

## **“Divided We Fall: Gated and Walled Communities in the United States”**

by Edward J. Blakely and Mary Gail Snyder

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### The Gating of the American Mind

It has been over three decades since this nation legally outlawed all forms of discrimination in housing, education, public transportation, and public accommodations. Yet today, we are seeing a new form of discrimination—the gated, walled, private community. Americans are electing to live behind walls with active security mechanisms to prevent intrusion into their private domains. Increasingly, a frightened middle class that moved to escape school integration and to secure appreciating housing values now must move to maintain their economic advantage. The American middle class is forting up.

Gated communities are residential areas with restricted access such that normally public spaces have been privatized. These developments are both new suburban developments and older inner-city areas retrofitted to provide security. We are not discussing apartment buildings with guards or doormen. In essence, we are interested in the newest form of fortified community that places security and protection as its primary feature. We estimate that eight million<sup>1</sup> and potentially many more Americans are seeking this new refuge from the problems of urbanization.

Economic segregation is scarcely new. In fact, zoning and city planning were designed in part to preserve the position of the privileged by subtle variances in building and density codes. But the gated communities go further in several respects: they create physical barriers to access, and they privatize community space, not merely individual space. Many of these communities also privatize civic responsibilities, such as police protection, and communal services, such as education, recreation, and entertainment. The new developments create a private world that shares little with its neighbors or the larger political system. This fragmentation undermines the very concept of civitas, organized community life.

The forting-up phenomenon has enormous policy consequences. By allowing some citizens to internalize and to exclude others from sharing in their economic privilege, it aims directly at the conceptual base of community and citizenship in America. The old notions of community mobility are torn apart by these changes in community patterns. What is the measure of nationhood when the divisions between neighborhoods require armed patrols and electric fencing to keep out other citizens? When public services and even local government are privatized, when the community of responsibility stops at the subdivision gates, what happens to the function and the very idea of democracy? In short, can this nation fulfill its social contract in the absence of social contact?

### Gated Communities Today

Since the late 1980s, gates have become ubiquitous in many areas of the country, and now new

towns are routinely built with gated villages while entire incorporated cities feature guarded entrances. While early gated communities were restricted to retirement villages and the compounds of the super rich, the majority found today are middle to upper-middle class. Higher end tracts within planned communities are now commonly gated. They seem to be more common in larger tracts, as there are more units over which to spread the cost of walling, gating, and constructing and staffing guardhouses. For similar reasons, they also are common in multifamily and higher-density developments, where unit costs are often low enough to place gates within the reach of the middle class. It is estimated that one-third of the communities developed with gates are luxury developments for the upper and upper-middle class, and over one-third are retirement oriented. The remainder are mostly for the middle class, with a growing number for working-class communities.

The gates range from elaborate two-story guardhouses manned twenty-four hours a day to roll-back wrought iron gates to simple electronic arms. Guardhouses are usually built with one lane for guests and visitors and a second lane for residents, who may open the gates with an electronic card, a punched-in code, or a remote control. Some gates with round-the-clock security require all cars to pass the guard and issue identification stickers for residents' cars. Unmanned entrances have intercom systems, some with video monitors, for visitors asking for entrance.

Along with new residential developments, existing neighborhoods are using barricades and gates with increasing frequency to seal themselves off. Since the 1950s, there has been a constant move away from the traditional city grid pattern to suburban cul-de-sacs and non-connecting streets. Urban street closures attempt to recreate this suburban pattern in the older grid, altering access and the ability of outsiders to penetrate.

Concentrations of gated communities. 1996



Gated communities are part of the trend of suburbanization. There is no doubt that Americans have given up on the old style of urban living for the large private spaces and small public spaces of the suburbs. A majority of people now live in suburbs. The old central cities are losing their position as the most powerful place in the metropolitan hierarchy, as not just residency but industry, commerce, and retail shift their balance to the suburbs. Driven by high costs, crime, and other urban problems, the expansion of the suburbs is likely to accelerate in the 1990s as development moves ever farther out, supported by and leapfrogging beyond the new economic centers of the edge cities.

