

**KEY WORDS:**

Expression of Ownership, Urban India, Community Living, Entrances

## Factors Affecting the Expression of Ownership in Community Living in Urban India

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**ABSTRACT**

The entrance of a house is a stage where residents perform expressions of how and why they own the space that they call home. This space tells you stories of function, of fears, of everyday routine and planning for the future. It also tells people to stay away, to beware, that if you were to harm my home, there will be consequences. It talks of celebrations, many a times common ones where many entrance spaces join hands and become a collective stage for festivities.

This paper narrates stories about a collection of such entrances in apartment housing, colloquially termed as 'colonies' or 'societies' in the urban Indian context, and how they define its residents and their identity. For this, a total of 106 houses across five housing projects in Navi Mumbai were studied by filling up questionnaires, inventories and taking detailed photographs of the individual houses as well as the compound areas of the various housing colonies formed within the housing projects. Site activities, spatial appropriations and areas for congregation that aided friendship formation were documented using photographs. The paper also puts forth various factors that affect the expression of ownership at the entrances of houses in community living in urban India and makes a case for the existence of this very pertinent architectural element in the mutating housing typologies of the future.



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## Introduction

“The home may be represented by the door and the window. Through the door, one gains access at will either to one's intimacy or to the indefinite outside.” (Simmel, 1976, p. 96).

The entrance of a house is a stage where residents perform expressions of how and why they own the space that they call home. This space tells you stories of function, of fears, of everyday routine and planning for the future. It tells you stories of the past, of mothers and grandmothers who performed rituals, where we become them every day. It tells you stories of loss and missing other spaces and people. It tells you stories of aspirations; it also tells you, very discreetly, stories that people want to hide. It reaches out to people who are dear and invites them to sit and gossip on a *katta*<sup>1</sup>. It houses important conversations that reinforce relations between a parent and a child while feeding food, combing hair, cooking or doing vessels together.

It also tells people to stay away, to beware, that if you were to harm my home, there will be consequences. It talks of celebrations, many a times common ones where many entrance spaces join hands and become a collective stage for festivities. It is also a bridge that allows various religions to express, where the give and take of cultural ideas and exchanges takes place, where *sheer khurma*<sup>2</sup> is shared at Eid and *modaks*<sup>3</sup> are given during Ganpati. It is a site of mourning when death visits.

This paper intends to narrate stories about a collection of such entrances in apartment housing, colloquially termed as ‘colonies’ or ‘societies’ in the urban Indian context, and how they define its residents and their identity. It also puts forth various factors that affect the expression of ownership at the entrances of houses in community living in urban India and wishes to make a case for the existence of this very pertinent architectural element in the mutating housing typologies of the future.

## Geographical Context and Methodology

Opening out the mainland for development was a conscious move made by the authorities and planners to decongest the island city of Mumbai with respect to housing, and to reorient the north south traffic along an east west direction. Navi Mumbai or then New Bombay was first proposed as a concept in 1965 after the Barve report. Ever since its conception, the development that the twin city faced has always been in pockets and bursts. Examples of these would include housing projects designed by eminent architects namely Uttam Jain, Charles Correa, Kamu Iyer, Hema Sankalia and Raj Rewal.

For this study, five CIDCO<sup>4</sup> housing projects in Navi Mumbai were studied namely: JN2 Housing at Sector 9, Vashi, the DRS Scheme Housing at Sector 26, Vashi, the UDRI Housing at Sector 3, Sanpada, the DRS Housing at Sector 21-22, Belapur and the Housing at Sector 7, New Panvel. These projects were further divided into Co-operative Housing Societies. A total of 106 houses were studied across these housing societies by filling up questionnaires, inventories and taking detailed photographs of the individual houses as

well as the compound areas of the various housing colonies formed within the housing projects. The data was collected from August to October 2016 between 12 to 6 pm. A random sample selection to select these houses from the sites and have tried to make sure that we got data that is geographically evenly distributed. Site Activities and spatial appropriations and areas for congregation that aided friendship formation were documented using photographs. Based on the data collected, five factors that affect the expression of ownership were identified and analysed.

