CHAPTER 6

INTERPRETATION: ASPECTS AND IMPLICATIONS OF AGREEMENT AND DIFFERENCE

6.1. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK OF SETTLEMENT AND ARCHITECTURE BASED ON MATRILINEAL DESCENT RULE AND ITS RELATION TO ORIGIN

6.1.1 Settlement as Spatial Manifestation of Social Organization of Clan

Tara and nagari is not exactly a spatial concept settlement, it is more a social configuration composed of maternal joint family units of particular community sharing common mythical ancestor that manifest in space. It has various social trait based on depth and level of remoteness toward ancestor. As a whole these traits perform a framework that produce social network that manifest in a spatial integrity. The evolution and emergence of spatial manifestation of social network constitute establishment of horizontal structures which follow the dynamic of internal clan structure and its connectivity with other clans.

This establishment is in line with a trait that in Minangkabau there is a prescribed hierarchy of settlement from taratak, dusun, koto and nagari, which imply that variations of settlements should be regarded as result of transformations at various scales of spatial dimension and functional elaborateness, where nagari is considered to be the most complete and
elaborate form of settlement, sufficient to undergo corporate function of agriculture and its exchanges. In Kerala the concept of tara is elaborated for various levels of community or groups, including caste category. Therefore understanding settlement means understanding the geographical distribution and spatial location and operation of clan structure. The framework could is described in Figure 6.1

![Diagram Comparative scheme of traditional habitation framework](image)

**Figure 6.1** Diagram Comparative scheme of traditional habitation framework

Concept of unilineality kinship acknowledge single ancestor as reference and enable the establishment of clan with clear line of social structure, either through maternal or paternal descent rule. Spatially it acknowledges particular spots of ancestor as reference. Descent rules manages integrity of intra-clan units and by kinship framework its interactions with other clans, nevertheless they are dispersedly distributed. Here the cases are matrilineal clan. Taravad and kampung represent both matrilineal clan.
units and residential unit. They are the smallest elementary unit of habitation, where people of common ancestor stay together.

6.1.2 The Establishment of settlement by residential proximity

By kinship the spatial impact of unilineal kinship is that the dispersal distribution of clan member over landscape following the natural source would not risk their social network. The conceptual sequence of settlement formation was begun with the establishment of house of earlier settlers, and was later followed by waves of new migrants. These accumulations of settlers would build up community with shared network and convention. In Minangkabau this concept is clearly prescribed in Tambo Alam Minangkabau, where concept of habitation is initially established by several huts or taratak. Later migrants came and with the original settler established a community unit comprising houses called dusun. When this community established as a governed settlement it became koto, and when it turned into polity, it became nagari. In more general context, Kerala habitation system is more nebulous then in Minangkabau. Tara is the most integrated form of indigenous settlement like nagari or koto in Minangkabau.

In tara the conceptual configuration of network of houses is preserved in the trait of vela (common annual festival). In comparison to the three cases of taras, there are fifteen taravads in Ootapalam Palakkad which are located far to one another. But those fifteen taravads are bound by common annual vela or festival where each family has contribution and role on the vela. This kind of festival bound community is also what works in tara. The difference is only that in the case of taravads in Ootapalam the taravad members are dispersed to one another and therefore did not constitute a settlement but in the three cases study of tara system the taravad members maintained spatial proximity and cohesiveness so as to physically manifest as a settlement units.
Ancient naming system of settlement which is typically based on topography character, relative position to each other, compass direction and finally historical names, suggests sequential shifts of orientation from spatial emergence of habitation in space, to network of coexisting habitation, and finally a defined labeled entity. It implies a development from scattered individual units, interactive units and finally accumulation of different individual units into an integrated system. Conclusively the integrated states in tara and nagari which lead to proximity and manifest in settlement is explained as follows:

i) Corporate management that trigger the need for social and functional security and paddy-farming estates

ii) As in the case of Kerala, the need for identifying sphere of community as limited accessed sphere and resulting eventually into a set of caste-based community.