Gating is not a universal American phenomenon. It is very geographic. It is a metropolitan phenomenon, and a southwestern, southern, and southeastern phenomenon. At the moment, it is less a midwestern or northern phenomenon. But even in these regions, gated communities are emerging around big cities. In terms of absolute numbers, California is home to the most gated communities, with Florida ranking second. Texas runs a distant third. Gated communities are very common in metropolitan New York, Chicago, Phoenix, and in Miami and other southern seaboard cities. They are also found in Arkansas, Colorado, Hawaii, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nevada, Oregon, Oklahoma, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin.

For developers, gated communities can be a marketing angle, another way to target specific sub markets, or, in some areas, a necessity to meet demand. Southern California builders report faster sales in gated communities, and quicker turnover means thousands in additional profits per unit. With their often-elaborate guardhouses and entrance architecture, gates provide product differentiation and clear identity in a crowded and competitive new home market. Also, whenever a significant recreational feature such as a golf course or lake is part of a development, the gate controls access and assures buyers their amenity will be theirs alone.

The developers of gated communities see themselves as providing security. The elderly have been targeted for gated communities since the 1970s, and gated second home complexes are also well established. Those seen in need of walls now also include empty nesters, who are likely to be away on long vacations frequently, and double-income families, in which no one is home during the day. Security is viewed as freedom not just from crime, but also from such annoyances as solicitors and canvassers, mischievous teenagers, and strangers of any kind, malicious or not. According to our survey, among those gated community association boards that think they experience less crime than the surrounding area, most believe that the gate is the reason.<sup>2</sup>

### The Context: Housing Segregation Patterns

There is little doubt that urban problems are the stimuli for this wave of gating. The drive for separation, distinction, exclusion, and protection is fueled in part by the dramatic demographic change in many of the metropolitan areas with large numbers of gated communities. High levels of foreign immigration, a growing underclass, and a restricted economy are changing the face of metropolitan areas like Los Angeles, Miami, Chicago, and New York at a very rapid pace. Many of the other places with large numbers of gates, such as Oregon, Arizona, and Nevada, are destination states for the increasing numbers of white Californians fleeing the state.

The need for gates and walls is also created and encouraged by changes in the social and physical structure of the suburbs. The suburbs are becoming urbanized, such that many might now be called, in Mike Davis's term, "outer cities," places with many of the problems and pathologies formerly thought to be restricted to big cities. America is increasingly separated by income, race, and economic opportunity. Suburbanization has meant a redistribution of the urban patterns of discrimination. Minority suburbanization is concentrated in the inner ring and old manufacturing suburbs. The Los Angeles area is an example of the new archetype of metropolitan spatial segregation, in which poverty is no longer concentrated in the central city, but has moved to the suburbs. This segregation by income and race has led groups within the hyper-segregated environment to wall and secure their space against the poor, as in Pacific Palisades on the California coast, to protect wealth, or, as in Athens Heights in inner-city South Central Los Angeles, to protect property values.

Structural segregation, when seen in the metropolitan context, leads to distinct gating phenomena. Those feeling threatened by creeping poverty have two options: to fort up in place, or to move to a perceived safe zone and fortify there. Those who fort up in place are the wealthy who have homes in desirable locations on the ocean or near downtown, or the working and middle class without the resources to move. Their gates are installed either at the resident's initiative or the developer's. Those who move to a safe zone are the residents of the subdivisions and new towns of the outer suburbs and exurbs. They intend to get as far away as they can and then fortify their new position to keep it safe from future threats.

#### Types of Gated Communities and Rationales for Gating

Gated communities can be classified in three main categories based on the primary motivation of their residents. First are the lifestyle communities, where the gates provide security and separation for the leisure activities and amenities within. These include retirement communities and golf and country club leisure developments. Second are the elite communities, where the gates symbolize distinction and prestige and both create and protect a secure place on the social ladder. These include enclaves of the rich and famous; developments for the very affluent; and executive home developments for the middle class. These two categories are examples of gating motivated by a desire to invest in and control the future through measures designed to maximize the internal life of the residents. The intention is also in part to artificially induce community in an ersatz, homogenous neighborhood, where physical security and social security are enhanced by both sameness and controlled access.