### **The Block and the Colony - setting the scale in the Indian context**

Ralph B. Taylor, in his book 'Human Territorial Functioning' (1988), suggested that territoriality works only at a micro scale, till the size of a street block and does not work for neighbourhood or nations. Its consequences are linked with small face-to-face groups whose sizes have an upper limit. The above was suggested in 1988 in the context of the United States of America.

For our study carried out in 2015 for urban India, it becomes mandatory to point out the obvious differences. All terminologies and concepts such as near home territories, home range, home site are framed keeping in mind a housing typology that has individual stand-alone housing units on dedicated plots (known in popular terminology as the bungalow typology in India) clustered together termed as an urban or a city block while our study deals with the apartment typology of housing comprising of a cluster of three or four storied buildings separated by internal roads for circulation and compound area, bound by a compound wall.

Yet, if one considers the ground floor housing units (which form a chunk of the study sample) that directly open on to the compound area, they show some resemblance to the behavioural traits mentioned in the book in the treatment and functioning of their near home spaces with minor differences. In comparison to the projects studied in the book, the user density is higher for the housing projects in our study, one obvious factor being the difference in the housing typology. While it is a valid topic to study how these terminologies and behavioural traits applied from the book may vary due to a change in the user density in the housing projects, it is not in the scope of this research to discuss this. The five housing sites considered for this study range from 3.6 Ha to 8.3 Ha of plot area. These dimensions are closer to the dimensions of an urban block than that of a neighbourhood, hence the definitions and occurrences discussed with context to the urban block are more pertinent to our study than that of the neighbourhood. Having said this, the housing colony still cannot be read as a street block.

### **How is Ownership Expressed in Community Living in Urban India?**

Friendships form when areas of congregation are provided in community housing. The residents of the studied projects in Navi Mumbai enjoy a phenomenal built to unbuilt ratio



**Figure 1:** Photo collage showing expression of ownership in community living in urban India

in a city where open spaces are a luxury. **Figure 1** is a photo collage that shows the expression of ownership of these residents.

a - One of the smaller open spaces with peripheral paved walkway around which buildings are designed. These are used by kids for playing.

b - The large open space in the centre has a peripheral paved walkway with seating and greens. It gets used for the *Ganpati panda*<sup>5</sup> during *Ganeshotsav*<sup>6</sup> and for dancing garba during Navratri.

c and d - Examples of user customisation and an expression of ownership. Seen here are images of mini gardens nurtured in spaces that cannot be slotted into one housing unit's territory. The room projected out directly sits on the low boundary wall. Physical extensions such as adding rooms, verandahs, enclosing balconies and maintaining potted greens can also be interpreted as user customisation and an expression of ownership.

e and f - The house owners have marked their territory by painting two walls of their verandah/balcony in a colour different from that of the building.

g - A small temple beside a tree at one corner in the building compound, an example of a religious marker.



Figure 2: Photo collage showing festive expression of ownership in community living in urban India

h - Seen above is a common *rangoli*<sup>7</sup> put for two adjacent houses on Dusshera<sup>8</sup> day on a common constructed platform. The two houses have their own individual *tulsi*<sup>9</sup> plants placed on either side of the door.

i and j - Infrastructure that facilitates group solidarity. Seen above is a co-operative housing society office to the left and a senior citizens *virangula kendra*<sup>10</sup> that helps in the socialisation of senior citizens to the right. While the former is in one of the smaller open spaces, the latter is located outside sticking to the boundary wall. The presence of such structures indicates a certain presence of a community and that activities are carried out together hinting at group solidarity.