iii) As in the case of Minangkabau, consanguinity is not the only cause of social establishment of a matrilineal joint family house compound. The proximity of settlement in nagari is caused by inter-class member of clan (kaum, warga) that take place in the level of clan unit or kampung. On the other hand other communities filled in the empty space left by the main settler. Currently the element of proximity is house, with presently 5 individuals or 1-3 nuclear families in Minangkabau. The present small numbers of members of house residing in compound explains difficulties of the settlement to manage their actual livelihood.

iv) Minangkabau clan unit is 4-5 generations deeper than in tara, which means clan organization would be more elaborated and accumulative. This social accumulation also maintains
communality and maintains lesser sense of boundary than in Kerala and therefore house compound (kampung) became more permeable than taravad. As a result spatial concept of nagari, suku and jorong is more fluid and solid than desham or tattakam and tara.

6.1.3 Kinship based network relations and spatial sphere of origin

The notions of ancestor refer more to earliest settler, which could have been collections of different kin. The over-layering social spatial organization takes place because each kin has its own structure down to lineage and up to the mythical ancestor and has their geographical of distribution. This over layering of clan distribution is higher in Minangkabau cases rather than Kerala.

The hierarchy structure of ancestor-base habitation in Minangkabau is still readable in the smallest scale to the outermost one, from cultural territory (Minangkabau land)– cultural sub-regions (luhak./ laras- darek/ rantau) – settlement (nagari) – clan grouping/ community (suku) - kampung (maternal joint family) - ancestral house (rumah gadang)– central post (tiang tuo) and room (bilik) . This structure is only readable up to cultural sub regions in Kerala. The idea of Malanadu has been disconnected to current social set up, while the idea of Minangkabau land (Alam Minangkabau) still exists. The hierarchical structure of clan is settlement (tara) – maternal joint family (taravad) – ancestral house (veedu/ nalukettu/pattayapura) – room (ara) and courtyard (natumittam). The spatial sphere of the ancestor is as big as the width of district (Palakkad district and tanah datar district).

Transformation and changes are rapid in Kerala. The land reconsolidation in Kerala has been higher than Minangkabau due to rapid and intensive changes of political power that has been operating. Both places are
inclined to have more than one language, which indicate a state of openness towards other cultures. In Minangkabau is more stable and stagnant. The institution of Tambo Alam Minangkabau, has preserved the structure of clan. Moreover transformation from clan hierarchy into class and caste hierarchy is much more immense in Kerala. Migrations and competition is also higher in Kerala. Family tree of Minangkabau is far deeper than Kerala indicating the stability or stagnancy of settlement and its conservative state toward changes. This may explain how urbanization brought about changes in matrilineal society.

Idioms of tree have found many articulations in both Kerala and Minangkabau. From the pamedanan and prathistan it is obvious that the concept of sacred groove indicate concept of navel in settlement. The metaphor of Penghulu as tree also associates penghulu as centre of kaum. The position of tiang tuo (navel post) in all kinds of function also indicates that the central post and penghulu appear as navel of clan and kampung. Sacred groove in kerala has indeed been the basic entity to develop into temple. In Kerala during festivals it would be obvious to find a unit of public habitation composed of network of temple, sacred groove, and market. This is comparable to the composition that emerges in Minangkabau where the navel of nagari is market (balai), assembly hall (balai adat) and mosque (masjid raya).

