

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SENSE OF PLACE AND
CO-CREATION EXPERIENCE:
CASE STUDY OF CROW ISLAND BEACH PARK,
SRI LANKA**

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Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Town & Country Planning

University of Moratuwa
Sri Lanka

November 2024

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Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Doctor of
Philosophy

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DECLARATION

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

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ABSTRACT

Co-creation has been embraced as a new collaborative strategy for place-making. Yet, the reasons behind the agency getting public co-creation participation have not been fully explored. Researchers highlight that one significant intrinsic motivation for taking part in co-creations is a sense of place. On the other hand, some scholars indicate that an enhanced sense of place can be achieved through community participatory strategies and co-creation. However, there is a noticeable absence of empirical investigations into this seemingly reciprocal relationship. Thus, this thesis explores the relationship between the sense of place and the co-creation experience using the case of the Crow Island Beach Park development in Sri Lanka. Following an exploratory research design, data was collected through in-depth interviews with a purposive sample of sixteen members engaged in the beach park development. Additionally, observations, document analysis and a review of social media data were conducted to collect data. Subsequently, content, thematic and concurrence analysis were employed within a qualitative research approach. The findings reveal, firstly, a novel conceptual framework of sense of place termed, ‘a ladder of sense of place’ which delineates distinct stages of sense of place progression from placelessness, connected to the place, committed to the place, commend the place as best and consecrate the place over personal goals. Secondly, the findings reveal that the co-creation experience is depicted as a cycle, with social network-based social experience as the primary aspect, followed by economic, cognitive and hedonic co-creation experiences. Thirdly, a reciprocal relationship between the sense of place and the co-creation experience is identified, marked by a spiraling-up dynamic. The ladder of sense of place broadens existing notions of sense of place and introduces new dimensions to measurement scales. Further, this study makes a noteworthy contribution to the co-creation and place-making literature by introducing the concept of the place co-creation experience cycle. The upward spiral illustrates individuals with a deep sense of place are experiencing greater co-creation experiences. Ultimately, the findings offer valuable insights for planners, environmental managers and policymakers seeking to foster active community participation in sensible and sustainable place-making.

Keywords: Collaborative planning, co-creation experience, ladder of sense of place, place-making, qualitative research approach

DEDICATION

To:

Mr. Ranil Meethiyagoda

Mr. Shantha Bandara

People as such, do not commit to a work based on extrinsic motivations.

Therefore, we need more people like them to co-create our future!

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGM	- Annual General Meeting
ATLAS	- Archive of Technology, Life world and Language
BPMS	- Beach Park Management Society
CBO	- Community Based Organization
CCD	- Department of Coast Conservation
CMC	- Colombo Municipal Council
COVID-19	- COronaVirus Disease of 2019
IWMI	- International Water Management Institute
MEPA	- Marine Environment Protection Agency
NARA	- National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency
NGO	- Non-Governmental Organization
RQ	- Research Question
SJR	- Scientific Journal Ranking
SLLDC	- Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation
SLLRDS	- Sri Lanka Low Land Reclamation and Development Corporation
SWOT	- Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UDA	- Urban Development Authority
UIP	- Urban Innovation Pathway
ULL	- Urban Living Labs
UN	- United Nations
VFI	- Voluntary Functions Inventory
VOS	- Visualization of Similarities

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

1.1 Background

The world is undergoing rapid urbanization, resulting in the prevalence of an urban-dominated global landscape. Particularly, the highest rates of urban growth are observed in the countries of the global South, often referred to as the ‘developing world’, where cities expand with an average of five million new residents every month. Currently, 52% of people in developing nations live in cities; by 2030, that number is expected to rise to 57%, and by 2050, it is expected to reach 66% (UN-Habitat, 2022). Some scholars contend that we are witnessing “a southern” urban world due to the rapid urbanization occurring predominantly in regions such as Asia, Africa and Latin America, in contrast to the Global North (Myers, 2021). Simultaneously, individuals increasingly adopt urban lifestyles, pursuing a higher quality of life. However, urban areas represent intricate organisms where the natural environment, built environments and human populations converge. Addressing this complexity necessitates urban planning, a regulatory process aimed at managing city systems to enhance the well-being of inhabitants. When an effective urban planning intervention is lacking, possible wicked urban problems include sprawling urban form, informal economy, underserved settlements, unstable governance, and service delivery. As these problems are complex, planners are no longer expected to solve them in isolation (Metzger & Lindblad, 2020). In response, Candel and Paulsson (2023) propose co-creation as an appealing and promising approach to tackle these issues collaboratively.

Accordingly, co-creation is recognized as a novel governance paradigm that serves as a tool for addressing complex urban challenges (Bentzen et al., 2020). As described by Ansell and Torfing (2021), co-creation falls within the realm of collaborative governance, emphasizing the productive and creative mobilization of societal resources in public governance. Notably, the significance of co-creation lies in its ability to enhance creativity within the public sector (De Vries et al., 2016). This creativity is cultivated through the exchange of experiences, knowledge, resources,

and perspectives among stakeholders at various levels and capacities (Ansell & Torfing, 2021; Torfing & Siebers, 2018). In the context of developing countries, it is a viable approach for decision-making in situations characterized by severe fiscal constraints (Van Eijk & Steen, 2014). Proactive co-creation is another important feature of governance; it mediates disputes between and among stakeholders, promotes productive collaboration across institutional and sectoral silos, and ensures agreement on public sector decisions and actions (Ives & Kendal, 2014; Ansell & Torfing, 2021).

Determining which spatial entities these complex urban problems are to be solved by using co-creation is another challenge to confront. In this regard, Costa et al. (2020) assert the importance of public spaces in urban life, the standard of the urban environment, and identity construction. Additionally, certain pioneering philosophers argue that place-making has evolved into an integral component of policy norms, playing a role in the re-invention of the city materially and imaginatively (Harvey, 1989; Massey, 1991). Consequently, there is a pressing need to refocus attention on local-level planning through multidisciplinary approaches, offering avenues for comprehensive strategic developments.

This localized planning approach has the potential to foster additional creativity in urban design (Chapman, 2011). Traditionally, urban designers have focused solely on the physical metamorphosis and final product of places. However, the concept of place-making has been evolving since the 1990s. According to Akbar and Edelenbos (2021), the contemporary understanding of place-making views it as "a process in which the configuration of the place results from the activities of its users, making the reformation of a place a social activity involving people." Lepofsky and Fraser (2003) illustrate that the act of place-making extends beyond professionals and local residents; it should encompass all stakeholders involved in decision-making, regardless of whether they reside in the particular planning area. Furthermore, Habibah et al. (2013) define place-making as "the process of making sense of a place based on the visions, strategies, and practices of stakeholders". In this context, place-making is closely tied to community participation, with enhancing the sense of place being the primary outcome. Teder (2018) succinctly captures this idea, stating that "place-making in

public space implies engaging in the practice of urban planning and design beyond an expert culture, and such collaboration can be termed as co-creation”.

However, according to Lund (2018), the collaborative concepts applied in urban planning have faced criticism for functioning as “public support machines” (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011, p. 104), excluding marginalized citizens. There is a growing consensus that alternative forms and conceptualizations of participation are necessary. Boonstra and Boelens (2011) contend that the primary concern with participation, as implemented since the communicative turn, is that these procedures are instigated and managed by governmental organizations. Consequently, they become laborious, susceptible to formal structures of influence, political processes functioning within a decision hierarchy, and affected by an inadequate delegation of power and accountability. As a result, these processes tend to favor individuals termed 'professional citizens' (Boonstra & Boelens, 2011, p. 106) or 'expert citizens' (Agger, 2012) – those who have the expertise and resources to engage within this particular framework. Therefore, community initiatives and informal problem-solving methods are often overlooked unless other modes of community engagement are actively facilitated and incorporated into planning processes (Boonstra & Boelens 2011; Agger, 2012). The effectiveness of regulatory community participation becomes questionable if the planning process fails to capture community interest (Jones, 2018) because community participation is typically voluntary and contingent on individuals' levels of expertise, creativity, passion for the topic, and willingness (Teder, 2018).

Sense of place refers to the relationship between people and places. This concept signifies that places are interwoven with individuals' sources of meaning and personal experiences. In this mutual construction and constitution, people, environments, places, and identities are interdependent (Harvey, 2003). Teo and Huang (1996, p.310) similarly perceive place as an "active setting" intricately connected to its inhabitants, emphasizing that places are not abstract concepts but tangible experiences within the real world. Casey (1996) asserts that living entails residing within one's local context, and authentic comprehension stems from grasping the unique characteristics of the places one occupies.

The concept of "sense of place" has been investigated in diverse fields, each drawing from distinct and occasionally conflicting theoretical and methodological backgrounds. Despite extensive literature exploring the connection between individuals and their environments, devising a universally applicable definition of place that encompasses all perspectives proves challenging (Escobar, 2001). Genius loci, or the spirit of a place, encompasses diverse elements, including topographical, cosmological, spiritual aspects, as well as people's emotional and psychological connections to the place. Theoretical and methodological considerations surrounding the sense of place involve examining the social construction of place, the evolution of place meanings over time, and how individuals form attachments to places (Agnew, 1987; Tuan, 1977 and 1991; Massey, 1995; Bender, 2002; Brandenburg & Carroll, 1995; Ingold, 2000).

Various forces led to deepening disruptions in people-place relationships (Manzo et al., 2023). Amongst modern planning paradigms such as the separation of functions, but also more recent global influences such as the COVID-19 pandemic and rising of social media. During the pandemic, long-standing notions of a singular sense of place based on fixity, centeredness, stability and rootedness have become problematic (Di Masso et al., 2019). Further, the spread of social media has influenced the understanding of place, the behavior of the urban community in the public space and their social networks (Dameria et al., 2018). Sense of place is developed in relation to the physical characteristics of the place itself, meanings and social aspects of the place (Stedman, 2023).

Therefore, the underlying research assumption is that the kind of place-making approaches may have a role to play in fostering sense of place. This research, in particular, explores the sense of place within communities, prompted partly by responses to urban challenges, environmental quality, the character of evolving spaces, activities undertaken, and the customs that develop around those activities.

