

Gated settlements in a peripheral town of India
A case study of Calicut

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Contents

Abstract	4
ABBREVIATIONS	5
Chapter 1: Arriving at the scene	6
The larger structural changes	8
The purpose of the thesis	8
Practice and theory of the gate	10
The classification of Gated community	18
Evolution of Calicut; Historical and spatial narrative of urbanism.....	25
Chapter2: Manufacturers of the new human settlement in Calicut.....	30
The Main actors in the art of construction in Calicut.....	30
Special place for special people	33
Malabar Developer how to engineer the space	34
Chapter3.The Gated community that stood out.	43
Prelude	43
The “Hermitage.”	44
Other masterpieces	46
Vinod Cyriac’s self-reflection of his architectural practice	51
Cross section of “Hermitage.”	52
The Courtyard of Nature, surveillance and interaction	53
Creation of the Urban family in Hermitage	55
Other households	58
Power and control in Hermitage	58
The surveillance and the making of the panopticon.....	58
Character modification.....	59
The Socio-cultural composition of people	61
Reciprocity with surroundings	62
Collective activities.....	62
Conclusion	64
Bibliography	66

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Abstract

Calicut in southwest India is a peripheral metropolis city with low crime and violence against property and people. Last two decades witnessed a rise of gated communities. Calicut's case presents a paradoxical challenge to the established critical urban studies scholarship theorizations on how Gated communities as a refuge against violent crimes and inter-community antagonisms. Based on the ethnographic fieldwork into the activities of the builder, architects, and home owners, I argue that gated communities in Calicut are latent products of architectural practice. It is an assimilation of international trends which are indeed creating a "hybrid spaces" to where people of the affluent urban classes are moving in, while securitization from crime moderate priority. The residential projects enclose people from different religion and caste with similar social, cultural and economic capital in community encloses. The case study contributes to understanding the urban practices and logic of affluent community building in peripheral cities of India in the global south.

ABBREVIATIONS

CREDAI: Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations Of India

CDA: Calicut development authority

Chapter 1: Arriving at the scene

Driving north towards Calicut city through the bypass road from the southern fringes of the district gives a firsthand glimpse of the land-development activities on either side of the road. One may get the feel of a “perpetually under construction Indian city”¹ which may not show any perfection in the foreseeable future with all the potholes in the road, people driving with no lane manners, noncompliance with traffic signals, sound of endless honking and of course the occasional fatal car crashes. Along the road, it is hard to miss the unconcealable five stories high, flamboyant “Now in Calicut” catch phrased billboards, advertising the limited edition cars of Audi, Mercedes and Jaguar-Landrover along with advertisements for high-end luxury apartments and homes in gated settlements. All the builders from Calicut have their billboards with catchphrases stating why “you” should buy their home is the perfect investment in term of value appreciation. Loaded with infrastructure and world class amenities about uninterrupted electricity supply, water, the internet, recreation facilities, swimming pool, sporting facilities health spas and all in a gated premise. Which make “one” wonder if Kerala as a whole is a high crime prone zone. With numerous reports indicating that the state has become the crime capital would solve the paradox of why gated communities with ease. A further inspection into the crime statistics revealed that it was a wrong reading of crime data². Therefore, a question remain unanswered as why do gated communities arise in Calicut? As the city approaches, the first gaze persuades the spectator in believing that

¹ A scene where the margins of the road are dirt covered, large dirty tire tracks of truck permanently inscribed on the road, the cement and rock dust laden wind flow against the windscreen of the car or helmet windscreen as some of the vexatious repertoires of perpetually under construction cities and towns.

² A conversation with a senior inspector of police in Kunnamangalam panchayat (county) of Calicut unraveled how Kerala polices are adamant in registering an FIR for all cases including loss of cellphones, fender benders and other petty crimes which result in more number of crimes being reported while in other parts of India police have refused not only petty crime but also rapes and murders. Most of the newspaper reports were projected at creating a fictitious idea about crime in Kerala. In absolute numbers Kerala ranked 7 in the crime index.

Calicut has grown into being a luxury loaded city of gated communities. The line of sight will never miss the twenty-five to thirty-five storied residential buildings coming up and completed with enclosures, several private roads with designer signboard leading to gated luxury villa settlements also put a good show for the passerby's to aspire. The architectural composition of the houses on the billboard depicts how the physical characteristics is a resonation of western architecture high-rise architectural model. Gated communities composed of independent villa show the amalgamation of western and traditional architecture. At a psyche level, these ideographic signs and iconographic labels emanate a tempting consumption logic "Yes this could be yours", this is what "you" ought to have if you got the "money". Driving through the bypass is comparable to living in an advertisement. it testifies a valid paradigmatic shift is happening in Kerala as a whole and for the purpose of the thesis, in Calicut, where austerity regarding consumption vanished, and a trend to acquire high-end materials for consumption commenced. Advertisements aim at persuading spectator to invest in real estate because occasional ups and downs in the stock markets could be a loss. These advertisements further asseverate the potential customers about the position of Calicut as a destination for wildlife safari in the eastern hills, a hub for health and medicine tourism and place for nature tourism in the beaches and backwaters. Likewise, a proposal to make an industrial township is underway and the now operational information technology park adds a new coat of reasons to invest in real-estate.

The larger structural changes

The sporadic growth of the past two decades is the result of a U-turn in the eastward vectors of city expansion aided with the building of the Calicut bypass road. The road conspicuously transformed the landscape on either side creating the new commercial and residential spaces. Post-1990 phase witnessed the end of the “license raj”³ whereby state regulation and the long wait for processing paperwork for executing any commercial, and infrastructural activities ended. Precisely the India state also took a U-turn from perusing economic isolationism and socialist state monopoly over manufacturing and industries. The failure of the state’s necessary powers to create infrastructure for public use created the void which the private developers took advantage off. However, Calicut urban topography did not resist such real estate development activity because of passive resistance. The people who were displaced were paid well in term of land value, and it turned out to be a cooperative all win game. Focus shifted to creating these lifestyle goods and service as the prime object for marketing. Local business groups meanwhile diversified to prepare themselves as the marketing agent of the lifestyle products in which real estate take the apex position.

The purpose of the thesis

What this thesis analyze is how the contemporary gated built environment become a part of Calicut city and how privatization of human settlement and infrastructure essentialized through the peripheral variants of neoliberalism. Alternatively, the thesis also establishes how the present form of gated communities had a predecessor, and they resonate with certain enclosed human settlements of the erstwhile Calicut.

³ <http://financial-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/License+raj>

The thematic focus of the thesis will be (i) elaborate and analyze the practice of the builder and architects in creating the built environment (ii) the narratives from the homeowners of the gated and semi gated spaces. Calicut in southwest India is a deindustrialized, tier four size peripheral metropolis city inhabiting five hundred thousand people. The last two decades witnessed the rise and assimilation new type of housing structures specifically gated and semi-gated seeming communities to the architectonic landscape of urban Calicut. Unlike other cities which accommodate gated communities, Calicut is void of any temperamental antagonisms between its class, caste, religious, and ethnicity consonance. Simultaneously it presents a paradoxical challenge to the established global discourse on gated community theorizations established on antagonisms related to fear of crime, race, and religious animosity. Contextually Calicut's case proves that rise of gated communities and increase in urban crime is not directly proportional. The thesis contextualizes why gated, and semi- gated communities arise by analyzing the historical trajectories, actors, cultural and social idiosyncrasies in pre and post gated community in urban Calicut. From a demand side, the Upper-Middle and up classes have created a new market new built environments. The result of "deterritorialized" architectural and construction practices adopting styles from other parts of the world creating a new space is "reterritorializing". Here the old way of constructing the built forms are phased out and new form come in , in that context a gated community takes its remarkable position. historically rooted caste, religious and cultural practices have been part of the built enviroment however with the change to new built environment is also causing a shift in practices. The new zone within a gated community is a liminal space for the inhabitants, which metamorphosize the preexisting orders in term of social, cultural and economic capital spread out and habituate them to a new ordering. Thorough an ethnographic inquiry into the activities of the builder and architects on one side and from the consumers of the

new gated/semi-gated spaces, I wish to argue that gatedness as a built quality is a latent function for a large structural project to make space for the societies affluent people. Furthering the argument, It uncovered a new avenue to showcase class aspirations occurred through possessing private property, investment, and status mediation. With gating as a latent mask, Calicut's spatial expansion created a new “hybrid third space” with a new rationalism to enclose people from different religion and caste with similar social, cultural and economic capital. Through exploring the philosophies, ideas and practices of architects, builders, urban designers, city planners, residents and resident associations, I have weaved the story to establish the *raison d'être* for gating.

Practice and theory of the gate

Gated community is a built environment designed to protect human inhabitant from imminent threats arising from crime and violence. Gated communities have proclaimed certain status in the urban landscape as the necessary built environment in the past 30 to 40 years. Conceivably in architectural landscape of a city, a Gated community locates itself at the highest form of contemporary human settlements while the lowest form is synonymous to a slum, ghetto, or favela. Locating a GC in the architectural spectrum allows us to categorize it according to the achieved and ascribed status statements of human beings.

Architecture partially loses its meaning with the negation of human status element. Human occupant and the house has an intimate relationship in which the house acts as an “external skin” as a second layer of clothing with the sole purpose to protect mind and body (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995). Understanding the gated community through a theoretical lens is an intricate procedure of contextualization and decontextualization of various historical factors. The skin metaphor of gating is apt when I found the gated community in Calicut to be an embodiment of the multi-layer process. The gated communities lie at a point in history where to start theorizing,