**Figure 2** is a photo collage that shows the festive expression of ownership of the residents.

a to g - Group level expression observed through means of decoration of the entrance areas at night during Dusshera and Diwali<sup>11</sup> festivals at JN2 Housing, Sector 9, Vashi, Navi Mumbai

h and i – Examples of appropriation of space. Mr. Vishwakarma and his neighbours of Snehabandhan CHS<sup>12</sup> in the UDRI Housing, Sector 3, Sanpada, decorate the same common *angan*<sup>13</sup> outside alternately for Eid and Diwali, yet another example of appropriation and sharing of common spaces at the entrance areas.



*Figure 3: Photo collage narrating stories of appropriation, presence of animals and personal safety*

**Figure 3** is a photo collage narrating stories of appropriation, presence of animals and personal safety.

a – Stories of appropriation - Mrs. Sudham Pandurang Thorat of Chintamani Society in DRS Housing, Sector 26, Vashi lives on the first floor but sells vegetables on the ground floor from the veranda of her neighbour, an example of appropriation and sharing of spaces at the entrance areas

b, c, d – Pets seen at the boundaries of housing units

e - Mrs. Shakuntala Shetty's residence entrance of Siddhivinayak CHS

f - Renovation work in front of Mrs. Shakuntala Shetty's residence

g,- Mrs. Roopali P Shinde's residence entrance in Sandeepani CHS

### **A case on personal safety:**

Given the various spatial and social psychological processes at work, one might expect that physically similar, proximate blocks could develop very different personalities. Two street blocks, even though adjacent, can be as different as two neighbourhoods.

Eg: Two ground floor houses observed in the Income Tax Colony at Belapur had very different perspectives on safety even if they were located just two internal lanes away from each other.

Case 1: Mrs. Shakuntala Shetty of Siddhivinayak CHS said,

“Recently the environment has changed. There have been two robberies yesterday. We can’t keep a watchman given the number of entrances the colony has.”

Case 2: While Mrs. Roopali P Shinde of Sandeepani CHS said,

“We face no safety issues as we know all neighbours.”

In Case 1 the house entrance faced a building that was undergoing renovation and hence saw a lot of construction workers from outside the colony, which would have added to the feelings of insecurity. Even if both houses belong to the same housing project, the arrangement of housing units and the layouts of their entrances are different. Case 2 belonged to a layout that had households “turned in” on each other (Taylor, 1988, p. 170) which facilitated more social ties and bonding while Case 1 was part of a design that did not have many household entrances facing each other. When asked about the multiple entrances to the housing colonies that was a cause of concern for Case 1, Case 2 wasn’t too bothered about it as they would mutually keep a watch on each other’s houses reinstating the idea of mutual surveillance.

**Figure 4** shows a photo collage on how conversations are carried out at boundaries or entrance areas when community housing is designed to accommodate such activities.

**Figure 5** shows the porous nature of these housing projects and how these intermediate spaces are used by its users. It is essential to define boundaries for the smooth functioning and maintenance of spaces within a residential colony in the intermediate spaces between the built spaces, but it isn’t always essential to assign specific functions to them as a designer. Today townships are providing interactive social spaces in the form of club houses, sports facilities with assigned and very specific activities. It may be beneficial to enlist specific facilities on a website selling these housing units to potential buyers as a marketing strategy but the execution of a design such as this gives very little freedom to its future users with respect to customizing spaces that they inhabit. The projects studied above display a variety of flexible spaces at different scales that haven’t been assigned roles which the users can customize.

Talking about loose urban spaces, Stavrides mentions the following: “Unbuilt lots or outdoor public spaces that were not shaped as streets or squares served as informal centers of sociality. Children used them in their games, grown-ups in their walks, younger ones in their exciting journeys into adolescence...Alana was, however, a rich and porous urban space, always in the process of being transformed through use, especially in low-income neighborhoods.” (Stavrides, 2007, p. 7)



**Figure 4:** Conversations carried out at the boundaries





People inhabiting low height compound wall boundary/commercial boundary of the colony.



Children inhabiting the boundaries



**Figure 6:** People inhabiting the boundaries

Vendors & delivery boys at the doorstep: informal & online economic transactions giving livelihood.