The third category is the security zone, where the fear of crime and outsiders is the foremost motivation for defensive fortifications. Here existing neighborhoods are retrofitted with gates or barricades. This category includes the inner-city perch, where gates attempt to protect property and property values and sometimes to wall out nearby crime; the suburban perch, where gates are installed as once quiet suburbs urbanize; and the street barricade areas where mazes of blocked streets are created to reduce access and deter outsiders. Here the residents erect fortifications to regain control of their neighborhood and so that changing conditions do not overwhelm them. By marking their boundaries and restricting access, these places often try to build and strengthen the feeling and function of community.

## Social Values: Resident Motivations

The three major categories of gated communities—lifestyle, elite, and security zone—all reflect to varying degrees four social dimensions or values: a sense of community, or the preservation and strengthening of neighborhood bonds; exclusion, or separation from the rest of society; privatization, or the desire to replace and internally control public services; and stability, or the need for homogeneity, predictability, and similarity.

	LIFESTYLE	ELITE	SECURITY ZONE
SENSE OF COMMUNITY	tertiary	tertiary	secondary
EXCLUSION	secondary	secondary	primary
PRIVATIZATION	primary	tertiary	tertiary
STABILITY	secondary	primary	secondary

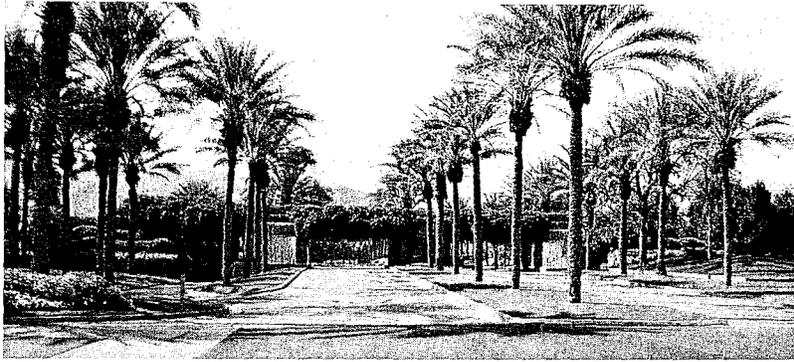
The lifestyle communities attract those who want separate, private services and amenities, and who are also seeking a homogenous, predictable environment. The elite communities draw those seeking a stable community of similar people where property values will be protected; concerns of separation and privatization of services come second. Within the security zone, neighborhoods are trying to strengthen and protect a sense of community, but their primary goal is to exclude the places and people they perceive as threats to their safety or quality of life.

### Lifestyle Communities—Gates of Paradise

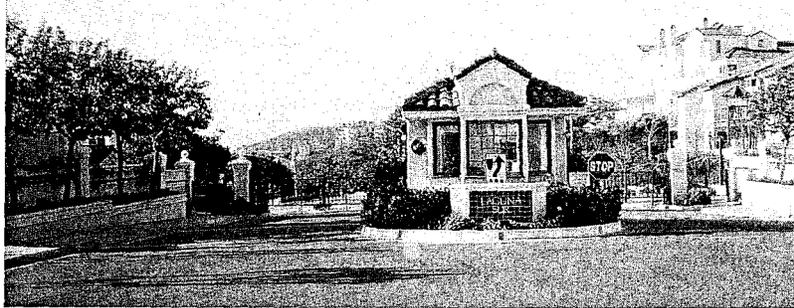
The lifestyle communities were the first mass-market gated developments, springing up in sunbelt retirement areas such as Florida, Southern California, and Arizona. They include two types: retirement communities and golf and leisure developments. The residents say that their primary motivation for choosing to live in these developments is the amenities provided. Many of these communities are marketed to golfers, retirees, and empty nesters. Carefree living, an active lifestyle, or member-only golf and country club facilities are highlighted. The security measures attempt more to establish control than to protect against criminals.

