CRITICAL REVIEW ON THE ROLE OF PLACE BRANDING IN REINFORCING THE IDENTITY OF A HISTORICAL CITY; WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO GALLE FORT

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Abstract

Place branding is a significant area of interest in developing countries which creates competitive advantages to places. There are many places which have potentials and resources that could be enhanced by collaborative approach of various fields including urban design, architecture, planning, marketing, policy making etc. Architectural contribution on place branding process does not limit to buildings or physical aspects but it is a comprehensive involvement regarding physical, social and economic well-being of a place and its people. Places are where different kinds of environments people live, including streets and squares. Space become a place when life occurs within it. Place brand is derived from existing assets of the place such as its value offering or public perception to it. Otherwise, it is derived from created assets, such as events, policies, abstract concepts, and so on. Branding is not simply the communication of strategy, a tagline, visual identity, logo or an advertising campaign. It is a strategic process for developing a long-term vision for the place, enabling a place to build on its existing strengths, make sense out of its present identity and build a future identity and image. Identity of a place is an orchestration of three elements; concept of place, the activity and physical characters and psychology.

This study was conducted in a historically significant setting which is also declared as a world heritage. The objective of this study is to identify the potentials of place identity and social attributes that can be use as indicators for forthcoming redevelopments under place branding in a historical setting. A qualitative study was carried through single case approach. The selected Dutch city of Galle fort is celebrated for years on its historical value, significant architecture and living attributes of a multi-ethnic and multi-religious community. Yet, the study carried out has revealed major changes occurred in the place due to tourism and commercial related implementations both physically and socially. A monotonous experience is emerging in the functions, spatial patterns and visual images.

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Nevertheless, through the analysis undertaken place branding is identified as a constructive tool for revitalizing a traditional context in urban scale through meaningful participation. This paper proposes suggestions to preserve place identity and to use it as an implement to develop a place brand which encourages the attraction that will bring greater economic and tourism rewards to a place without compromising its honesty.

Keywords: Place Branding, Place Identity, historical setting, Impact, monotonous experience, honesty, Galle Fort.

Introduction

Place branding is the idea of discovering or creating uniqueness, which differentiates one place from other in order to gain a competitive brand value. It has been perceived that successful place brands marketed their history, quality of place, lifestyle, culture, and diversity etc. Unlike branding simpler entities like a product, service, company, person or classical subjects of branding, place branding is a complex process. Place identity concerns the meaning and significance of places for their inhabitants and users, and how these meanings contribute to individuals' conceptualizations of self. Place has a lot more to offer than just a physical location. Historical settings are significant with respect to physical structures, meanings and social associations bound with them. The community attached with such a specific setting is carrying the constructs of place identity including memories, feelings, conceptions than anyone else. Today place branding has been identified as a strategic process of implementing place identity and regenerating a place from its existing situation to obtain competitive advantages. Sri Lanka also as a developing country involving in this process. However, in order to make places more attractive they have been added with some inacceptable concepts and proposals disregarding the potentials, character or the living aspects of them. This leads to a pitfall of dishonest images to places. Identifying recent development activities in Galle fort undertaken based on branding the place and their impacts on its heritage value and to what degree they contribute to reinforce the place identity is critically examined through this study. Branding is not unpretentious, it is a strategic process for developing a long-term vision for the place, enabling a place to build on its existing strengths, make sense out of its present identity and build a future identity and the image. But recent redevelopments along with the conservation in Galle Fort seem to be merely depend on the commercial purposes and tourist promotions. Accordingly, the brand image of the place seems to be contradictory with its original identity. Such initiatives cause damage to the community associates with this place. There could be negative impacts ensued by developing artificial place brands in its implementing. In order to avoid this, it's a timely initiative to find means of meaningful participation for gaining effective and sustainable place brand which is long-term, beneficial and trustworthy to the place, to its inhabitants and consumers.

This study identifies recent development activities in Galle fort undertaken based on branding the place and their impacts on its heritage value and to what degree they contribute to reinforce the place identity is critically examined through this study.

Research Methodology

The research is focusing on place branding of a historical setting, giving highlight to local historical ensembles which are highly attractive by the groups of people locally and internationally due to novel involvements. Among the highly conserved historical heritage settings one case was

selected. Since the branding is studied with relevant to place identity it is more appropriate of studying a single case.

The study is conducted with its limitations. Case study is carried out on a single historical setting considering only the recent developments. This study is conducted with interviews representing 25 respondents consisting of those who have constant engagement with the place. Since the quality of the information is the most important thing referral sampling is utilized letting the participants recommend or suggest more names of people to recruit. Majority of the field survey respondents are aged between 18-65 years old. unwillingness of users to participate in the survey affected the sampling. Face to face interviews are conducted with the respondents as most of them prefer over a questionnaire.