1.2 Knowledge gap and research problem

Some insights for co-creation concerning urban planning emerged from the Design Participation Conference (1971) held in Manchester, England, organized by the

Design Research Society. The event sought to explore the significance of involving users in the design process as a strategy for addressing social issues (Lee, 2008). It highlighted the norm of 'do-it-yourself,' where users play a main role as creative thinkers in the design process, representing the true essence of design participation (Cross, 1972). Consequently, co-creation is essentially defined as the participation of citizens in different phases of the planning process (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2000). Originally introduced in the field of market research, co-creation posits that consumers can actively contribute to designing products. Although this concept has gained widespread acceptance in various sectors, its adoption and empirical testing in urban settings have been limited (Leino & Puumala, 2021). As co-creation becomes increasingly recognized as a transformative strategy applicable to many fields, especially in the face of social challenges and financial constraints, there is a pressing need for further research efforts in the urban planning and design research domain.

While co-creation is acknowledged as a possible approach in modern spatial planning, its incorporation into the planning process could prove ineffective if it fails to actively engage and captivate individuals (Jones, 2018). Moreover, existing studies on collaborative planning predominantly concentrate on collaborative networks, processes, and organizations. However, for successful collaboration, it is essential to examine conditions at the individual level, considering the characteristics, capacity, and willingness of citizens to participate (Van Eijk & Steen, 2023; Voorberg et al., 2014). Simultaneously, Moroni (2018) underscores the importance of exploring individuals' or groups' willingness to partake in the co-creation process to sustain such practices.

Moreover, Puerari et al. (2018) emphasize that motivations for engaging in the co-creation process are linked to a sense of ownership and personal fulfillment, with most stakeholders voluntarily participating. Despite these concerns being highlighted in the literature, empirical attention confirming the potential intrinsic motivators for co-creation has been scarce. Additionally, the positive impact of sense of community and ownership on community participation has been consistently emphasized (Anderson, 2009; Talo et al., 2014; Puerari et al., 2018), acting as motivational drivers (Bager et al., 2021). In the context of co-creation, certain studies highlight the relationship of

concepts like sense of place, place attachment, place identity, or place dependence. However, the lack of empirical investigations into these relationships is noticeable (Stoica et al., 2022; Deng, 2021; Yan et al., 2019; Hadjilouca et al., 2015; Saar & Palang, 2009).

Similarly, the sense of place might have a role to play in the co-creation experience, given that it revolves around the meanings individuals attach to their significant locations. However, the application of studying the sense of place in relation to place co-creation has not been put into practice, primarily due to the concept's intricacy and the challenges associated with assessing this sentiment (Lewicka, 2011). This issue becomes even more complex when considering the significance of the sense of place in urban planning. Consequently, the full exploration of the meaning of the sense of place within the context of place co-creation remains an ongoing task. Furthermore, Duggan et al. (2023) highlight the limited research on the measurement of the sense of place, particularly from scholars in the global south, resulting in a skewed understanding of the phenomenon.

Furthermore, concerning the sense of place, certain scholars observe that the prevailing discourse tends to focus on the conservation or preservation of existing senses of place. There is limited discussion about how to actively create places with a highly valued sense of place (Roe, 2012). Traditional planning approaches for recreational settings have historically concentrated on the physical attributes and quality of those places to support specific activities and experiences. However, it is recognized that people engage with a place beyond the physical setting to deepen their understanding of it, fostering a 'sense of place' and emotional connections among individuals, leading them to appreciate it (Mohapatra & Mohamed, 2013). Nevertheless, there remains considerable uncertainty regarding the role of citizen science in nurturing a sense of place, particularly concerning the evolving meanings of places (Toomey et al., 2020).

Many scholars have investigated the relationship between the sense of place and other dimensions such as community involvement, place attachment, cooperative planning, and participatory urban development in recent years (Thompson & Prokopy, 2016; Erfani, 2020). Furthermore, several researchers indicate that the co-creation experience contributes positively to the growth of sense of place (Casais & Monteiro,

2019; Teder, 2018; Marušić & Erjavec, 2020; Slingerland et al., 2020a; Deng, 2021). Nevertheless, the empirical research to examine the relationship between sense of place and co-creation experience is limited.

1.3 Research aim and research questions

In response to these trends, there is a need and growing interest in reviving radical urban ideas. Therefore, this research aims to explore the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience.

Concerning the above, the main research question of this study was formulated as follows,

What is the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience?

It has been possible to formulate a response to the primary research question by addressing the three subsequent questions listed below.

RQ1: What constitutes sense of place?

This question is designed to explore the sense of place, as locating this concept within the realms of urban planning and design is essential (Cartel et al., 2022; Erfani, 2022). Due to its subjective nature, the lack of consensus on its definition and the challenges associated with measuring this feeling (Lewicka, 2011), there is an opportunity to delve deeper into the nuances of the sense of place, particularly in understanding how individuals experience it and how scholars can assess it. Furthermore, a key gap in the existing literature resolves around the absence of a widely applicable sense of place scale capable of encompassing the diverse range of perceptions and effectively incorporating them into place-making. Therefore, the primary research question can be addressed once empirically exploring the question, ‘What constitutes sense of place?’.

RQ2: How does the community experience co-creation?

This question explores the patterns through which the community experiences co-creation. The concept of co-creation has been empirically explored primarily in field such as marketing, tourism, business studies, computer science, and design science (Greenhalgh et al., 2016), yet it has been less explored in the sociological context of

urban place-making (Teder, 2018; Foth, 2017; Leino & Puumala, 2021). Existing frameworks (Verley, 2015) provide some support, but specific insights into people's behavioral patterns are essential, as they relate closely to psychological concepts like sense of place. Therefore, the question, 'How does the community experience co-creation?' is crucial for addressing the main research question.

RQ3: How do sense of place and co-creation experiences relate?

This question is designed to explore the nature of the relationship between sense of place and co-creation experiences. Relph (1976) identifies places as "significant centers of our immediate experiences of the world," emphasizing the importance of understanding the relationship between sense of place and a more experientially-based understanding of place. Therefore, exploring how people experience a place is important to understand sense of place. Although sense of place encompasses both conscious and subconscious perceptions, emotions, and affections toward a place (Shamai, 1991), addressing this question may make it possible to explore how self-conscious experiences are affected when an individual is overwhelmed by the quality of place. Thus, the sub-research question, 'How do sense of place and co-creation experience relate?' is theoretically justifiable.

1.4 Research approach

Addressing the research questions, this study serves both theoretical and practical objectives in the field of urban planning. Both co-creation experience and the sense of place involve philosophical aspects and intricately engage the human psychological system. Consequently, collecting and analyzing data for these concepts is not straightforward, but the research follows a logical sequence. This study primarily focuses on understanding 'people,' placing it within the realm of social ontology. In terms of research philosophy, this research aims to uncover relationships and, therefore, opts for critical realism to provide a comprehensive explanation of the phenomenon.

Considering the research approaches to theory development, abduction emerges as the most suitable method. The two key concepts in this research, sense of place and co-creation experience, possess substantial theoretical backgrounds. Thus, adopting a

reflexive, interactive, or iterative process, such as collecting data, interpreting it with theories, gathering data again to fill theory gaps, and building the theory further - is plausible. The 'what' and 'how' of the research questions need exploration from ground realities where relying on existing theories is impractical. Consequently, this research employs more explorative, qualitative research methods.

Consistent with this approach, the data collection takes place in a natural setting, demonstrating sensitivity to the individuals and locations under investigation. In qualitative research, employing multiple data collection methods is customary to ensure a comprehensive understanding of complex entities and phenomena. As such, this study incorporates document surveys, audio-visual materials sourced from social media, observations, interviews, and focus group discussions to enrich its depth.

Regarding the data analytical approach, this research employed the grounded theory approach to explore this social matter. However, the Thematic Analysis process was chosen instead of the traditional grounded theory approach. Using this technique, the underlying patterns (themes) hidden in the data were found, examined, and presented (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The identification of numerous themes connected to the ideas of sense of place and co-creation experience was facilitated by this methodical approach. These discovered themes were cross-referenced with the body of existing literature to identify similarities, differences, possible inconsistencies, and theoretical advancement. The iterative process of alternating between empirical data and analysis incrementally improves the gathered data and enriches the theoretical intricacy of the analysis.

1.5 Significance of the research

Researcher's experiences over the previous 15 years in the fields of urban design and education have culminated in this research. Having traversed roles as a student, urban design educator, and researcher in three distinct countries—Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, and briefly Amsterdam—the researche have keenly observed and experienced the transformations, interconnections, and realities of urban design. These experiences point to a change from the traditional top-down approach, indicating a move toward a participatory design philosophy informed by interactions with people and systems.

This progression represents the shift in design philosophy from "designing for" to "designing by" and "with" people. The realization of place co-creation on the ground is the main result of this research.

The realm of academic research on citizen participation is expanding, with a proliferation of articles addressing various facets of this phenomenon. However, there has been a disproportionate focus on lower forms of citizen participation (Vicente & Novo, 2014). The existing literature on co-creation concerning place-making is relatively limited. Hence, this research makes a significant contribution by advocating place co-creation.

In the investigation of the sense of place concept in relation to co-creation, this research identified varying degrees of the sense of place and notably addresses existing research gaps. Specifically, it addresses the absence of methodologies that encompass the inherent diversity of the sense of place concept and the lack of context-specific measures for the sense of place (Relph, 1976; Shamai, 1991; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; McCunn & Gifford, 2014; Lin & Lockwood, 2014). This study extends prior understanding of the role of the sense of place in the co-creation experience, an area that has received limited empirical attention thus far. The literature review indicates that countries in the global north have produced more publications discussing the sense of place and co-creation, while many countries in the global south, including Sri Lanka, lack any publications in English. This analysis underscores the need for more research to explore the relationship between the sense of place and the co-creation experience in the global south.

Understanding the role of the sense of place in the co-creation experience is crucial, as it has the potential to mobilize resources within social networks for place-making. The research also delves into the prospect of fostering a sense of place as a result of the co-creation experience, challenging the prevailing trend where existing research primarily evaluates the sense of place of spatial entities planned some time ago.

The findings of this study hold significance for practitioners, providing them with the tools to plan and design more sustainable environments and cultivate communities with stronger connections, fostering active participation in ongoing place-making

endeavors. Furthermore, both academics and practitioners can gain insights into strategies for nurturing and sustaining a sense of place. Essentially, this research emphasizes that sense of place-oriented co-creation goes beyond mere urban development; it reinforces place dependence, attachment, and identity. Consequently, this approach has the potential to establish more effective and sustainable place management. In summary, by revealing the intricate spiral relationship between the sense of place and the co-creation experience through an inductive qualitative methodology, this research contributes novel perspectives to the literature on place co-creation.

