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# Gated communities in South Africa—experiences from Johannesburg

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Received 7 July 2000; in revised form 9 May 2001

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**Abstract.** In the course of a broad liberalisation and globalisation of South African society, the transformation of the apartheid city to the postapartheid city has contributed to an increase in crime as well as a feeling of insecurity among the people. Urban blight has changed a lot of the inner cities into 'no-go areas' for blacks and whites. For personal protection, since the end of the 1980s (the phase of the abolition of apartheid laws) living areas have been created in the suburbs whose uniqueness and exclusiveness are defined by the amount of safety measures. These are called gated or walled communities, or security villages, and their population structure combines social and racial segregation. The authors made a complete survey of two housing areas in northern Johannesburg in 1999. The traditional wish of South African families for a big estate and a home of their own has been replaced by the wish to live in town houses, cluster housing, and sectional title flats with shared use of swimming pools or tennis courts.

## 1 Introduction

All around the globe one can discern a trend in the transformation of environments which had originally been open to the public into privately used areas, squares, and streets. Beginning in the 1950s—with the USA leading the way—shopping malls and office buildings (Kowinski, 1985), were thus transformed. From the 1980s, more and more residential areas were also privatised (Blakely and Snyder, 1998). Municipal, that is, state, functions are taken over by private enterprise and are integrated into the interior of single buildings or whole street blocks (Sack, 1990); social problems, which might be detrimental to the net profit of real estate, can thus be externalised. In South Africa, the boom of shopping centres in the 1970s and the emergence of so-called 'security villages' since the late 1980s have promoted similar developments. In this paper we take security villages as an example in our discussion both of reasons for the popularity of this kind of community, and of social, political, and urban planning consequences that follow from their development. Employing methods of empirical research, we will identify those segments of the population who are most likely to buy themselves into gated communities. What are their motives? What consequences does this type of settlement have for the postapartheid city?

## 2 State of research

Most of the works on gated communities (some authors also refer to them as walled communities, 'fortified villages', and—in the South African context—as 'enclosed neighbourhoods', or 'security villages') focus on the situation in the United States. The work of Blakely and Snyder (1997) sets the current scientific standard in the field. These authors have systematically analysed the motives for this type of planning and building as well as the various manifestations of gated communities and their effects. Blakely and Snyder (1997) distinguish

(a) lifestyle communities, which attract prospective residents with a variety of leisure activities and other aspects of personal comfort;

- (b) prestige communities, which are characterised by the elitist social standing and the corresponding public image of their inhabitants; and
- (c) security-zone communities whose inhabitants, because of either fear or paranoia of the outside world, base their decision to live there on the various security measures.

Blakely and Snyder developed the following definition for their research:

“Gated communities are residential areas with restricted access such that normally public spaces have been privatized. Access is controlled by physical barriers: walled or fenced perimeters and gated or guarded entrances”.

They are more than just apartment or condominium buildings with a doorman controlling access to the lobby: “Gated communities preclude public access to roads, sidewalks, parks, open space, playgrounds—all resources that in earlier days would have been open and accessible to all citizens of a locality” (Blakely and Snyder, 1998, page 62). It was Marcuse in particular, with his concept (1995) of the quartered city, who pointed out that there are also other, invisible or symbolic, forms of social segregation. The aspect of ‘community’ emphasises the integration of interacting individuals into a social network. As far as gated communities are concerned, the success of such networks does not depend on a mutual emotional understanding between neighbours (Johnston et al, 1994): rather, it is guaranteed through the ‘control’ of the neighbourhood by means of codes of conduct—covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) and organisational structures—(homeowners’ associations). Such are the instruments designed to defend the desired harmony and stability of secluded private residential areas against the disordered and fragmented society outside.

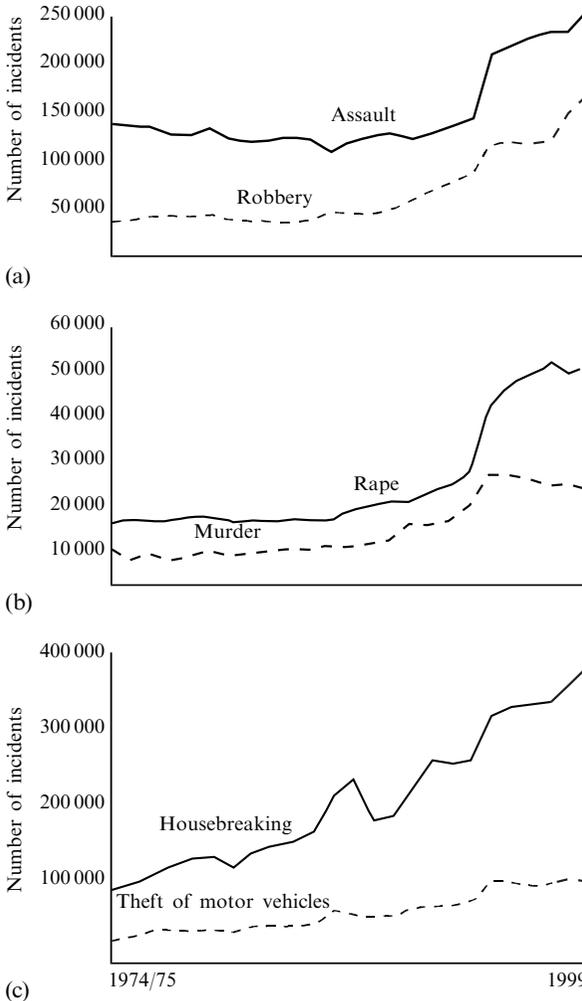
### 3 The city in South Africa

Until the Soweto unrest of 1976, and the ensuing gradual loosening of apartheid laws and ordinances, security measures to protect private houses from intruders and, in particular, gated communities, were largely unknown in the predominantly European-style cities of South Africa. Instead of building walls or fences aimed at separating minicommunities from the outside world, apartheid policies were designed to segregate ethnically defined parts of the population on a large scale in order to contain generally the so-called ‘*swaart gevaar*’ (the ‘Black danger’)<sup>(1)</sup> (Bähr and Jürgens, 1993; Davies, 1981), which had been a traditional worry of the white minority. The segregation of residential areas was accomplished by means of linear buffer zones, which could be ranges of hills or mountains or industrial areas, railway lines, or motorways. Furthermore, national legislation and its implementation at the local level (the Group Areas Act) prevented black people from straying uncontrolled into residential areas declared ‘white’. These white residential areas were politically designed and police-enforced gated communities. Under apartheid they could exist with no walls other than those between individual plots.