Internet and newspaper articles are taken as the major source of information in collecting data. Secondary information gathered from institutes in Galle and existing literature are used to recognize the transformation. The key methods employed to collect field data were observations, semi structured interviews and photographic study to grip the activities of local people and foreigners separately. Further this study acknowledges the subjectivity of the researcher and reflects on the personal experience.

The Concept of Place Branding:

Places including towns, cities compete with each other to attract tourism, investment and talent, as well as to achieve many other objectives. Most of the countries, towns, cities, and even regions are investing in branding operations in order to create a reputation for themselves, and to have a competitive advantage among others.

"[…] a network of associations in the consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioral expression of a place and its' stakeholders. These associations differ in their influence within the network and in importance for the place consumers' attitude and behavior."

<div align="right">Zenker & Braun, 2017; p. 275</div>

The idea of branding is progressively embraced from the commercial domain and applied in search of urban development, regeneration and quality of life. But these two fields are following parallel paths rather than interdisciplinary. Places of all kinds can be benefited by implementing comprehensible strategies managing their resources, reputation and image through place branding. In a highly competitive environment, place branding can help by building a worthwhile identity in order to influence perceived images in relevant markets. Particularly, **sustainable and competitive advantage** can be created by building the brand equity in relation to the identity of the nation, region, local area, city or town.

Robert Govers and Frank Go (2009) put it as follows:

> **"Place branding**: The process of discovering, creating, developing and realizing ideas and concepts for reconstructing place identities, their defining traits and 'genius loci' and subsequently building the sense of place, by efforts and investments in hardware (e.g. infrastructure, buildings), software (e.g. events, stories), orgware (e.g. co-operative organizational structuring) and virtual ware (e.g. symbols and symbolic actions, websites)"
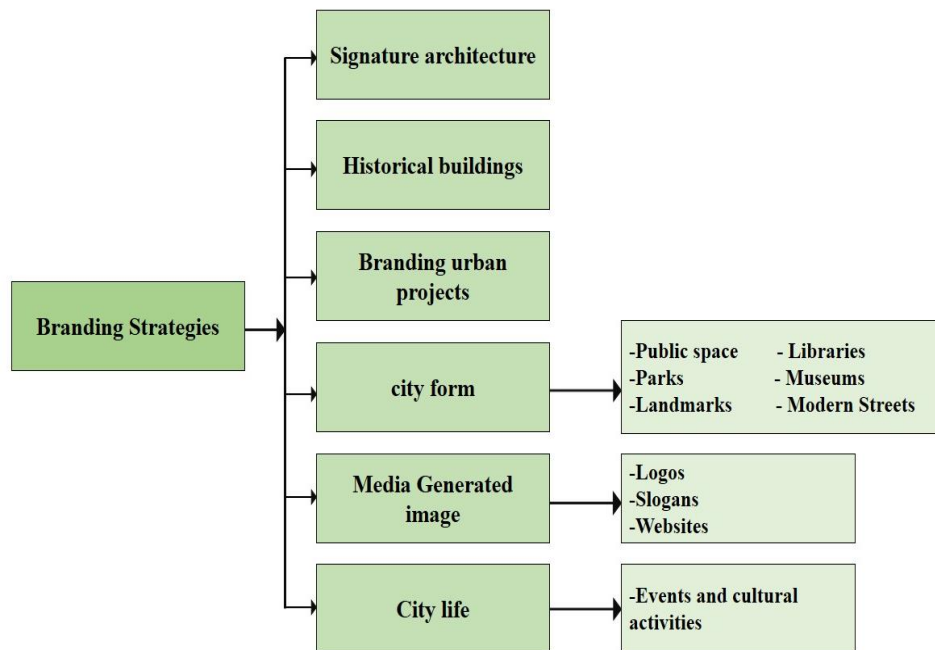
Figure 22: Branding Strategies
Source: Rehan(2013)

Signature Architecture - Architecture plays an important role in branding places through creating new icons and extraordinary developments. The visual potentials of buildings and even districts are instruments in branding places. Signature design are extensions of the flagship buildings. Introducing design elements into the built environment. Such as the design elements in the surroundings contribute to the building following up a same theme in order to create a single statement. Not to look same but to create a unique environment to create a memorable image on viewers mind unconsciously with a singular identity

Historical Buildings - A place or a city with a significant historical legacy has unique historical buildings and they are another method of branding. According to Rehan (2013) historical buildings can be re used in to different functions and through them could attract much more people to them. Historic properties, preserved by the organizational framework, can create distinctive landscapes that are likely to contribute to place branding to a certain degree (Kim,2014).

Branding Urban projects - Urban projects are a collective association of different field including architecture, urban design and planning. They appeared as master plans for the areas and new development to the regenerate the places. They are concerned on social, economic, climatic condition and various other factors that need to address in order to established a better living and the complete development of the city.

