Abstract

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Perusal on Urban Fear - Case study of the Gated Communities in Greater Cairo.

Things are known by their antagonists if fear did not exist, safety would have no meaning. However, this do not apply on architecture. Karen Frank - in her review on “The Architecture of Fear” book - argues that there is a fundamental difference between the architecture of fear and the architecture of safety. The first is interrelated with insecurity and thus calls for a defensive action, while safety-seeking architecture is more closely interrelated with physical circumstances. The most common classification to gated communities depends on the reasons behind the gating, and classifies them into three categories: lifestyle, prestige and security. This research is more concerned with investigating the fear approach to understand architectural practices seeking safety. The gated communities are considered one of the manifestations of the architecture of fear the architecture of risk - as Eric Denis calls it - an urban risk of getting out of the heart to the edges. The research aims to uncovered this phenomenon by exploring some manifestations of urban fear, especially the spatial dimension and the choice of the isolated location of gated communities on the outskirts of Cairo then measure the degree of feeling of safety for its inhabitants. Due to absence of reliable statistics to measure the degree of safety, the research methodology relies on collecting information from residents of gated communities. This fieldwork is based a questionnaire where all questions rely on rereading theories of safety as well as safety manuals for western gated communities. The research consists of three main axes first the theoretical base that begins with an introduction on urban fear and its manifestations in the gated communities. Second, a critical review of of the system of macro-decisions that contributed to the creation of demand for these urban communities, thus responds to the real estate supply in the end. In other words, reread these communities in light of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design CPTED. Third, an empirical study to identify the degree of security achieved in a number of gated communities on the periphery of the Greater Cairo. The research concludes with reflections on the culture of fear influenced by mass media.