In practical terms, this research extends its relevance not only to urban planners but also empowers community members to initiate place co-creations. The examination of community participation strategies, particularly the commitment demonstrated by members of the Beach Park Management Society (BPMS) in engaging in open discussions with local residents, highlights an effective approach for conducting successful deliberations with diverse stakeholders.

Furthermore, the qualitative approach employed to explore sense of place and co-creation experience provides a wealth of information for planning practitioners, policymakers, and a general audience. Additionally, this research illustrates the possibility of conceptualizing ground situations by following an inductive approach, contributing to the development of relevant theories.

1.6 The structure of the thesis and collection of articles

This thesis comprises seven chapters, each contributing to the comprehensive understanding of the research topic. In Chapter 1, the study begins with an introduction, encompassing the background of the thesis, the research problem, the questions, the approach, and the significance of the research.

Moving to Chapter 2, the study is contextualized within existing research. It starts by reviewing literature on place and place-making, providing a foundation for subsequent discussions. The chapter then discusses the theoretical background by exploring communicative planning, participatory planning, and collaborative planning. Additionally, in the light of prevailing literature,, it thoroughly examines two pivotal

concepts: co-creation and sense of place. Within this context, the definition of co-creation is established, and the co-creation process is elucidated. The literature related to the co-creation experience is extensively reviewed and critically discussed. A significant research gap in the co-creation field is identified: the insufficient exploration of factors that motivate co-creation. This gap is addressed by drawing insights from the theoretical discussions, leading to the publication of a research article:

Meetiyyagoda, L., Mahanama, P. K. S., Ley, A., & Amarawickrama, S. (2023). Collaborative place-making: some theoretical perspectives in sense of place as a motivation for participation. *Journal of Urban Culture Research*,

Journal of Urban Culture Research is Q1 journal with the SJR 2023 is 0.24

The final publication is available from Fine and Applied Arts of Thailand's Chulalongkorn University in conjunction with the Urban Resilience Research Center of Osaka Metropolitan University, Japan.

<https://so04.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/JUCR/issue/view/17841>

Consequently, the intrinsic motivation for the co-creation experience is identified as the sense of place. To delve into this connection, the concept of sense of place is scrutinized under three primary sub-dimensions: place identity, place attachment, and place dependence. Following this exploration, existing measures of sense of place are thoroughly reviewed. A systematic literature review is undertaken to comprehensively understand the theoretical relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience. This endeavor not only enhances our theoretical grasp of the topic but also illuminates a significant research gap. The final section of Chapter 2 is dedicated to the conceptualization of these findings. The systematic literature review presented in this chapter is published as an article. This article, derived from rigorous peer-reviewed processes, has been accepted and published in:

Meetiyyagoda, L., Mahanama, P. K. S., Ley, A., & Amarawickrama, S. (2024). Relationship between sense of place and co-creation process: A systematic literature review. *Land Use Policy*, 136, 106961.

Land Use Policy is Q1 journal with the SJR 2023 is 1.85

The final publication is available from Elsevier at:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2023.106961>

In Chapter 3, the research design is elucidated through the application of the ‘onion’ methodological framework. This involves a thorough explanation, accompanied by justifications, of various aspects, including the research philosophy, the approach to theory development, methodological choices, research strategy, details about the chosen case study, the time horizon, methods employed for qualitative data collection, the sample selection process, interview questions, ethical considerations, and the chosen methods for analysis. This comprehensive presentation aims to provide a clear and reasoned understanding of the foundational elements guiding the research design.

Chapter 4 unveils the findings of the sense of place phenomenon, addressing the research question: ‘*What constitutes a sense of place?*’ Employing a qualitative approach, deductive coding took precedence as it aligns the codes with existing theoretical frameworks. Consequently, the findings were expounded upon utilizing the pre-existing theoretical knowledge within the dimensions of place dependence, place attachment, and place identity. This comprehensive exploration of the findings was showcased at a research conference and subsequently published in a journal:

Meetiyyagoda, L., Mahanama, P. K. S., Ley, A., & Amarawickrama, S. (2023). Sense of Place Dynamics in Public Places. *Telematique*, 22(01), 1372-1389.

Telematique is indexed in the Emerging Source of Citation Index

The final publication is available from Provincia Journal at:

<https://www.provinciajournal.com/index.php/telematique/article/view/1326>

Through an iterative and reiterative examination of transcripts, involving thorough reading, coding, and identification of themes, a novel conceptualization emerged: the ladder of sense of place. This unique conceptual framework represents a noteworthy contribution to the research arena. The conceptualization of this ladder of sense of place has been documented and published in:

Meetiyyagoda, L., Mahanama, P. K. S., Ley, A., & Amarawickrama, S. (2024). A ladder of sense of place: Case study of Crow Island Beach Park, Sri Lanka. *Cities*, 145, 104695.

Cities is a Q1 journal with 1.73 SJR 2023

The final publication is available from Elsevier at:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cities.2023.104695>

Chapter 5 delves into the research question, '*How does the community experience co-creation?*'. Aligned with the conceptualization, it thoroughly investigates the co-creation experience, examining its social, economic, cognitive, and hedonic dimensions through empirical data. The chapter highlights the crucial insight gained from employing social network analysis as a tool for assessing co-creation experiences across these dimensions. Another main finding of this research elaborated in this chapter is that the co-creation experience unfolds as a cycle where the social experience takes precedence, followed by subsequent experiences in the realms of economic, cognitive, and hedonic dimensions. Furthermore, positive hedonic experiences contribute to the amplification of the potential for further co-creation experiences.

Moving forward, Chapter 6 is dedicated to addressing the research question of '*How do sense of place and co-creation experiences relate?*.' In line with this objective, the chapter establishes a clear and reciprocal relationship between sense of place and co-creation experiences. It underscores the significance of a robust sense of place for individuals to actively participate in co-creation initiatives. Conversely, the co-creation experiences enhance the overall sense of place for the participants. Furthermore, the in-depth analysis within this chapter not only confirms the reciprocal relationship but also reveals an upward spiral dynamic between sense of place and the co-creation experiences. This signifies that as individuals cultivate a stronger sense of place, it positively influences their co-creation experiences, leading to an amplification of their overall sense of place. The intricate interplay between these two elements unfolds as a dynamic and mutually reinforcing process. This important finding has also been documented as:

Meethiyagoda, L., Amarawickrama, S., Mahanama, P. K. S., & Ley, A. (2024). Spiraling up: Sense of place with co-creation experiences insights from Crow Island Beach Park, Sri Lanka. *Habitat International*, 154, 103219.

Habitat International is a Q1 journal with 1.63 SJR 2023

The final publication is available from Elsevier at:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2024.103219>

Finally, the concluding chapter presents five pivotal findings drawn from the research. It not only expounds upon the theoretical and practical contributions of the study but also critically assesses several conceptual, theoretical, and methodological limitations encountered during the research process. Furthermore, the chapter explores potential directions for future research, presenting valuable recommendations to enhance the scope and impact of subsequent studies and place-making attempts.

CHAPTER 2

Literature review

1.1 Introduction

This section provides the theoretical understanding related to the main concepts of co-creation and sense of place. It commences by reviewing the fundamental concepts, namely, place, and place-making. Then, it discusses the theoretical background of co-creation by reviewing communicative planning theory, participatory planning and collaborative planning - as the co-creation concept has been developed in the light of these theories. Subsequently, this chapter identifies a gap in contemporary public participation-oriented planning theories, which is little attention to getting the community's willingness to engage in place-making. As the literature indicates, sense of place plays a role in the willingness to participate in collaborative planning activities. Thus, it is inquired about sense of place and its sub-aspects, namely, place identity, place attachment and place dependence. With a proper comprehension of the main concepts, theories and sub-concepts, a systematic literature review was carried out to identify how the prevailing literature indicates the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience. Consequently, the literature review paved the way for developing a conceptualization explained in the last part of this section. However, the literature review was not limited only to this chapter, additional reviews will be done based on as needed during the research.

2.2 Place

A task of urban planning is to transform urban spaces into places. Additionally, people also overlay meanings on a space to make it a place. Places are intricately connected to human experiences; thus, they serve as natural laboratories for studying people, their relationships, and processes. Scholars define place from various perspectives, including phenomenological, sociological, psychological, and humanistic.

In 1964, Lukermann outlined six fundamental components of the concept of place: location, which encompasses both internal and external characteristics representing the

inside and outside aspects; the integration of natural and cultural elements, indicating uniqueness; spatial interactions; a system of localization; an emerging and evolving nature intertwined with historical significance and meaning. According to scholars, a place constitutes an integrated and meaningful phenomenon beyond mere location (Norberg-Schulz, 1971; Relph, 1976; Canter, 1977; Massey, 2005; Cresswell, 2009; Friedmann, 2010; Hamzei et al., 2020). Norberg-Schulz (1971) suggests that a place is "a focal point where we encounter the significant events of our existence." Relph (1976) identifies places as "significant centers of our immediate experiences of the world," emphasizing their direct experiential nature rich with meanings, tangible objects, and ongoing activities. According to Canter (1977), a location should predict a specific site, specify the physical boundaries of the environment, and include people's perceptions or descriptions of how they should behave there. Massey (2005) elaborates on three key aspects of place: its multiple identities, its dynamic nature as a process, and the absence of clear boundaries distinguishing inside from outside. Cresswell (2009) emphasizes that places exist on various scales, from a child's corner of a room to the entirety of Earth viewed from outer space. A place can range from the vastness of the planet or a country to the smaller scale of a city, neighborhood, home, or even a park bench. This study focuses on a mid-sized place, specifically the neighborhood. Friedmann (2010) defines "a place as a small three-dimensional urban space cherished by its inhabitants". Hamzei et al. (2020) investigate the concept of place by analyzing 72 publications spanning from 1970 to 2018, presenting various dimensions of place (Figure 2.1). They differentiate between anthropocentric and geographic aspects, with anthropocentric clusters depicting relationships among individuals or groups of people, and geographic clusters encompassing spatial and physical elements. According to these perspectives on place, people have a significant role as they overlay meanings on the spatial and physical elements of a location. Therefore, it is crucial to identify the place-making process.