City Form –

The city form as a backdrop should support the livability and vibrancy of it. According to Lynch (1918-1984) City performance cannot be measured with reference to its spatial form. It matters the quality of the place which includes both the place and the society which inhabits in it. Once

the city form has variety of attractions, places to rest and interact, where it creates different opportunities including business or even shopping more people attract to them.

Figure 23 Sectors of city forms
Source: Rehan (2013)

Media Generated Image -Media representations play a crucial role in the place image context. Perceptions of places, including countries or tourist destinations, are influenced by the ways in which they are represented by the media (**Boisen** et al., 2011).

City Life - Events including cultural activities are one of the main means for attracting people and they help to develop the image of the location it took place by adding value to the city life.

"An emerging trend is for smaller cities to use larger, international events as bellwethers for their city branding efforts" (Dragin-Jensen, 2017). When an event is held at a place it creates various associations with the place, once those associations are in tune with the place it creates symbolic meaning to the place which leads to a strong brand.

Principles of place branding

Robert Govers, together with Erik van't Klooster and Gerard Van Keken developed an identity based set of place branding principles to guide the brand development and management of places including countries, destinations, regions, and cities.
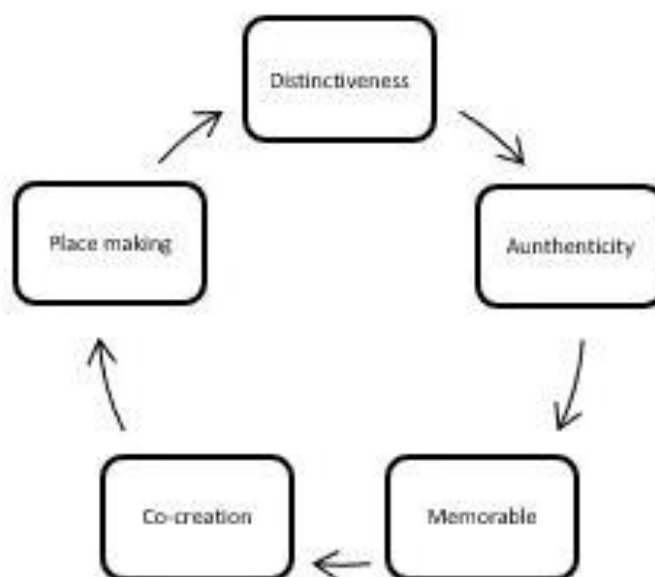

Figure 24: Principles of place branding
Source: Govers R.

Distinctiveness- The uniqueness of a particular place over other places/competitors. This is based on the core values of a place. Simply about what the place brand promises to its stakeholders.

Authenticity- A comprehensive and firm basis for place branding is established by involving its stakeholders in. In other words, authenticity in place branding is about people co-creating things that matter to them.

Memorable- The enjoyable experience at that certain place, achieved space in one's mind and heart. So that they generate the idea of living or investing in a place, or returning back one day.

Co-creation- Will only produce the best results when it is created and maintained through a strong coalition between government, business, civil society and target markets

Place making - An integrative place branding strategy is needed to capture the hearts and attention of visitors. It is not about a good slogan, logo and nice promotional campaigns. Yet it should be supported by strategies, innovations, events, structures, investments and symbolic actions.

The Concept of Place Identity:

Canter (1977) explained place as 'a unit of environmental experience' and the outcome of the relationships between conceptions, actions, and physical attributes. Places are where different kinds of environments people live. They consist of streets and squares of the urban environments. Space becomes a place when life occurs within its model. Places are built upon three major components. They are concept of place, the activity and physical characters and the psychology. The identity of place is an orchestration of these three elements.
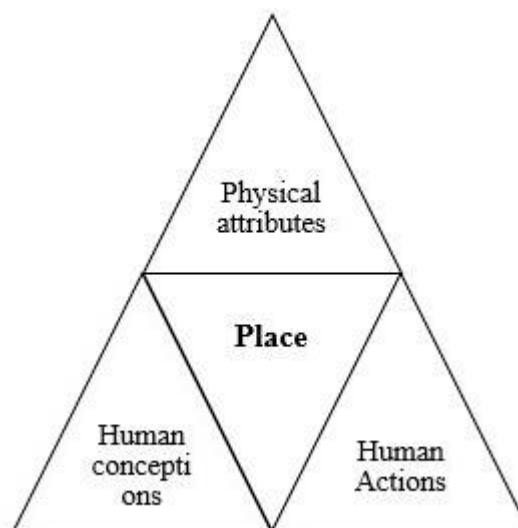

Figure 25 Components of place
Source: Canter, 1977

Stokols & Shumaker (1981) explained the "transactional view of settings" emphasizing the interdependent relationship among people and environment. It describes people and environment as a unit. Stating the mutual influence between people and places. This is further strengthened by Speller (2002) by defining the place as a "geographical space which has acquired meaning through a person's interaction with the space".