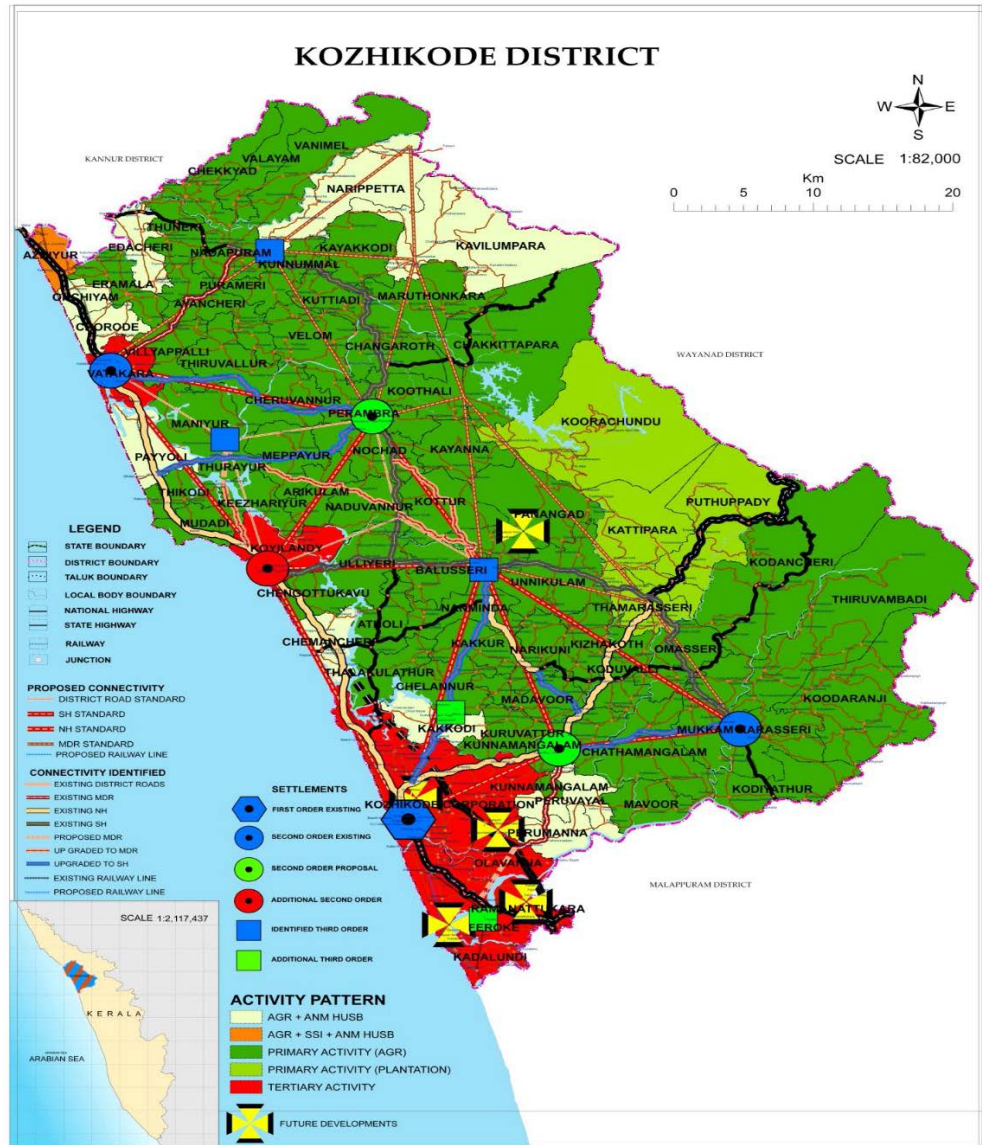
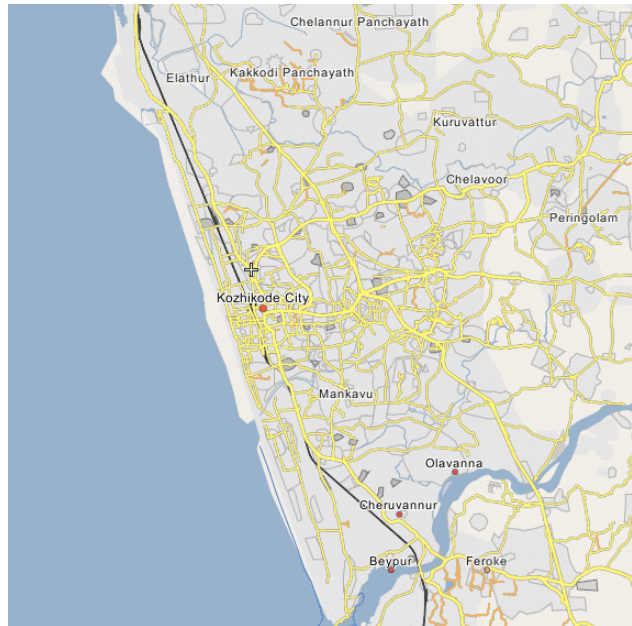


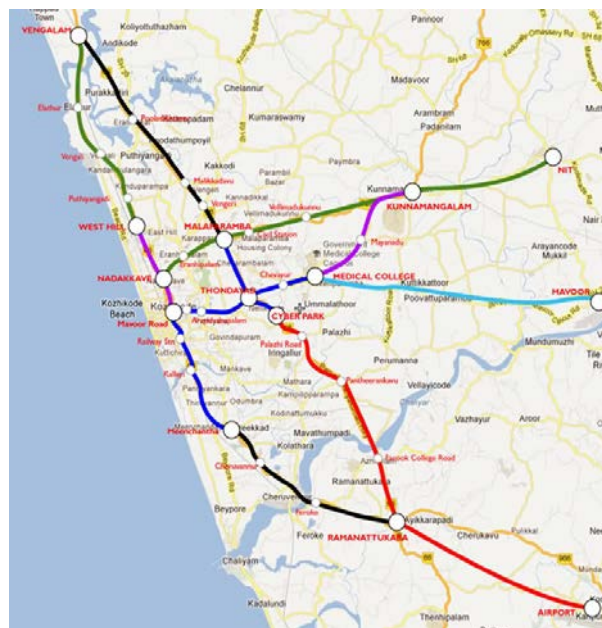
Figure 1 The Map of Calicut district

⁴ Town planning organization of government of Kerala



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Figure 2 The road map of Calicut



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Figure 3 The road map of Calicut. The Red, blue and black colored road is the Bypass road which house most gated communities

⁵ Wikimapia

⁶ Wikimapia

Or at least to start with something, I look at the built environment, which is a product of human action to create a space which is supposed to protect the rich and the affluent. The inception of gated community in Calicut also resonates with the wave of globalization in a national and international level, the increased distribution of wealth and insecurities are contributing to the inception of gated communities (Low 2001b). Beyond this other notion and ideas of fear, paranoia and reasons for exclusivity associated with gated community which several urban anthropologists found in the other parts of the world are absent, but the built design of the gated community suggests that the landscape is conditioned to be solicitous about violence and crime (ibid).

A Gated community, among all other urban structures, becomes a concrete structure as it is the commemoration and embodiment of various processes producing and reproducing the urban elites, bourgeoisies, and the new transnational embourgeoisied populace. The built environment of a gated community intends to be a private space with fences, relatively impenetrable walls with armed and unarmed security guards, intentionally developed, for protecting and securing residential, commercial and corporate zones from the dangerous outside world (Davis 1990, Le Goix and Webster 2006, Low 2001a). Why gated communities arise in Calicut is adding a new layer and discourse to the urban built environment in the city of Calicut. I wish to find out the cause behind why people decide to gate themselves and live in these post-modern condominiums and villas despite Calicut being in a city with fewer crime rates and externally invisible inter-community antagonisms. In Kerala gated communities would aid in understanding the complicated relationship between urban built environment, private spaces and the formation and contemporary structuration of caste and class in urban zones. The urban agglomeration of Calicut has a population of 4 million and the city area or municipality has a day population of 500,000 people.

Presently Calicut evidently shows the all the signs of a burgeoning tier III size city with massive transformation; urban space has polarized into zones of exclusion, inclusion, emancipation and subjugation regarding new power structures about urban class, caste, and kinship. A Gated community, among all other urban architecture, becomes the commemoration, concrete structure, and embodiment of all these various processes. Additionally, historically, the size of the house was dialectically related to the class and caste of a person.

The prominent literature about gated communities from scholars and cases from internationally suggests that the Gated communities existence ratify with the desire and urgency to dwell in highly securitized due to inter- race, class and caste antagonisms(Blakely and Snyder 1997, Low 2003, 2001a) .The promising aspect of these zones are rooted in their structural make which , makes them technically a closed, fortified ,defended, privately governed public space(Atkinson and Blandy 2006) .The contemporary case of Calicut's new gated built forms are effectively show these characteristics and empowers the occupants solipsistically. The Gated communities in Calicut in its physical appearance, style and aesthetics seems to represent a “rhizomatic structure” created the confluence of capital and ideas(Deleuze and Guattari 1987) .The juncture created by the migratory class of people, with transnational connection , especially to the middle east, and the marginal, yet significant internal migrants have created a new demand for housing in general. In Calicut there is discernible transcendence of the global patterns in terms of marketing the gated communities, its style and anesthetics are visible on the physiognomy of the gated built environment. The gated communities are the pinnacles of private communal infrastructure embedded in private urban spaces validating the idea of “metropolitan fragmentation”(McKenzie 1994, Blakely and Snyder 1997, Low 2003, Le Goix and Vesselinov 2015, Le Goix and Webster 2006). The Gating pattern in Calicut verbatim resonates with the “planned development” for the

common interest of the up class discourse (Bodnar and Molnar 2009). David Harvey's concept of "relational connectivity" ameliorates my quest to understand the significance of the space and memory embedded in these spaces. However the puzzling side is how to come up with an explanation for the visible absence of spiraling urban crime and the rise of gated communities. The need for securitization is very non obligatory due to low crime rates .The lack of 'fear of the urban crime' (Brenner and Theodore 2002) ,aspect of gated community which Bodnar and Molnar sees as a crucial reason for the rise of gated community is missing here.

The idea of representation of social space of Lefebvre (2007) would ideally unfold in the construction of the meaning making processes within the gated community. Henry Lefebvre makes a distinction between representations of space and representational spaces in his theorization of social space.(2007:38-39). Representations of space stands for "conceptualized space, the spaces of scientists, planners urbanists, technocratic sub dividers and social engineers...all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived". Representational spaces on the other hand refer "space as directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of inhabitants' 'and users,' but also of some artists and perhaps those, such as a few writers and philosophers, who describe and ascribe to do no more than describe". (P.38-39). I endorse this theoretical methodology to explore the possibilities of spatial reorganization and experience in terms of its everydayness interaction. The creation of this new gated community space is evidently happening with similar over tones, Michel De Certeau, makes an important distinction between place and space in his influential work, the Practice of Every Day Life [1988]. "A place (lieu) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence". He further says "a place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. It implies an indication of stability." A space on the other hand "is composed of

intersections of mobile elements.” He further argues “space is a practiced place” (p.117). In the built environment of a gated community, the space is a structured, hierarchical zone where the, relations of power and hierarchy outside is reflected on the internal attributes build environment (access to particular zones within, electing the residents association president, and rules and regulation for internal governance). The space here is the place where of habitualization of caste practices and idiosyncrasies takes place.

Furthering the rational inquiry into gated communities, I find Edward Soja’s (1989) observation regarding space in his Post Modern Geographies, *The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. According to him “space in itself may be primordially given, but the organization and meaning of space is a product of social translation, transformation, and experience” (p.79-80). The organization and meaning making process, as a multicausal and multilayered process, introduces the new spatialization, creation of the third space through reorganization and marginalization. A gated community in this context is space of such historicity, more over social space in India is a convolution of caste, religion, and class embedded in multiple historicities. This layering causes a new form of spatial or what Lefebvre calls Hegel's "fetishization of space in the service of the state.” The urban elite and the growth makers through its liberal policies are facilitating for the construction of this space, the urban elite the new space for themselves and the aspiring middle class(Jonas and Wilson 1999).