6.1.4 Replacement and Displacement

There is a possible plotting that the earlier or aborigine settler would have individually or in some limited numbers stayed in higher plane, seemingly to acquire mere accessibility to natural source. The new migrants filled up the space in between in the more plain area. The new migrant constituted the mainstream settlement generally associated with the immediate political power such as kingdom or trade centers generally cited in
local legend of places. The element of velakoridal rites in Puthiankam narrates Vadukka community as the original settler, upon what the present tara-Nayar has been standing. The legend of Padinjaretara in Mathur could not be told without mentioning Kizhaketara, which contained less Nayar society. Nagari Rao-Rao is not part of the mainstream legend therefore in general is considered as recently established nagari. But some accounts and the environmental fact that it is built on altitude and not sufficiently supporting paddy-field cultivation, it may have been possible that nagari Rao-Rao simply has not been part of the category of mainstream nagari. It might have been established initially in simpler format than nagari, such as dusun or koto. This leads to the idea that the notion of settlement depicted as nagari, in Tambo have been based on the establishment of organized society based on paddy-farming. The remote position of nagari or tara with relation to main transportation route indicated that they may have been less connected to the centre of power. Indeed, tara-Nayar in Mathur and nagari Rao-Rao were more remote from urban centers or situated in higher plane, and don’t have significant legend that relate to particular royal, colonial or political power.

There is indication that jorong II nagari Sungayang, Chittur tara and Puthiankam tara belonged to mainstream settlement. The current elite settlement is justified by legend. The environment profile suggests the nagari Rao-Rao might never have been uplifted by agriculture since the very beginning. It might have been recently established and prospered by coffee plantations during the Colonial period in 1930’s. Once the coffee estate declined, they became traders.

6.1.5 Manifestation of Matrilineal Kinship and The Growing Paternal Character

Matriliny does not necessarily signify the female power. As a matter fact the notion of controlling female could be rather vulnerable. It correlates
more to degree of communal character in the settlement, in all layers of habitation and from the abstract world view to the practical aspects of life.

There are three controlling agents that overlap one another in matrilineal society which are ownership passed on through female side, management in maternal uncle side and female position in both regions appearing as auxiliary aspect supplementing the male-head, yet in Minangakabau female position is much stronger than male.

Social bounding, spatial sustainability of settlement and corporations are maintained by marriage. When the tradition is broken the following occurs:

i) Inclination toward partitioning or increase of factional degree. It is inevitable that the reasons are Modernism and alienation of the people to the history of their traditions. It is also caused as social stigma carried by social hierarchy embedded in social classes and castes.

ii) A new family which does not belong to the clan migrates into the settlement. It could be caused by the partition that lead the clan member to start selling the property partially which in case of Kerala it can be as a whole; and the shift of duo/uxiriolocal to virilocal and neolocal that made a male clan member to establish his own residence with the name of his wife’s family house.

iii) Confined regional integrity of clan is disrupted as cross-cousin marriage declines

There are two conceptual bench marks. One, the female aspects represent spatial sphere and second, the male aspects represent spatial
authority. The expansion and extension of taravad and kaum depended on distribution of the female lineage (tavazhi or saparuiik). A new extension or the new house compound branch could be done by placing the female lineage in the localities along with supporting communities and also the husbands. Accompanying the female lineage is the brother or uncles who would stand as care-taker or male-head of the branch families. Accordingly the concept habitation would be developed with reference to this male-leader. The stronger the matriliny the more permeable, nebulous and wider the spatial sphere, and less the centre. The weaker the matriliny, the more solid, specified and confined the spatial sphere and the more obvious centre. Currently matriliny in Kerala is less visible than in Minangkabau.

The cases also show that the low fraternity interest could go beyond its causal scope of matrilineal kinship. The low fraternity interest associate significantly to the equilibrium state operation agent of control and the controlled configuration. In comparison, the pattern of development indicated that the most recently developed settlement of mostly working class or serf community as found in nagari Minangkabau, and settlement of lower class people running patrilineal kinship as found in Cherutara in Puthiankam and Vadakkatara in Chittur show more socially communal and spatially defined character. In both settlements fraternity interest is limited by either matrilineal set up, or by the superior power of landlord.