During the 1980s, and particularly after the abolition of the Group Areas Act in the early 1990s, a distinct change in population structure took place. This development was most obvious in the inner cities. People of other than white skin colour (Africans, Indians, Coloureds) moved into residential areas that had originally been declared ‘white’. Initially, this had been illegal although it was quite often tacitly accepted by the police (the development of so-called ‘grey’ areas). In 1991 legal restrictions were lifted (Jürgens, 1991). The new dwellers moved into vacant apartments in the ‘white’ sector of real estate into accommodation for which they would have had to wait for years in the townships. In some areas the long-term result was a distinct change in atmosphere from the original European one towards a more African urban environment.

<sup>(1)</sup> In this paper we use ‘Black’ to denote African, and ‘black’ to denote African, Coloured, and Indian/Asian people.

With this development, the perception of a society in transition as well as the very real fear of crime and falling real estate prices increased, particularly among the white population. Whites found themselves confronted with a rising number of squatters, both in the outskirts of the cities and in municipal parks. This development created much more than just an image problem, as is shown both by crime statistics and by falling real estate prices (figure 1).



**Figure 1.** Development of crime in South Africa, 1974/75 to 1999: (a) assault and robbery, (b) murder and rape, (c) property offences (source: SAIRR, 1998).

## 4 Gated communities

### 4.1 Reasons

Increasing politically motivated unrest of the black population against the apartheid system in the mid-1980s, and the state's tacit acceptance of breaches of apartheid rules which had begun in the late 1970s (Jürgens, 1991), triggered a 'paranoia' of personal insecurity and political uncertainty as well as the development of various construction measures designed to protect citizens in the predominantly white cities. From the mid-1980s, the security business developed into the fastest growing sector of the South

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African economy. In the mid-1990s, up to 150 000 people worked in this field (CSIR, 2000, page 5; Ewing, 1999).

In 1991, all apartheid laws were finally abolished and mobility control over non-white persons was terminated. In consequence, the obvious social contrast between 'rich' white residents and 'poor' Black street merchants, beggars, and taxi drivers became a daily sight in residential areas that originally had been declared exclusively 'white'. After the democratisation of South African society, the predominantly white police force could no longer concentrate on the protection of these residential areas in their daily routine. This led both to a sharp increase in crime in general (figure 1) and to its more even distribution among formerly black and white residential areas (Mills, 1991, page 92). In a survey conducted in 1998 (Louw et al, 1998, page 14), 62% of 1266 interviewed persons from all population groups in Johannesburg stated that either they personally, or family members, had become crime victims between 1993 and 1997; nationwide, the figure was 44%. Some 28% suffered more than one incident. Although white persons are victims of serious crime less often than are nonwhites, on a nationwide basis they are almost twice as often victims of property offences as are people from the middle-income stratum (Statistics South Africa, 1998, page 41) and this figure rises with increase in annual household income. The population reacts by hiring 'paid-for protection' (armed response) or by 'mob justice' in order to compensate for the perceived inactivity of the police force and the penal system (CSIR, 2000). It has been said that fear of crime has become an everyday concern in South African society. 'Rich' people in particular react to this with 'target hardening'—"physical strengthening of building facades or boundary walls to reduce the attractiveness or vulnerability of potential targets" (CSIR, 2000, page 6).

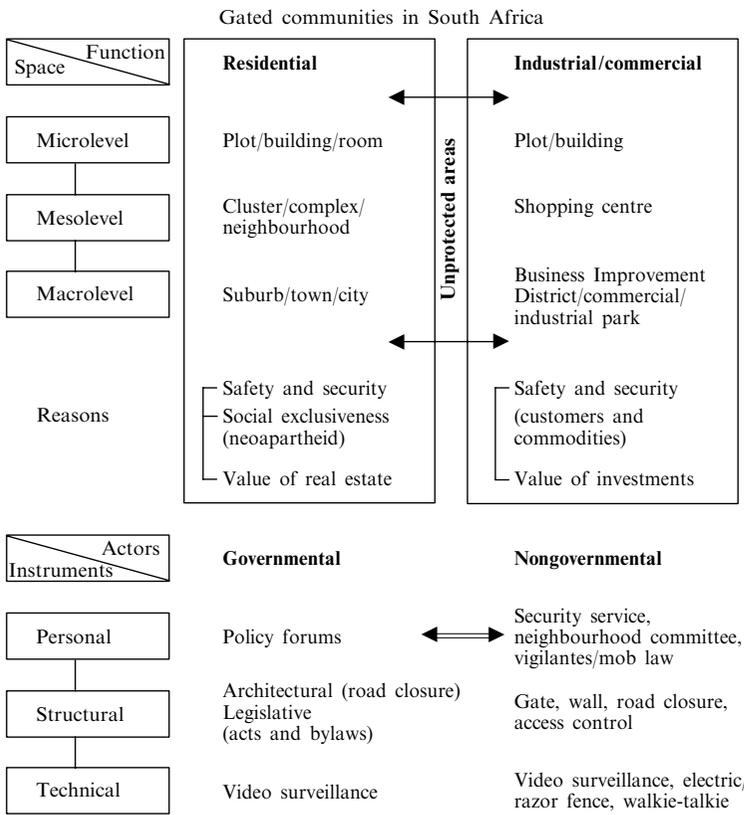
#### **4.2 Forms of gated communities in South Africa**

In 1987 the first plots of land were offered for sale in a residential area that had from the outset been protected by a walled perimeter. Fourways Gardens, located in the traditionally white northern part of Johannesburg, comprises 913 plots of land which mostly accommodate standardised units in the form of so-called 'cluster houses' (terraced houses), but there are also some individually designed housing units. The whole community is surrounded by a 2.4 m high wall with an electric fence on top. Fourways Gardens can be entered only through a garden gate. All the houses are linked into a central computerised security network (Roberts, 1996, page 37). Other residential areas soon followed this example. Some of them, catering to the upper end of the market, offer a combination of leisure activities, semirural lifestyle, and security in the form of 'golf estates'. There are a number of theme residential areas, which feature Mediterranean construction materials, a corresponding architecture, and a spectacular sloping site. These promise an exclusive Mediterranean lifestyle and their structure sometimes resembles Sicilian fortified villages. In terms of quality of life, they can offer all the infrastructure of a small town in the countryside, including facilities such as stores and schools (CSIR, 2000, page 7). Heritage Park, in Western Cape, is a prime example of such a self-sufficient community; here there is light industry, other jobs, and medical care within the fenced perimeter ["there should be no need to venture beyond the barricades" (McGreal, 1999; see also Grill, 2000)]. The majority of these settlements, which on the one hand are designed as rather compact structures but which, on the other hand, sometimes cover extensive areas by virtue of the incorporation of parks and outdoor sports facilities, are located within commuting distance, on the fringes of the big cities. Security measures are often regarded as necessary evils, and are cloaked by landscaping (sloping site locations, vegetation, etc).