One such lifestyle community is Mission Hills Country Club, a sprawling development centered around a lush golf course; the vista from nearly all of the narrow internal roads is of greens and palm trees. It is located in Rancho Mirage, one of the wealthier of the small contiguous towns of California's Coachella Valley, where Palm Springs is located. There are three gates into the walled development, each with a staffed guard house, and a private security firm patrols twenty-four hours a day. These security arrangements protect a prestigious community for active retirees, where each individual subdivision is run by its own board.

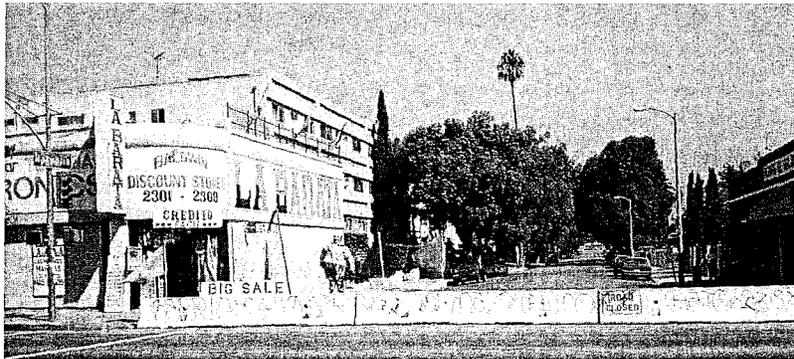
Residents say the social life can resemble that of "Peyton Place." Many volunteer at local charities, but finding people to volunteer for board duty, like community associations everywhere, can be difficult, and getting cooperation between the fifteen boards is next to impossible. But in the end, these retirees did not come to Mission Hills to find a small town community. They came for manicured greens, the built-in social life, the many amenities. This is the list of the affluent retiree: "The gate, the golf, the tennis, the ability to drive around in a golf cart ... there are many days when I never move my regular car. It's a different lifestyle, and I bought the lifestyle."



Lifestyle community



Elite community



Security zone

## Elite Communities—I Have a Dream

Gates not only protect leisure amenities and lifestyle enclaves, but economic and social status. The elite communities are perhaps the most traditional type of gated community in the United States, having their roots directly in the walls and gates that the very richest have always had. Now, however, the merely affluent, the top fifth of Americans, also have barriers between themselves and the rest of us, and so can the upwardly mobile middle class. These developments feed on exclusionary aspirations and the desire to differentiate. The services of gate guards and security patrols add to the prestige of exclusivity; residents value the simple presence of a security force more than any service they may actually provide. Except for some of the oldest developments, the elite communities tend toward ostentatious entrances and showy facades. Although they lack the recreational amenities of the lifestyle types, they do have carefully controlled aesthetics and often enviable landscapes and locations.

When you enter the southern California elite gated community of Marblehead, you are entering a place of dreams—the dream of Mr. and Mrs. Executive America. They want good schools, nice homes, streets in which kids can play, and friendly neighbors. And Marblehead is just that—a nice community. It is a suburban housing tract of middle-class homes that would look like any other tract anywhere except for the gate and the guard. The residents we met were clear right off that Marblehead was no friendlier, no more of a community, or even safer than any other suburban community: “It is just like any other place!”

The gates do give the area a prestige that is attractive to young executives, but they have been less than effective at slowing traffic or keeping out crime. The gate guards are lax, hired only to monitor traffic, and no one is willing to pay the cost for improved levels of security. The community has burglaries and other mild vandalism, just as anywhere else. Gangs from nearby San Clemente have entered the development from an adjacent park, and teenagers who live inside have also been a source of trouble. The speed at which residents drive within the gates is a contentious issue. Marblehead seems far from the crime and traffic of the city, a protected suburban cocoon, but it has many of the same problems inside the walls as exist outside them, and the people who live there know it. “You can run but you cannot hide.”

## Security Zone Communities—Valleys of Fear

Possibly the fastest growing type of gated community is the security zone, characterized by the closed streets and gated complexes of the inner-city, suburban, and street barricade perches. Poor inner-city neighborhoods and public housing projects are using security guards, gates, and fences to keep out drug dealing, prostitution, and drive-by shootings. Other neighborhoods, frightened by spillover crime from nearby areas, are obtaining city permission to take their streets out of public use, limiting access only to residents. In the inner suburbs, in areas both near to and far from high crime areas, existing communities tax themselves to install security gates. Whether crime is acute or infrequent, the threat actual or only perceived, the fear is very real.