The low fraternity interest posits settlement as a spatial configuration that emerges and, not as something that is deliberately designed. Its sustainability is defined by the equilibrium of relation between the power of controlling body and the configuration under control.
6.1.6 Loose Intensity of Centre

Fraternal interest correlates spatially to the significance and intensity of centre. In matriliny the centre is not too rigid. The role of fraternal character of male-leader in Minangkabau (penghulu) is balanced by the importance of female member (bundo-kanduang) while in Kerala karanavar has been almost the apex power of the clan. In this condition, the role of karanavar is more paternal than penghulu and he has more power to execute residential rules and manage clan members to keep in close proximity. It made the notion of centre of fraternal interest higher in Kerala than Minangkabau and the role of karanavar more autocratic. The centre does not have to appear as a monumental structure, singular apex of leadership or distinct building. The idea of center is more as an ancestral reference. Ancestral reference constituted a network that vertically connects the building structure, house, house compound, settlement, landscape and cultural geography; and horizontally connects it with other ancestral references from different settlements. As a whole the controlling body is more a configuration which gained communal and collective agreement.

Representative centers or landmarks, such as mosque, temple, and assembly hall were recently conceptualized than the settlement itself. They had been originally meeting places or a tree (idiomatic, metaphor and objective) belonging to one of influential family. The primacy of mainstream religions (Hindu and Islam) and corporate interest like trade and markets solidify concept of ancestral reference into more rigid monuments and social contract. Religious buildings in both places are basically advanced concepts of earlier communal assembly venue. All the centers are built later than the settlement which shows that both Minangkabau and Kerala settlement was rooted back to the concept of community and not religion. Only recently, centers for religious purpose became part of public realm and constituted a
movement from market to religion. Market is a form of public realm and need for inter-settlement exchange, which is higher in Minangkabau than Kerala. In tara it appears in desham level.

Concept of public space is not completely public but refers to notion of space accessible to everyone within their spiritual sphere. It refers more to a dynamic spatiotemporal defined by activities. The public venue is space for activities of the clan member within the house compound. The communal assembly should not be necessarily confused by public interest. Communal assembly is a social defining apex of the settlement unit. They would gather in assembly venue which traditionally in earlier time took place in prathistan in Kerala, and pamedanan, or balai adat in Minangkabau. The idea of public venue of settlement is more a spatiotemporal setting taking place during festivals. It takes place annually in March after harvesting. The square where the festival takes place is the dried paddy-field after harvesting. During rainy season, this portion would be flooded. The final set up of this spatiotemporal is dried paddy-field after harvesting or pond adjacent to banyan tree. Public realm is also defined by needs to corporate with agent outside, like road or path lines that take place among the tara-Nayar or nagari.

Labor division is determined more by kin structure than by skill. Therefore in Minangkabau there is no segmentation by profession as in Kerala. In the realm of construction, building is a clan activity. It may include third parties from outside the clan but the clan member must contribute. Therefore professional building construction in Kerala is more than in Minangkabau. Building construction in Kerala, especially the ancestral building, is more an individual act, while in Minangkabau is a communal activity.
6.1.7 **Degree of Centrifugality and Centripetality**

In matriliny uxirilocal trigger the high movement of male as a consequence of a lesser compulsion for them to stay in the same place. This has caused the dispersal of male or the agents who in general are regarded as cause of rigid control. Presently the shift from uxirilocal or duolocal to virilocal causes an increasing concentration of male in their own maternal house and therefore increases the concentration of controlling agent of property. Adding to this condition, property commercialization decreases of role of clan-leader, and pressure from the growing Modernism has caused the structure of descent rule to become quasi-paternal. This quasi-paternal is characterized by the following situations:

1) the male takes wife to stay in his maternal house compound.

2) the role of father increasing with more power in his own nuclear family, which consequently alters the power structure within the house compound

3) the decreasing of the role of female in house management.

