The Impact of Enclosed Neighbourhoods on Privatization of Public Space: A Comparative Analysis of Nairobi, Johannesburg, and Ibadan

Abstract:

Nairobi, Johannesburg, and Ibadan have witnessed a rapid development of enclosed neighbourhoods where residents have taken upon themselves to restrict access to pre-existing neighbourhoods in various ways. The most common is by erecting a gate, barrier or boom on the main street leading to the neighbourhood, hence restricting access to public roads or streets. These streets are normally public through-ways. By restricting access, public space is privatized, whether formally or informally. This form of territorial construction, mostly motivated by security concerns, raises important challenges to the management of cities in terms of flux and mobility, and in terms of exclusion and urban fragmentation. This article intends to contribute to the existing debate on the impact of enclosed neighbourhoods on privatization of public space, with particular emphasis on road or street closures and from a comparative perspective of Nairobi, Johannesburg, and Ibadan. In all cases, enclosed neighbourhoods have impacted negatively on the mobility and fluidity within the city, although in different ways according to the dominant street pattern.