The demand for security villages was further significantly increased after the first democratic elections of 1994 (Roberts, 1996). Although a stable new system of government was established, one which allayed fears for the future among the white population (apart from those who contributed to the brain drain by emigrating), those who could afford it preferred to withdraw into the new 'wagon barricade'—the laager mentality. "Crime drives the market", analysts conclude (Cohen, 1997). Therefore it is not only the upper class, but also people from the white and the aspiring new black middle class which fuels the demand for walled communities. Defying the classic ideal of all South African races of being the owner of a home on a large estate, there is a boom in the so-called gash market (gash—good address, small home). With its relatively low real estate prices, this market segment particularly attracts young couples, single people, and single parents, and it offers on-site amenities such as swimming pools and tennis courts, with flats ranging between 60 m<sup>2</sup> and 100 m<sup>2</sup> living space (*Financial Mail* 1993). Empty nesters, that is, married couples whose children have moved out of the family home, are identified as potential customers for living the 'lock and leave' lifestyle. This is not only related to the issue of security within one's own walls, but also to convenience, as collective responsibilities (for example, cleaning of the communal swimming pool) can be shared and thus the costs reduced for the individual parties (*Housing in SA* 1996). Some of the buyers use their flat as an investment and rent it out to others, or sell at a profit.

Other forms of gated communities have emerged in older residential areas. Road blocks, aimed at increasing the safety of entire quarters by keeping them free from through traffic, have been erected to form 'enclosed neighbourhoods'. In some instances, these road blocks had been set up illegally by private abutters who financed the measures by charges levied on the neighbourhood (up to US\$12 000 per road block, and monthly charges of approximately US\$30 per household for security personnel). Road closures exist in the form of manned road blocks with barriers, or massive metal fences that turn roads into dead ends. According to the Eastern Metropolitan Local Council (EMLC) of Johannesburg, more than 360 roads were subject to such measures during the year 2000. The fences are designated to be legalised later through the Rationalisation of Local Government Act (Northern Metropolitan Local Council, 1998). Proceedings take time, however, and are dealt with in a very restrictive manner. Within the Northern Metropolitan Local Council (NMLC), none of the approximately 80 illegal road closures had been legalised by 1999 (information from the NMLC, August 1999). In order to legalise a road closure, the following criteria must be met: at least 80% of the neighbours must declare that they agree to the fencing off of their neighbourhood; there must be no objections by certain branches of the municipal administration (for example, solid-waste management, traffic, emergency services). In any case, measures to restrict access are to be seen only as measures of last resort, that is all other previous mandatory measures to reduce crime in the area must have failed. All permissions are granted only on a temporary basis. Access to a residential area may only be controlled—it must never be denied. The last criterion is particularly disputed as many neighbourhoods would like to shut themselves off permanently, not only from motorised traffic but also from pedestrians. This is where the concept raises serious constitutional concerns, and has initiated a discussion about the protection of basic rights in South Africa.

Figure 2 (see over) provides an overview over individual spatial elements, forms, and structures of gated communities in South Africa, which integrate differently far-reaching stages of the citadel society. There is emphasis on the fact that housing is only one of many social functions, and one of many spatial cells, within the overall concept of 'security'. Unsecured areas normally have to be crossed by car in order to reach

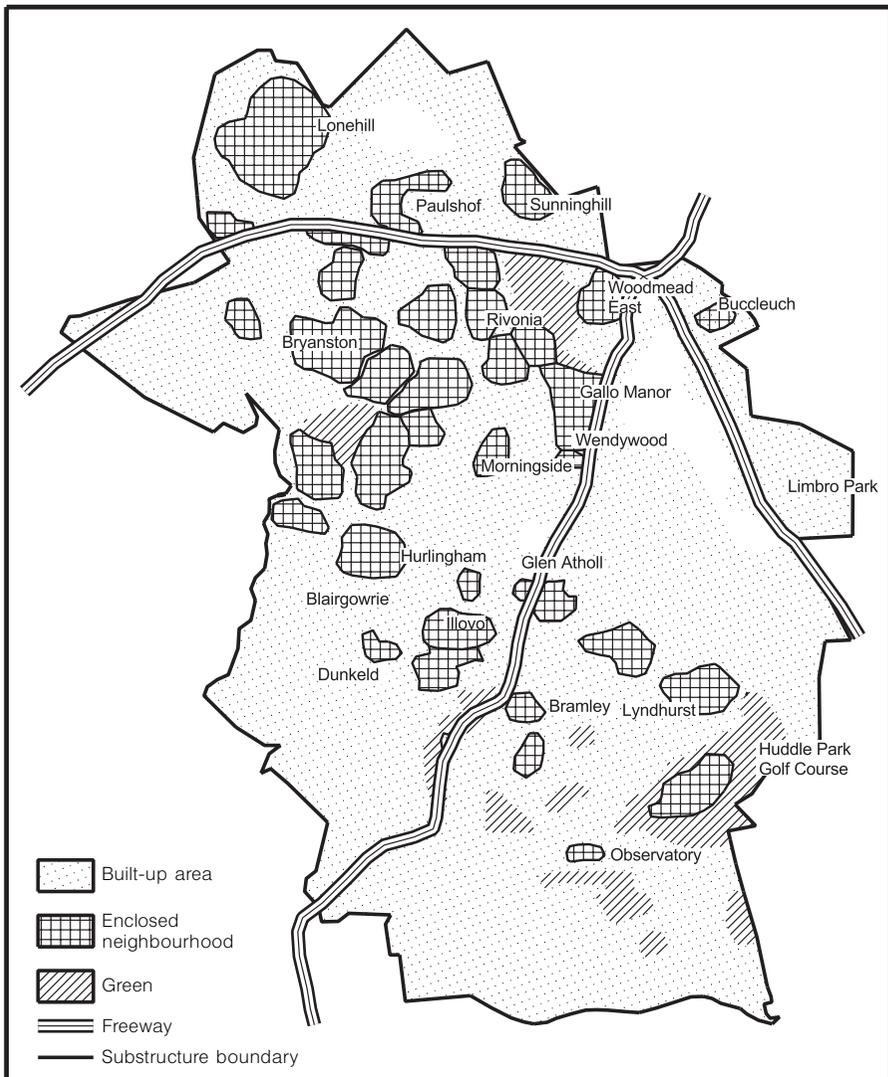


**Figure 2.** Forms and structures of gated communities in South Africa.

other semiprivate facilities, such as shopping malls or business parks. The Melrose Arch project in northern Johannesburg, or Heritage Park, which is planned to include some 2000 houses on 200 ha close to Somerset West in Western Cape, aim to circumvent this problem by integrating aspects of living, working, retail, leisure, and medical care in the form of a city within a city, surrounded by a single high-security fence (McGreal, 1999; Qoza, 1999).

