

# PRIVATE CITIES

There is hardly another form of urban development that has received so much public attention since the late 1990s as privately organised and secured housing developments. For the antagonists, private communities are icons of post-consensus, fragmenting civic society, enclosing and excluding by contractual constitution and sometimes by walls and gates. For others they are simply an efficient way of organising urban life.

*Private Cities* brings together an international team of authors in an attempt to construct an interdisciplinary dialogue, based upon empirical evidence, on the global spread of private communities. Case studies from the US, Latin America, the Middle East, Europe and China are used to explore local and global explanations of the phenomenon. The contributions show that private neighbourhoods are a highly significant feature of postmodern urbanism. They are a global phenomenon; they signify a distinct shift in the way cities are organised; they create micro-territories with their own local constitutions; they break down traditional social geographies and create new ones; they provide an alternative model for financing civic goods; they do for home buyers what the package-tour industry has done for individual holiday buyers; they alter patterns of urban insecurities; and they create new micro-societies.

In compiling a range of commentaries from writers taking contrasting perspectives, *Private Cities* challenges readers to reflect on the differences in approach and reasoning.