Activities such as drying of clothes and grains are carried out in the intermediate spaces. Also the environment created is inclusive to both humans and animals.



**Figure 7:** Informal economic transactions and activities in intermediate spaces

### **Housing Complex Boundary- Interaction with the rest of the city:**

**Figure 6** shows how the boundary wall itself can be used as a connection to the city and how people inhabit the boundaries while **Figure 7** talks about the informal economic transactions and activities that happen at the boundaries of the studied housing projects.

*Kids' play area:* The spaces in between buildings become safe play areas for children. These areas are under constant surveillance thanks to every house on the ground floor opening out to them.

The key feature in all projects studied for this research is their porosity and their integrated presence in the city. The projects at Vashi, Belapur and Panvel still retain their porous nature (given exceptions of a few stretches that may seem dead) If one were to identify the Jane Jacobian, 'curse of the border vacuums', the Sanpada project seems to have the maximum dead boundaries due to high boundary walls and the central unused Recreational Ground, fewer number of entry/ exit points and the colonies being super strict about who enters and who doesn't. This project in spite of its initial porous design has begun to look inwards.

### **Factors Affecting the Expression of Ownership**

Factors discussed here were assimilated after having read C M Deasy's book (Deasy, 1985) that talks of factors like Personal safety, Territoriality, Privacy, Friendship Formation, Communication through markers and group solidarity that affect the expression of ownership. The following data was collected using questionnaires.

#### **Mutual Surveillance & Inclusive Environment**

##### *Observations:*

When the residents were asked if their houses included grandparents as permanent residents of the house, 80.5% of the residents mentioned that they were absent while 19.5% mentioned that they were present. When the residents were asked what the mother of the house does, 90.1% of the residents mentioned that she stays at home, 1.2% mentioned that she works from home and 8.6% mentioned that she goes out to work. When the residents were asked if they had pets, 95.1% of the residents mentioned that they did not, while 4.9% mentioned that they did.

Reading this together, we have over 90% of the households that have the mother of the house at home, around 20% of the households have grandparents at home and around 5% people have pets at home.

### *Analysis*

The presence of these people in and around a household, be it the mother or the grandparents increases surveillance and hence reduces crime rates increasing the feeling of security that residents feel living in that housing colony.

Oscar Newman mentions in his work *The Defensible Space*, the characteristics of defensible spaces namely

- “The capacity of the physical environment to create perceived zones of territorial influence”
- “The capacity of physical design to provide surveillance opportunities for residents and their agents”

Jane Jacobs speaks about more “eyes on the street” in her book *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*.

While both the above authors mention rules to design spaces that help in increasing vigilance and reducing crime, it is important that the family structure that the residents adhere to, have a considerable number of members staying back at home populating the housing colony for these surveillance models to succeed. Mothers and grandparents do exactly that; they help in mutual surveillance. Pets, such as dogs actively help in surveillance to protect a house. A diverse environment comprising of people of all age groups, pets, grandparents, greens thus become a very inclusive environment.

## **Personal Safety and Security**

### *Observations*

When the residents were asked if they would keep their front doors open and go out, 77.4% of the residents mentioned that they would not while 22.6% mentioned that they would. When the residents were asked if they would allow vendors/ courier man/ postman/ gas cylinder man inside their houses, 85.5% of the residents mentioned that they would not while 14.5% mentioned that they would. When the residents were asked if they would allow a stranger woman inside their houses, 87.9% of the residents mentioned that they would not while 12.1% mentioned that they would. When the residents were asked if they would allow a stranger man inside their house, 90.3% of the residents mentioned that they would not while 9.7% mentioned that they would.

### *Analysis*

The control access points are not very defined and monitored. Hence the fear of safety and security has cropped in amongst the residents. Residents aren't proactive enough or lack

the means to work out solutions to better the conditions with regards to personal safety and security.