**4.3 Extent of the emergence of gated communities**

There are few hard data concerning the extent to which new enclosed neighbourhoods are emerging in South Africa today. Usually, only individual projects under construction are discussed in the literature. In late 1998, in the upper segment of the market alone, about 30 golf estates were reported to exist or to be planned (*Personal Wealth* 1998). The Centre for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Pretoria conducted the first comprehensive mapping survey, including an interpolation of spatial extension, for the Eastern Metropolitan Local Council of Johannesburg (CSIR, 2000) (figure 3). This survey suggests that gated communities contribute significantly to the urban appearance of the Northern Johannesburg region. In the same CSIR survey, 100 local authorities across the nation (including all metropolitan areas and the capital of all nine provinces) were sent a questionnaire. There was an overall response rate of 43%; 53% of the responding communities stated that they had received applications for permission to build neighbourhood enclosures. Only 21% of responding local authorities had granted building permits to all such applications. Among the prime reasons for the denial of permits were apparent restrictions to public traffic, and

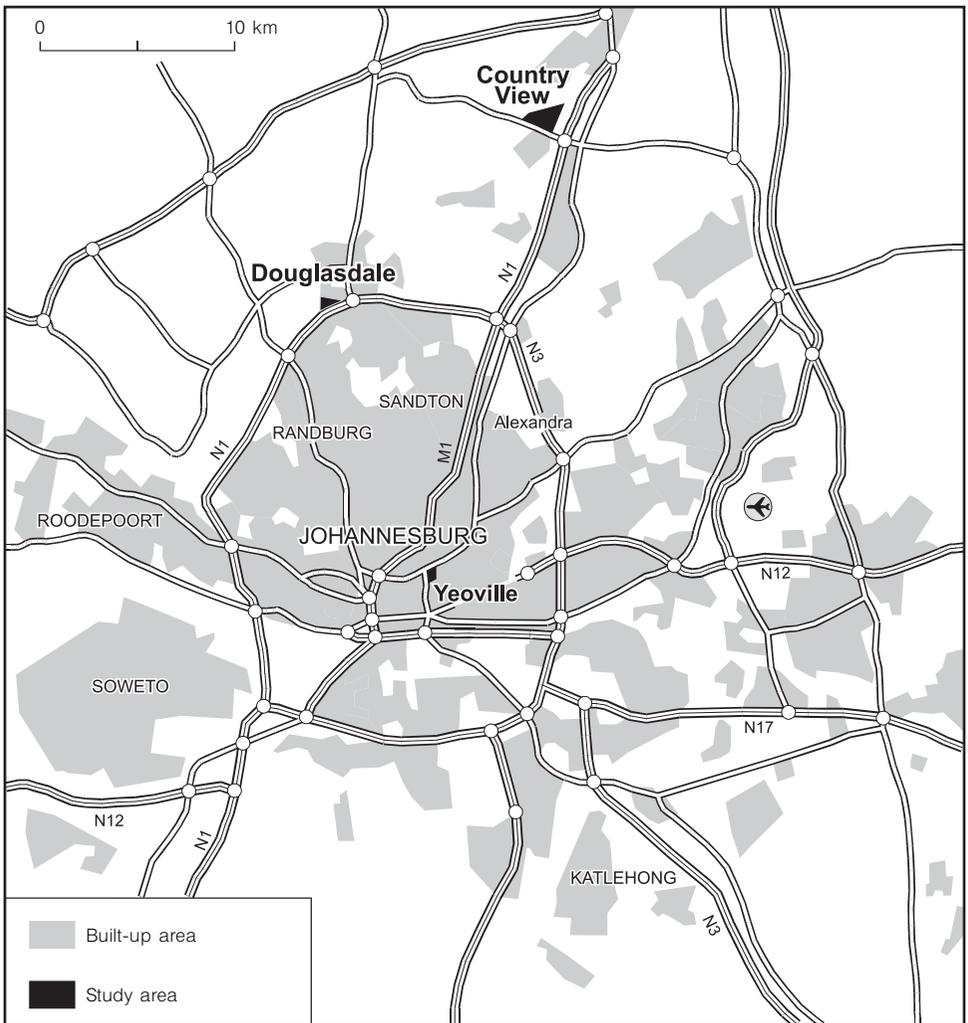


**Figure 3.** Gated communities in the Eastern Metropolitan Local Council area of Johannesburg (source, Landman, 2000).

obstacles for fire brigades, waste collection, and public utilities such as water and electricity supply. Only 16% of the responding authorities could rely on formal regulations and procedures in dealing with applications for gated communities. With few exceptions, the enclosed neighbourhoods are located in and around larger cities (CSIR, 2000), most of them in the Gauteng province. High crime rates, a bias among the population in favour of drastic preventive measures and the readiness of local authorities in Gauteng to grant permits for gated communities may be the reasons for this concentration.

##### 5 Choice of survey areas and empirical significance

In June 1999, we closely examined two gated communities in the Johannesburg metropolitan area [see figure 4 (over) for their exact locations]. Both settlements had been planned and constructed by the Sage Schachat Group, who also made possible the



**Figure 4.** Map of Johannesburg showing study areas.

interviews conducted on the premises. With respect to the typology developed by Blakely and Snyder (1997) both Forestdale and Santa Cruz represent security communities. Based on information from the real estates business and the daily press, there is no empirical evidence of aspects of 'lifestyle' or 'prestige' communities in either of these developments. Although lifestyle and prestige communities represent only a very small segment of the housing market, Forestdale and Santa Cruz, with their appeal for middle-class residents, already reflect the increasing commonness and spatial expansion of gated communities in South Africa. The fact that scientific research inside gated communities, which expressly strive to shut themselves off from public life, cannot be conducted without the consent of their proprietors, placed some limitations on our choice of survey areas. There was another, equally important, reason for the choice of Forestdale and Santa Cruz: we were looking for answers to the question of whether gated communities are only a white phenomenon which revives apartheid in the form of residential segregation, or whether the affluent black population is also part of this tendency towards residential segregation. Our research cannot take into

account all local peculiarities, nor do we quantify the extent of gated communities in South Africa as a whole. We can, however, identify basic trends in population structure of and residential motivation in security villages, as well as reveal resulting problems for residents and neighbouring areas.