Relph (1976) intend that place is a concept and not just a point of map. Above all the theoretical insights "Place" could be identified as a concept which is developed through various pillars. Steele (1981) wrote about place on a perspective of industrial psychology. In his clarification he shows the importance of understanding the place as a means of improving the quality of life for everyday people. Further He described place as a "trans-active relationship between person and setting". The experience we receive through a place define the character of the place and vice versa.
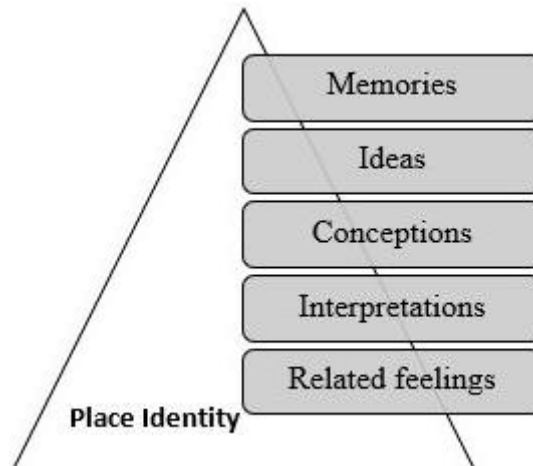

Figure 26: Place identity constructs
Source: Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1983

Place-identity is defined as the individual's integration of place into the conception of self, a person's strong emotional attachment to a place. (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff, 1983).

Further the place identity is considered as a sub structure of self-identity of people with respect to physical environment. The link between the above two leads to the understanding of place. It represents "memories, ideas, feelings, attitudes, values, preferences, meanings, and conceptions of behavior and experience which relate to complexity and variety of physical settings" (Proshansky et al, 1989).

In order to create the place identity, the attention should not be given only to imageability and appearance of the physical elements, but the meanings and relations as indicators for the place distinction. Physical elements are not only the buildings but the landscape features too. The place identity has been defined in a psychological term as,

> "The symbolic importance of place as a repository for emotions and relationships that give meaning and purpose to life, reflects a sense of belonging and important to a person's well-being" (Proshansky et al., 1995).

While it is a fact that the environment surround by us is repetitively changing, each and every place is existed with its own identity. In order to survive in the process of globalization, cities should reinvent their images in order to achieve a restored position. Relph (1976) indicates that places become "placeless" by losing their authenticity where either stereo 'type conventions' or 'technological sophistications' restrict them. Losing the essence or the honesty of a place will lead the people who are living there also to lose their true identity, because identity of people is mostly connected to the place where they are associated by. And also, Relph further explains that authentic and unself-conscious sense of place is key in providing identity for individuals and communities in contemporary communities. According to Day (2002) "root", is knowing the past which "… in time and place give context to individual life; connecting us with community, nature,

even our identity and self-esteem". The following aspects are important in examining a particular place with its original sense.

- The buildings' impact on the culture of the place
- The buildings' contribution towards the reinforcement of the community and vice versa
- Reflection of the beliefs and values of interpersonal involvements of the people and the place through the buildings.
- The buildings' image as an expression of the community

Cognitive psychologist Margaret W. Matlin has once stated that memory as the "process of retaining information over time." Thus, memory has the ability to bridge the past and present. Built environment can take back one to the past through means of memory. Hence, architecture as medium could remind to people who live in and who visit a historical city from its existence. "place memory" as Hayden(1997) mentions "is the key to the power of historic places to help citizens define their past; places trigger memories for insiders who shared the common past and at the same time places often can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing about them in the present". Hayden (1997) states that the urban landscape should "help the citizens to define their public past". As to what they did in a particular kind of space such as an open area, a courtyard, a verandah and etc.; who, why and how people used them. "Memory is place-oriented", she further states. It should be able to arouse visual and social memory.

Identity of a place is as much a function of inter-subjective intentions and experience of appearance of the buildings and scenery and it refers not only to the distinctiveness of individual places but also to the sameness between different places. (Relph 1976). He further clarifies that the identity of a place is expressed in three ways; they are,

- The physical appearance
- Observable activities and functions
- Meanings or symbols

According to the above characteristics he expresses a "socially structured identity" while stating that identity of a place articulates a 'common identity' within a community.

> "The 'environmental past' of a person (a past consisting of places, spaces and their properties), is at the core of his physical environmental-related cognition, which has served instrumentally in the satisfaction of his biological, psychological, social, and cultural needs" (Proshansky et al., 1983: 59).