The security zone community of Whitley Heights is a part of old Hollywood, a historic film and

artist colony. It has only two entrances—one from Hollywood Boulevard on the south and the other from the Hollywood Bowl parking lots on the north. The contrast between the flatlands of Hollywood Boulevard and Whitley Heights on the hill above could not be greater, despite the few short blocks that separate them. Over the years, Hollywood Boulevard became the site of prostitution, drug dealing, and other urban ills, and the people on Whitley Heights began thinking of gates, despite the fact that there was little crime on the hill itself. But no matter how strong the fear and the perception of crime, cars were perhaps an even greater concern to those on the hill. The residents of the apartment buildings below were parking their vehicles on the hill, and commuters were using it as a convenient shortcut when the freeways were jammed with cars. In 1986, the community decided to gate off their streets. "Gating was not propelled by any high increase in crime, but a sense that we could not control our community," explained Bob, a former board member. Gates were to control "who got up here."

Opposition emerged from the neighbors in the apartment buildings on the other side of the new gate. Calling themselves CAGE, Citizens Against Gated Enclaves, they filed a lawsuit to keep the public streets of Whitley Heights from being closed. They claimed the gates were an exclusionary, elitist slap in the face; Bob thinks they were just upset that they would lose their parking spaces. Even when completed, the gates stood open, hostage to the lawsuit making its way through appeals. Finally the California Supreme Court ruled in CAGE'S favor: the gates to Whitley Heights may not ever be closed. To those on the hill, the fight was to save their community, or at least their part of it. To those in the flatlands, the fight was to keep the hill dwellers from dividing the Hollywood community with fences. In the end, the cost was high, and not just in money and time. The battle exhausted the community of Whitley Heights; the board collapsed, and street parties and other events that had been held for decades have been abandoned.

### Fortress Mentality

Walled cities and gated communities are a dramatic manifestation of the fortress mentality growing in America. Gates, fences, and private security forces, along with land-use policies, development regulations, and other planning tools, are being used throughout the country to restrict or limit access to residential, commercial, and public areas. These turf wars, while most dramatically manifested by the gated community, are a troubling trend for land-use planning. As citizens divide themselves into homogenous, independent cells, their place in the greater polity and society becomes attenuated, increasing resistance to efforts to resolve regional, let alone municipal, problems.

Movements to gate public streets in Los Angeles and other large cities and the dramatic growth of the private security industry are indicative of the fortress mentality. Proponents support street closures as an effective crime deterrent that helps reduce traffic, curb white flight to the suburbs, and maintain neighborhoods and homeownership. Opponents point to exclusion, the displacement of crime and traffic, and negative impacts on neighbor's property values.

### Citizen Who

Privatization is the new means by which local communities, burdened with an increasing share

of the costs of schools, roads, police, housing, and other services, pass off previously public roles. Privatization here refers not to the hiring of private firms by government to provide public services, but to privatized government, the replacement of public government and its functions by private organizations who purchase services from the market. Private communities are providing their own security, street maintenance, recreation facilities, and garbage collection. An entirely parallel, private system exists to provide schools, playgrounds, parks, and police protection for those who can pay, leaving the poor and less well-to-do dependent on the ever-reduced services of city and county governments.

Privatization of a wide range of traditionally public goods and services is fueled in part by the declining levels of services provided by localities across the country. In areas where citizens feel let down by local government, it is not surprising that those who can afford to turn to private service provision do. Even in the most affluent suburbs, however, where crime is nearly nonexistent and street repairs occur promptly, Americans are turning to self-provision of services, privatizing their streets and buying security and other services on the private market. Here the issue is less one of replacing failing city services than controlling residential space. In a gated community, the swimming pool, the street, and the tot lot is private, used only by residents and their invited guests—fully under their control.

