therefore given a special place here.

Mr Akrami naturally does not want to take personal credit for the success of the Globale Hof. Nevertheless it is not only the very professional way in which he does his job that has made the Globale Hof into a successful project but also his personal attitude to the residents with all their concerns - which seem small to a distant building management company.

On the one hand Akrami emphasises that the residents of the Globale Hof - in his view - have lived together over the years with tolerance and mutual understanding, or put simply, have been good neighbours. Example of the headscarf and burka: "That's no problem." However, it does happen that he must explain the historical context of these customs. Then there is also understanding. Akrami's basic attitude: "Talk to me."

The fact that with his help the usual conflicts about noise, dirt etc. can be simply and quickly settled and that the communal facilities, although sometimes oversized, are still intensively used confirm what Akrami and the residents interviewed say. The atmosphere is good. The success of the Globale Hof lies in the fact that things are so "normal" here. Most of the tenants have also lived here for a long time. "We've also matured."

Akrami sees the job of the caretaker in mediation: between residents if it gets a bit loud such as at the New Year's Eve party; when someone needs help with some household damage or if a social service is needed. "Then it's good that I live here." Life is made up of many small things that should be dealt with simply and quickly. All the interviewees find it very good that A. Akrami lives in the building.

But Akrami also sees that the Globale Hof is not an isolated island cut off from current events in the country and in Vienna. Akrami fears that the mood spread by the media could also have negative effects at the Globale Hof. There is of course also reason to suppose that personal acquaintances and neighbourliness have become strong enough over the years to see prejudices coming from the outside for what they are.

There are concerns about the repeated rent increases as a result of rising additional costs, seen as primarily due to the communal rooms. These increases, as justified and understandable as they may be, conceal an "explosive force" within the community and the model, which categorically includes the communal facilities, could be questioned from the outside - if it is too expensive for the tenants.

Akrami is also the most important contact person of the 'Miteinand association'.

All the interviewees said they were very satisfied with the caretaker's work. "Without him it wouldn't be what it is. Akrami - a stroke of luck." "Hopefully he won't retire too soon."

The caretaker is also a buffer for the Sozialbau building management. Whereas the caretaker received the highest praise, interviewees were very critical about the building management. Residents were badly informed and felt like supplicants. Requests have to go via the head office.

Some statements:

- “Sozialbau is always there for us. But Akrami is the key person.”
- “If you’re not getting anywhere with Sozialbau and can’t find anyone responsible, it’s better to go straight to Akrami. He deals with everything.”
- “Takes care of everything.”

Conclusion:

The caretaker is ‘the soul’ of the Globale Hof. The residents and the building management company are unanimous on this. He is always there, mediating, putting things in order, giving advice, helping, occasionally reprimanding someone, and is also the contact person for the building management.

Seen independently of the personal aspects of the caretaker, because he will also retire and a successor will have to be found, the following aspects should be taken into account:

- In view of the fact that there is such a large percentage of migrants in housing complexes, it would be good if the caretaker is also a migrant.
- One requirement is a qualification in mediating conflicts that can arise when Austrians and migrants live together - intercultural social competence.
- Even if it can be difficult for the caretaker, it would be good if he lived in the building.
- The caretaker needs the trust of both the residents and the management company. This also requires a high level of social competence.

Sozialbau – the housing management company

The issue of migration is present every day in the allocation of flats and the management of housing complexes and for the staff there are certainly always new and increasing demands to be met. This is why experience gained from projects like the Globale Hof is of great relevance. Not only should residents want to be happy with their housing complex but so should the building management company. This example should have a positive effect on the company.

At Sozialbau one manager is responsible for 1,600 to 1,700 flats. The manager is not involved with allocation.

Since its first occupancy the Globale Hof has been taken care of by the same manager. For Sozialbau the Globale Hof was also an experiment. There was no way of foreseeing whether the 50-50 idea would prove itself in practise. It was here that “get-to-know-you” meetings were organised for the first time, where residents meet up before moving in. This proved worthwhile and such meetings are now standard with the company.

The 50-50 mix of Austrians and migrants was still an exception at the time but according to the information of the housing management company it has now “almost automatically” become the rule in the housing complexes of limited-profit housing companies. There is no instrument for controlling the mix of foreign households in order to achieve as wide a range of ethnicities as possible. Diversity should be the aim.