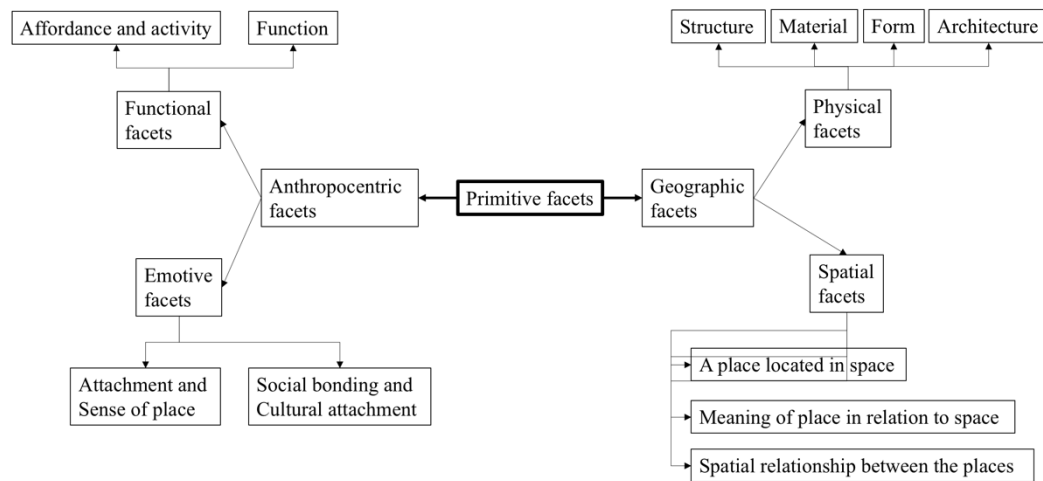


Figure 2.1: Facets of place

Source: Adapted from Hamzei et al. 2020

2.3 Place-making

The concept of place-making gained prominence in urban design after 1960, following the works of Jane Jacobs (1961), Kevin Lynch (1964), and William H. Whyte (1956), who emphasized the importance of attracting people to cities. Carmona et al. (2021) identify two main traditions of urban design: the “visual artistic tradition”, which concerns the visual quality of the built environment, and the “social usage tradition”, which prioritizes the quality of people, places, and activities. More recently, combining these two traditions has given rise to a third tradition known as the 'making places' tradition. This approach emphasizes the creation of places with both aesthetic quality and a behavioral setting that fosters a sense of place (Živković et al., 2019).

Scholars define place-making as the process of transforming space into a place by overlaying it with meaning, social dimensions, and functions (Cilliers & Timmermans, 2014). The majority of scholars consider place-making as an integral aspect of urban design (Fleming, 2007; Akbar & Edelenbos, 2021), emphasizing the involvement of various stakeholders. Habibah et al. (2013) also acknowledge that place-making involves making sense of a place from the perspective of stakeholders' interests. Therefore, place-making is recognized as a complex and dynamic process due to the evolving nature of places and the diverse interests of involved actors.

The conventional view holds that place-making is primarily the responsibility of urban designers and the state, with the end goal being the creation of a place. However, some scholars have recently argued for a collaborative planning approach to place-making (Cilliers & Timmermans, 2014; Ellery & Ellery, 2019; Akbar & Edelenbos, 2021). They critique literature that predominantly emphasizes the role of residents in place-making. In this regard, Akbar and Edelenbos (2021, p. 3) assert that “place-making is a process of adding value and meaning to the public realm through community-based revitalization projects rooted in local values, history, culture, and the natural environment.” Corcoran et al. (2018) note that place-making emerges as a result of the democratization of public realm design. Consequently, it challenges professionally driven and commercially oriented initiatives, instead advocating for the co-production of places by returning them to the community and embracing organic processes of place development.

Akbar and Edelenbos (2021) conducted a review of 61 publications spanning from 1960 to 2016 to identify the factors influencing place-making (Figure 2.2). Among these factors, the majority of publications highlighted local resident-related factors (35%), with motivation being the most frequently mentioned influential factor for place-making (49%).

The outcomes of place-making are often discussed in a positive light. Regarding the outcomes, Silberberg et al. (2013) describe a cyclic effect, or virtuous cycle, of place-making wherein communities reshape their surroundings, thereby enhancing the quality of the community. Several scholars argue that place-making enhances the link between people and places, serving as a foundation for sustainable urban development (Healey, 1997; Project for Public Spaces, 2016; Živković et al., 2019).

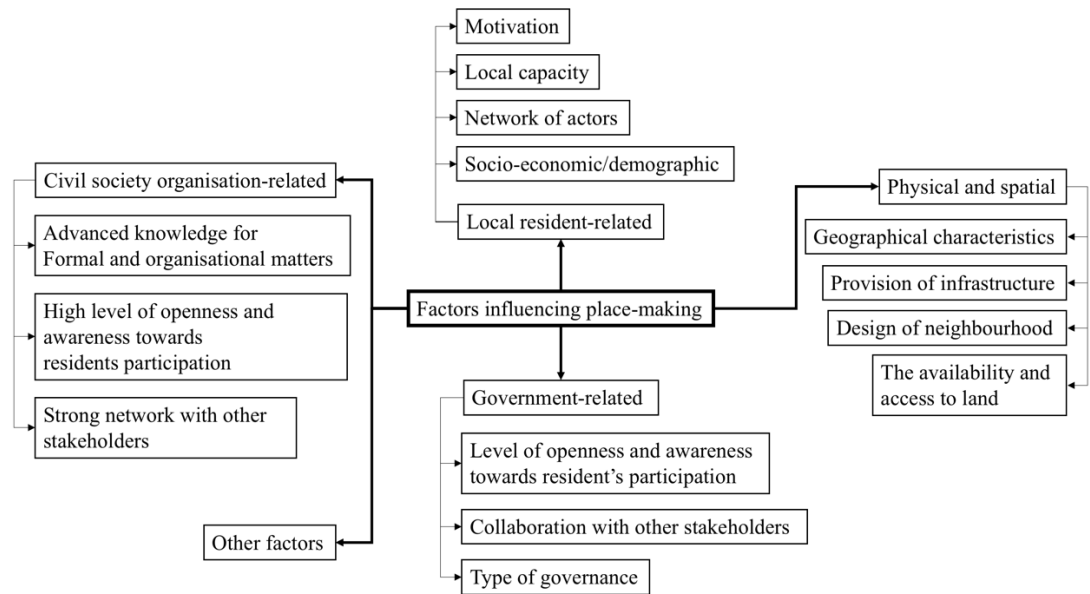


Figure 2.2: Factors influencing place-making

Source: Adapted from Akbar and Edelenbos, 2021

Further, Project for Public Spaces (2016) mentions that place-making is,

“a collaborative process by which we can shape our public realm in order to maximize shared value. More than just promoting better urban design, place-making facilitates creative patterns of use, paying particular attention to the physical, cultural, and social identities that define a place and support its ongoing evolution”.

Akbar and Edelenbos (2021) outline four main outcomes of place-making in their review paper: local empowerment (Douglas et al., 2016; Đukanović & Živković, 2015), social connection and capital (Ho & Douglass, 2008), place-attachment and identity (Rota & Salone, 2014), and quality of life (Sandoval & Maldonado, 2012). Similarly, Mateo-Babiano and Lee (2020) assert that the place-making process equips people with the capacity to invest space with meaning. This capacity encompasses community assets, knowledge, emotions, inspiration, and other elements (Živković et al., 2019). Hes and Hernandez-Santin (2020) observe that enhancing the sense of place is a key consequence of place-making.

“The key outcome of place-making, whether it has been intentional or through happenstance, is the sense of attachment we can feel to the place. Places enable connections; sometimes these are intense and formative to our sense of ourselves, and at other times, our attachment may be momentary and quickly dissipate. This place attachment is what makes us

feel that we are part of a place and that we belong. It gives us a desire to live in it, invest in it and share that experience with others”.

In this context, it becomes evident that place-making is a participatory process aimed at enhancing the link between people and places. Consequently, this process positively impacts both the quality of places and the community. As place-making is inherently collaborative, underscores the importance of examining it within the framework of existing planning theories and concepts.

2.4 Communicative planning

Planning is frequently defined as "foresight in formulating and implementing programs and policies" (Hudson et al., 1979). But in reality, spatial planning is a complex and ever-evolving field, so it is challenging to give a single, comprehensive description. The impact of Howard and Geddes on urban planning is highlighted by Hall and Tewdwr-Jones (2010), especially after the garden city idea was first proposed in the late 1800s. One of Geddes' contributions was the creation of an organized methodology, namely the sequence of survey-analysis-plan, which served as the basis for the logical comprehensive approach. The products of a logical, all-encompassing planning process are sometimes called "blueprint" plans, but several academics have criticized this term. Critics argue that planning's fundamental complexity stems from its emphasis on people in an unpredictable environment (Faludi, 1973; Webber, 1964; Hall & Tewdwr-Jones, 2010; Lane, 2006). Planners who prioritize the creation of static blueprints over the ongoing and dynamic character of the planning process are criticized by Hall and Tewdwr-Jones (2010).

Various alternative planning theories have evolved in response to criticisms and the need to address the idea of a "universal public interest" associated with rational comprehensive planning. These include advocacy planning (Davidoff, 1965), transactive planning (Friedman & Huxley, 1985), bargaining (McDonald, 1989) and communicative actions (Healey, 1992). Transactive planning advocates decentralizing planning organizations to empower individuals and encourages interpersonal or face-to-face dialogue with the planning community to learn mutually. In addition to the integration of the community into the decision-making process, it suggests decentralizing the planning institutions (Hudson et al. 1979). Thus, this targets both

participation and empowerment of people to gain welfare. Advocacy planning also accepts social and political pluralism and the main issue addressed is the “image of society” as there is an inequality of negotiating power, and unequal access to the political system and most people can be unrepresented by interest groups (Mazziotti, 1982). The bargaining approach suggests that “planning the decision is the product of giving and taking between active participants involved in the planning process” (Lane, 2006).