Forestdale is located in a belt of single-family houses in the Douglasdale quarter (Extension 66) on the northwestern limits of Johannesburg. It borders directly onto a motorway. High schools and shopping centres (in particular, the Fourways shopping mall, which attracts many customers from other regions) are all within a few miles. The cluster settlement (terraced housing) was built up since 1994, after it had proved impossible to sell the previously developed real estate since 1990. Forestdale comprises 75 plots of land (14 of them were still without houses in June 1999), with a maximum area of 500 m<sup>2</sup> to 600 m<sup>2</sup>. The individual housing units, which were built under the coordination and control of Sage Schachat, feature living areas of 87 m<sup>2</sup> to 143 m<sup>2</sup> (Schachat Cullum Ltd, 1994). The complex is completely surrounded by a wall, and the entry gate is controlled by guards. Forestdale features various communal facilities such as a club house, a swimming pool, and a tennis court. The price range (about R 200 000—approximately 30 000 US\$) is appropriate for the average middle class.

In March 1997 the first inhabitants moved into their freehold flats in the cluster complex of Santa Cruz (a total of sixty-five units, six of which were vacant in June 1999). Santa Cruz is part of the Country View residential area, which belongs to the economically booming Midrand municipality located halfway between Pretoria and Johannesburg. Country View had originally been unique under the apartheid system. In 1989 it had been established as a 'free settlement area', that is, an area in which different races were allowed to live together within the apartheid rule. From the outset, Indian and Black people particularly moved into the area, which features land plots with an average size of 800 m<sup>2</sup> and which allows for individually designed houses. After the abolition of the Group Areas Act in 1991, there was a trend which suggested that Country View would develop into a gilded ghetto for the Black middle class after the Indian households moved elsewhere (Bähr et al, 1998). The question arises of whether Santa Cruz, as a walled-in island within Country View, will experience a similar occupancy by Black residents. The individual housing units of 50 m<sup>2</sup> to 80 m<sup>2</sup> are considerably smaller than those in Forestdale, and resemble one another very closely in terms of architecture. Prices of about R130 000 (US\$19 500) represent the bottom limit for living in 'everyman's security villages' (*Housing in SA* 1997a).

Expert interviews with representatives of Sage Schachat Ltd, as well as a complete survey of Forestdale and Santa Cruz inhabitants, were conducted in May and June 1999. The interviews at Sage Schachat served to gather information on the planning process, the coordination with the neighbouring vicinity, and to get an overview of the real estate market. With the aid of a standardised questionnaire, households in 55 out of 60 completed and inhabited units in Forestdale, and 56 (out of a total of 59) in Santa Cruz were interviewed. In order to get a complete picture of the situation, information about the ethnic composition of the remaining households was collected from neighbours.

## 6 Empirical results

### 6.1 Population structures

Both Forestdale and Santa Cruz are residential areas with racially mixed populations, yet the two are dominated by different ethnic groups. In Forestdale 85.6% (out of a total of 132 persons) are white and 14.4% nonwhite, 5.5% of them are Black (figure 5, see over). Santa Cruz, on the other hand, features 80.2% nonwhite (67.9% of them Black) and 19.2% white inhabitants (out of a total of 156 persons) (figure 6, see over).

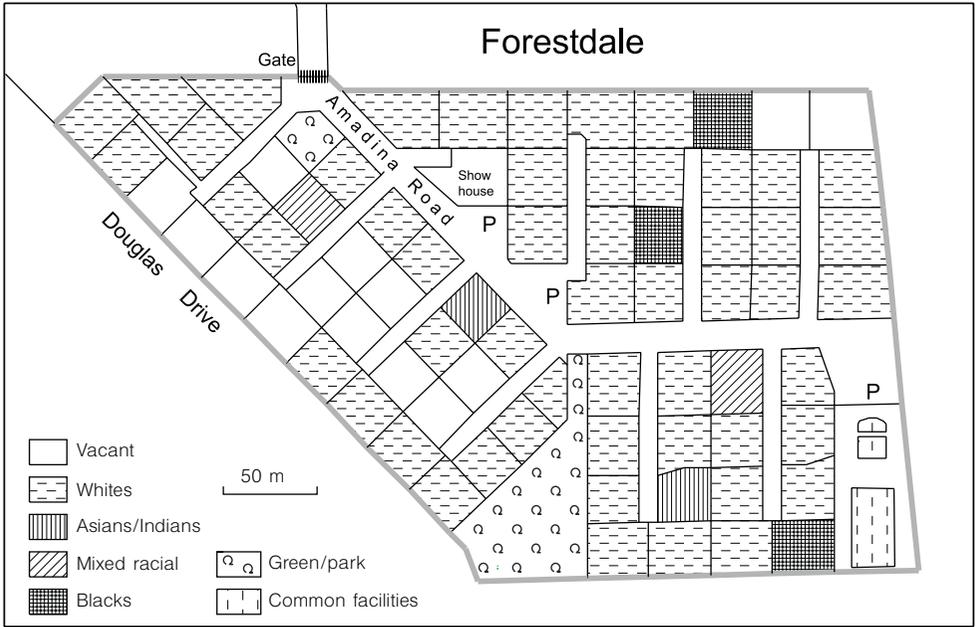


Figure 5. Ethnic structure in Forestdale.