The fact that the Globaler Hof is seen at Sozialbau as a successful model can of course also be attributed to the social competence of the caretaker. And it also cannot be overlooked that the migrants are socially upwardly orientated, who want to become middle class or have already done so. It was already found in the first survey in 2003 that if there was any rejection at all of the concept in the housing complex it came from Austrians who do not have these upwardly mobile ambitions.



The housing management company does not intervene in the everyday affairs of the housing complex but pays regular visits.

There has also been positive experience with the communal rooms which is transferable: the varied provision - "No, there aren't too many communal rooms," - the functional layout is exemplary. The "Miteinander" association, which organises parties and other activities, makes an important contribution here.

Numbers of tenants moving out of the Globale Hof are around the same as in other Sozialbau housing complexes. Since first occupancy 49 of the 140 flats are still occupied by their first tenants and there has been a change in 91 flats. Some of these were vacated but passed on. The ground floor areas (restaurants, kindergarten) are all rented. There have not been longer periods with these premises standing empty, which would damage the image.

There is criticism of the housing management company for a lack of information:

- There is criticism that Sozialbau does not inform new tenants of the aims of the Globale Hof. "You only get to know about them afterwards, if at all."
- There is talk of a feeling that the 50-50 is no longer the case and that there is now a surplus of migrants.

The housing management company also faces a challenge when it comes to measures that involve costs. The rising operating costs are also a burden on the company but it has little influence on many items - meaning that it can only make savings with many smaller items such as lighting, where more economical bulbs have been fitted, or with garden maintenance etc. This has been discussed with representatives of the association. One tenant said, "Money could be saved. Why is there a cleaning crew when Akrami does everything anyway?" This shows that it would be good to have an information point at some eye-catching place in the building detailing who is responsible for which jobs and what each one costs.

The housing management company is also involved in which TV channels should be received by the central system. At the moment there are 117 stations including 95 non-Austrian. The interviewees were satisfied with the channels selected by Sozialbau. One statement: "There's no channel from our country but we can get it via the internet. No problem."

One issue was also the request for video surveillance, but this is not in accordance with Sozialbau's philosophy.



Conclusion:

The residents seem to be satisfied with the management company in everyday matters. "They take care." It is appreciated that the company makes regular visits.

The 50-50 mix at Globale Hof was still an experiment, today it is often already the rule in housing complexes. In this regard the experience gained at the Globale Hof has certainly been very helpful. Within the company the Globale Hof seems to have a good reputation as a special project.

The interviewees point to one aspect that is by no means only relevant for the Globale Hof: how far should - or could - Sozialbau steer the social mix in a housing complex? It is suggested that a majority of migrants could have negative effects, as could the dominance of one ethnicity. Whether this supposition corresponds to reality is not the question here. On the topic of integration psychological factors are more decisive than facts.

Rent, operating costs and ancillary expenses

Some of the interviewees, including the caretaker, were very keen to talk about the rent. The rent level was already an important issue in the first survey shortly after moving in but in a different context to this survey. At that time it was said that the fact that the rent was - comparatively - not low ensured that residents came from more or less similar social circumstances (milieu was not meant here). The rent level was seen as a selection instrument.

In this new survey the concern was expressed that residents would have to move out because of the rent - especially the operating costs. The topic was also broached that the upkeep of the communal rooms, a central part of the project, was too expensive. However, opinions differ. For example, one interviewee who had recently moved in said, "Great price in relation to what you get for it. The flats disappear fast, there's a queue. There's also a lot of renovation going on."

In fact running costs have increased steeply over a few years (also due to increased external charges). However, during the last accounting period they could be reduced.

The question of whether the rent was currently reasonable was seen in different ways. One interviewee, just recently moved in, had for example done some research and found the rent level completely acceptable in comparison. The statement, "Acceptable, yes but..." possibly sums up the general murmuring against rent levels - sometimes justified, sometimes perhaps not. (It would be revealing to take into account the relationship between income and rent, which has not been possible in the given framework.)

New arrivals who had studied prices on the Vienna housing market while looking for a flat see the rent level at the Globale Hof as reasonable, whereas the long-time residents see the rent increases from the perspective of when they moved in. (The question of the reasonableness or affordability of rents in general and currently in Vienna in particular cannot be taken up within the framework of this study.)

Categories for integration

It can evidently be said that the Globale Hof is a case of successful integration. There is of course also criticism on the part of the residents - where would that not be the case? But all in all none of the residents would say that they did not feel at ease in this social space and international neighbourhood or that they wanted to move out at the next opportunity. The fact that over the course of the years there are ups and downs in neighbourly life is also a part of the realities of life and should be seen positively. Because this is not a project burdened by an idea, rather the mix is generally becoming normality. In the process integration is not a category that refers to migrants alone.