Places are in an endless competition in attracting people by admitting various strategies for their survival in the process of globalization. Promotion of places are successful when they refer to identity roots rather than alien thematic concepts. In contemporary cities, weakening of identity is facilitated by the uniform concepts of planning and development together with commodification of places which have led to the loss of local identity (Mohamad, 1998). So, identification of the Place identity before implementing development projects and planning is a crucial requirement. If not, the place derived within a physical context may not have any connection within its meaning or with its inhabitants. Lack of connectivity between the physical landscape and the meaning of place derived through physical, cultural and emotional backgrounds leads to placelessness (Relph, 1976). Gieryn (2000) has explained various factors influencing place attachment, accumulated biographical experiences, socially and culturally shared activities and geography and the architecture of the place. According to him placelessness weakens the attachment to the places. Finally, in fulfilling the place identity especially in Asian context examining live-in experience of its inhabitants is really important. These experiences are

bound with social and cultural diversity, psychological values and the memorable elements of the place, yet in present day these factors do not seem to be considered.

The importance of retaining the place identity in historical cities

Preservation of historical sites are certainly essential because they provide a sense of identity in this fast-changing context for upcoming generations. These places represent the past and culture of a country. Cities narrate their own tales. Places are still being reminded, explored and studied based on what they gifted for the future.

Physical features, activities, symbols and rituals express a common identity about a place. Therefore, careful attention needs to be paid on redevelopments targeting different audience in a traditional background since they do not only transform the existing places, but their meanings and the place attachment as well.

Preservation and retaining historic places should not only concentrate in the physical features and the visual character of them, but the non- tangible, humanitarian values as well. A historic place should be protected with its people as well.

Retaining historic places give economic values as well. An effective place brand can be generated from inherent place identity, which can be represented by historic heritages. (Kim S, 2014). People are attracted to experience these historic places greatly. Therefore, preserving them is not saving past but adding value for the present and an investment for the future.

> "The term 'living heritage site' refers most of the time to a site with a local community, which is seen as a community of fixed boundaries living near or around a site and is supposed to be differentiated from those communities using a site at a national or international level. In an increasingly globalised world with an increasing mobility of people, the membership of a local community may range from a small group of people to the entire living world population" (Cohen 1985, 117–118; Robertson 1995, 26; Erb 2003, 131).
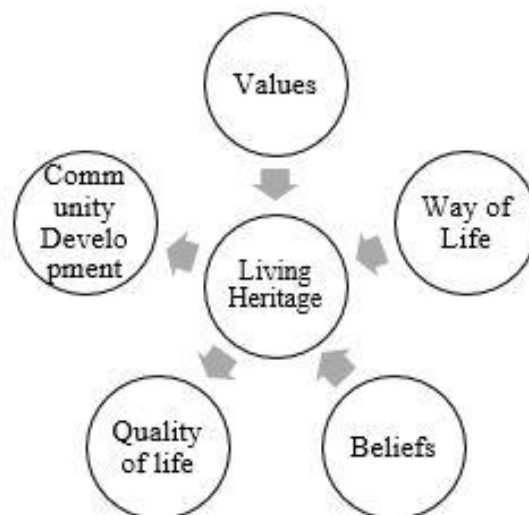

Figure 27: Living Hertage
Source: Poulios I, (2011)

Heritage cities, historical and cultural site are recognized as important assets of place branding. When it is living heritage, the physical environment is attached with the cultural values as well. This influence the place branding as well. (Hanna and Rowley, 2008). Ultimately, they influence on the community development and improve the quality of life.

"The simplest form of sense of identity, in the narrow meaning of those common terms. 'Sense of place'; identity is the extent to which a person can recognize or recall a place as being distinct from other places as a having a unique, or at least a particular, character of its own". (Lynch K, 1981, P: 130)

In early 2000s the ICCROM introduced people centered approach to conservation following the living heritage program. The specialty of this approach is it was clearly varied from the conventional material-based approach and took a more placed living dimension at the core in the heritage continuity. According to this key theme there were main three key principles in this approach. They are as follows.

- Identifying communities as the true long-term upholders of their heritage sites
- Empowering the communities in the process of conservation and management, and promoting from their traditional and already established values, maintenance practices and management systems.
- Connecting sustainable development to the conservation in the communities, by developing a process to accomplish transformation and by making heritage related to the requirements of the contemporary communities.

Therefore, as long as conservation of these historical cities matters for their existence branding them with novel yet appealing approaches could bring competitive advantages and prosper to the place and its people. Most importantly these processes should not be isolated from each other, but should have a mutual connection in revitalizing historic settings.

Galle as a world heritage city

Galle fort has such a colorful history that it is known as the Dutch Fort or the Ramparts of Galle. This was first built in 1588 by the Portuguese and then fortified by thee Dutch from 1649 onwards during the 17th century. This wonderful place is considered as a historical, archaeological and architectural heritage monument. The heritage value of the Fort has been acknowledged by the UNESCO and declared as a cultural heritage under criteria IV. Galle fort has been identified as an urban communal which showcase both European architecture and south Asian traditions from 16th to 19th centuries.