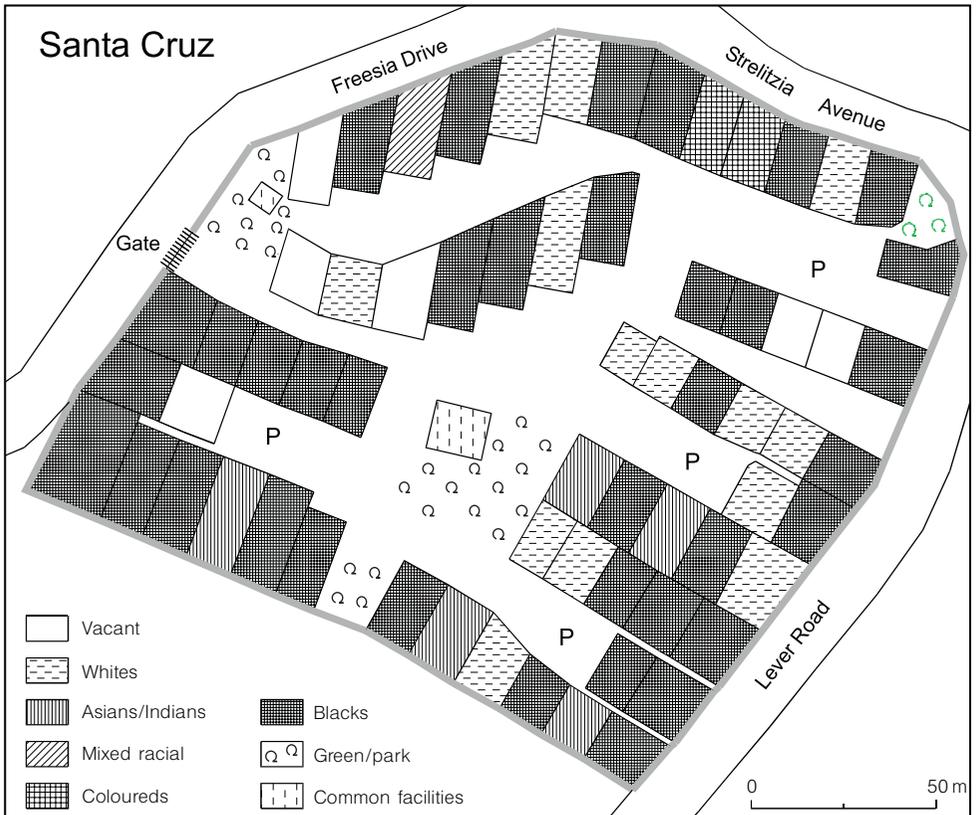


Figure 6. Ethnic structure in Santa Cruz.

This means that both areas closely resemble the ethnic composition and public image of their surrounding regions. Thus in the early days of its development as a free settlement area Country View had to suffer the disadvantage of being a special form of a Black township, with white homebuyers avoiding the region. White homebuyers still prefer to move to traditional white suburbs, in which real estate prices are still prohibitively high for most Black prospective buyers. And even those Black households who could afford to live there do not necessarily look for this new kind of architectural confinement, as they are already familiar with it from the matchbox houses of Soweto or Katlehong; instead, they prefer large estates. This may explain the low level of interest which Black buyers initially displayed for Forestdale. The overall age structure in both surveyed areas is quite remarkable too. The average age in Santa Cruz is 24 to 25 years, and about 31 years in Forestdale. In Santa Cruz, 22 out of 56 households include children aged 6 years or less, compared with 14 of 55 units in Forestdale. Only 8.4% of all recorded persons in both areas ( $N = 286$ ) are older than 50.

A mother explained what, in her opinion, has improved for her after moving into a gated settlement:

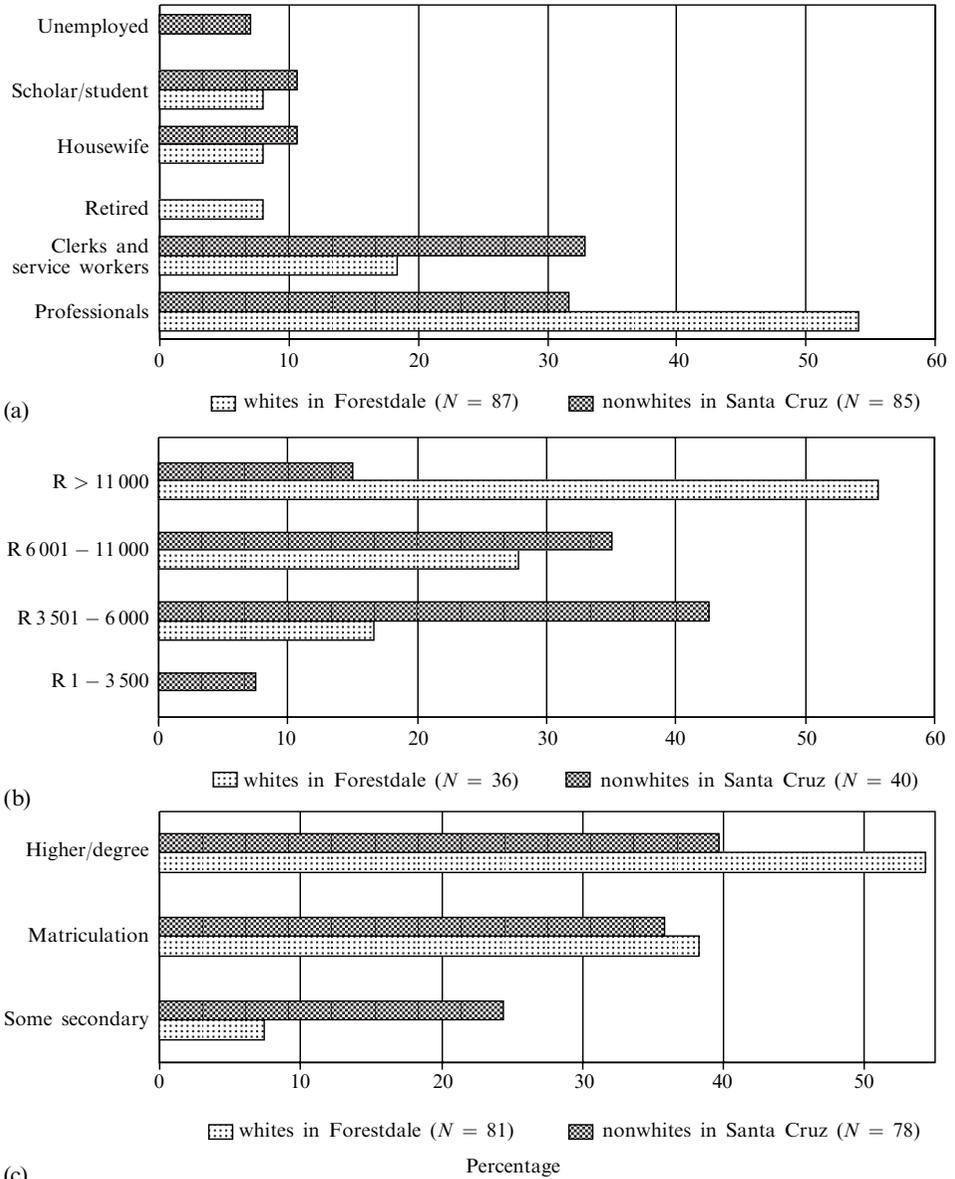
“For the first time I feel secure about my children’s safety. They ride their bicycles and roller blades on the roads within the complex. If their toys and bikes are left next to the pool, they will be found the next day. I do my washing in the communal laundry, which often becomes a social gathering of housewives. I enjoy this interaction” (*Housing in SA* 1997b, page 53).

