Abstract

Yasser M Mostafa

The Wall, an Increasing Phenomenon in Cairo: Main Reasons and Potential Implications

The wall, this stand-alone structure, which materializes in many different ways in the urban context, is the substance of the study. The wall in all its forms has an impact on the built environment and urban space users. Walls divide, segregate, discern, screen, protect, prevent and sometimes guide and redirect. The study investigates the wall phenomenon in Cairo and its increasing manifestations in the urban context walling public buildings, privatization of public spaces, street barriers, security walls, fences of residential buildings and finally walls of gated communities. The study critically argues that the decline in the sense of security, the terrorism problem, the changed nature of privacy needs and the neo-liberal urban politics are the potential reasons for the increasing phenomenon in Cairo. Using related international urban design literature, the paper identifies the wall potential implications on the urban environment in terms of urban space vitality, right to the city, social cohesion, crime prevention and image of the city.