Residents of gated communities are in essence taxed twice, once through local property taxes, and again through homeowner association fees. A few communities are revolting against this double taxation, asking for rebates on the cost of the public works and public safety services they provide for themselves, despite the fact that they volunteered for it when they bought their property or gated their streets. They are taking care of themselves, they say, and have no desire to contribute to the common pool serving their neighbors in the rest of the city. In areas where gated communities are the norm, not the exception, this perspective has the potential for severe impacts on the common welfare.

### Social Contact and the Social Contract

Gating is an extension of the separation and distinction that the covenants and restrictions of suburban tracts already provide, acting as an additional way to define boundaries, guarantee property values, and effectively prohibit neighborhood change. Exclusionary segmentation imposes social costs on those left outside; it reduces the number of public spaces that all can share, and thus the contacts that people from different socioeconomic groups might otherwise have with each other. Gated communities are themselves a microcosm of the larger spatial pattern of segmentation and separation. The growing divisions between city and suburb and rich and poor are creating new patterns that reinforce the costs that isolation and exclusion impose on some at the same time that they benefit others. Suburbanization has been instrumental in dividing up the gains and losses of economic restructuring, allowing the winners to protect their position through geographic separation and further exacerbating differentials in income and wealth.

The issues of social exclusion, privatization, and segmentation that gated communities bring up, raise concern that without social contact, the social contract that underpins the health of a nation will be damaged. Certainly the move to gate private reserves has impacted commitment to public spaces. In Laguna Beach, the California Coastal Commission has been fighting gated

communities for years over the lack of public access to the beaches that their multi-million dollar homes overlook. The beaches are public, but the gates to the private streets built along them preclude any access to the coves along the rocky coast. Cities across the nation are involved in similar battles as those with privileged access to natural resources try to exclude the rest of the public from sharing them.

### Divided We Fail

Recent demographic changes are dividing, not diversifying, the nation. Metropolitan areas have become increasingly spatially pluralistic and segregated in terms of race, class, and land values, and these spatial patterns are apparently being recreated on a national scale. The unprecedented volume of foreign immigration in the 1980s was concentrated in seven states: New York, New Jersey, Illinois, Massachusetts, Florida, and California, most of which experienced significant white out-migration.

The divided city is becoming a sharper reality. As the middle class flees not just the city but the inner suburbs and even entire states, and as walls are built to help protect those who try to stay behind, poor neighborhoods are increasingly isolated from the municipal land, labor, and social markets. In a sense, the poor inner-city neighborhoods form a new land and social pattern. They are not responsive to the regular real-estate market. Even the reduction in land values does not attract buyers or lenders. Consequently, the fate of these neighborhoods cannot rest on the workings of market forces as in previous decades.

The trend toward privatized government and communities is part of the more general trend of fragmentation, and the resulting loss of connection and social contact is weakening the bonds of mutual responsibility and the social contract. We no longer speak of citizens, but rather of taxpayers, who take no active role in governance, but merely exchange money for services.

Gated communities manifest a number of tensions, between notions of civic responsibility and exclusionary aspirations rooted in fear and protection of privilege; between the trend toward privatization of public services and the ideals of the public good and general welfare; and between the need for personal and community control of the environment and the dangers of creating outsiders of fellow citizens.

### Forts or Communities

Our analysis of the new fortress communities is depressing in several respects. First, walls, street patterns, and barricades that separate people from one another reduce the potential for people to understand one another and commit themselves to any common or collective purpose. Second, the very foundations of citizenship are rooted in sharing. Finally, protection from violence and other criminal activity largely depends on the active vigilance of fellow citizens. We are interdependent. Walls, gates, and other barriers, as Peter Marcuse says, are "second best solutions: No solution that denies the problem has great longevity. Surely, walls are only temporary measures at best. Anyone who wishes to penetrate such an environment can and will. Our field work and analysis of local studies provide no evidence of any general permanent reductions of crime in walled security areas. Gates and fences are not impenetrable to the serious

criminal, and they do nothing to reduce crime arising from residents. Unfortunately, most crime is committed by locals who know their victims. If walls do not protect, if they do not build better neighborhoods, and if they do not bolster civic life, are they worth it? Moreover, if they fail these tests are there any other alternatives?