Communicative actions play a significant role in public engagement through dialogue, argumentation, and discourse (Healey, 1996). Healey (1992) explains this approach by drawing upon the notion of communicative rationality (Habermas, 1984), the concept of discursive democracy (Dryzek, 1990) and the notion of dialogic democracy (Giddens, 1994). Healey (1997, p.29) summarizes this theoretical shift by identifying five key characteristics: (1) the construction of knowledge is inherently influenced by social factors; (2) various forms of knowledge and reasoning, such as storytelling and subjective assertions, can be utilized; (3) personal perspectives are shaped through interactions within society; (4) individuals possess varied social, symbolic and material interests and expectations; (5) effective public policy necessitates the utilization and dissemination of diverse knowledge and reasoning from various origins.”

Mainly, the communicative action theory focuses on "the process of communication, deliberation, and knowledge production in planning," with its characteristics being "interactive, discursive, conflict-mediation, and consensus-building" (Irazábal, 2009, p.120). Essentially, more effective communication is expected to lead to better agreement among stakeholders. According to Young (2000), the communicative action framework is founded on the "norms and conditions for inclusive democratic communication" aimed at addressing inequalities and cultural differences among people. Grubović (2000) similarly asserts that communicative planning enhances democracy, efficiency, and yield. In this model, the planner's role is that of a "mediator" among stakeholders.

Forester (1993), Flyvbjerg (1998), Fainstein (2000), and Yiftachel & Huxley (2000) are among the critics of communicative action theory. According to Forester (1993),

public involvement in urban planning is fundamentally complicated and can result in power struggles, stakeholder conflicts, and mistrust of the government. One of the primary criticisms is that the ideals of this theory, which advocate for consensus-building, are challenging to achieve. Flyvbjerg (1998) argues that if the goal is to build something based on the concept of civil society, it's necessary to address issues of exclusion, difference, diversity, and the politics of identity. Fainstein (2000) raises concerns about the assumption that planners can act as neutral mediators when addressing structural inequities and power hierarchies. Moreover, this theory overlooks the political processes that shape cities and fails to emphasize the spatial practices involved in the production of space. However, planning theory should consider the spatio-temporal dynamics inherent in the process of place production (Harvey, 1996; Yiftachel & Huxley, 2000) and the complexity of participatory planning.

2.5 Participatory planning

Public participation serves as one of the cornerstones of co-creation (Pappers et al., 2020), addressing the needs of spatial actors while enhancing the value of development. Innes and Booher (2004) outline five purposes of participation in planning: 1) to discern public preferences related to decision-making; 2) to tap into citizens' local knowledge; 3) to establish fairness and justice; 4) to garner legitimacy for public decisions; and 5) to meet legal requirements. Historically, in many countries' planning systems, participation has primarily taken the form of public hearings, reviews, and comment procedures. However, theorists and practitioners influenced by Arnstein's (1969) ladder of citizen participation advocate for targeting co-decision, co-production, and collaborative levels of engagement.

Arnstein's ladder of participation consists of eight levels. At the bottom are two non-participatory practices: manipulation and therapy. Tokenism occupies the middle levels, encompassing information and consultation. The upper levels indicate citizen power, which includes the freedom to partner with others and share power (Figure 2.3). Therefore, when participants possess power, they can exercise negotiation rights up to full managerial power. According to Lyles and Swearingen White (2019, p. 288),

"engaging the public on the higher rungs theoretically allows planners to foster collaboration and begin to extinguish the flames that oppression ignites".

With the inspiration of Arnstein's (1969) ladder, Wandersman (1981) introduced five levels of participation in the design process. These levels, ranging from bottom to top, include scenarios where there is no user participation and the plan is solely devised by the designer; the user provides feedback on a plan and the designer makes the ultimate decision; the user selects a plan from alternatives presented by the designer; the user engages in self-planning with consultation from the designer; and the user creates the plan without any restrictions from the designer. However, some scholars critique the top level, emphasizing the necessity of designers' creativity. They argue that successful design requires collaboration and negotiation between citizens and designers (Roderick, 1987). In 1986, Fredrik introduced a ladder with seven levels of participation specifically related to the design process. These levels, from bottom to top, encompass representation, questionnaire, regionalism, dialogue, alternative, co-decision, and self-decision.

Choguill (1996) introduces a ladder of community participation to address the gap in understanding within the context of underdeveloped countries. From bottom to top, the rungs of the ladder are named self-management, conspiracy, information, diplomacy, dissimulation, conciliation, partnership, and empowerment. Empowerment of the community is particularly important for developing nations where the government may be unable to undertake developments, and communities with formal decision-making power can initiate their own developments by securing resources from external organizations. Wilson (1996, p. 627) asserts that "as individual empowerment dismantles the sense of personal isolation, the act of participation creates a feeling of belonging and interconnectedness, which in turn produces commitment and cooperation."

Edelenbos and Klijin (2006) employed a participation ladder, which delineates the rungs from bottom to top as information, consulting, advising, co-producing, and co-deciding. According to this framework, co-producing entails the identification and derivation of solutions collectively by all involved groups, including politicians and

administrations, while co-deciding signifies that development decisions are entirely made by the participating stakeholders, with politicians accepting the outcome.

Stelzle and Noenning (2019) referred to a modified participation ladder with rungs from bottom to top as information, consultation, involvement, collaboration, and empowerment. In this framework, aside from the empowerment level, top decision-makers are responsible for decisions at other steps.

The evolution of participation ladders underscores the necessity for increased public involvement in planning decision-making processes, thereby distributing power more evenly among professional decision-makers (Figure 2.3). At the top rungs of the ladder, "Collaboration," "Co-deciding," and "Co-producing" highlight the importance of active engagement from a diverse range of stakeholders.

When considering who participates in planning, most scholars refer to households, Community-based Organizations (CBOs), Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), private developers, local governments, professionals, public authorities, and administrative organizations (Edelenbos & Klijin, 2006; Svara & Denhardt, 2010; Slotterback & Lauria, 2019; Valler et al., 2021). However, according to Cilliers and Timmermans (2014), these actors participate based on willingness, interest, curiosity, or social responsibility, rather than external forces. Durman (2020) identifies four basic principles of public participation as transparency, openness, mutual trust, and responsiveness, and she presents the benefits and problems in brief (Table 2.1).

Arnstein (1969)	Wandersman (1981)	Fredrik (1986)	Choguill (1996)	Edelenbos and Klijin (2006)	Stelzle and Noenning (2019)	
Citizen control	Creation of the plan from the user without restrictions from the designer	Self-decision	Empowerment	Co-deciding	Empowerment	Degree of participation is high 
Delegated power		Co-decision	Partnership	Co-producing	Collaboration	
Partnership	Self- planning from the user while getting consultation	Alternative	Conciliation	Advising	Involvement	
Consultation		Dialogue	Dissimulation	Consulting	Consultation	
Information	Choice of the plan by the user	Regionalism	Diplomacy	Information	Information	
Therapy	Feedback from the user	Questionary	Information			
Manipulation	No user participation	Representation	Conspiracy Self-management			

Figure 2.3: Participation ladders

Source: Adapted from Arnstein (1969); Wandersman (1981); Fredrik (1986); Choguill (1996); Edelenbos and Klijin (2006) and Stelzle and Noenning (2019)

Table 2.1: Outcomes of participation

Benefits	Problems
Strong foundation for creating and enforcing regulations	Challenges regarding citizens' motivation and resources
Expanded range of knowledge and information	Insufficient interest, time, financial resources, knowledge, self- confidence
Better quality of regulation	Challenges associated with facilitating participatory processes
Easier implementation	Lack of representativeness and interest domination
Legitimacy potential	Enhancing conflicts
Accountability	Lack of transparency
Legitimacy	Symbolic obstacles
Support and trust	Determental impacts on internal organizational operations
Education and integration potential	Limited time, financial and personal resources
Citizens' education at individual and community levels	Complicating the existing procedures
Integration and social capital	Additional coordination
Education of administrators	Non-genuine participation ^{[1][2][3][4][5][6][7][8][9][10]}
Advancement of democratic ideals	Symbolic manipulation
Social justice	Diminished regulatory quality
Equity, protection of minorities	
Dispersion of power	

Source: Durman (2020)

As the top rungs of the participation ladder demonstrate the need for collaboration in planning practice, thus, it is worth paying attention to the discourse of collaborative planning.

2.6 Collaborative Planning

Within the democratic governance system, deliberative and participatory modes gave rise to the discourse on collaborative planning. This change is a result of the realization that previous emphasis on participation techniques is insufficient for the kinds of decision-making processes that are underway today, involving a wide range of dynamic stakeholders (Abelson et al., 2003). At the same time, cooperative networks and partnerships are thought to be more inclusive and supportive of empowerment (Lund, 2018). According to Agger and Löfgren (2008), enhancing empowerment and competency building is another goal of collaborative planning. As such, cooperative

planning functions as a governance mechanism that is enabled by empowerment and discussion.

Gray (1985, p. 912) defines collaboration as "the pooling of appreciations and/or tangible resources, such as information, money, labor, etc., by two or more stakeholders, to solve a set of problems which neither can solve individually."

According to Emerson et al. (2012), collaborative governance is defined as:

"the processes and structures of public policy decision making and management that engage people constructively across the boundaries of public agencies, levels of government, and/or the public, private and civic spheres to carry out a public purpose that could not otherwise be accomplished".

Ansell and Gash (2008, p. 544) define collaborative governance as:

"A governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making-process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets".

Healey (2006) defines collaboration as "the power-sharing process that operates within the social system where people's identity and social relations are constructed and interrelated with each other".

Scholars identify sustainable development as underpinned by collaborative design practices, and this new design pedagogy fosters trust among participants, promotes innovation through local wisdom, and empowers citizens to take responsibility (Thompson & Prokopy, 2016). Regarding environmental outcomes, collaborative designs contribute to quality urban design, vibrant public places, and the cultural enrichment of the city (Kendig et al., 2010).

Leino and Puumala (2021, p. 785) elucidate the relationship between collaborative planning and co-creation:

The assets of collaboration in the public sector, both among various actors and across sectors, have been deemed necessary for addressing and tackling complex societal problems, which public sector organizations cannot solve alone (Tuurnas et al., 2019: 6). The potential of co-creation is based on its promise to break down hierarchies between local government, business, universities, citizens, and other stakeholders. It is neither a top-down, nor a bottom-up process, but involves a multi-directional approach to problem-solving.