### **Economic Data Evidence**

#### *Observations*

When the residents were asked about how many members earned in their families, 65.4% mentioned that theirs was a single income family while 34.6% mentioned that theirs was a double or more income house. When the residents were asked about who the earning members in their families were, 91.0% mentioned that it was the father, 24.4% mentioned that it was the son, 10.3% mentioned that it was the mother, 6.4% mentioned that it was the daughter, 6.4% mentioned that it was the uncle, cousin or others, 3.8% mentioned that it was the grandparents and 2.6% mentioned that it was the daughter in law. When the residents were asked about the monthly income range of their families, 14.8% mentioned that theirs was under Rs.15,000/- a month, 29.6% mentioned that theirs was between Rs.15,000/- to Rs.30,000/- a month, 29.6% mentioned that theirs was between Rs.30,000/- to Rs.50,000/- a month, 3.7% mentioned that theirs was between Rs.50,000/- to Rs.80,000/- a month and 22.2% mentioned that theirs was Rs.1,00,000/- and above a month,

#### *Analysis*

Researchers in the past have tried establishing the relation between the economic status of residences and the degree of their expression of territoriality, but these studies have ended with the proposition of theories. The data collected on site for this research is not sufficient to reach a conclusion on the same as neighborhoods (richer or poorer than the ones studied) have not been touched upon in order to compare & contrast the degree of expression.

### **Other Factors Affecting Expression: Duration, Migration, Previous Home**

#### *Observations*

- When the residents were asked for how long they have been living in their present houses, 42.4% (close to half) of the residents mentioned that they have been living here for 10 years or lesser, 32.3% mentioned that they have been living here for 11-20 years, 20.2% mentioned that they have been living here for 21-30 years, while 5.1% mentioned that they have been living here for more than 30 years
- Only the residents of JN2 Housing at Sector 9, Vashi answered as above 30 years

- DRS Housing at Sector 21-22, Belapur has residents who've been staying there for 20 years or lesser.

#### *Analysis*

It may be beneficial to cross verify these answers with the year of construction of these projects to get a better understanding.

JN2 Housing at Sector 9, Vashi : late 70s (estimated)

DRS Scheme Housing at Sector 26, Vashi : 1991

UDRI Housing at Sector 3, Sanpada : 1994

DRS Housing at Sector 21-22, Belapur : 1985-1996 (built in phases)

Housing at Sector 7, New Panvel : early 90s (estimated)

Many of the residents are not the first owners of the houses. For instance the DRS Scheme Housing at Sector 26, Vashi was initially built for Mathadi workers, but today the occupations of the residents living there is varied indicating that either they moved in after the Mathadi workers or the houses were never sold to the Mathadi workers.

The DRS Housing at Sector 21-22, Belapur was built for Income Tax and Customs employees/ officials but this project shows more complexity in ownership than the others. A few types of housing units now clubbed together as co-operative housing societies are given out to the public to own and maintain, while few blocks and all individual duplex houses belong to the Government given to the Income Tax and Customs employees/ officials as official accommodation. There are also a few blocks that have been deserted and are currently in a dilapidated condition which the Government has slowly begun to refurbish. The duration of stay is one of the factors that influences the expression of ownership at the entrance of houses. But this research doesn't delve deeper into this aspect. A study on how the expression of territoriality changes with time may be found in Ralph B. Taylor's book (Taylor, 1988, p. 330) where he elaborates on the passage of time and territorial functioning of a household.

**Migration:** The **Table 1** is the tabulation of all the information that the residents gave us through interviews on why they migrated and from where they did.

The data provided in **Table 1** is represented using maps in the image shown in **Figure 8**.