Figure 28: Galle fort city
Source: https://www.google.com

Today even centuries later this place rests as the best conserved and most integral fortified city by the colonial European rulers in Asia. Fort was later become a historical monument while at the same time a setting for a living city. It was a living settlement with nearly 700 houses alone. It consisted with a local community of different ethnic groups, including Dutch burghers, Sinhalese and Muslims. They have resided there for generations. Further they have claimed their own spaces and they have given meaning to different places simply by living in them. They called fort their home. The colonial culture affected many areas including the social patterns, education, religion, economy, administration and the built fabric as well. The impact of the architecture is significant among them. However according to various factors, the architectural fabric is affected and altered throughout the history.

Analysis and Discussion

In recent years fort has undergone through several revitalization projects and redevelopment projects in order to increase its attraction. Most of the attempts could be identified as place branding strategies, though there is no clear branding campaign for Galle fort. It is constantly supervised by various authorities in order to preserve its historical character and to conserve the place. According to the increased arrivals of visitors including both local and foreigners the atmosphere has transformed from its original character. There are more than three hundred houses inside Galle fort and among them around 110 are already taken over by the foreigners. (Thiranagama). According to the observation done onsite and the references made amongst the identified six place branding strategies, five strategies are highlighted. Branding projects is not been significantly acquired in Galle fort for promotions. However, branding strategies have made some notable differences in the environment which was not there for more than 400 years.
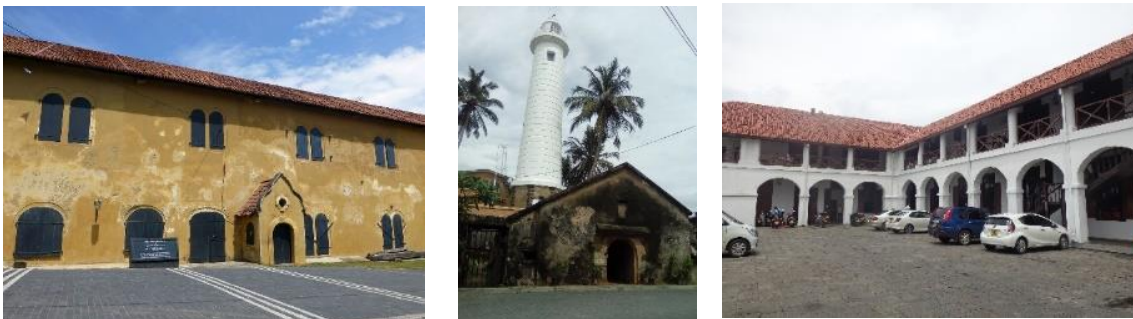

Figure 29: Signature Buildings and historical buildings
Source: Author

Maritime museum and the light house are signature buildings which are highlighted primarily. Both residents and outsiders admit that unique architecture of those buildings attract more people to this place. Historical buildings have reused and readapted for various functions in Galle fort. Both residential and non-residential buildings have been converted to restaurants, cafes, shops and villas. Most of the residents were encouraged to sell their own houses because of the higher prices they were offered. However, these houses were renovated and restored by preserving the Dutch colonial character since tourists are attracted to the unique architectural character in Fort which is completely distinct. Among the historical buildings which are readapted to various functions, Dutch Hospital is an iconic building. At present building is restored in to a shopping precinct in order to attract large number of visitors to the venue which can be identified as a branding strategy.

Some buildings which were acquired by foreigners converted them to holiday homes and they are closed for most times of the year and make the surrounding area despondent. However, authorities are not controlling this re-adaptation in order to provide economic benefits for the residents in this historic city. However according to the information collected most of the places are not own by the real residents but foreigners or wealthy people from outside.

Miss.Thilini an employee (Personal communication 13.05.2018) at a stationary shop mentioned her idea as

 "Most of the places I passed by on my way are closed for most of the time. I think the owners are in Colombo or abroad"

Therefore, the unique expression which it had earlier with its components of physical structure of the city form and living inhabitants is in a changing facet according to the extensive flow of local and foreign visitors. According to the residents' perspective the image of the place has drastically changed due to residential displacement, loss of local trading activities and different other local administrative functions. Establishing modern streets is a strategic method in branding a place so that a lot of people are attracted through presenting diverse activities. But the transformation of an existing situation may cause various misinterpretations and disturbance to the original environment.

Figure 30: Conversion of buildings for different functions
Source: Author

The congestion in the streets has made a lot of impacts. Hospitality sector and retail trade had converted the street character. Souvenir shops, bars cafes, restaurants and food shops and fashion outlets and accessories shops are leading most of the spaces along the streets in order to cater the tourists and visitors. These high-priced areas of restaurants, shops and hotels are dominated the streets creating a luxury atmosphere. Public thoroughfare is invaded by the various disturbing activities. In some situations, extended business activities can be seen in to the available free space. They have restricted the free flow of those spaces. There is a competition to use the public space. This deteriorate the quality of the traditional streetscape; modern amenities are established compromising the original character of the surroundings. As a whole the city form is generating a crowded, busy, noisy and stylish association which is completely opposite to its own identity as a peaceful city.