The urban landscape of Calicut has the three major types of gated settlement, (1) Gated, walled apartment complexes (2) Luxury villas and mansion enclaves and (3) Assorted space of both. The walls were established to demarcate class divide. The rich ought to project themselves as exclusive group while physically avoiding the poorer groups. Europe had an adaptation of this system in its history too, so did North America. Predominantly , this built arrangement was to protect the rich

from poor local population (Low 2001b). The extreme cases of urban landscape being segregated are Mike Davis's account on urbanization of Los Angeles and how gated communities prop of on the one hand and ghettoization on the other (Sorkin 1992). However on a relative scale, for the austere architectural landscape of Calicut, Gated communities occupy a surreal and outlandish position. Well this does not mean that, there is an opposition to its existence. A Gated community embodies the accumulation of economic capital. In certain way, no one opposes its physical existence, and the social function it performs by protecting the rich. A plausible reason for this could be resonating from the absence of those "crucial" factors that makes gating happen in the first place.

The human element of a Gated Community is the rich and the affluent of any society. Therefore, without any contention, a Gated Community harbors people of up and upper-middle class. Simultaneously, in the cultural landscape, Gated Community fits a deterrent for inter class-caste-religious-ethnic interactions argues some scholars. They claim that Gated Community phased out inter class-religion-ethnic interaction by making it dysfunctional through its walled and gated built environment. Hence, the essence of the society is lost. However, before labeling a Gated Community as a deterrent for human interaction, we need to the nuanced class, religion and ethnicity components of the city where the particular Gated Community exists.

These characteristics components form the essence of the society through the human interaction. The interaction is socio-economic and cultural. In using architecture as a parameter, we find these interactions taking a new turn. A turn for essential segregation with passive resistance, However, there are differences in how segregation is critically thought of. In North America where racial segregation existed (Low 2003, 2001a, Blakely and Snyder 1997), in South Africa with the apartheid (Jürgens and Gnad 2002). Cities in Europe and North America where Jewish and other

ethnic minorities have face segregation, have triggered a historical debate on architectures functional role(Kantrowitz 1969). No consensus exist from the public against such segregation which is killing diversity among people. However in India, segregation was caste and religion based. The depth of segregation was unfathomable, so the resistance to such discrimination has not yet taken a counter hegemonic stand. However the spatial segregation has been observed in India(Fuller and Narasimhan 2010, Jodhka 2002). In post-colonial India, social mobility restructured the influence of caste. The dominant and the effluent of the middle castes and lower castes attained a threshold in the social hierarchy. Class mobility caused by an increase in income of the people and the economic opportunities they were exposed to, resulted in the seizing of the threshold. Therefore, caste and class convoluted to transform and reassert a contemporary validity, essential applicability and functional presence in the society. As a practice of everyday life, it operates in the tacit and subtle understanding of people should and ought to interact. In India, Gated communities which what qualifies a human settlement a Gated community? To answer, first, we ought to interpret what the architects who designed the built environment defined it as. The architectural meaning of a gated community shifts after a gated community becomes occupied by inhabitants.

The classification of Gated community

I took the typification Rowland and Blandy gave in their Introduction: international perspectives of the new enclavism and rise of Gated communities. They describe a gated community as a space that is walled, surveilled, legally codified for micro governance with varieties of leisure facilities. The gated communities in Calicut have similar characteristics with the huge compound wall, larger gates for entry and exit, perpetually controlled by several security outposts are standard.

Rowland and Blandy problematize the definition of gating by pointing out that these characteristics are also present in a non-gated settlement like an apartment with electronic door entry systems, doorman or service apartments. So how can a built environments with gates classified as Gated community, but the real essence of Gatedness is the combination of legal framework and the protective physical built environment (Atkinson and Blandy 2006, viii).

What is peculiar about Calicut is the way the public perceives privatization of land, the fortification is legitimized with no opposition and the fundamental lack of high crime that creates the need for gated community which contradicts the finding of Atkinson et al. (2004) in the UK. However what corroborates with Atkinson and others findings with Calicut's case for gating is people's search to find like-minded individuals, creating a space for private governance,(Atkinson and Blandy 2006, ix). Calicut's human settlement trajectories newest add-on has a dynamic architectural characteristic which in other parts of the world is loathed as it is very concrete symbolism of segregation but in Calicut, it is very well camouflaged in the upper-middle and up class's ethos and idealized dwelling aspiration. Therefore, with such sheer lack of opposition, these the aggressive architecture of gated communities or enclosures receive strong valorization as the next ideal place to live if anyone could afford it.

I define the gated communities of Calicut as the new paramount of human settlement in Kerala. The motive behind calling it the new paramount is its aura in containing and sustaining significant social, cultural and economic capital. Promising imperatives of gated settlements safeguard upper middle class and up class aspirations, interests and habituates the next generation of their lineage to follow the same trajectory. The built environments that I have classified as gated are based on the principles of classification framed by Atkinson and blandly, specifically concerning walled,

gated and fenced communities, as an area of restricted access to public, legal and quasi-legal agreements determining a code of conduct(Atkinson and Blandy 2006, viii)

The decision to work on a thesis to describe and theorize why gated communities form in Calicut was out of highly motivated curiosity and observations made while visiting few in preceding years. The remarks gave an idea of how urban landscape of a peripheral tier 3(some say 4) size city of Calicut became a zone of “new” architecture acculturation. Newness is regarding the paradigmatic shift from the old built environment core characteristics in segregating and containing individuals and households according to the caste and religion belonged replaced by new Gated communities that contain people according to their class. To understand the essence of contemporary gating, the knowledge and practice of the architects and builders of this space became the primary objective; the next were the dwellers of the community. The first problem I faced was with access and willingness on behalf of people to engage in conversation with me. A day into field work gave astonishing replies regarding how access to architects and builders unfolded. That motivation was the driving force that led to the traverse through a wide variety of people to gather ethnographic data. The initial conventional interviews were with City planning authority official. They gave a brief overview of Calicut and its previous master plan and how the drafting of the new master plan is taking place. The next were the interviews with three major architect groups in Calicut, STAPATI architects, N M Salim and associates, Prashant Architects. Their collective intervention opened up interaction opportunities with the builder they work with and their esteemed customers who are the inhabitants of several gated communities in Calicut. The clients or dwellers were people of the upper-middle and up-class social groups, most of them had found refuge in expensive gated houses in Calicut after unpleasant life in non-gated homes. Most of them were business people, doctors, engineers, professors, architects, investors, retired professional and

The first empirical chapter is an account of historical Longue Duree approach in understanding the human settlements in Calicut. Primarily focusing on how the religious and caste defined clusters of human settlement changed with socio-historical and political economic variation. The chapter argues about how gatedness were a part of human settlement in Calicut in the form of a rigid system which prevents people from possessing private property. The second chapter describes the contemporary gated space and place making narrated through the interviews conducted with the Builders and architects based in Calicut. The chapter further elucidates how the longing for the gated spaces is part of new urbanism in Calicut. The third chapter focuses on the individuals who live in the gated communities and how they see the gated areas as the next phase of human settlement for a particular class.

The plot to understanding the structure of Housing.

To briefly set the background of my field site, I can plausibly state Calicut city as a usual esplanade of neoliberalism's instrumentality and influence. Local economy was resonating the instrumentality through its particular interest in urban change programs through the disinvestment in state's activities on developing the urban area and public infrastructure. Private developers were tacitly promoted by the state. Specifically the financialization of land for accelerated and expeditious construction ventures. Preexisting structures of built environment of independent houses and un-gated residential colonies losing prominence as desired dwelling place for the wealthy with new trends and styles in architecture. The trend setting gated built environments with assuring and enrapturing infrastructure advances to prominence as it becomes the ideal dwelling zone of the rich and the affluent. The plausible reason behind rise of urban activities and the increase in the number of projects are due to the road building projects of the state as a part of "new urban development programs". The urban growth thesis of Harvey Molotch corroborates Calicut's urban development trajectory where the state, the private developer and political elites and banks conjoin to create the "urban growth machine". The need amalgamation of capitalism with historically situated places with culturally rooted people or in other words the rise of the local form of neoliberalism with peripheral flavors (Jonas and Wilson 1999). The background of the gated community's landscape is a product of such development schemes, as roads opened up hinterlands within the city's metropolitan agglomerations. Roads connected the primitively accumulated land to attain a market price and nearness to the road infrastructure determined the costs. However because of a vast number of land speculators, the land prices soared due to higher demand, which made the owners sell them to land pooling groups for reasonable profits. Disposal of land made them relatively wealthy, and the previous property owners pushed themselves to city

fringes. The speculation land market born out of this union became the caretakers of the land. To sum up the land deal, the expropriation by these private agencies made it profitable for everyone who dealt with it. The agency centered localism and motivation for growth creates consensus among the local elites created the perfect starting point for real-estate development.

After some successive land dealings, when the ground attains a critical mass regarding the area and financial worth, the land pooling agents sell it to building developers. The area turned into an urban fortune, where the rentier class formed around the land developers, realtors, and banks facilitate the construction and sale of the property (Jonas and Wilson 1999). The area is then processed by them using the migrant labor inflow from north India, to construct these relatively outlandish structures, when you take into consideration the delicate, lush green and verdant landscape of coconut trees and laterite soil. GC development approximately takes about 3-4 years to complete due to the technological lag in the construction field in India. Money for construction transnational capital, mostly from the Middle East. A major share of the customers who invest in land development projects are expatriate migrant professional classes. The builders of the development projects are the erstwhile wealthy gentry in Calicut, who are Muslims and Hindus, and their social networking enables them to channel bulk capital for building projects from Malayali investors from Middle East. Once the structure of the landscapes and the building are in blueprint, the advertisements firms which has taken the contract for advertising publishes the artist's impressions of the final product in several property expos, mass media, lifestyle magazines and bill boards around Kerala. Product placing is themed under lifestyle aspiration. Advertisements show what ought to be life style of the rich and the affluent. A common phrase used in ads are "world class", which implies the quality of the make and the feel an individual experience when they buy the property would be like that of big cities of the world. This aspiration

is the collective episteme a small peripheral city. Gated Community is sold under the similar banner of “world classness”.

As a stage for selling the last condos and apartments, the developer also invites the creditors, who are the national and international banks that operate within the state. The association is because the builder has their bank accounts in the same bank so that reciprocity makes them be a part of the expo. The first attempt to sell the apartments happens. However to woo the potential buyers in a more successful way, the Builders who are mostly from the state of Kerala and also outside the side and their banking partners in Calicut join and organize annual expos where they sign the first deal with potential buyers who play 20% of the cost of a condo. The bank with their alluring and with budget interest rates, the interior designers with their eloquent contribution to the interiors form the perfect angulation for the first sale. The apartments are bought by or on behalf of non-resident Indians. Non-resident Indians or NRI's are relatively the groups who possess the instantly liquidated cash to buy these properties. However, there are other local elites like doctors and lawyers usually or anyone who can raise the specified amount of money to buy property. They are the elites regarding this microcosm within the larger macrocosm of the world economy. Scaling their purchasing power parity in the context of the urban landscape of Calicut puts them as the middle and upper-middle class. The ideal of “world class living” are sold to these categories more efficiently. Summing up, A Gated community, among all other urban structures, becomes the commemoration, physical structure and embodiment of all these variegated processes. My central question is about “why the people of this city are gating themselves” since premeditatively the question of gating arises when there are race, class and power antagonisms among the populace. But here it suggests a larger market function. From this assumption, I do not want to reduce the

further underlying elements of gating in Calicut. Through a micro lens, I wish to inspect into what constitute the microstructures of gatedness.

