

TERRITORIALITY IN URBAN SETTINGS
A STUDY ON OWNER / USER PERCEPTION ON
TERRITORIALITY WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
SELECTED AREAS IN COLOMBO

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Master of Science in Architecture

Department of Architecture

University of Moratuwa

Sri Lanka

January 2012

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Science in Architecture

Department of Architecture

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Sri Lanka

January 2012

DECLARATION

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This dissertation never had been possible without the invaluable support given by many, to whom I am deeply indebted and sincerely acknowledge.

My gratitude is extended to.....

My supervisors, Archt. D.B.Navaratne and Archt. J. Dharmasena

for all the guidance, valuable comments and instructions given through the entire procedure in preparing this document.

Archt. D.P.Chandrasekara

(Head of the Department, Department of Architecture, University of Moratuwa)

for initial guidance.

Prof. S. Manawadu

(Head of the Department, Department of Town and Country Planning, University of Moratuwa)

for the comments and guidance.

Dr. S. Coorey, Archt. Narein Perera, Archt. Anishka Hettiarachchi

(Year Masters and Senior Lecturers, Department of Architecture, University of Moratuwa)

For the valuable comments and guidance.

Mrs. T. Seneviratne, Mr. Punchihewa

(Librarians, University of Moratuwa)

Archt. Preethika, Archt. Nishantha

(Central Engineering Consultancy Bureau – Colombo 07)

Archt. Champika, Archt. Anjana, Archt. Thushari

(Urban Development Authority – Battaramulla)

My dearest friends **Anushka** and **Gothami** for being real friends in need and for the help and assistance given for the completion of this work.

My ever loving parents, Aunty and Husband

For the love, affection and care giving to me every day.....

ABSTRACT

Key words – Territoriality, urban setting, perception

Human is a territorial animal. Therefore territoriality is one of the basic psychological needs of the human beings. Animals or humans who belong to certain territory (it may be an area, culture, society, or group) feel sense of belongingness.

In an urban setting, territoriality is different than in rural areas. Individual territoriality is more significant in rural areas while group territoriality becomes more important in urban settings. There should be temporary and permanent territories for people in urban areas. Temporary territories become active when personalization takes place. Permanent territories are based on ownership and enclosed by boundaries such as walls, fences, hedges, gates, pavements; paving etc.

There should be a balance in public and private territories in an urban environment. Semipublic space or semi-private space, connecting public and private domains is essential in the spatial organization of an urban structure. The foresaid balance will result a good physical and psychological environment for the perceiver and the occupant.

Perception links man and the environment. It is a process of interaction of the perceiver and environment. The expressions of symbols, cues and the use of elements to sense territoriality should be meaningful, easily understood and obeyed by the perceivers.



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For the research, a content analysis is carried out on the relevant literature available. Certain parameters were derived from the theoretical basis to judge the appropriate level of territoriality in various types of buildings in urban environments. Data is collected through observations, interviews and questionnaire. Data is summarized in tables for easy references and analysis. Critical analysis was done on the results, based on the foresaid theoretical basis. Case studies were selected from Colombo.

This research reveals the appropriate level of sense of territoriality which certain domains or the building in urban setting ensures in the minds of the occupants and the users. Through the study it is found that the entire built fabric of an urban setting should not have the same level of territory. It differs according to the function or the type of the building, scale of the building, etc.

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