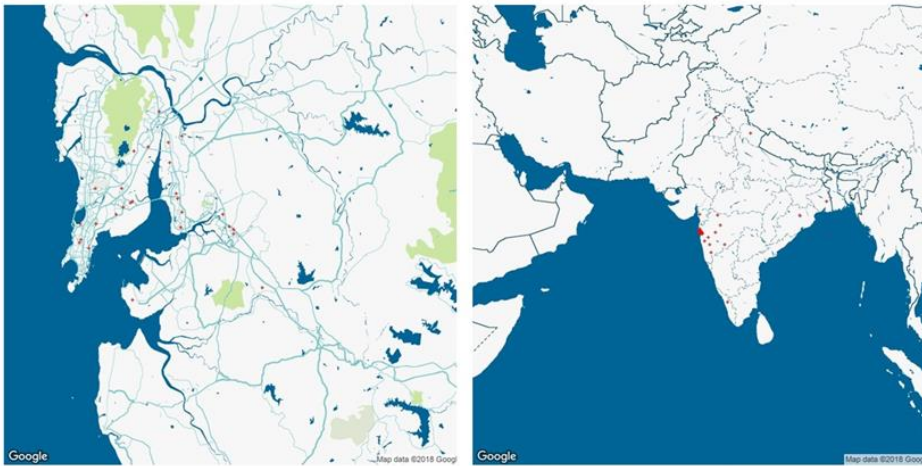
#### *Analysis*

Migration influences the expression of ownership as a large part of how one expresses ownership at the entrances of houses is culturally learnt. The previous house that one inhabits, and the prevalent expressions of that house are carried forth and emulated through rituals and traditions.

Housing Project	Co-operative Housing Society Names	Shifted here from
JN2 Housing at Sector 9, Vashi		Mumbai, Kolhapur, Uran
DRS Scheme Housing at Sector 26, Vashi	Chintamani	Mazgaon, Mankhurd, UP, Next building, Chembur, Prabhadevi, Chembur,
	Maharashtra	Sion, Solapur
	Vaibhav	Rasayani, Panvel, Sion, Vasai, Pauna Gaon (Thane)
	Happy Home	Bhandup, Chembur
	Pragati	Santacruz East
	Vasant Vihar	Satara
UDRI Housing at Sector 3, Sanpada	Niwara CHS	next building, Bhandup, Ghatkopar, Mumbai, Bhandup
	Snehabandhan CHS	Himgiri Society, Nalasopara, Saat Raasta, Mankhurd, Same place
	Himgiri CHS	Govandi, Sanpada, Chembur, Sector 8, Bhandup, Deonar, Ghatkopar
DRS Housing at Sector 21-22, Belapur	Siddhivinayak CHS	Bhandup, Airoli, Nerul, Karave, Nerul, Orissa, nearby
	Sandeepani CHS	Nerul, Kolhapur, Kolhapur, Sanpada (Turbhe gaon) Shigdha Gao, Chembur, Sion
	Sameer CHS	Amritsar, Nerul, Santa Cruz, Ghansoli, Pune, Pune
Housing at Sector 7, New Panvel	Cosmo CHS	Virar, Aurangabad, Uttarakhand, Sector 19, Chembur, F type, Mahad (Maharashtra), From A type, Calcutta
	Shiv Smruti CHS	Wadala, Solapur, Kerala, Nagar taluka
	Neelkamal CHS	Amaner, Jalgaon, Sector 7, Mumbra, Kopar Khairne, Worli
	Dattaguru CHS	Kalamboli, Satara
	Tejomay CHS	Ahmednagar

**Table 1: Table showing prior residence information**





**Figure 8:** Maps showing the extent of migration at the Navi Mumbai (L) and India (R) scale (generated by: Ar. Raunak Sudhakar). The red cross signs are locations from where the residents migrated.

### Previous Home

#### Observations:

When the residents were asked how similar or different was their present house from the previous one, 51.3% (more than half) of the residents mentioned that it was very different, 26.9% mentioned that it was different, 12.8% mentioned that it was similar, 6.4% mentioned that they couldn't judge, while 2.6% mentioned that it was the same.

#### Analysis:

The **table 2** enlists how the current house of the resident is different from their previous one and their reasons of shifting into this house.

Almost all the reasons mentioned above indicate families wilfully moving in a planned manner for economic, social, or educational progress in their lives/ children's' lives, (as opposed to migration due to political turmoil or natural disasters) which is a strong positive underlying factor that influences the expression of these residents in their newer houses.