Mr.Gunasekara (Personal communication 10.05.2018) a resident in Hospital street mentioned his idea as;

"There is no limit in this, I also like to keep my house front beautiful. But then people come and obstruct it and take photographs. No one cares about our privacy. So, I purposely make it unpleasant so that we are undisturbed."

Different parties have accommodated new technologies to communicate the change of physical and social order in this historical city in order to drag the attraction. Hence apart from highlighting the unity, harmony and the cultural values of the community in this place fort is marketed as

commercial enterprise. Residents' perception on the media generated image is less. As most of the residents expressed what is distinctive to here in Galle fort is the harmonious community which bonded by each other irrespective to the religion and historical and architectural values. They mentioned that it should be promoted and even the issues they face should be highlighted from this media so that the inappropriate happenings could be minimized.

Regarding the city life various social events have created vibrant environment which is appreciate by the residents. Courts square is the main place where most of the functions taking place. Different cultural activities add diversity to the place and creates liveliness and eventually promotes the place as well. The infrastructure development projects (especially the road system) implemented has created a better and beautiful environment. Even the residents acknowledged that. This has ensured the well-being and satisfaction of both community and visitors.
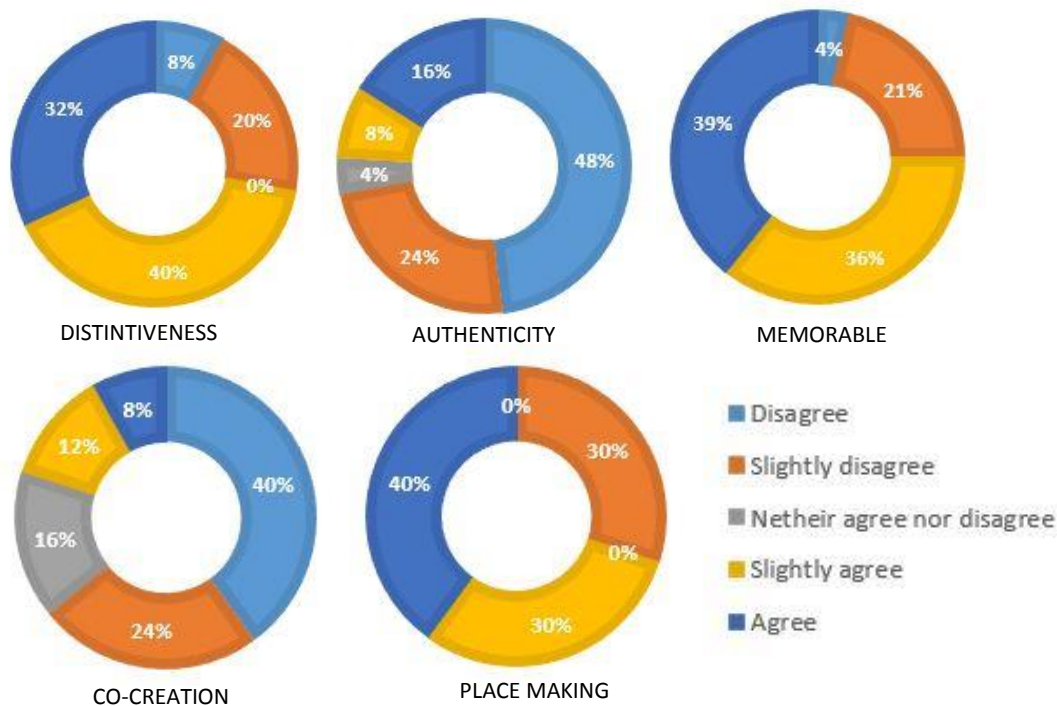

Figure 31: Response from interviewees
Source: Author

The community in the Galle fort has been affected by the results of branding strategies adopted in. The remaining residents are dissatisfied by the changes and most of them are showing less connection with their surroundings. Further, informal discussion with some foreigners were conducted in the field study. Many of them stated that they visited the Galle fort because of its fortifications and the historical buildings. However, most of their responses revealed that the implementation of tourism related activities made them feel uncomfortable at some points. Through the observation done tourists could be identified as the main target of this branding development. Re adaptation of historical buildings, city life enhancement and city form improvement are the main three strategies which could be highlighted in Galle fort branding process. In order to start tourists related hospitality services and commercial activities investors were attracted to this place. Readapting abandoned and dilapidated historical buildings is a

positive thing in boosting up a mute place. But the important fact is that it is just not only a physical transformation, but a transformation on the social structure as well. There are meanings attached with those buildings with the community. And there is an overall unity, and interdependency with others as well. So, the impact of reusing these buildings need to be greatly consider beforehand. Authorities should promote more neighborhood-based strategies in order to create the living settlement alive to the visitors. Distinctiveness or the authenticity does not depend on the physical structures but with the meaning and with the people associates with them. So, the socio-cultural characteristics should be enhanced in the branding process.