Teder (2018) claims that “when the stakeholders collaborate in place-making beyond an expert culture, such collaborations can be called co-creation”. Therefore, the next section will discuss the collaborative approach of place-making: co-creation.

2.7 Co-creation

2.7.1 What is co-creation?

The concept of co-creation is motivated by the communicative shift in planning theory, specifically as a form of collaboration. Urban environments are also embracing this idea, despite its current popularity across a range of industries (Leino & Puumala, 2021).

Co-creation, co-design, and co-production are often used interchangeably with some minor differences. While some authors consider "co-creation" and "co-production" as distinct terms, Brandsen and Honingh (2018) explain that co-production is the "design and implementation of a service," and co-creation involves the "initiation and/or strategic planning of a service." According to Ostrom (1996, p. 1073) co-production is "the process through which inputs used to produce a good or service are contributed by individuals who are not 'in' the same organization." According to Leino and Puumala (2021), co-creation emphasizes creativity and innovation more than co-production.

In the context of participatory planning and collaborative planning literature, co-creation involves citizens as active and responsible actors in the place-making process. In general, Akhilesh (2017) defines “co-creation as a sophisticated, value-based, context-driven, collaborative effort to develop new paradigms, products, and services to satisfy human wants”. Key terms such as creative, collaborative, active, networked social process, trade resources and generate values are highlighted in several definitions of co-creation (Roser et al., 2013; Ind et al., 2013; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2013; Voorberg et al., 2014; Tokoro, 2016; Brandsen et al., 2018). In order to address issues related to mobility, air quality, urban regeneration (Leino & Puumala, 2021), transportation (Gebauer et al., 2010), tourism (Prebensen et al., 2014), recreation (Slingerland et al., 2020a), design, and innovation (Puerari et al., 2018), co-creation practices are tailored to different urban settings.

According to Depper and Fullagar (2020, p. 87), co-creation involves "moving beyond tokenistic participation and is guided by participation, praxis, collective creativity, and knowledge exchange between two or more individuals in the design process." Several authors agree that "co-creation is an act of collective creativity" (Guaralda et al., 2019; Šuklje Erjavec & Ruchinskaya, 2019). The primary characteristics of co-creation include the active involvement of end-users (Stoica et al., 2022), "making something together" (Puerari et al., 2018), and "a social process of individuals participating in addressing complex societal problems" (Deng, 2021; Säwe & Thelander, 2015; Marušić & Erjavec, 2020). The systematic review identified scholars using environmentally responsive behavior (Deng, 2021), neighborhood revitalization (Manzo & Perkins, 2006), experimentation (Frantzeskaki et al., 2018a), participatory design (Slingerland et al., 2020a), place-making (Ellery & Ellery, 2019; Teder, 2018), and collaborative planning (Thompson & Prokopy, 2016), which share similar characteristics of co-creation (Figure 2.4). Therefore, this research considers studies that relate the sense of place or aligned concepts with these terms.

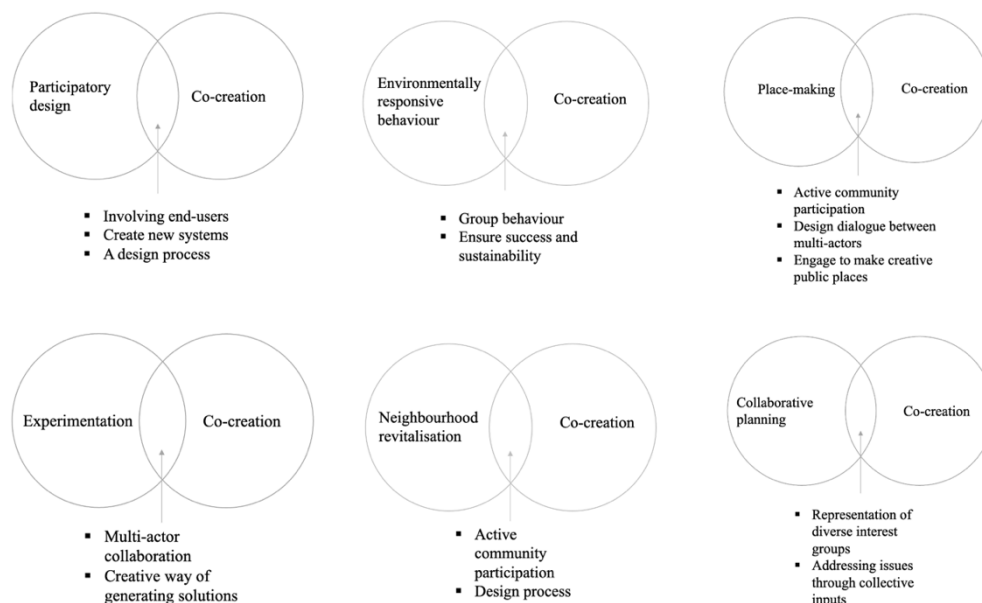


Figure 2.4. Overlapping the characteristics of co-creation with other related notions

Source: Author

When considering the rationale behind co-creation, according to participation ladders, if citizen participation is at the bottom level of the ladder, public opposition can be

expected in later phases of the process after investing time and resources. However, when employing the co-creation approach, local wisdom, social empathy and inclusion would contribute to decisions (Wang et al., 2016). Osborne et al. (2018) also identify the benefits of co-creation: harnessing the resources of civil society, enhancing inclusiveness, and providing empowerment opportunities. Corcoran et al. (2018) also mention that the outcomes of co-creation are building social capital and community well-being. Interestingly, Magala (2009) describes co-creation as the "post-modern pattern of sense-making".

In terms of environmental benefits, traditional, profession-dominated, and commercially driven regeneration efforts are supplanted by transforming space into place and returning places to people (Corcoran et al., 2018). Furthermore, co-creation emerges as an answer to the declining legitimacy and diminishing resources of the public sector, as it emphasizes the outcomes of the policy cycle (Brandsen et al., 2018). Additionally, it enhances stakeholder integration into the urban planning process (Marušić & Erjavec, 2020), improves the quality and effectiveness of public services, and enhances the democratic skills of participants (Brandsen & Honingh, 2018). Sillak et al. (2021) identify five advantages of co-creation, including involving communities in the entire planning process, addressing power struggles while focusing on inclusiveness, meeting the needs of people, recognizing alternative forms of collaborative work, and engaging with material and tangible results of change.

The question of 'how' co-creation proceeds requires clarification. According to Akhilesh (2017), co-creation relies on trust, respect, mutuality, equality, ownership, and other collaboration demands, including communication, transparency, and accountability. Scholars distinguish citizens involved in co-creation as co-initiators (those who take the initiative), co-designers (involved in the content and process), and co-implementers (engaged in service implementation activities previously conducted by the government) (Voorberg et al., 2014; Lund, 2018). Voorberg et al.'s (2014) literature review on co-creation (122 publications) reveals most of the literature explores the role of co-implementers.

Three distinct roles for planners engaged in the co-creation process are recognized: a steward, responsible for ensuring and preserving process integrity; a mediator, tasked

with managing conflicts, fostering relationships, and cultivating trust among participants; and a catalyst, who identifies and communicates opportunities for value creation, motivating participants to pursue these opportunities. This evolution reflects a shift from the traditional expert role to that of a facilitator (Ansell & Gash, 2012; Marušić & Erjavec, 2020). Meanwhile, the role of public authorities shifts from the "regulating state" to the "enabling state," providing opportunities and power for the community (Sirianni, 2009). Sillak et al. (2021) categorize three types of communities involved in the co-creation process: the community of place (e.g., residents), the community of interest (e.g., NGOs), and the community of practice (e.g., professional groups). However, the roles of actors can be influenced by power dynamics, with power defined by Sillak et al. as "the capacity of actors to mobilize resources to achieve goals." Mahmoud and Morello (2021) list financial, skills and time as some examples of resources. Some countries in the global north practically engage in the co-creation process through "urban living labs (ULL)" (Voytenko et al., 2016; Puerari et al., 2018). Based on current practices, some scholars theorize the process of co-creation, as discussed in the next section.

2.7.2 Co-creation process

This section explores the co-creation process, which lacks a standardized approach, leading researchers to propose various frameworks. Wippoo and van Dijk (2019) emphasize the absence of a universally applicable method, while Mahmoud and Morello (2021) caution that theoretical models might not fully reflect real-world co-creation. Despite this, Voorberg et al. (2014) delineate co-initiation, co-design, and co-implementation as primary phases. Nabatchi et al. (2017) expand this to include co-commissioning, co-delivery, and co-assessment. Paskaleva (2011) outlines five phases: co-conceptualization, co-decision making, co-design, co-delivery, and co-use. Mačiuliene and Mačiulis (2017) propose a process involving project initiation, preparation, design, implementation, and maintenance. Mahmoud and Morello (2018) introduce six phases, including Urban Innovation Pathway (UIP) establishment and co-creation planning. Similarly, Spagnoli et al. (2019) detail four stages: co-analysis, co-design, co-implementation, and co-evaluation. Jiang et al. (2020) simplify this to co-making, co-design, and co-management. DeLosRios-White et al. (2020) present a

life cycle with five stages: CoExplore, CoDesign, CoExperiment, CoImpliment, and CoManagement. Despite varied terminology, the coherence of the co-creation process is upheld, with DeLosRios-White et al.'s (2020) framework (Figure 2.5).