Safe from crime, children can play in the private streets of the compound. Because the flats are rather small, most families are small. The average household size varies between 2.3 (white households in Forestdale) and 2.9 persons (Black households in Santa Cruz). Moreover, in Forestdale 22% are one-person households (11% in Santa Cruz), most of them young working single people. Only one single occupant was older than 60 years. One can conclude, therefore, that both areas surveyed are not so much refuges for pensioners as appealing to active persons engaged in professional and family life.

## 6.2 Social structures

The prices for the purchase or the rent of a house or land plot and the basic monthly charges of R300 to R450 (US\$45 to US\$68) which all parties have to pay (for administration, security, gardening, etc) promote the social selection of the population in security villages. The average monthly net income per household in Forestdale is about R 13 200 (US\$1980), compared with R 8000 (US\$1200) in Santa Cruz. The income of Black residents in Santa Cruz is two and a half times that in an area with dense housing in the inner city (Yeoville in the northeastern limits of the central business district). This fact is partly a result of the higher rate of education: only 7% of households in Forestdale and 15.4% in Santa Cruz have education below the level of matriculation. Consequently, nobody in Forestdale and only 6 out of 102 persons capable of gainful employment in Santa Cruz claimed to be unemployed. For comparison, according to the 1996 Census the official unemployment rate for Gauteng province was 28.2% (Jürgens, 1999, page 21) whereas the nationwide level was 37.6% in 1997 (SAIRR, 1999, page 10).

In figure 7 (see over), the social situations of whites in Forestdale is compared with that of the nonwhite population in Santa Cruz (the absolute numbers of whites in Santa Cruz and of nonwhites in Forestdale are too small to give meaningful data). In figure 8 (see over), the social situation of the overall population in Forestdale is compared with that in Santa Cruz. Disparities between the two communities are clearly discernible, with the minority of nonblacks in Santa Cruz ‘improving’, and the

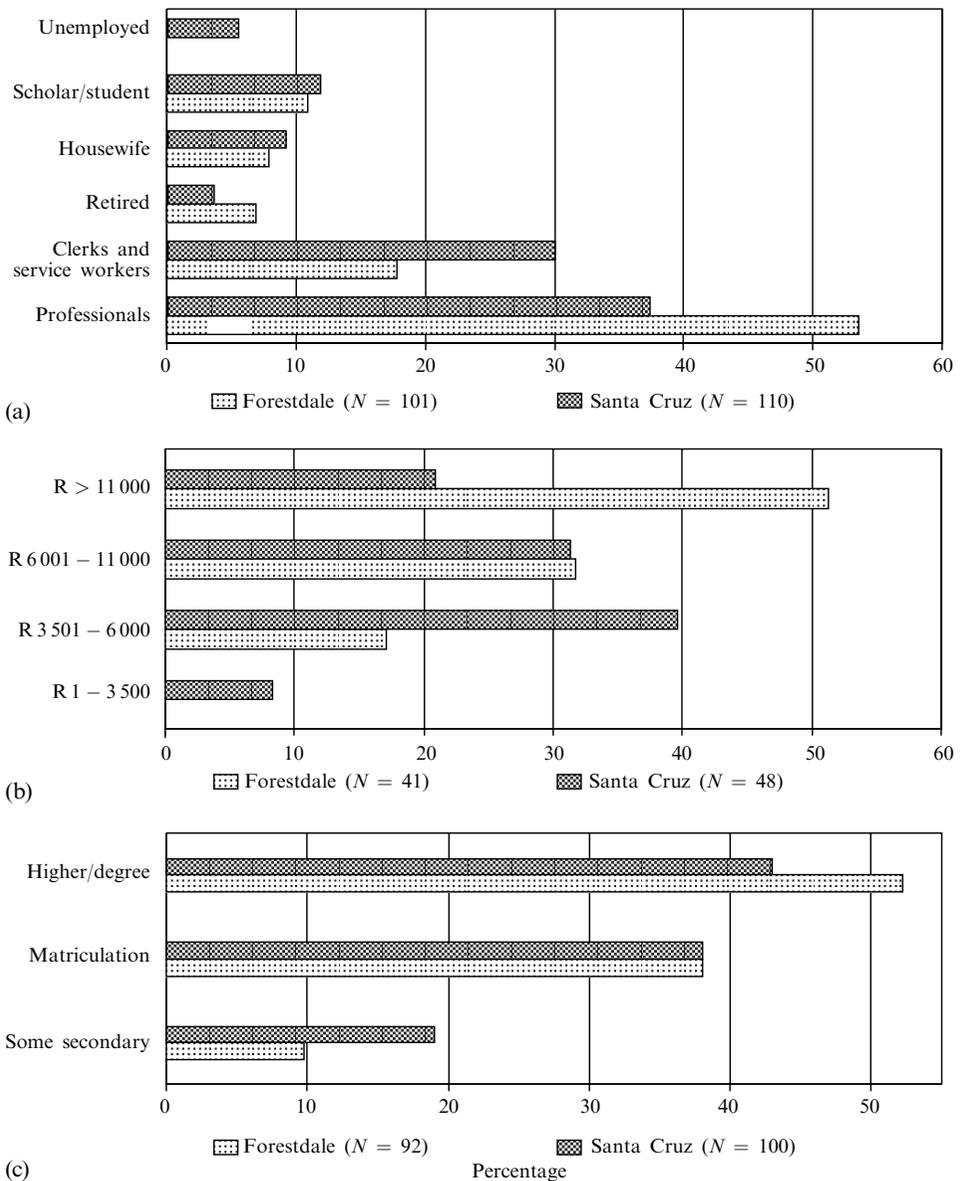


**Figure 7.** Socioeconomic structures in Santa Cruz and Forestdale (whites and blacks): (a) occupation, (b) monthly income per household after tax, (c) level of education.

minority of nonwhites in Forestdale ‘impairing’ the results. Despite the alignment of social areas, traditional inequalities between whites and nonwhites can be seen even within the same area. As an indicator of social status and the high level of spatial mobility in the Johannesburg urban sprawl, 51% of all households in Forestdale and 24% of households in Santa Cruz possess two or more cars (in the comparative area, Yeoville, 64% of all nonwhite households did not have a car at their disposal in 1998).