The case of centrifugality and centripetality in Kerala is more rapid and intensive than in Minangkabau. The spatial impact is very clear on the design of settlement and architecture in Kerala which comparing to Minangkabau. It has a greater rigid structure and greater specified typology, greater solid, and greater confined territory. On the hand the design of settlement and architecture in Minangkabau is more permeable, more communal and fluid, and show less specified typology. The ancestral sphere in Minangkabau is wider than in Kerala because they can still maintain it due to less inclination for changes. A more centrifugal, concentrated and segmented society brought by the shift from matriliny to a more patrilineal character made sense of boundary, sense of symbolic expression, and sense to
promote difference, stronger in Kerala than Minangkabau. Consequently the following phenomenon has taken place:

1. The concretization of reference to a mosque and temple
2. The fading attachment to origin, which is stronger Kerala than in Minangkabau
3. The increasing role of concentrated authority which demanded spatial expression and elaborate design in Kerala. It coincides with the fact that buildings and spatial arrangement in Kerala is more defined and elaborated than Minangkabau
4. The traces of sequential order of the most recent settlement to the older one is less in Kerala than Minangkabau because of changes that have rapidly taken place.
5. The spatial segregation and segmentation of class/ caste (elite)-low class/ caste (mid/low) in Kerala is more than Minangkabau. It makes the spatial and visual designations of tara-Nayar recognizable over other taras by its lavish design.

6.2 EXTERNAL INFLUENCES THAT TRIGGER MODIFIER FOR SPECIFIC DESIGN OF SETTLEMENT AND ARCHITECTURE

6.2.1 Contextual Environment

Although in general Kerala and Minangkabau demonstrate common wet tropical environment, local difference prevail. Topography setting of nagari in Minangkabau is more undulating and hilly than in tara which is rather plain. Therefore spatial confinement by means of natural profiles appears more in Minangkabau, such as segmentation of jorong. The distance toward river made important the irrigation system in Kerala.
Minangkabau has more environment hazards than Kerala, like flood, fire and most destructing is earthquake. Therefore building structure in Kerala is relatively more rigid, solid and heavy, while in Minangkabau is more flexible, permeable and light. Tiang tuo as sacred structure indicated that in Minangkabau structure was designed to protect against earthquake, while in Kerala the importance of arudham as the sacred structure is not constrained. This enabled architecture in Kerala to be more elaborated, specialized and more compartmented,

6.2.2 Local Social History

There are major historical sequences that may be taken as the background for several differences. Ninth century seemed to be important due to Buddhism and Jainism history in both places. The trait of migration and overseas trade flourished along with the Buddhism and Jainism. It expanded the concept of social proliferation in temple and market. Buddhism declined in 10th century in Kerala while it sustained in Minangkabau. This may have been one reason that the concept of social proliferation in temple and market still sustained, while in Kerala temple became inaccessible to certain communities and market became a specialized activity of a specific community. The communal character of settlement is therefore higher in Minangkabau than in Kerala.

Twelfth century may have been the time when both Kerala and Minangkabau faced the invasion of Chola which disrupted the equilibrium of indigenous clan and paddy farming -based enterprise. Both polity had run overseas trade and each had a hold on the Agrarian Surplus of 12th century Asia. Both kingdoms retained the indigenous clan-based settlement. The concept of desham and nadu as formal unit of administration which was applied by Kulasekhara had been based on the clan based settlement and corporate, similar to the concept of nagari. Both polities in Kerala and
Minangkabau weakened after the invasion, and the power structure were altered from kingship into vassalage (swaroopams) coupled by the flourishing of Brahmanism by which caste spatial segmentation appeared as a transformed version of specialized profession. This may explain different kind of social-spatial segmentation which is caste-wise in Kerala. Authorization of Tambo Alam Minangkabau may have on one hand made it prescriptive.

The institution of Tambo Alam Minangkabau as codex of cultural life of the Minangkabau people had been authorized during this time. Nagari Rao-Rao is the case of this recent established nagari, triggered by coffee plantations.

As a region Kerala did not lose its importance as a trade fulcrum between Mediterranean and China during 12th century, therefore the concept of swaroopams and Brahmanism prevails. In Minangkabau the centre of power shifted away from Sumatra (to Java, Malaysia and Indo-China) and the development of the regions became relatively stagnant. Thus the elaborateness of design in Javanese architecture, Cambodian architecture and Vietnamese architecture has been more comparable. This may explain why the design in Kerala architecture is more elaborated, advanced technically and professional than Minangkabau.