Construction/ infrastructure	<i>Kuchcha</i> <sup>14</sup> to <i>pukka</i> <sup>15</sup> house; Husband's previous house <i>kuchcha</i> (Uttar Pradesh) Wife's previous house was in the city
	<i>Kuchcha</i> cow dung house, this house is 90% better
	Toilet inside here, we faced water problem in previous house
	We got this house from CIDCO, the previous house was in a slum
	Shifted since old house went in redevelopment; Bought in 2004, renovated in 2012
Quality	Current house is better

	New house is good
<i>Bigger house</i>	Previous house was more congested
	Chawl <sup>16</sup> to society, this house has a veranda
	Previous home was small
	Earlier house was a chawl, congested. New house different with respect to space, ventilation, nearness to station
	It was a huge house (home they used to live in now is compared to the kitchen of the previous home)
<i>Quality</i>	It's better here, pollution free, fresh. It was crowded in the previous house.
	The previous house was a 1bhk <sup>17</sup> , shifted for a bigger house
	Shifted to a 2bhk
<i>Staff quarters</i>	Retirement home - Father was Government servant. He had quarters which they left.
	Previous house bank quarters
	Tenure got over
	Income Tax/ Customs official housing
	Government quarters given
	Army colony, Nerul, that was on rent.
<i>Rural to urban</i>	Journey: Vasai wada <sup>18</sup> for 14 years, Sector 16 to 26
	Shifted from hometown to city
<i>Marriage</i>	Shifted after marriage, wife here since marriage. Husband stayed in town (Mumbai) & shifted here since marriage
<i>Relative</i>	Because this is relative's house
	Husband's sister's house
<i>Subsidised rate</i>	Bought for 3.5 lacs (25% discount by CIDCO), Airoli was better
<i>Other family members</i>	Parents shifted
	Childrens' decision to move
<i>Shifted to a smaller house</i>	Bungalow types in Kerala
	Big house at Nagar taluka
<i>Education</i>	Shifted for better schooling
	Specially abled child so shifted here for his school
	School was far
<i>Job</i>	Job need - market shifted here to Navi Mumbai
	Father's company in CBD, Belapur, so shifted.
	Had to go to different places because of their job
	Shifted for job, previous house was on rent

**Table 2:** Table enlisting differences from previous house & reasons of shifting

## Patrons And Users of The Domain

“Thus, cognitions and expectations regarding who has how much control in a space, or over others in a space, who has how much responsibility for what goes on in a particular location, and whether one will see strange or familiar faces in a location, all refer to

territorial functioning. Relevant behaviours include maintenance and beautification efforts as well as actions that indicate proprietorship, defense, or assertions of control.” (Taylor & Brower, Home and Near Home Territories, 1985, p. 185)

### *Observations:*

When the residents were asked who decided on the civil work/beautification of the door, window and balcony areas, 60.9% of the residents mentioned that it was the father, 47.1% of the residents mentioned that it was the mother, 18.4% of the residents mentioned that it was the son, 11.5% of the residents mentioned that it was the daughter, 2.3% of the residents mentioned that it was the daughter in law, 3.4% of the residents mentioned that it was the grandparents, while 4.6% of the residents mentioned that it was the uncle/ cousin or some other family member.

When the residents were asked who took decisions when it came to decorating the door, window & balcony areas, 45.9% of the residents mentioned that it was the mother, 29.4% of the residents mentioned that it was the father, 11.8% of the residents mentioned that it was the son, 15.3% of the residents mentioned that it was the daughter, 1.2% of the residents mentioned that it was the daughter in law, 3.5% of the residents mentioned that it was the grandmother, while 2.4% of the residents mentioned that it was the aunt/ cousin or some other family member.