Evolution of Calicut; Historical and spatial narrative of urbanism

Calicut or Kozhikode is a coastal city facing the Arabian Sea, located in the north central part of Kerala State in South India. The city evolved out of predominantly with the trading activities with the Middle East. The geographic location of Calicut was historically a part of the archaic globalization. The trading reciprocity between the Middle East at least stretches back to a millennium. The erstwhile Calicut under the rule of the Zamorins was documented as a nodal port for active trading activities between East Africa and Indonesian archipelago and further extending to the Far East(Ptak 1989). Marco Polo, Ibn Battuta, Abd al- Razzaq, all have memoirs about Calychachia (Calicut) in their travelogue respectively(Ptak 1989). Conjoined to this Calicut was also described as a significant harbor in the 'Western Ocean' and tantamount to being the hub of foreign merchant. The Ming Dynasty's navigational chart of the possible place of anchorage in the West has Calicut as an important destination(Ptak 1989). In 1409 AD, A Mohammadian Chinaman, Mahan's states about Calicut in his memory. He describes the verdant landscape of coconut trees and hills with pepper cultivation, all owned by wealthy proprietors and their trade link with Aden, presently in Yemen(Phillips 1896) The transactions for these commodities were in exchange for gold, silver and beautiful scarlet cloths. In 1498 AD, Vasco da Gama set sail from Belem in Lisbon harbor, circumnavigated the Cape of Good Hope, traversed the Indian Ocean and dropped anchor in Calicut. The Traditional dominance of Malabar under the control of the local chieftains ended with the Portuguese advent, popularly referred as the 'Da Gama epoch' (Northrop 1955) .The Portuguese and locals Hindus and Mappila Muslims fought for supremacy over trade where the locals won. However with the advent of the British, the local group's monopoly over

the space faded. Transnational interaction through trade, commerce, and exchange of cultural and religious values gave birth to the colonial Calicut (Kieniewicz 1969, Dale 1980, Pearson 1976, Kundu 1983). The British rule added several facets to the town in term of the spatial ordering. The graveled and tarred roads, government offices of administration, Post and Telegraph systems established, the port, timber exporting yards, several warehouses. At the later stage of colonial rule, the railway lines and train station were built.

However, no reforms and spatial changes were made to human settlement. The control of Mosque, Temple authorities, caste, and religion, made spatial reallocation impossible. The Hindus centered on areas which had prominent temples and Muslims around the mosques. The best examples would be the large mansions of Kuttichira, where, Mappila Muslims live. They are a matrilineal and matrilocal community. The newly wedded grooms could not to take away the bride and start a new family elsewhere. They were to be the part of the larger family which used to have a minimum of 25 to 50 members in the household. Collectively this was indeed a primitive form of the cultural and religious enclosing (Gating). The Tamil Brahmins practice a similar form of enclosing. They cluster around the Temple vicinities in Calicut and live in a built environment called Aghraharams. The sale of property to non-Tamil Brahmins was prohibited. The place does not welcome outside who are of lower caste and other religion. The Smiths of several kind, e.g., copper worker, goldsmiths, and blacksmiths lived in their exclusive clusters in the city. The caste system works are a signifier of occupation and ritual purity. The Dalits are seldom in the record of housing. They live on the outskirts of the city in shanties and run down structures. Historically the essence of gatedness has always been part of Calicut through these primitive forms.

From a macro view, the house is a product of social-cultural, economic, ritual and physical forces with multiple purposes to serve to the individual living and the larger image the house as a built

environment wants to emulate (Rapoport 1969). An Agential perspective shows the Body of a person and their house are linked, metaphorically an embodiment of their self, with a perpetual link between body, mind and home (Carsten and Hugh-Jones 1995). At a generic gaze, the pattern showed that people profusely preferred living with the individuals who shared their same caste and religion. During precolonial times, house construction was a limited affair. The technologies and diversities in styles and make were absent.

After India's Independence, The land reallocation restricted single individual from possessing massive areas of land. The land was bought and sold, The Christian communities in Kerala were a prominent group that acquired much land along with others. In Calicut, the Thyya caste, a dominant lower caste group of agrarian and entrepreneurial occupation also received many lands. The monopoly over land held by the Hindu upper caste, the Brahmins, the Nambiar's and wealthy Mappila Muslims ended. Historically the caste system prohibited people of the lower caste to use and possess the particular type of building material for the construction of homes. The upper caste had exclusive monopoly to use tiles for flooring and roofing, using teak wood for furnishing. The lower caste had less monopoly over using specific materials. The materials and the craftsmen work with them followed tacit agreement on who they would serve. The Dalit's were entitled to no materials hence they lived in shanties made of coconut leaf thatched roof and wall supported by four wooden poles.

The Malabar Architecture

The coast of Kerala referred to as Malabar in vernacular language and English is the home of Malabar architecture. The archetypical features were predominantly clay tiled roof fixed on top of a wooden frame made of Jackfruit tree, teak wood or some variety of rosewood. Walls made of laterite soil brick, plastered with sand, limestone powder and cement and Exteriors painted with

hydrated lime obtained from seashells and meager quantities of ultramarine fabric bluing agents makes this architecture very austere(Thampuran 2001). A panoramic gaze of the neighborhood would yield building painted in mild sky blue color. A house ought to have these characteristics to have class. Collectively this phase shows the austerity in technology and ideas for majority households in Calicut. The materials used in construction embodied an element of caste and class. However in the heart of the town, most houses had similar looking features. An individual could not customize it further to assert their individuality.



Figure 4 A typical Upper middle-class home in Malabar region (only for representational purpose)

The transformation of residential built form

The first significant urban gentrification happened when the professional class of that era and the affluent sections of the middle class emerged in the small town of Calicut. Collectively the period until the 70's was stagnant but with the Migration to Middle-east for Oil jobs. The wealth multiplied among the middle classes as the remittances soared. The straight effect it had was in the Housing Industry whereby people had the private income to expand on material products. The Imagination of a person were to recreate the upper caste life world in term of materials were seen

initially. The Housing styles and preferences changed as remittances poured in. Social mobility for the lower class became a reality. The ground rules changed through people adopting modern architecture for that age. Concrete roof systems of Portland cement with indigenous mid structure and base. An architect with STAPATI, to whom I spoke to recalls about how the middle-class of 60's and 80's wanted to imitate the upper caste built environments. Especially the newly em-bourgeoised class among the Hindus and Muslims, who were historically economically backward. At that point, there were two trajectories, a section longing of upper-caste styles and a part that looked for transnational architecture.

Simultaneously a new built environment was introduced to Calicut's urban space during 70's, and 80's. The rise of the residential colonies. They became the new ideal refuge of slowly developing urban middle classes. Most residents in these colonies were of professional classes. The emblematic aspect of residential colonies were its class exclusivity and similar looking houses although with customizations. By 90's the residential colonies predominated as the ideal form of human settlement. The built environment had ordered space with the access road to individual homes. Every house had its compound perimeter wall. No security guards posted at the point of convergence of the access roads to the main road. These access roads usually did not have public transport operating in them. The ideal family in this settlement ought to have a two wheeler or a car. It was specifically developed to cater the middle classes of the late 70s' till post 90's.

Chapter2: Manufacturers of the new human settlement in Calicut

The Main actors in the art of construction in Calicut

The following narrative unfolds the structural and corporate role played by the builder and architects of Calicut in the process of constructing the new houses for the urban upper-middle and up classes. The exclusive group of builder mentioned in this chapter is originating from Calicut and have many human settlement projects completed and ongoing. The enquiry started with revealing the position as a researcher, to understand the trajectory of housing and finally to understand where gated communities fit into the larger picture. The positionality of a researcher helped in contacting the top echelons of these builder groups with ease for conversation and interviews. Further acquaintance with the managing director Rajiv Menon a civil engineer of PVS Developers and builders, Chief engineer of operations of Malabar developers, Mr Yassir Ahmed, Managing director of Crescent builders and CREDAI Calicut chapters president Mr KV Haseeb Ahamed , Founder and principal architect of De-earth Mr Vivek Puthenpurayil and Founder architect of Good earth builder group Architect Vinod Cyriac collectively contributed to the unfolding the finer story of the creation of semi-gated and gated apartments, villas and villaments as exemplars of new spatial reorganization in Calicut. The actors who are controlling the building construction are transforming the way the public picture a place. The larger narrative is about how the space become an expensive place, in certain ways it can be called as gentrification of Calicut. However, the displacement is passive and has no resistance and more people are attracted to the idea of living in infrastructure loaded gated or semi gated community.

PVS developers and builder got established in 1991; they are the property development division of KTC group which is a prominent industrialist family from Calicut. Before diversifying into real

estate they have been investing in and running a transportation company for people and logistics since 1958. PVS developers have around 25 projects all around Kerala in which most of the customer pool are Non-resident Indians working in Middle Eastern countries. Their investors are domestic entities who keep a low profile. They have four segments of apartments which are graded according to the price and proximity to the city center.

In 2005 Malabar Developers were formed as the real estate division of Malabar gold and diamonds. Malabar developer's offers high end gated luxury apartments and villas for customers. Their logo catch phrase is "more life per square feet". Most of the advertisements have luxury innuendo emanating from it. Their principle agenda is to cater to the customer who will return to Kerala after their work abroad. The customers usually return back with the idea of living a traditional and cosmopolitan life. Hence they make spaces which are an amalgamation of both. Their present master piece is "Montana Estates" which is massive self-sustaining gated community in the eastern hill side of Calicut city. It will house around 500 homes and villaments, with the option of massive customization.

Crescent builders are a real estate division of a larger business enterprise owned by Mr K.V. Kunhammed .The Company is headed by Mr K V Haseeb Ahamed with a business motive to create superior quality homes in Calicut which are in close proximity to public infrastructure. Their apartments are on mostly situated in the prime location of Calicut city, with most of them being semi-gated and gated. The company has processed over twenty projects out of which fifteen are completed and handed over to customer.

De-Earth architecture and builder firm founded by a young architect and urban designer Vivek Puthenpurayil focus on creating built environments that are overwhelming with nature. The company was founded by him and his associate Nishan Muttumuttam. To "nurture", "create" and

“Belong” is the catch phrase in their company logo. They work as consultants for bigger firms with a strict philosophy rooted in bringing nature to the forefront along with traditional and aesthetically appropriate architecture.