Nineteenth century until twentieth century is the zenith of cultural hegemony in both regions, before Colonialism declined and Modernism took place. Colonial authority made many reinterpretations and reconsolidations on local culture, including setting up boundary to geographical landscapes creating compartmented plots of ownership. Some social alterations caused divisions of properties and its culture started to fail, finally unable to sustain the conditions. In Kerala several abolitions took place, such as landlordship, matrilliny and slavery. In Minangkabau the alteration of nagari model into national village system eradicated the social milieu of the nagari culture. In
short Modernism and Colonialism brought down the network framework and social integrity. And when in 2007 the Indonesian government tried to revive the nagari system, the result was not satisfactory. As a result now nagari and tara only appear as a social custom and schemata than an enterprise. In Minangkabau the concept still prevails because it was politically supported by central government, but it has not revived the living culture.

6.2.3 Impact of Urbanization on Settlement running Matrilineal Kinship

Urbanization in general is led the social and spatial proliferation into a more complex organization, to cope with a more specified and plural set up. But in the five cases of settlement studied, urbanization in general is understood as the solidification of the fluid-flowing and flexible trait of matrilineal social organization into a more rigid and paternal set up. Kin-based organization decreases its importance and has been gradually replaced by polity under major landlord, king or any agents with accumulated power and capital. The emergence of settlement has been initially natural and gradual, but later turned into deliberate and designed endeavor. Communal sense was transformed into a more feudal character. Communal power was gradually transformed or disguised into a more singular authorized power. The advancement of caste-system and class-system might not be only a matter of religious or enterprise phenomenon but a social condition which has been penetrated by requirements for a far more specialized society. The role of single ruler (kingdom) prevails, the male character gain more importance, and partitioning is part of scaling down the sphere of enterprise into a more customized scale. The development of formal world religion like Islam and Hindu escalated the solidification of communal interest. In this way it could be reflective to review the formulation of tambo alam Minangkabau in
prescribing establishment of nagari as an act of formalization of values and customs including settlement design.

6.3 MEANING AND ROLE OF RESIDENTIAL ARCHITECTURE

Conceptually matrilineal kinship manifests eventually in the prominence of feminine character of articulating place making and anchoring of clan into place. It signifies settlement not as product of conscious design but a gradual emergence of social network that took place in space, with house as its elementary ingredient in the network. Matrilineal kinship made female aspect an important idiom for spatial referencing and extension. The distribution, movement and positioning of female of the clan would determine the spatial plotting of the house and, spatial arrangement. In largest extent of settlement, the movement of Bhagavaty, halting points and her placing positions would define the connectivity and network of settlements. Bhagavaty herself is spiritual symbol of origin. The naming of kampung and branching of clans in Minangkabau also follows the idiomatic of mother. The idea of mother Goddess and her representational acts and movements are also manifested in idea of Dewi Sri in Minangkabau. It used to be celebrated but no longer. The idea of matrilineal kinship makes house convey its role as element of network of origin, dwelling place of member of family, rice and ancestor, and symbol of clan and marker of clan properties. However, currently particularly in Kerala they have gradually become functional houses. Some families have developed on the demolished ancestral house monument and family shrines.

Therefore matrilineal kinship does not conceptually signify the power and freedom of woman in space. Female is significant due to her territorial impact on her movement and status of property. On the contrary female is preserved because they are the potential offspring bearer of clan and
they represent the axis mundi within the compound, and agent of the network framework of habitation.

House design is a construction of the worldview of a clan and its community and therefore, it is built with role of people, with distinct skill, by means of particular trait, and sanctioned by sacred institutionalized dignitaries. Demolition of house also therefore appears as a significant act which is recorded and preserved. In Kerala, in the event of demolition of nalukettu, the family often preserve the Mahcu ara and reestablish them into family shrines. In Minangkabau the spot of demolished house are often planted by living plants and marked with stones.