When the residents were asked who cleans and takes care of the door, window and balcony areas 67.9% of the residents mentioned that it was the mother, 6.4% of the residents mentioned that it was the father, 3.8% of the residents mentioned that it was the son, 6.4% of the residents mentioned that it was the daughter, 5.1% of the residents mentioned that it was the daughter in law, 2.6% of the residents mentioned that it was the grandmother, while 14.1% of the residents mentioned that it was the aunt/ cousin or some other family member.

### *Analysis*

When it came to civil modifications in the entrance areas that involves some monetary investment, it was mostly the father (read earning member) of the family who took the decision. The earning member, although not physically present in the entrance areas holds power to make physical changes that involves constructing elements there because he plays patron in this scenario.

Other activities such as maintenance and decoration were the mother's forte. She and other family members such as children, grandparents mark their territory at the boundaries by their constant presence performing different everyday household activities and by cleaning and maintaining the entrance space. Thus, adults in the family contribute towards territorial functioning in their own ways.

## Conclusions

- The environment in the five housing projects studied was found to be conducive for practicing mutual surveillance. It was also found to be inclusive as it showed diversity in its residents with respect to age group, economic status, and caste. The presence of pets is also a sign of an inclusive environment.
- With regards to personal safety and security, given the porous nature of the housing projects with multiple formal and informal entrances, it was observed that there wasn't enough surveillance at these entrances, giving rise to the fear of personal safety and security amongst the residents. Expressions of territoriality and ownership by residents were observed, but the territorial functioning hadn't manifested itself into group solidarity that would have reflected in the residents trying to solve the problem.
- How factors such as economic status of residents and the duration of their stay in the house influence and affect the degree of expression at the entrances, needs to be studied in greater depth in different neighbourhoods and for longer durations of time to reach a substantial conclusion.
- A study on migration helped in understanding the expression of ownership as it informed one about the previous house and culture the resident had been a part of. Reasons for migrating helped understand that almost all families had decided to wilfully move for progress (and were not forced to move due to unforeseen circumstances). This strong positive underlying factor influences the expression of these residents in their newer houses.
- All family members contribute towards territorial functioning in their own ways. This gives us a certain understanding about the family structure and hence an insight into their expressions of ownership as well.

We try too hard to not pry. We forget that we are made of stories. We forget the juice behind finding out more. The space becomes a canvas that starts narrating more than what the artist intended to express and that's what makes this space beautiful. In a world where our stages for performances are set up in the virtual world, these physical intermediate spaces outside our houses become vestiges of a world that will soon be forgotten; unless we as architects adapt them to the newer more economically viable typologies of housing

that are coming up, unless we morph these spaces to aid the changing family structures of the inhabitants.

The environment around us, whether built or natural, influences the way we behave and interact with each other. Living in a city is stressful thanks to the busy lifestyle that we all lead with no time for social interactions and intellectual upheaving. Hence it is crucial to evaluate our residences, their immediate surroundings and ensure that they provide us with an environment that is peaceful, rejuvenating, socially and emotionally enriching. These are the safe havens we wish to come back home to. ■

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### Notes:

- <sup>1</sup> Seating at the entrance porch
- <sup>2</sup> Vermicelli pudding
- <sup>3</sup> Sweet dumplings
- <sup>4</sup> City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra
- <sup>5</sup> Temporary structure to house Lord Ganesha
- <sup>6</sup> Indian festival celebrating Lord Ganesha
- <sup>7</sup> Patterns drawn on the floor using rice powder or any other material.
- <sup>8</sup> Indian festival
- <sup>9</sup> Holy basil
- <sup>10</sup> Relaxation centre
- <sup>11</sup> Indian festival
- <sup>12</sup> Co-operative Housing Society is a legal entity which owns [real estate](#), consisting of one or more residential buildings.
- <sup>13</sup> Entrance courtyard
- <sup>14</sup> temporary
- <sup>15</sup> permanent
- <sup>16</sup> a large building divided into many separate [tenements](#), offering cheap, basic accommodation to labour.
- <sup>17</sup> one standard-sized bedroom, hall, and kitchen
- <sup>18</sup> Marathi word for a large house mostly with courtyards

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