Both residents and authorities should work together in decision making and executing plans. Residents should be aware of the changes happening in their surroundings.

And also place making should not target only the tourists. The real possessors of the heritage are the local people. It is true that tourism based on heritage could create a lot of advantages. But this process should give prominence to the life style of the inhabitants. When value is given to them, they also become positive partners in the process. Even in organizing events, there should be relationship to the place meaning and commitment of the community. So more successful events could be held. Media should optimize the potential of the original place constructs and living community and their distinctiveness in place branding more than the touristic ambience. Mitigation plans need to be established on the modifications which affect to the character of the place. More prominence should be given o to bottom-up approaches in implementing strategies. There should be kind consideration paid on well-being of being people and their living condition which are highly affected by the control of regulations. So that the residents will remain in the place and they could be strong partners who are both responsible for the place meaning as a historic heritage city and participate on enhancing its regeneration.

Conclusion

Galle fort can be identified as a place where the branding strategies are achieved in order to make it a thriving city. Since this old city has been once isolated and there was a less connection with the outer world it was developed to be attractive. Among six strategies of branding, there are three highlighting strategies in Galle fort branding process. They are Historical buildings, city form and city life. But other three strategies including signature architecture, branding urban projects and media generated image also contributing in the process as well. Key target market identified in Galle fort with its branding process are tourists and investors.

At the present situation this place is a popular and vibrant with the invention of various kinds of restaurants, coffee shops, boutiques, hotels, galleries and shops. This atmosphere gives a different interpretation to the so-called fortified city; with this drastic conversion Galle fort has become a popular backdrop for photo shoots, TV commercials and movies.

Based on analysis, it is confirmed that branding implementations have directly impact on the place identity. The collective meanings of the study indicated primarily a loss of place identity. Further it has ensued a monotonous experience within the premises, a "Sameness" which gives the similar look in everywhere. The place is branded by reorienting its real significance. The whole context is in a hard try to achieve a tourism demand more than preserving its identity. Most of the activities are encouraging tourism and attracting investments. An overcrowded destination is emerging by undermining the local identity and the historic character of the place. Overcrowding of tourists and commercialized atmosphere results the loss of residential character, this has discourage residents to live in the place and while the focus paid on tourism and commercial advantages this residential settlement is transforming in to a leisure quarter without

its original residents in which the physical character is being given focus but with a dying living settlement.

Earlier streets were consisted with neighbors chatting and kids playing in. But now since most of the houses are converted to holiday homes, they remain empty for most of the time in year and streets are full of tourists. Due to overcrowding there are many negative effects on residents' quality of life. Anti-social behavior in the residential quarter is established and the interaction is discouraged. There are a lot of safety, privacy and cleanliness issues as well.

A gradual transformation can be identified through change of functions, spatial patterns and social cohesion which deviates the identity of place. The historic authenticity and the distinctiveness of the neighborhood is threatened by the process. Modern streetscape is appearing since most of the ground floors of the building are dedicated to direct tourism activities. Majority of the people who keep a memory which is bound with the history of the place are dissatisfied with the image obtained at the present due to the branding process. Most of the historical buildings of various categories has undergone through commercial or tourism related conversion. This has affected the character of the place and the identity generated through their symbolic meaning.

Even in the considerable number of websites as activities promoted to do in Galle fort are typical experience such as shopping and dining. Even though it is highlighting an image as more vibrant and successful there is a hidden story which is not revealed. It is the lack of authenticity felt by the residents of this old city which threatens the socio-economic fabric of the neighborhood. Not only that this has affected the historic and symbolic aspects of this heritage city but also is devaluing the historic image of the place.

Events are creating more live and vibrant place in this place and creates different associations. Social relations are contributing to the expression of identity and to generate the belongingness to the place and vice versa. And new social relationships which is in turn affects to resident's existing social relations. Through the study it has been identified that with respect to events Galle fort is experiencing positive scenarios which could be further developed.

Findings of this research contribute for decision-making process to create the image of a historical setting preserving its character and reinforcing the place identity which at the same time to improve the tourism related branding process in Galle fort. Further considering more on the place's existing values and its potential as well as the value of the inhabitants who are the representatives of the place. According to Vaske and Kobin (2001), residents' positive nature of the attachment to the place is protective and more responsible. Therefore, this study suggests that local authorities should increase the active role of the host community in implementation of the heritage conservation and place branding. More over the neighborhood qualities, bottom-up approaches and irrelevant modification should be minimized.

The case study directs in to interesting facets of the work, while showing directions to future research. It would be greatly pertinent to study on the scales on the impact of the recent branding efforts which would clearly describe the impact caused. Since the field study was conducted in single case study, this research could be further improved in to different settings and explore on the theme. More over this allows to compare the place branding approaches with relevant to their target market and the implementation strategies of the place identity among each other.

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