### 6.3 Reasons for moving in and contentment

More than half of all interviewed households emphasised the security aspect of their new residential compounds as the main reason for their moving in. As a price for that



**Figure 8.** Socioeconomic structures in Santa Cruz and Forestdale (overall population): (a) occupation, (b) monthly income per household after tax, (c) level of education.

security, 60% of households in Forestdale and about 45% in Santa Cruz have accepted the fact that, compared with their previous flats, the average number of living rooms has decreased. Most of them had previously lived in single-family houses in the Gauteng metropolitan area. The majority of nonwhite buyers or tenants also moved in from other 'white' areas, and not from black townships (in Santa Cruz only 24.4%, and in Forestdale 40% of all nonwhite households came in from townships). However, an improvement is noticeable in terms of crime, at least in the short run: the average duration of residence in Forestdale was three years; only 6 (out of 55 interviewed) households had fallen victim to crimes during that time. In contrast, in the areas in which Forestdale residents had lived before, in the three years prior to moving away,

22 households had been victimised. In Santa Cruz none of the 56 interviewed households had been the victim of a criminal offence during approximately 18 months (compared with 25 households in the areas of origin during the three years prior to moving to Santa Cruz). Other reasons for moving into the gated communities are their central locations (proximity to schools, the motorway, shopping centres, and to the workplace), affordability, and the immediate social environment—'a quiet, upmarket, area'.

However, satisfaction with walled communities was not undisputed either within or outside the compounds. This is illustrated by the opposition of Douglasdale residents to the planning of Forestdale, which they voiced in a petition to the developers, Sage Schachat. Here, the high building density of the cluster settlement was criticised in particular because this was considered to be detrimental to the prestige of the surrounding communities and thus likely to reduce the value of real estate there: "This is a downgrading of the area and a traffic hazard." "Dense population of our area will encourage crime and lower our property values." A Black homeowner from outside of the gated community wrote: "I moved from Soweto to get a peace of mind. Unfortunately, I find that there is another Soweto with matchbox houses to be built near-by. I strongly oppose this downgrading development to our upmarket sizes and larger stands size of extension 66" (Douglasdale Ext. 66 Residents, 1994).

Within the gated communities, the lack of privacy because of the light construction and the resulting poor acoustic insulation, as well as the narrow space between the houses was criticised. In Santa Cruz in particular, white residents complain about their Black neighbours because of cultural differences. "They slaughter chickens in their gardens and disturb regardless of their neighbours with noisy parties. Empty cans are dumped in the environment and they used to pee outside in the complex ..." (interviews, 1999); all of that is regarded as township culture, and is rejected. At least one party intended to move away and rent their house because of these problems. This practice is already widespread, as 20 of 54 Santa Cruz households were renting their homes. Both the location and the facilities of the residential areas are criticised for their artificiality and arbitrariness: there is no access to public transport and because— with the exception of a petrol station in Country View, Santa Cruz—there are no local shops for daily supplies. Although crime is excluded from the community, fears of violent threats outside the fences continue to exist (table 1).

**Table 1.** Responses to the question "What do you dislike most in Forestdale resp. in Santa Cruz?", in percentages.

	Forestdale	Santa Cruz
Nothing	34.5	42.6
Lack of privacy	3.6	11.1
Traffic noise from N1 (motorway)	18.2	0.0
Isolated place	3.6	14.8
Crime in the area	9.1	3.7
Management	12.7	1.9

#### 6.4 Organisation

An important aspect in the functioning of security villages is their internal organisation. In accordance with the Sectional Titles Act of 1986, the owners of property within the compound are obliged to abide by conduct rules, as are their tenants. In Santa Cruz, just the short version of conduct rules comprises 19 points listing prohibited behaviour and illegal modifications to the buildings. Trustees and a chairman serve as representatives and spokespersons of the community; in Forestdale there is also a

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homeowners' association. These people are obliged to make their decision balancing the private interests of individuals and the interest of the community as a whole. In Santa Cruz, for example, many internal services such as paying electricity bills to the city, the control of observance of conduct rules, as well as installation and repair works in the compound lie in the hands of the committee. These services are paid for with money from the mandatory charges which are collected from all households—in addition to the regular electricity bills. In March 1999, about 10 parties failed to pay these charges which forced the committee to take out a loan of R 35 000 (US\$5250) in order to pay debts to the city. As a result, in April 1999, an additional charge was introduced in order to pay back the loan, and some households were cut off from electricity (Santa Cruz Trustees, 1999). On the one hand, this example illustrates that after the sale of the housing units the development company, Sage Schachat, essentially handed over all responsibilities to the residents. On the other hand, one can see that care for financial risk—the establishment of reserve funds to cover costs of long-term maintenance (*Financial Mail* 1996)—and the functioning of such a community remains exclusively with the proprietors.

### 7 Consequences and prospects

All over South Africa, gated communities influence prices for flats and houses—prices which depend on the extent of security measures. In prestige communities in particular, where security and lifestyle are two sides of the same coin, land and house prices have multiplied (Roberts, 1996, page 37), even though, at the top end of the market, cluster settlements are already becoming mistrusted themselves [“in a cluster development you can be exposed to the comings and goings of everyone else’s staff. And it’s a fact that a high percentage of burglaries are inside jobs” (Stafford, 1999, page 46)]. Particularly for the white and black middle class, for first-time homeowners, and for single-person households who flee urban blight and inner-city flats, gated communities are becoming the most important housing alternative in ‘desirable areas’ (Cohen, 1998).

Can this serve to contain crime? After the establishment of road blocks in Sandton, the local crime rate was reported to have gone down by some 70% to 80% (*Business Day* 1998). Positive effects are also beginning to show in Forestdale and Santa Cruz. Opponents of gated communities are concerned that crime may be displaced to the disadvantage of neighbouring areas; these areas might, in turn, be forced to take similar preventive measures (CSIR, 2000, page 17). It remains unclear whether the social segregation in these compounds is complemented or eclipsed by a new form of racial segregation (the ‘neopartheid city’ in the sense of Beavon, 1998), which comes about as a result of different price levels and images of individual residential areas. The changes that are already occurring after a short time in Forestdale and Santa Cruz do not exclude the possibility that the various ethnic communities in South Africa will eventually set up their own gated communities.

In conclusion, gated communities reflect four different social trends: segregation in search for stability and control of the neighbourhood; privatisation; militarisation (that is, private armament); and architectural separation (Bremner, 1998; CSIR, 2000). A combination of these is determining the development of the contemporary South African urban landscape. Not all of these processes are new: the wish, or the thrust, for segregation can be linked to the apartheid experience. An entirely new aspect, however, is that of the state or the municipality becoming redundant for certain functions such as the preservation of law and order, and the maintenance of infrastructure.

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