### Building Better Communities

Enormous national resources have been expended on building housing units and expanding the suburbs. However, the inadvertent price we paid for this explosion in housing stock was an absence of attention to the configuration and organization, both physical and social, of the community structure. Now the residents of suburbs and cities turn to separate gated enclaves in an attempt to thwart crime, reduce traffic, and create livable neighborhoods. However, there are other means to these ends, means that also build community. And without community, we have no hope of solving our social problems or ever really gaining control of our neighborhoods.

One remedy to revive our communities is neo-traditional design, the "new urbanism" of Peter Calthorpe and of Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk. Neo-traditional design is based on the notion that community means face-to-face contact and interaction. In contrast to gated communities, it focuses on street patterns and designs that bring people together rather than isolate them. A prominent feature is the open, traditional American street pattern that provides privacy and security without barriers.

In Europe, the concept of "slow streets" has taken hold to reduce traffic and increase livability. These streets are narrowed, curved, and landscaped to make them pedestrian-friendly and to reduce automobile speeds to a crawl. The residential streets become a sort of community courtyard, where children can play, adults interact, and everyone can keep an eye on the street for suspicious or dangerous activity.

Ever since Jane Jacobs's *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*<sup>4</sup> urban designers and planners have recognized that "eyes on the street"- the social control of a tightly knit community-are basic defenses against crime. Today, programs like neighborhood watch and block safe houses offer ways for families in suburbs and cities to build community and reduce crime. Overall, these socially based mechanisms are more effective than additional hardware like gates. Where physical design is employed, as in Oscar Newman's "defensible space's the physical environment is intended to facilitate and encourage these social, communal responses. Gated communities, in contrast, offer fortification and hired guards, relieving residents of any need to feel responsible for maintaining the safety of their neighborhoods.

One of the most important elements in democratic societies is respect for and maintenance of heterogeneity. Communities need all age groups and lifestyles to remain viable places. Gated communities, however, tend to be homogeneous economically and by age. This lack of diversity makes the communities brittle and too easily harmed by a single trauma. A more diverse community can protect itself as each group 'assists the others.

Maintaining diverse communities can be achieved. Some cities, like Shaker Heights outside of Cleveland, work hard to maintain their diversity through active community programs that attract

and retain their residential base. This type of program can be introduced in any community. Active citizen organization effects community behavior in many tangible ways, ranging from improving community relations to reducing crime. Another approach is the development of active community volunteer programs supported by local governments. Miami has developed a network of community service centers that act like miniature city halls and give residents a sense of comfort and governmental concern and presence. As a result, residential stability is increased with the resultant impact of stronger community organizations.

### Neighborhoods in the Region

Good neighborhoods exist in good cities. Good cities are supported in good regions. Some areas of the country, such as Portland, Oregon and Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minnesota, have few gates and walls. In part, this is because of a much more active regional approach to dealing with urban needs and problems. These areas have developed regional approaches aimed at protecting neighborhoods and making quality of life central to economic well-being.

Regional development does not mean regional government. Rather, it requires regional analysis of problems and the implementation of regional policies and infrastructure to meet housing and community needs. Portland's emphasis on regional transportation and regional land use has led to both rational and livable environments, while Minneapolis/St. Paul's tax and burden-sharing approaches continue to provide quality living environments at a reasonable price. This is not to say these places are perfect or do not have crime, walls, or gates. However, we must acknowledge that no neighborhood, area of a city, or city can survive on its own outside of the regional economic and social framework.

### Community as Bedrock

We have been concerned here with the notion of community within a particularly residential framework. Our research has provided us with evidence that the social structure of a community is more important than its physical features in combating crime and maintaining quality of life. As a result, we advocate a much stronger, deeper national commitment to community building that goes beyond bricks and mortar, and attention to the social effects and impacts of the physical structures we build. We need a commitment to develop neighborhoods and communities that are racially and economically integrated, safe, and connected to the larger society. There is too little effort, philanthropic or governmental, aimed at discovering how we can build better social space. We must engage this question for the health of our neighborhoods, our cities, and our nation.