Good Earth architecture firm is brainchild Architect Vinod Cyriac and his wife Anita Chowdhary, They are an architecture and a builder firm in Calicut with a philosophy to construct sustainable community which is also reflected in the company logo. All their project are distinctive and experimentally constructed to focus on human interaction. They are also strict forbearer’s traditional architecture with contemporary designs. So far three residential projects have been completed apart of other works for government, hospital and schools.

In the construction game the builders bring in three components together starting with channeling the money from the investors, the architects and interior designers who have the sense of design and how the interiors have to be to match with the existing styles and the advertisement and marketing the property to the customers. Collectively each builder does the same activity. The magnitude of this activity can be fathomed when the CREDAI membership is ascertained. All the 27 builders in Calicut does the same activity along with plenty of non-credai members. So what does this process signify in the larger context seems very unfathomable. Further conversation with Mr Rajeev revealed the much needed perspective about the larger urban processes. He said “From a larger view point, Calicut is presently undergoing a process of spatial reorganization where the builders have created a quintessential consumption market for building. We as the builder collective have created this tendency through our ads and testimonies about the returns on an apartment. How it is a perfect investment which is better than gold or diamond. Property prices appreciate much quicker. And in this context as part of larger built environment fabrication the Gated aspect come in. The space we created might seemingly look gated and exclusivist but in fact

it is semi-gated. When an apartment is constructed the price is determined by the proximity to public infrastructure like road, bus stops and bus connectivity, railways station, nearness to the airport and other recreational areas and finally the proximity to the city where the work and shopping areas are located. The distance from the city center and the initial price of the apartment are determined by that. Price is again depended on space and the type of segment people plan to buy”. An overview of this activity show how a peripheral city’s land area is gentrified, land is given a new identity in terms of the class of people it harbors and a new assimilation of community culture.

The builders are careful about the way apartment systems are constructed. High priced one are always guaranteed more in terms of quantity and quality. Finer aspects would be the closeness to public infrastructure. Notably Mr Rajeev states about the smart homes “which are low raised building of 3 to 4 stories and priced are between 2,500,000 to 4,000,000 rupees (32k to 50k Euros), we provide these homes to the first time buyer who could be single or just married people who are “yuppies”, and this would be perfect investment to start with”.

Special place for special people

Kerala state is deindustrialized, with high unemployment rates most people are forced to find jobs outside the state or go abroad. Even with such parameters the urban space in Kerala have been transforming to accommodate a conspicuous consumption class. In the 1990s, the three principal notable cities were the state capital, Thiruvananthapuram (Trivandrum), Cochin (Ernakulam) and Calicut (Kozhikode). They were prime locations for urbanization and commercial activities. However 25 years later, the growth in the urban space have created massive urban sprawls connecting all cities with never ending urban sprawls. Smaller towns added into the process of urbanization have made many scholars call Kerala as one single town. Extremities of a town in

term of massive re-spatialization and class restructuring are yet to take place. As the process of urbanization is progressing, the housing sectors have become the more promising industrial activity in the state.

Malabar Developer how to engineer the space

It is not surprising that the urban restructuring is nuanced to cater to the needs of the special classes of young professional. Mr. Rajiv further stated that “the intention is to make the first home buyers feel good about their investment.” Builders see a multiplier effect in marketing as more young professionals would prefer to buy homes that cost less. There is mobility element embedded in buying these home in these semi-gated built environment. They could rent it and move to a “premium segment” of flats costing between 5,000,000 – 8,000,000 – 9,000,000 Rupees (65k - 118k Euros). The high price allows a finer group of upper-middle class people to occupy these. As seen in most gated apartment systems, these are the places where a well-established professional stay. It is a place which embodies the individuals who have higher leverage in the social capital of Calicut. Price and affordability are explicitly the constraint that or add or reject a person from an exclusive group. Mr. Rajiv asserted that “we do not mix up classes of high and low extremes in one single project, from my experience prefer household of similar status and class.” This affirmation shows how prices on apartments have created a new wave of urban gentrification. Where the middle classes are further fragmented and put in their exclusive groups due to the barriers in finding an apartment to buy. The apartment culture tends to show an essential segmentation of people, with a motive to contain different classes in a strict order.

The mobility for upper-middle classes and up classes are different. Mr. Rajiv describe how their new project is evolving in Calicut where “We have a premium and luxury segment , where the first 16 floors will be premium and the rest will be luxury up till the top, both segments will have

separate entrances, lobbies, and parking”. He further elaborated about how two residents association are going to be formed after the construction is completed and when people move in. Power and micro governing the place is the central factor. With an iron cage rationality and bureaucratization, the power relations outside the built environment is reflected inside it. Surprisingly the finding shows that more resident association’s president are the affluent, upward class and caste people.

Price and spatialization are directly related. Proximity to city center adds value to the property and in a wider context the larger convolution of apartment determines the land prices. Commercialization and financilization of land by builders cause the new kind of structuration. In the case of PVS builders and developers, the managing director Mr. Rajiv asserted that “smart and compact high rises will be located between 8-12 kilometers from the city center, while the premium will be between 5-8 kilometer and the luxurious segment will be between 1 and 5 kilometer”. The space loses its value and history, as the builder pile on them to make the base and structure. A new identity is created for the place through the architecture style and name. Reproduction and restructuring of space cause respatialization of people in a way this process can be seen as gentrification. The trajectory of a family is set of choices to live in a place which is has infrastructure and amenities or to look at affordability. The golden ticket of access is money and affordablty . Mr rajiv also added a minor anomaly that exists within flat systems when you consider the time frame of project, built quality and technology “the segments of flats we have are smart, compact, premium and luxurious. These are planned and constructed within three to four years. The interior make and quality finish of our luxury segment of our earlier projects could be similar to the premium projects today. Change in technology and building materials cause these shifts”.

He further elaborated about how occupants from the luxury segment of a 10 year old apartment system moves into a new flat system of latest built, quality and technology. The older systems get occupied by the new middle-classes. It's a linear process he adds which leads to city making in the end. End of this linear process culminates in gated communities these days. There is also an opposite flux to the Time and flat segment disconnect, visit to certain apartments showed how the process works. When a flat system is constructed the builders keep in view the value appreciation in terms of price from the customer's point of view and quality depreciation in terms of new materials and technology causing newer flats to have better finish and embedded technology at cheaper prices and quality. Mr Rajiv states that "When a flat is made it might belong to a particular class in terms of its finish and make. But as time passes, the value of the flat increases but the label on the flat relating to its luxury changes. A luxury segment flat of 2000's and 2010 varies greatly in its finish and quality. In 2016 the finish and value changes further. We make the finish at par with the international styles. We use international products to make the finish, wiring, lighting, networking, electricity, switchboards, surveillance cameras, sensors and security. The wood is from Indonesia, china and Malaysia". The assembling of such a space is an ordeal indeed for the builder. Having a right idea about the market is necessary. Moreover builders ought to have a control over the styles and variation. Supposing there is a larger variation in style, each year, by the time it takes to construct and finish a project would not prove efficient cost wise and customer may prefer not to buy them in case they find better alternative. The builders grab on trend will be elaborated upon on the chapter about architects and their practices.

The luxury apartments are gated communities exclusively made for the rich, they possess fully automated system with smart bio metric sensors and other lifestyle nuancing amenities. It is given to people who can afford it. Money makes to which segment one might fall into. Builders don't

make gated communities exclusively for specific communities but are focused on class aspect. Mr Rajiv also highlighted that Calicut has no trend in terms of religious segregation, he says “I have not encountered builders and resident association who are very caste exclusive and I don’t think it’s good for our business”.

A peripheral city has its limitation to growth because the best builders can do is to make a plan that would complement the state’s withdrawal in community building. Objective of the builder is to create the space for community development and move on. Mr Rajiv says that “it’s hard to ascertain what will happen in 20 years’ time, hence we only plan for four to five years into the future. Our land survey teams assess the high return areas and we buy land, then we speculate and pool land for construction. Apartment and villas sales depend on the expendable income of the people. Remittance from Middle East is also important and most of our customers are non-resident Indians”. Field work in all the sites I visited revealed that people buy houses for investment purposes with idea to rent it but the rent which you might get from one apartment would be less and inconsistent compared to the prices a customer might have paid for it. But if you add the appreciation and rent then it will be a fairly good investment according to Mr Rajiv. This occurs, provided the locality is a prominent access hub for jobs and commuting.

PVS builder is starting their Gated community project in proximity to the Bypass road. Gated villa projects occur outside the clutter of the city. Calicut’s 2001 master plans show the untapped spatial resources of the hinterland to use for residential and commercial purposes. The outcome of that was the bypass road which created this surge commercial and residential development.

The investors channel the initial cost of construction after the completed project is sold to the buyer who is mostly a nonresident Indian and from the professional classes. The investment comes back as returns for the investor when the home buyer pays the cost to the builder. The builder pays

the contractor from where the wages for the construction workers are paid off. the complete cycle of the whole process of construction in a nutshell. Now the question is what it does to the culture and environment of the urban Calicut.

The Political economy of Gated communities and promise of new era in Housing market

Most residents of GC in Calicut opined that gated community is the future of upper-middle class and up class housing. A decade back, the predominant form of accommodation settlement before GC were just residential colonies. The built environment had ordered space with the access road to individual homes. Every house had its compound perimeter wall. No security guards posted at the point of convergence of the access roads to the main road. These access roads usually did not have public transport operating in them. The ideal family in this settlement ought to have a two wheeler or a car. It was specifically developed to cater the middle classes of the late 70s' till post 90's. The paradigm shift happened with the new gated community formation.

The early developers of the city were local business group who dealt with small scale commercial activities involving agricultural products which in turn diversified into construction and real estate to suit the new emerging consumer market. Real estate took the center stage of investment activities of the state. However, it is not a surprising factor because the people of Kerala or "Malayalees " tend to invest a lot on home and home décors. The essence of having a home of dreams is the driving force behind conspicuous consumption. The 'Malayalee' episteme longs for the accomplishment of such home. If I were to this practice as conspicuous consumption, it would be a reduction of Veblen's theory of leisure class. However, the prospective buyers of a home are indeed emulating the patterns of consumption of individual of the highest hierarchy.

Assembling of the gated community.

“It is hard to say if this is gated community as the definition says. It is the borderline. It is a space that is not open to the public yet. The segregation is not rigid; the demarcations are not so strong that one is not allowed inside. Hi-Lite looks integrated into the Calicut city, but, yet separated as a miniature city. It has a paradoxical position. In the north of India, these gated communities are very rigidly demarcate. However, here it is not. In North class comes into play” G.S Sujith Architect with STAPATI

The residential built-environments occupies an accentuated position in the urban landscape of Calicut. They are seen as pillar stones of urban development and prosperous display what upward class mobility could offer. For the aspiring home buyers, it brings forth what an ideal living place and standards ought to be. Advertisements of all residential properties point toward building a home that emanates the occupants character.

The first day in the field helped make acquaintance with the major architects in the city through a family friends. A new family who moved into the residential area I lived, had a home in HiLITE Builders Metromax, which is a gated apartment community. Through their social network of friends and acquaintances in the community I got my first introduction to my field site.