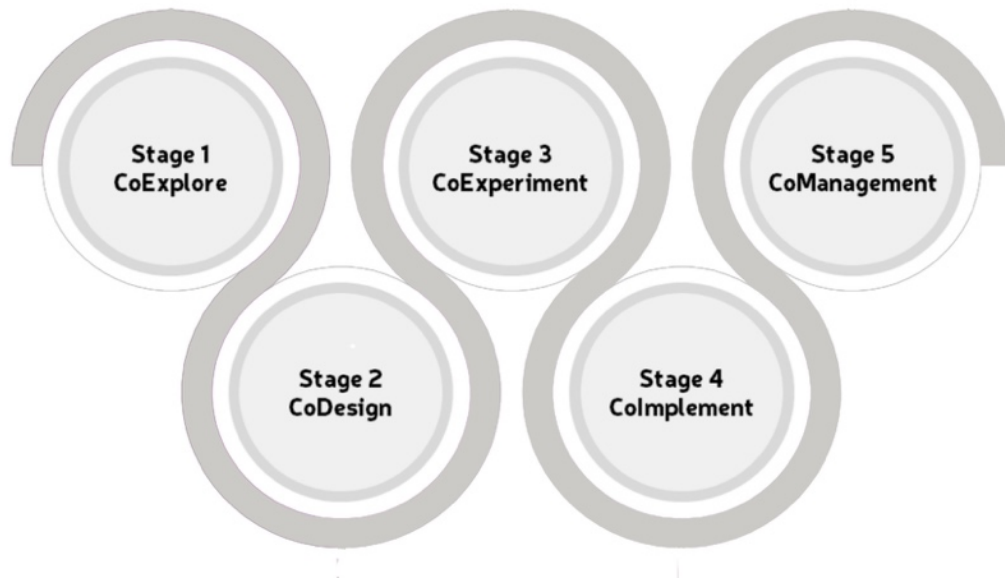


Figure 2.5: Co-creation process

Source: DeLosRios-White et al. (2020)

CoExplore

DeLosRios-White et al. (2020) elucidate that the CoExplore phase commences when a stakeholder identifies a problem. Within this phase, stakeholders conduct mapping and analysis, and preliminary project planning is initiated. Moreover, the primary objective of this stage is problem identification and analysis based on initial data gathering. Consequently, the CoExplore stage encompasses five sub-stages: problem identification, preliminary research, defining the problem and objectives, stakeholder mapping and analysis, and preliminary project planning.

CoDesign

This is the Design Thinking stage of the process. Stakeholders collaboratively formulate solutions and explore new opportunities to develop multiple prototypes, which will undergo testing in subsequent stages of the process. These solutions may stem from idea generation exercises and are grounded in the needs and desires of the stakeholders, available data and information, and the nature of the identified problem.

Therefore, the primary sub-stages of this phase include empathizing, defining, ideating, and prototyping.

CoExperiment

This stage involves refining the identified solutions and selecting the most suitable one(s). Public participation is essential during this phase as feedback from actual users is necessary to test the effectiveness of the solutions. Moreover, it may be necessary to determine whether the identified solution is optimal as is, requires further refinement, or should be rejected altogether. Therefore, the two primary sub-stages of this phase are experimentation and decision-making.

CoImpliment

Once the most desirable solution(s) are determined, it is necessary to formulate the production and implementation plan, including management methods such as risk management, and budgeting. Of the two sub-stages, production and implementation, the latter is particularly significant as it addresses future implementation and contributes to trust-building.

CoManagement

Once the solutions are implemented, this stage comprises Co-Governance and Co-Maintenance as part of the control stage. According to DeLosRios-White et al. (2020), a few stakeholders are involved in this stage, thus, there is a possibility of neglecting maintenance. To overcome this, a clear governance structure must be defined and shared among the stakeholders. Generally, in this stage, bottom-level stakeholders (end-users) gain power in decision-making. Simultaneously, end-users are co-owners of the product; therefore, they should understand their responsibility in maintaining it.

If post-co-creation engagement is lacking, the ownership of co-creation becomes debatable. Scholars emphasize that involving stakeholders from initiation to completion is crucial to generating a sense of belonging (Mahmoud & Morello, 2021). Moreover, Mahmoud and Morello (2021) state that keeping stakeholders' interests alive throughout the process is challenging, but commitment to engagement and a sense of ownership are interconnected.

2.7.3 Discourse on co-creation experience

When reviewing the existing literature on co-creation, Akhilesh (2017) identifies the experience mindset, collaborative climate and network relationship as integral components of co-creation. Greenhalgh et al. (2016) categorize resources, governance, connectivity, motivations, incentives and rewards, and facilitation as fundamental principles governing co-creation. Füller et al. (2011) define autonomy, competence, task enjoyment, and further interests as the dimensions characterizing the co-creation experience, while other authors delineate dimensions such as hedonic, social, economic, cognitive, personal, and pragmatic experiences (Verleye, 2015; Hussain et al., 2021). Yi and Gong (2013) use the term "co-creation behavior" in tandem and delineate several sub-dimensions, such as information seeking, sharing, responsible behavior, interpersonal communication, feedback, advocacy, assistance, and tolerance. Previous research indicates that both co-creation behavior and co-creation experience have been systematically operationalized and empirically tested. Given that this study is cross-sectional and focuses on a past phenomenon rather than exploring co-creation behavior, it appears more fitting to emphasize the co-creation experience.

Verleye (2015) argues that the overall co-creation experience is influenced by six dimensions: hedonic, cognitive, social, economic, personal, and pragmatic experiences. When conducting an empirical study to substantiate the scale's validity, factor analysis revealed that items related to personal and social experiences loaded onto one factor, while pragmatic and economic experience items loaded onto another. Consequently, this four-dimensional co-creation experience scale has been employed in various research disciplines and confirmed through validation in studies by Pranita et al. (2020), Zhang et al. (2019), and Ismulyati et al. (2022). Building on this foundation, the present research conceptualizes social, economic, cognitive and hedonic experience as the primary dimensions of co-creation experience.

Social experience

Social experience concerns how individuals engage and collaborate with others throughout the creative process. As people inherently seek connection and interaction with others, co-creation fosters a social experience (Verleye, 2015; Ollila & Yström,

2016). Consequently, as suggested by Zhang et al. (2021), social experience can be understood as the act of networking with others.

Mandarano (2009) asserts the utility of social network analysis as an effective tool for evaluating collaborative planning. While anthropologists in the 1930s aimed to comprehend social relationships, social network analysis found expanded application in subsequent decades. Political analysts in the 1930s utilized this method to identify the social life of communities. Later, regional environmental policy planners adopted social network analysis to assess both direct and indirect relationships among individuals. Beyond merely understanding the nature of relationships between actors, social network analysis is essential for identifying shared resources such as information, aid, power, and money that influence the decision-making process (Knoke, 1996). These analyses extend to evaluating both direct and indirect relationships linking individuals within networks. In the broader context of social network analysis, three types of actors are typically identified: bonding social networks, where actors belong to a common network; bridging social networks, which connect actors from different networks; and linking social networks, which establish connections between actors from various systems (Kawachi et al., 2004; Vachette et al., 2017).

When examining the interplay among co-creation, social experience, and the sense of place, multiple authors highlight that individuals' engagement in co-creation cultivates social experiences, contributing to a heightened sense of community (Ollila & Yström, 2016; Füller et al., 2011; Abhari et al., 2019). Similarly, some scholars suggest that social experiences enable participants to connect with like-minded individuals, enhancing their sense of belonging (Füller et al., 2011; Hussain et al., 2018; Luo et al., 2019). Additionally, Pranita et al. (2019) propose that social experience encompasses elements of recognition and social esteem. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2021) identify the benefits of social experience as fostering a sense of social identity and belonging. Consequently, these findings collectively indicate a discernible relationship between social experience and the sub-dimensions of the sense of place.

Economic experience

The economic aspect of co-creation pertains to how individuals extract economic value or benefits from the collaborative and creative processes involved in co-creation. According to Verleye (2015), this involves receiving compensation that aligns with the effort expended. Similarly, a couple of other authors assert that the economic experience involves volunteers receiving compensation proportionate to their efforts (Xia & Suri, 2014; Pranita et al., 2019)

Furthermore, forming a social network through collaborative efforts facilitates economic experiences (Ho et al., 2020). Hence, a significant correlation exists between economic experience and social capital, where social capital represents resources derived from social networks (Kawachi et al., 2008; Musso & Weare, 2017). Amarawickrama (2022) proposes a conceptualization in the context of community co-financing for housing, highlighting that emotional support, time, information, money, materials, skills, social credentials, and collective efficacy are potential resources embedded in bonding and bridging social networks. Additionally, time, information, money, expertise, land, services, and power are potential resources embedded and shared through linking network-based resources.

On the contrary, certain literature asserts that economic experience means the tangible benefits an individual gains through participation in co-creation. Füller et al. (2011) have affirmed that economic benefits play a crucial role in motivating participants, especially those with extrinsic motivations, to more actively engage in co-creation. However, there is a limited body of research addressing the connection between the sense of place and economic experience. While not explicitly focused on co-creation, Loureiro (2014) endeavors to comprehend the impact of economic experience on place attachment and behaviors. Furthermore, concerning service brands, Hussain et al. (2021) discovered that hedonic, social, and economic experiences positively impact individual satisfaction, attachment, and participation.

Cognitive experience

The cognitive aspect of co-creation encompasses how individuals perceive, process, and generate new ideas, insights, and knowledge throughout the co-creation process

(Nambisan & Nambisan, 2008; Valkokari et al., 2016; Verleye, 2015; Pranita et al., 2019). Beyond the potential for learning and acquiring knowledge, this experience also involves managing cognitive tensions (Verleye, 2015). Füller (2010) suggests that individuals who seek cognitive experiences are typically intrinsically motivated, driven by a desire to generate and implement creative ideas.

Concerning opportunities for learning, Holland et al. (2012) highlight the cognitive experience when individual learners, a community of learners, and educators collaboratively construct knowledge, essentially transforming knowledge into a learning process. Furthermore, Holland et al. (2012) emphasize that the presence of ethical values influences the cognitive experience, facilitating consensus among learners and educators regarding prioritized values and best practices essential for fostering a democratic, participatory, and safe teaching and learning environment. Consequently, a cognitive experience serves as a fundamental prerequisite for effective learning

Tóth et al. (2018) define tension as “the discomfort arising from ambiguity, stemming from various sources such as contradictory and unclear communications, lack of communication, insufficient planning, and incongruity between actors' goals”. Gaski (1984) suggests that tension occurs when there is a conflict between two parties, potentially causing harm to relational intimacy (Wuyts & Geyskens, 2005), and fostering inter-organizational distrust (Johnsen & Lacoste, 2016). Scholars highlight that trust can play a crucial role in managing tension (Andersen & Kumar, 2006).

Furthermore, the dimension of cognitive experience pertains to the cognitive processes of individuals. It seeks to lead participants in exploring their innovations by methods that surprise, captivate and challenge them (Fornerino et al., 2011; Schmitt, 1999). Essentially, the aim is to provide opportunities to learn, refine participants' skills (Holbrook, 2000), and empower individuals (Gentile et al., 2007). Moreover, scholars, particularly in the context of business research, assert that the cognitive experience serves as a tool to engage individuals and foster bonds (Schmitt, 1999; Donovan et al., 1994). Consequently, it becomes plausible that the co-creation experience has the potential to enhance place attachment.