According to what criteria can integration be judged more concretely? How can successful integration be determined?

“Upwardly mobile” orientation

A central motive of human action is aspiration towards a higher social status and getting on in society. This general motive can bring together native and foreign households. Upwardly-oriented and therefore integration-oriented migrants seek to fit in with the lifestyles of the natives whose status they hope to achieve, or which they want to enable their children to achieve. Opinions and attitudes among migrants regarding for instance rules for living together - cleanliness, quiet, orderliness - can be in complete contrast to the modes of behaviour of residents from lower native social strata. In short: migrants want nothing to do with either Austrian or foreign sub-milieus. The desire to get on in a new country also leads to migrants often not wanting to live in segregated urban quarters but rather where a majority of natives lives.

Being able to maintain and pass on traditions and customs

Migrants bring pictures and customs with them from their home countries. The elder migrants want to preserve this treasure and pass it on to the next generation. These deep-rooted pictures are brought out at family celebrations and also in everyday life. Preserving traditions need not stand in the way of integration, insofar as they are within the framework of the values and rules of the destination country.

Customs bind and unite people. They help to structure time. Everyone lives according to their customs. Customs are individual but at the same time determined by the milieu in which one lives. Customs are especially pronounced in housing. People fit out their apartments themselves according to their customs. However, with exterior spaces - hallways, stairways, balconies etc. - there are few possibilities. But, to a certain extent, there is the opportunity to share and get to know customs.



Wanting to be among themselves

Social life together requires a familiar milieu. When people have the choice they look for an apartment in a part of town where they predominantly find their milieu, and are thus in a certain way segregated. They are then integrated there. “Milieu” does not mean that people on different incomes or of various ethnicities cannot live together. The fact that a housing model like the Interethnische Nachbarschaft in Vienna can “work” with maybe 22 nationalities, is mainly because the residents class themselves among closely related milieus. Social mix is not a synthetic product here but has come about and is limited by the market via the rent level.

Wanting to be proud

In both surveys of the Interethnische Nachbarschaft it was emphatically confirmed how important it is for residents to be able to show “their home” to friends, relatives and work colleagues when they can proudly say, “This is where we live.” We can then speak of “identification”. People can be proud when their housing complex somehow sets itself apart from others for positive reasons. Possibilities for this are actually inexhaustible.

The residents of many housing complexes can in fact only be proud of their own apartments. Because the housing complexes themselves have hardly any design quality residents concentrate on fitting out their flats. This is no wonder in view of the dull and draughty access balconies - which however are also to be found at the Globale Hof - with prison-like apartment doors or the simplicity of two flats per storey. No pride can be taken in this. If people want to get to their flats as quickly as possible and if they even perhaps avoid inviting friends because the surroundings are unwelcoming, social life will not be encouraged.

Being responsible

In an apartment building for working single people a caretaker or a professional external company is responsible for providing all building services. This is very expensive. There is no social life in these buildings and it would perhaps even be unwanted. It is different in housing complexes where people live who are dependent on neighbourly living because they would otherwise hardly be able to manage work and childcare; or people who are dependent upon affordable housing. Here good communal life is almost essential. And if everything is done by service companies, it becomes expensive. Integration and feeling responsible belong together.

Wanting to be respected

Whoever is treated without respect will also not meet others without prejudice. Here we are not speaking of obvious discrimination but of concealed cases of a lack of respect. Being classified as a “member of a target group” such as “migrant” is already part of this. Structurally there is a certain lack of respect inherent in every public subsidy. If this is also reflected in city planning figuration and architecture, residents must feel like objects of housing provision. Particularly in architectonic design there are numerous approaches which show respect to residents: by placing more value on their everyday life circumstances than on some extravagant architectural fashion.

The Interethnische Nachbarschaft housing model - more topical than ever?

In view of the current dimension of migration in the cities - are elaborate housing models such as the Globale Hof still worthwhile? Should not aspirations for integration be reduced? Will we not be bound to accept segregated housing complexes for migrants, if only because of the large number of arrivals? - Even ethnically segregated quarters?

The question is, what will ultimately prove more costly for urban society, handling future conflicts resulting from a lack of integration or the cost of models such as the Globale Hof. The chances for successful integration exist in housing complexes like this, because integration cannot be passed by decree or institutionally organised, but only comes about through contact among people in everyday life. It is therefore a matter of creating the preconditions through the organisational and structural framework.