HiLITE builder are originally from Calicut. The catchphrase in their logo states “Hilite: the finer side of life”. The catchphrases in advertisement have a deep-rooted story to convey. They are subtle markers of depravity asseverating the condition of poor public infrastructure and amenities the public do not experience and on the pragmatic side an offering of a quality solution. The most intriguing is the “world class” catchphrase in the advertisement. The intriguing part is how

architects whom design and builder who invest, construct and market the place bring together functional elements of infrastructure and amenities. A comparison of Calicut and another larger tier 1 city in India or abroad is often shown to depict how those elements are now available in Calicut too. Core material elements are security, surveillance, recreation, and high-quality finishing of the building. Advertisements for apartments are shot and edited in way to show how a particular family has found the investment in immovable assets very lucrative. Intention is to entice the home buyer who are migrant professional in middle east to buy the property. see it a good investment opportunity

Master plan of Calicut for 2001 showed how the transportation infrastructure has to be rerouted to bring in more urban development project. 15 years later the bypass road became a reality and with it the land prices soared. Unlike other cities where gated communities are formed, Calicut depicts a different trajectory. Under the salient feature for development in the urban master plan 2001, the top priority went to constructing built environments that would make commutation from home to work and back in less time. Land adjoining the bypass were owned by household who were natives to the panchayat (county). Bypass road was founded after several land survey to ascertain the effects and feasibility of the project. The bypass road which connects the southern part with the norther part for traffic free travel without passing through the central part of the city

Finding the appropriate responded took a while because even as a researcher I ought to be connected with any residents as it was a closed off environment. But with the intervention of the facility manager I met Doctor Pratap who is the acting head of the resident association in HiLITE city, he hails from Kottayam and has been living in Calicut because of his occupation. He is doctor with the Calicut medical college, He 'chose to stay in a gated community because of the package it offered in term of infrastructure and class exclusivity. Dr Pratap said "I prefer being with people

who does more or less the same profession as I do”. Another important facet is about the proximity of his work place, and children’s work place. The bypass road is provides reduced travelling time. More over Dr pratap said he “sees its as investment which will appreciate in value and he can sell it later at a higher price” The fact that HiLITE city has high levels of security didn’t concern him as he said that is part of a “larger social orchestration to look classy”.

Another family with whom I interviewed has a new home in HiLITE City. However, they stay in their rented home in HiLites Metromax. The head of the household is Prof Sajitha, her husband is a civil engineer in the Middle East, she works in a Collage in the nearby town of Feroke. Her primary reason to She affirmed that “social interaction is the most crucial factor.” “We do not feel lonely here,” this place has people from all over India and people are not closed off. All the infrastructure “like swimming pool, basketball court, and ping-pong halls are places of interaction”. “One has to lock themselves” to isolate to avoid any interactions. However, “as a gated flat system one has the choice to distance from people”. Metromax has gates, securities, cameras and checks points; it is a zone where people cannot go uninvited.

Roshan Kynadi is an agro- entrepreneur; he stays in skyline meadows near to the bypass area. He moved into a gated community because of the “I wanted to be with people who think and did the same kind of work as I did”. He states “the level of comfortableness increase when I am with people of my same status and money.” Roshan was worried about the safety of his parent and property when he travels on business as staying in a gated community is a protection when “I” compare it with an independent house in a residential locality. He states that “gating the future of the business and the affluent class.”.

Mr. Aboobaker is a retired engineer who stays in “Jayanti Nagar residential colony”, the place recently got a facelift with high walls and gates (which are open). His home is on the west side of

the layout with one more compound wall and gated. The built environment suggests a double gating phenomena, but that factor is widespread. Aboobaker states that “I am old, retired, and this place is an excellent retirement spot,” “ I like the quietness of the site, but when I bought it before returning from Middle-east, it was a very sound investment.”.

Mr. T.C Ahmed, is the owner of TC one properties, Realtor company, He pitches the idea of secularism as one the foremost. He vividly states,”I live in a place where people are of the same class, typically the business class, we all belong to different religions but out thoughts and practices are secular.”.

Through all these cases there I find that there is a larger trend to close people off regarding physical-income spatialization. What we see here is on a macro level the re-spatialization of the city where these new build environments from phasing out the old prominent built environment and in turn, an economically refined space created for molding a new community.

Chapter3.The Gated community that stood out.

The chapter elaborates on the work of architect Vinod Cyriac, who constructed the “Hermitage”, from where the firsthand account of Hybridity of space is established where elements of mechanical and organic solidarity have interfused to form a neo-traditional community. The main actor who control(s) the structure and functioning of the gated community is architect Vinod Cyriac. The agency of the architect in creating a space that revives traditional family and interaction is unfolded through a detailed structural analysis presented in a self-explanatory way. Hermitage stands out in the urban landscape as a zone of resistance where the traditional architectural practices, inspirations from old built forms and contemporary aspirations have materialized. While most built environment promotes nuclearization of families and seclusion, the arrival of “Hermitage” casts a new shade to idea and reason to gate in a peripheral city.

Prelude

The probability of meeting Vinod was almost ruled out as he was unavailable on his contact number. Architect Vivek Puthenpurayil of De-earth architecture firm had mentioned about Arch Vinod’s, experimental gated villament which is a combination of a single and multilevel villa in a conjoined built environment and his interior designs for maximizing social interaction inside it. Hence to meet him was important. Co-incidentally through the interference of a family friend who has a mutual friend who is also an admirer of Vinod's work helped in securing an appointment. Good Earths office building was not hard to spot; it stood out in the landscape as a sample of tropical minimalist styled building. The facade stood overwhelmed with creepers bearing red

flowers and surrounded by non-green and green colored ornamental plants. Polished orange mud bricks horizontally arranged edge to edge projected a stretched pattern to the walls. Floors of the parking lot had patterned brick tiles, and an angular iron fabrication blended bamboos made the structure of the arcade archway with a path of zigzag-patterned bricks to lead to the lobby. From where his assistant showed the way to his private room for the appointment.

The “Hermitage.”

Vinod Cyriac completes 19 years of practicing in the field of building and architecture this year. The reason to select him as a vital part of the research is primarily due to his preference to stay in his creation the “Hermitage” where he experimented with human interaction principles. Vinod Cyriac’s first brainchild the “Hermitage” rests on the slope of a hill in Mavoor Road, which is a kilometer from the Calicut bypass road. The building is surrounded by greenery outside and inside. As the site is terraced, the car parking is in the basement. The whole architectural make suggests it is a spatial escapade made for particular people who likes the amalgamation of traditional and modern experimental designs. Entrance to the courtyard and the basketball court is located proceeding up the stairs to the dwelling area.

Hermitage means a place where people live “religiously” and in some degree of “seclusion.” Contrastingly hermitage semantically coalesces with the embodiment of gated community. The built environment of Agraharam where upper caste Tamil Brahmins reside inspired, Arch. Vinod to built Hermitage. An Agraharam is a built environment of row houses with open verandahs, constructed on both sides of a street near or leading to a temple facade where Tamil Brahmins live. It is a spatial segregated auspicious zone where aspects of caste purity and pollution are strict and is near to resources like rivers or streams (Fuller and Narasimhan 2010).

The larger structure of the building resembles a “Naalukettu”, which is a traditional method of internal spatial arrangement used in joined family homes in Kerala where a house surrounds a courtyard. As previously mentioned the built environment is also inspired by the “Agraharam” concept. The central courtyard is not an entirely flat area; it is terraced as well with slight slopes blending into each other. The courtyard is the rendezvous point for all inhabitants. Open ventilation on the top of the structure maximizes air flow and natural lighting.

The internal assemblage of private space in the front of each dwelling unit and the semi-public private in the courtyard emanates zone of community interaction. At proximity to the door of each dwelling unit, there is a small courtyard, a space that is semi-private where people situated themselves when there is a need for any personal communication and wanted a certain level of privacy.



Figure 5 The courtyard inside Hermitage



Figure 6 Another angle of the courtyard inside Hermitage

Other masterpieces

Vinod's second residential venture is "Florican Hill" gated community. It rests upon a slope in Florican Hill Road at proximity to the Calicut Bypass Road. The houses blend with the landscape in accordance to the slanting terrain in a linear pattern. Built environment houses 15 dwelling units of Villaments and Villas with traditional and modern designs specifically created to asseverate the collective values of community living. The houses are an assortment of duplex and single floor units. The element of greenery is overwhelmingly present in the form of greenery covered wall and a sky garden. All independent villas inside the compound have one courtyard shared with three other homes. They are of different sizes. The four courtyards inside the compound had space where

all inhabitants drive in their cars to park near their sit outs. Each courtyard will have four cars coming in making it one cluster. However, all four groups in the built environment started to fight because of they were sharing common facilities unequally and in the formation of the resident association and on precisely who will govern, manage waste disposal and oversee water usage.

The critical analysis from “Hermitage” was the lack of privacy and intense bonding, while in “Florican Hill”, where a cluster of four houses shared a common courtyard which gave everyone their share of privacy, but people failed bond there. The third venture is “river song”, is a combination of Hermitage and Florican Hill, is in the southern part of the Calicut, near the south end of the Calicut bypass road. The perfect alignment of the built environment’s base on a bed of nature and the ideal distance from the bypass’s vehicular sound and air pollution makes it a quiet place. The built environment rests on a hillock, it is gated and consists of six split-level villas arranged around a mound where a multilevel villament with single level dwelling unit towers. All the dwelling units are arranged to overlook the valley.



