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

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Master of Science in Architecture

Department of Architecture

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DECLARATION

I declare that this is my own work and this dissertation does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a Degree or a Diploma in any other university or institute of higher learning and to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by an other person except where the acknowledgement made in the text.

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The above candidate carried out research for the Masters dissertation under my supervision.

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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 perceivers 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.

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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