Figure 7 View inside Florica Hill

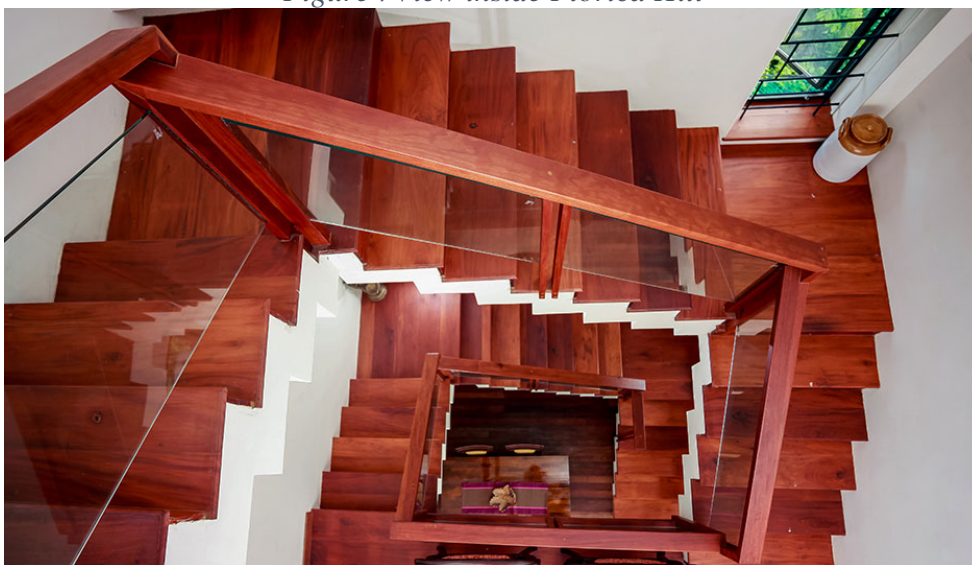


Figure 8 The spiral staircases inside Florican hill Villament

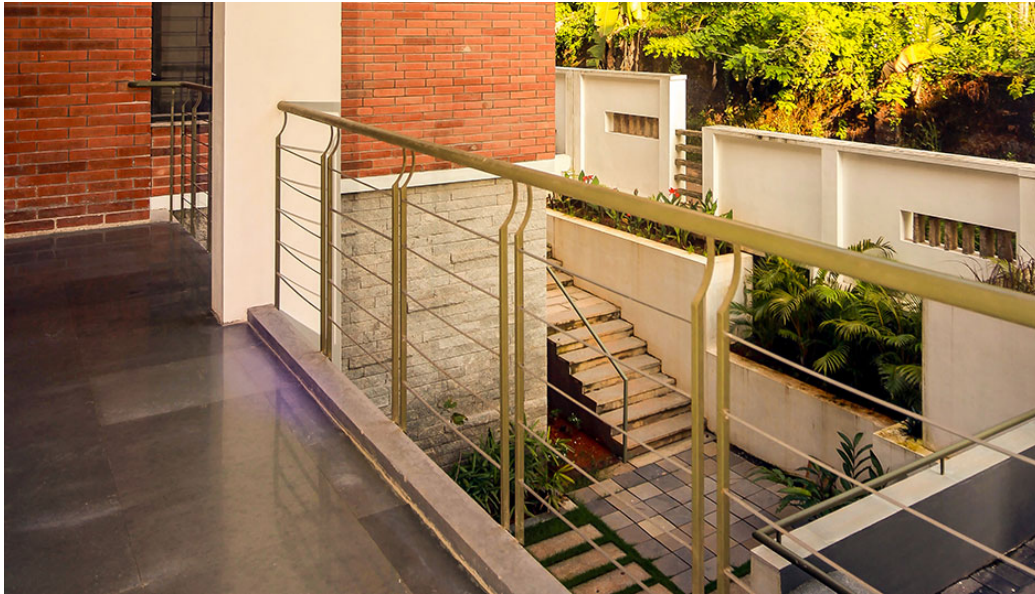


Figure 9 The Private-public spaces of Florican hill

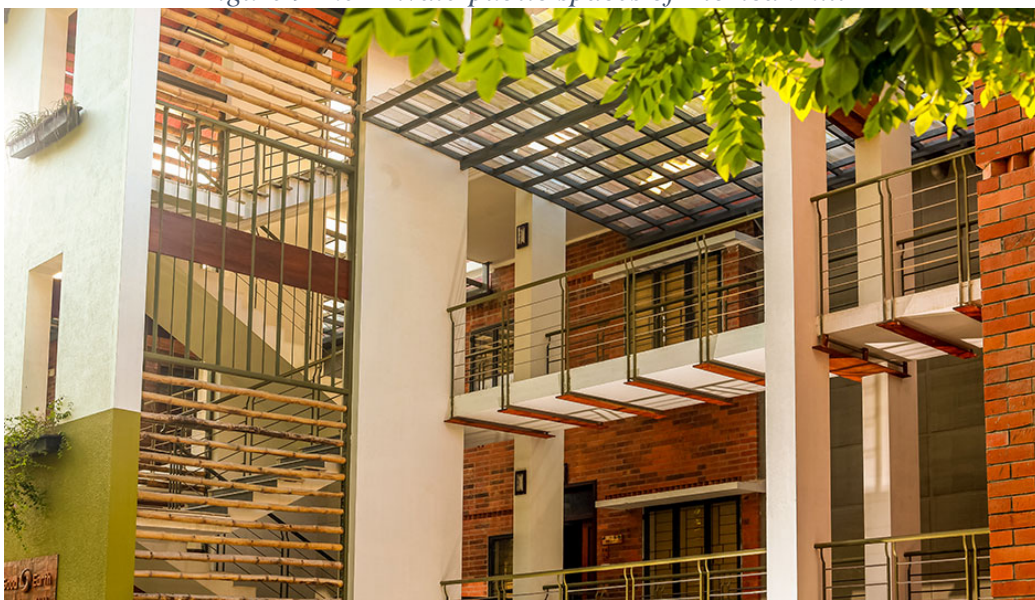


Figure 10 florican hill



Figure 11 the facade of a typical home



Figure 12 The private road inside florican Hill community

Vinod Cyriac's self-reflection of his architectural practice

In making a gated community built on such a philosophy and characteristics shows assimilation of traditionalist idea of architecture revived with modern architecture forming a strange blend. The three projects Arch. Vinod competed have different designs and different spatial arrangement for experimenting on interaction. Vinod states that space “I created is not a result of well-calculated thought process, it was a risky, adventurous experiment.” A built environment like Hermitage would not harbor the privacy-seeking home buyer of a city, who ideally would like to assert individuality, emanate the blasé attitude and experiment with their life by breaking away from the traditional societal norms and ways of life in a non-urban place. The everydayness of a city environment and the everydayness of the “Hermitage” is dissimilar because of the overbearing on the traditional way of life. In that context, marketing “heritage” could be a problem as people would not like to buy or rent apartments here due to the lack of privacy and high level of the household to household intimacy. Vinod elucidates on the particularities during the planning and building stage of “I built “hermitage” ten years back when I was uneducated, naïve, younger and incapable. That obviously adds to some fundamental contribution from within. My thought process and thinking had the village life as a bearing point. I could not think of anything or make anything else, so I designed and developed this place with my village epistemology and innocence”. Hermitage is probably a “naïve creation of good earth”, but as a “latent function”, the built environment helped up to live a “positive life” with my family.

Cross section of “Hermitage.”

Hermitage is where the field work and larger share of data collection took place. Hence, the focus will be on the structure, actors and various agents in the built environment. The “Hermitage” is a Villament, which is technically a villa and an apartment together. With a central courtyard which makes all the facade of all the homes facing each other. Taking a peek outside through window casement or door would have the other homes opposite and diagonal in the spectator’s line of sight. Arch Vinod narrates how the “system enables a constant communication between all the inhabitants perpetually and in creating a sense of unity, belonging, security, and interaction”. However, he states that the element of individuality takes a back seat. “Because if I decide to do something in my home, it will have implication on other homes around me.” “So it is a zone of self-disciplining.” The whole built environment resonated a Foucauldian repertoire, in the creation of the docile subject, the subjects who are government, and the subject who are monitored and finally habituated into that built environment as “ideal” subjects. Villament is a terminology created that would typify a place which has the characteristics of a Villa and an apartment. Five duplex units and eleven single level units compose “hermitage”. Interiors for all the homes are unique, and the unit prices varied. Duplex units have multilevel terrace spaces. There are fourteen occupied houses here and approximately four people in each making the total number of inhabitants at fifty-six.

As a gated community, the “Hermitage” does not have any embedded technologies in the built environment to negotiate and control the movement of people. The case of Hermitage is different with the absence of surveillance systems of closed circuit television camera, key card entries, and stricter security who stops everyone from entering into the gated compound. Instead, a very simple

system exists where, Vinod's mother, Annakutty Cyriac, who lives in the villament closest to the exit and keeps an eye on who is going in and out. Vinod states that "my mom is the eyes and ears of the community." A traditional form of surveillance prevails on the built environment where the grandmother takes the role in possessing supreme authority and legitimacy to monitor. Her agency is accepted as she is one of the oldest members of the community.



Figure 13 The nature-filled space inside Hermitage

The Courtyard of Nature, surveillance and interaction

The courtyard is proportionate to the building size. "My mother filled it with plants and nature." However every after the initial effort, other people also joined in. Now it is full of nature. All the living rooms are looking into that courtyard. All the bedrooms are on the outer periphery of the building to maximize privacy. What surprised and interested is how the courtyard and the greenery became a refuge for small birds. Calicut had a substantial population of hawks, eagles, and crows. The smaller birds hunted for food by bigger ones find refuge in hermitage's greenery fill courtyard.

They nest here, procreate, and they fly away. “I feel like nature awarded us because of the reciprocity we have with the surroundings”.



Figure 14 Near the access to the courtyard



Figure 15 The intimate space near the entrance to each dwelling unit

Creation of the Urban family in Hermitage

Vinod was born, raised and socialized in an agrarian village of “Kattipara” (which translates into “hard rock” in English) forty kilometers from Calicut city in foothills of leading to the mountains in Wayanad. After moving into to the city, He loathed the way of life due to the common sort of loss of solidarity among people comparing with the place that brought him up. He elaborates “I came from a life-world filled with chirruping birds, screeching insects, the sound of the stream, river, taste of mango and berries. It is in a close-knit community, where everyone knew each other”. The motive was to create a space that could recreate the village like setting in a city or an attempt to make a built environment that could hold those characteristics of a village life. Vinod states “he wanted his children socialized in that manner.” Joined families which dissolved to form nuclear families in cities because of the way division of labor is organized and with more specialized types of jobs people had to move out of their joined family settings. In Hermitage, five out of sixteen families have their grandparents staying with them which were an unusual phenomenon in cities where families are nuclear. In Vinod’s case, his parents and his brother live in a separate dwelling unit in the same built environment in different multilevel villaments. The combined need to bringing the close family members motivated him to make Hermitage, where the ideals of village life could form.

Families moving into the city from rural parts has the tendency to be clannish. They try to find people who can offer the same kind of comfort in interpersonal communication that would resemble a village lifestyle. Which is the case with Vinod’s mother, Annakutty Cyriac, “she refused to live in an apartment system as assumed it would be close off her communication with other people”, The built environment of Hermitage gave her the space to revive her village

idiosyncracies. Vinod further asserted that “My mom’s determination was the reason why Hermitage came into existence.”

Micro level interaction is where the bedrock of this research is situated. The most intimate space within a house, inside a gated community in a peripheral city. The purpose of this section is to give a phenomenological understanding of the architecture, interior design, negotiation of space by in habitats and how the family retains its traditional essence of joint family households. Space and objects inside this setting habituate a person to follow certain conditioning. In a larger context of its illustration of a microstructure readjusting and habituating old idiosyncrasies that made their identity.

The ground floor of all houses consists of sit out, drawing room, living room, dining room, kitchen, work area, master bedroom, attached and secondary bathroom. As the space of primary interaction within a household. A level above it composes of another family room, and two other bedrooms and the top level has a laundry room and a terrace garden.

Case one

Vinod’s Father is a retired member of the legislative assembly and an ex-minister of agriculture with the Congress part a few decades back. All party members are conditioned wear an only white shirt and “mundu⁷”. Even after retiring his habit to wear white clothes has not stopped. It is Annakutty’s duty to soak, wash, and rinse blue it with a coloring agent. On a routine basis, with her knee pain, she goes up to dry the clothes in the terrace. Vinod states that this habituation and routinized activity improved her knee and overall health.

⁷ A long piece of cloth worn around the waist line

Case two

By not having a TV, a PC and an active cooking unit inside Vinod's home, he makes sure that he and his family has to come down to his parents dwelling units to cook or to use TV or PC. The arrangement makes everyone dines together for breakfast, lunch and dinner. Vinod states, "I made sure that my children feel the experience of a joined family in gated community" and "There is forced interaction when I focus on only my family." The interior assemblage of daily use objects kept at a central point where all the inhabitants can monitor each other; the interior is designed to provide maximum human interaction to nurture, teach and transfer traditional values intergenerational way.

Case 3

Hermitage accommodates people of different linguistic, religious, regional and caste groups. Vinod's mother and children learned the ways of other culture and to understand "Hindi" through the interactions they had with the other grown up and kids of other households belonging to other parts of India.

Case 4

Vinod states, "The door to my villament is fifty stairs from my mothers, I ply this distance ten times, my wife more than fifteen, my children even more". He elucidates about the potential health benefits of the arrangement. "By evening, we are all tired by shredding our excess energy." This trip is an exercise with a possible function to prevent seclusion and to maximum interaction within our household.

The four cases point out how the space within a gated community has been reviving the essence of joined family systems where all daily life activities were done as a commune.

Other households

The other families in Hermitage, who have their grandparents staying with them, also have the same style of interaction inside their household. Vinod's venture to terminate individuality diffused into another home, where the internal spatial arrangement of the object for daily use are assembled in the center of the mental and geometric base of the household so that all inhabitants converge and interact to use them.

Power and control in Hermitage

Retirement homes in Calicut are rising in gated and non-gated environment. Vinod states the lack of empathy of the young generation to take care of their parents and that "this crucial element to nurture and take care of them in their old age inspired me to create this space so that the family is held together." However, in an increasingly urbanized space, this phenomenon is slowly vanishing. He further states that most people are concerned about loss of privacy here "Privacy breach does not occur because the grandparents and family live in their separate modules but maintain a connection." Another dimension is how the grandmothers and grandfathers of one family take the role as everyone's grandparents and, "My mother is the grandmother to all the children in Hermitage."

The surveillance and the making of the panopticon

From inside each dwelling unit, any spectator's line of sight from open doors and window falls on the courtyard. Vinod's states, "My mother monitors all the children in the community because of her home is closest to the access pathway which falls in the direct line of sight from her living

room. This traditional form of securitization has bonded the whole community of 16 households. A sense of solidarity developed where everyone feels responsible for each other and his or her children. Everyone greets each other whenever he or she see each other. A conversation usually followed that. The multi-ethnic and cultural background of all inhabitants created an inquisitive atmosphere. People here were keen on learning about each other. The mutual inquisitiveness turn into another reason for bonding, “we feeling and we become a close knit group undoubtedly”. A CCTV system, on the other hand, is impersonal, and there exist only a one-sided interaction in the form of monitoring. A human being has to analyze the recorded footage once again to make a judgment.

Character modification

The built environments design has made people more cautious about what they say and do. Body and mind of a person are not seen as solipsistic but indeed as a segment of the collective within this ecosystem of traditionalism, culture, family and conservatism. Vinod states about the habits changed after a struggle “We are loud people, especially my father and me. After moving here, we habituated ourselves to keep our voice down”. Since it is an intentionally packed community, “if I shout my neighbors will hear me”. It is guaranteed that “I will not say something that shouldn’t be said in my home” and especially for “neighbors to hear.” “Even if you say you are in control.”. The collective restraint makes people discipline themselves and avoid unnecessary yelling. Family issues like mutual tussle and shouting do not have a scope in “hermitage” because one cannot do it”. The shame that comes with “your neighbors hearing you shout will mellow down the ego”. The built environment promotes self-disciplining and “I have never had any domestic violence

case here.” Excessive drinking and returning home crawling or walking on four legs never happens because of the self-discipline aspect and “one ever tries to come back getting very drunk shouting and howling”. Public smoking and drinking are an offense in Kerala, which could come with jail detention and fine; Vinod states that “Nobody smokes cigarettes or marijuana here because of the way the air flow and ventilation systems are, and someone will see or smell it.” Vinod seemed proud about making “Hermitage” a drug and smoke-free zone and “self-disciplining happens without anyone commanding you. It transformed and changed me”.

“Brining prostitutes and other vice activities” have no place because the traditional surveillance will spot the perpetrator will get caught. However, he states that “I am not against all this but taking into consideration the generation of people who are living there and socio-cultural setting these activities are very anti-household”, Hermitage is a place “you” must come to stay if “you” want to refine yourself after your research. The motive is to refine behavior, character, and practices that it blend with “our traditional” culture and ways of life”. An individual might have fetishes, habits or obsession which may not be acceptable to the larger community hence to blend with the larger system “we the people” of “hermitage” have to change our ways.

The two projects of Gated community which “good earth” undertook gave Arch Vinod a clearer idea about how much privacy people need, He, states “in community living privacy should not be an issue”; “people must interact”. After ten years of stay in Hermitage, “I can confidently say that we should never give privacy more than what is required. It is a deterrent to becoming a better person”. The change and decline in intergenerational communication because of nuclearization of families worries Arch Vinod “as a young generation will be in the pool of hatred, self, me, I and iPhone.” The families get further atomized due to the stress and tensions of daily closing them to different corners of the home. Revisiting some of the Arch Vinod ideas about self-isolation in

homes, he states “I do not encourage balconies in bedrooms”; “I encourage balconies on shared space.” By architecturally and design wise forcing to keep people back into the center of their household is a way to repair and revive, interaction, and rejuvenating the essence of a family by “forcing people to come and gather”. The only bedroom needs privacy, and no other spaces need any privacy. The motive is to make a better community, with sensitive, interactive, sharing, caring, liberal people.

The Socio-cultural composition of people

People grouped according to the profession from different cultural and ethnic groups live here. Families hail from Haryana, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. Families of practicing Christians, Tamil Brahmins, Muslim and other Hindus stay here. Comparing this settlement to an erstwhile “Tharavadu”, a similar pattern emerges, the built environment built upon religion and caste syntaxes but in the Hermitage, it is a combination and harmonious mix of people of various caste, religion, color, and region. In a traditional Tharavadu, one religion, common conscience, and value systems compose the bonding and solidarity. Religious practices are very minimal and personal. During festivals like Diwali⁸, the whole building is decorated with small “Deepams” (lamps). In Christmas, it will be lamps, Christmas tree, and a crib, for Id-ul-Fitr the Muslims families gift everyone biryani, for “Vishu⁹” it will be crackers, for Onam¹⁰ the flower carpets. Everyone join in, co-operate to make it make this happen with no aggression in religious practices. These exchanges cause people to have a bonding based on an annual routine which culminates in the creation of reciprocity which is of both ways; they habituate into the system.

⁸ Festival of Lights

⁹ Traditional New year according to Malayalam calendar

¹⁰ A wider celebrated end of Harvest festival

In religious terms practices, Vinod states, “fanatic or a fundamental” in inhabitants, “parochial” and “narrow-minded” habits are broken. The bottom line is to neutralize religious arrogance will be automatically toned down. The architecture engages the person in a tacit conditioning. The changes are subtle and sublime, but as time passes by “we find changes in people’s behavior”. It is a space for self-disciplining, to increase tolerance, and to “self-control”. In a religious and behavioral sense, people become more precautionous, caring, concerned, and empathetic.

There is an unexplainable bonding happening between people. New people come into the apartments for rent every three years on an average. They are assimilated into this built environment very quickly. When they leave after that “period of a stint with us, I have personally felt sad” as the bonding and reciprocity have made them feel like a part of a familial system. Therefore, Vinod states that “bonding also adds an emotional layer.”

Reciprocity with surroundings

A voyeur tried to peep into one villament from the vacant plot; Vinod state, that “the only case of any violation we face in the past ten years.” moreover “We have a cordial relationship between our neighbors”. As “We buy coconuts from the house behind, milk from a trader behind”. So these outside interactions have created a network for mutual dependency with the neighborhood people. After this villament came, “I think there are new supermarkets, bakeries and utility shops in the vicinity”. Moreover, “believe that there is a correlation”.

Collective activities

The maids come from another place; there are around five maids, and most of them work in more than two villament, and one lady cleans the common space. Vinod states, “The resident association

takes care of the internal upkeep we all contribute to the common fund for electricity (for the common area), water bills(complete), General upkeep and maintenance, security guard, the common area cleaning maid.” The governance of this space is done very meticulously with “full transparency” in the using of the “fund for upkeep”. Bond and solidarity within the community make everything work in unison like a “joined family”. Governing does not take a rigid form as the built environment makes people disciplined. However “aloof or anti-social” a person is in this space, “they” are naturally habituated become disciplined. People become emotionally attached due to the reciprocity everyone show to each other.

Vinod creates a space which is a progressive and conservative blend of elements in the traditional Kerala society through the Hermitage, reviving the village lifestyle. The case stands out as an exception in the type of gated communities that exist in Kerala or the larger context of India.

Conclusion

A gated community stands out in the urban environment of Calicut as a zone to assert people's individuality and aspiration. However, it is observed that the case of gating in Calicut has different shade which deconstruction the popular notions for gating. As a project of modernity and the other in which a gated community is a tool for reviving traditionalism. The few shades of gated residents are the narratives of Non-resident Indians, a case where they are afraid to mingle with the local population because of the fear of crime and cultural shock. For non-Malayalees in Calicut, it is a case where their families want to find other families who are in a land with different language and culture. For people who want to revive traditionalism and neo-conservatism, this is stronghold to change people's behavior

Urbanization cause various structural and changes to the family and a gated community is a refuge that people find to live to reposition their practices and culture. The gated community becomes a precursor for strategizing about their class mobility, a place where people of the upper-middle professional classes can find individuals who are of similar kind and nature. Material benefits regarding amenities and infrastructure form a part of the "desire" to be in a gated community. The collective utilization of resource a like having a swimming pool or tennis court are infrastructure that house owners cannot afford on their so when they move into a gated space that needs it met. The larger context here is how the transformation of urban land by the conscious effort of builders, architects and the market role of the home buyer.

There is two level of change happening in the cityscape (1) at the degree of the re-spatialization of the city space and (2) at the familial level where inhabitants have to negotiate with cultural change. However in the larger context, I find that several tenets of a gated community like security take a back seat along with factors like need to be anonymous, blasé attitude, freedom and individualism

and the actual fear of crime. Instead, I find that most communities are gated, but gating is a latent function. It is implicit that people who can only afford the place can buy them. Class safeguards the exclusivity. The study could contribute to understanding the various reasons for gating where narratives point toward the need to being with people of same class and intellect, having a similar profession.

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