Hedonic experience

Hedonic experience refers to the joy or contentment individuals derive from co-creation (Verleye, 2015; Meng & Cui, 2020). Derived from the Greek term 'hedonic,' Higgins (2006) notes that, dating back to ancient Greek times, hedonic experiences have been associated with the foundational motivational principle that individuals are inclined to seek pleasure and avoid pain.

Engaging in interactions not only serves as a means of creating value but also provides highly captivating, enjoyable, and mentally stimulating experiences. Extensive research on value co-creation indicates that customers derive significant enjoyment from conversing with each other. This positive response and sense of pleasure extend to citizen science activities as well (Alberti et al., 2001). In the realm of tourism research, Juliana et al. (2023) discovered that the enjoyment experienced by tourists plays a pivotal role in fostering effective interactions with place identities, contributing to the co-creation of value and informing the development of destination strategies. In the context of business research, Hussain et al. (2021) assert that hedonic experiences in co-creation stem from intrinsic motivations. Individuals engage in co-creation activities to get pleasure, fun, and entertainment, irrespective of extrinsic reasons. Moreover, they emphasize that individuals who pay attention to intrinsic values and actively engage in co-creation activities tend to reveal hedonic experiences even more. Verleye (2015) presents a multi-dimensional co-creation experience scale items in her paper aimed to provide insight into the customer experience in co-creation situations and its determinants (Table 2.2).

Table 2.2: Multi-dimensional co-creation experience

Scale	Items	Scales from which items are adapted
Social experience	I met others with whom I share similar interests I'm able to connect with other people The interaction was pleasant	Adapted from make friends scale (Fuller, 2006)

Scale	Items	Scales from which items are adapted
Economic experience	I got compensation in line with the effort made	Adapted from intrinsic innovation interest scale and knowledge scale (Fuller, 2010)
Cognitive experience	I got an appropriate reward in return for my input	
	I got a fair return	
	It allowed me to keep up with new ideas and innovation	
	It enabled me to come up with new ideas	
	I could test my capabilities	
	I improved my skills	
	I gained a sense of accomplishment	Adapted from achievement-challenge self-efficacy scale and knowledge acquisition scale (Fuller, 2006)
Hedonic experience	I gained new knowledge/expertise	
	It was a nice experience	Adapted from self-regulation questionnaire-intrinsic motivation scale (Ryan and Connell, 1989)
	It was fun	
	I enjoyed it	

Source: Verleye (2015)

2.8 Community engagement, co-creation experience and motivations

In contemporary urban planning practice, participation is an essential requirement. All stakeholders must be involved, as emphasized by Habermas (1984), for a planning process to be communicatively rational. Furthermore, increased public involvement is at the core of collaborative planning to uphold participatory democracy (Bain & Landau, 2019). The co-creation process requires more than passive user involvement (Bager et al., 2021). The sustainability of co-created development is determined by active user involvement throughout the co-creation process. However, the active and continuous involvement of stakeholders remains a debatable topic, with concerns about effectiveness and equity aspects unresolved. Marušić and Erjavec (2020, p. 28)

clearly state that “initially in the co-creation process citizens are valuable contributors, but their precise role is rather unclear.” Bager et al. (2021) also stress the importance of involving diverse people and ensuring that all voices are heard in co-creation. Van Eijk and Steen (2014) identify a research gap in empirical studies, as existing literature on co-production focuses more on collaborative networks, processes, and organizations (Brandsen & Van Hout 2006; Joshi & Moore 2004), with limited exploration of the individual capacities and willingness to collaborate, which are precursors to successful co-production.

While governments are eager to promote public participation in co-creation, relying on citizens' substitutions or supplementary resources for development and as a low-cost alternative for service delivery, this voluntary public involvement largely depends on people's motivation or willingness to engage in the co-creation process (Tönurist & Surva, 2017; Borges Júnior & Farias, 2020). Chado et al. (2016, p. 187) define voluntary participation as "an informal public participatory practice resulting from ethical or moral values attached to participation." This form of participation typically evolves informally and is initiated by citizens, private sector planners, academics, and NGOs. Among the six dimensions of the Voluntary Functions Inventory (VFI), the social function is likely the primary reason for involvement in urban development purposes, as it suggests that volunteering can help individuals strengthen social relationships (Benjamin & Brudney, 2018).

Volunteering requires motivation, which can be broadly classified into intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Deci, 1972; Van Eijk & Gasco, 2018; Puerari et al., 2018). Intrinsic motivation involves engaging in the co-creation process for personal reasons, without external pressure, while extrinsic motivation involves participation due to external incentives. Examples of intrinsic values include loyalty, a sense of civic duty, and a desire to witness positive development (Voorburg et al., 2014), whereas examples of extrinsic motivations include monetary compensation and recognition from others (Puerari et al., 2018). Benjamin and Brudney (2018) differentiate motivations as egoistic (self-centered) and pro-social (community-oriented), highlighting individual capacity, which encompasses human and social capital, as influential in participation decisions. Van Eijk and Gasco (2018) refer to this

individual capacity as individual competency or efficacy, distinguishing between internal and external efficacy, which reflects individuals' perceived capability to engage and their belief in the willingness of other stakeholders to facilitate interaction.

Additionally, Van Eijk and Gasco (2018) differentiate motivations based on material and non-material incentives, where material rewards include money, goods, and services (Van Eijk & Steen, 2014). Initially, individuals must find co-creation to be interesting, enjoyable, or worthwhile (Pestoff, 2006). Subsequently, co-creators may be driven by non-material values, particularly altruism, stemming from empathy with other participants and a sense of trust (Ostrom, 2009). Importantly, factors such as a sense of community, ownership, and sense of place are strongly correlated with community engagement (Anderson, 2009; Talò et al., 2013; Puerari et al., 2018), as demonstrated by Bager et al. (2021). Sharp (1978) classifies motivational incentives as material (goods or services), solidarity (a sense of belonging, socialization), and expressive (the ability to express ideology and contribution). However, Leino and Puumala (2021) argue that while material incentives are effective for simple tasks, intrinsic rewards are crucial for complex activities. Puerari et al. (2018) highlight a sense of fulfillment associated with participation in Urban Living Labs.

Furthermore, scholars identify social, cultural, technical, and psychological factors that influence engagement in co-creation (Füller et al., 2011; Puerari et al., 2018; Van Eijk & Gasco, 2018). Age is one such factor, with younger people reporting lower levels of efficacy and interest in engagement (Van Eijk & Gasco, 2018). Additionally, social factors like gender and education level impact engagement, with studies showing that women and higher-educated individuals tend to engage more (Bovaird et al., 2015). Social capital also plays a significant role in accelerating the co-production process, as stronger social ties lead to greater willingness to engage (Voorberg et al., 2015).

According to critiques of communicative action theory, co-creation must extend beyond mere public engagement to address power dynamics, justice, rights, and inclusion (Harvey, 2003; Fainstein, 2009; Irazábal, 2009). Weber (1947) defines power as "the extent to which an individual actor, relative to other actors, controls alternative sources of resources." Wapwera et al. (2011) note that knowledge, wealth,

skills, power, and information are lacking resources among the poor. However, some studies suggest that skills and information exist within social networks, while power typically resides with officials and government authorities (Amarawickrama, 2022). Babajanian (2011) observes that communities often lack the power to influence decision-making processes, yet Sheng (1990) argues that power-sharing is crucial for community participation. Huxham (2003) acknowledges that negotiating in the presence of power imbalances is challenging. Therefore, issues arise in community engagement if authorities lack the power to invite stakeholders, empower communities to participate actively, or if participants lack the power to engage or sustain the process. Additionally, bias favoring powerful social groups can undermine the process (Fainstein, 2009; Purdy, 2012). Purdy (2012, p. 416) emphasizes;

The success of a collaborative process depends on achieving cooperative participation and sharing of power. Greater attention to power can help in the design and implementation processes that are more representative, inclusive, and impartial, and lead to greater empowerment within a democratic system.

Campbell and Marshall (2006) assert that planning is deeply concerned with justice. The co-creation process necessitates democratic deliberation, prioritizing fair processes over mere egalitarian outcomes such as voting (Fainstein, 2009). However, in practical terms, achieving equality often becomes entangled with power struggles that hinder genuine deliberation. This is especially true if elite groups dominate planning forums or if negotiations among diverse actors lack true democratic deliberation. As a solution, the literature discusses the planners' facilitative and mediating role (Forester, 2006; Fainstein, 2009; Johnson, 2012). Additionally, the authors advocate for the "right to the city," which is explained by Lefebvre (1991, p.34) as,

the right to information, the right to use multiple services, and the right of users to make known their ideas on the space and time of their activities in urban areas; it would also cover the right to the use of the center.

Marcuse (2009) discusses citizens' right to participate in collaborations, not in a legal sense but on a moral plane, without seeking profit. Generally, the literature explores the rights of marginalized individuals, including insecure members of the working class, people oppressed due to race, ethnicity, gender, or lifestyle, as well as non-

humans and future generations (Forester, 1999; Young, 1990; Sandercock, 2003; Low & Gleeson, 1997). Young (1990) argues that planning endeavors should promote the ideal of a heterogeneous community while respecting differences. However, once all representations are included, authors grapple with determining "whose claims are more important or righteous" (Bradley, 2009, p. 52).

Even though planning agencies aim to create platforms that prioritize social justice, rights, and inclusiveness, people may perceive stakeholder engagement as a time-consuming, uninteresting, and frustrating process (Brandsen et al., 2018). Some research highlights supply-side issues related to community engagement, such as community distrust, and concerns about time, capacity, and cost (Di Napoli et al., 2019; Ostrom, 2009; Benjamin & Brudney, 2018). Purdy (2012) explicitly states that "as collaborative governance processes are voluntary, some invited parties may choose not to participate because of mistrust of collaborative processes or a preference to address the situation through alternative means". Di Napoli et al. (2019) define social trust as "a positive expectation regarding the cooperative behavioral exchange with others" and institutional trust as "whether the performance of institutions, such as the government, meets their expectations". Meanwhile, Luhmann (1988) also emphasizes that overcoming distrust may be the primary task of urban development activities if the goal is local empowerment. Guiso et al. (2008, p.6) mention that "a lack of trust prevents cooperation and any form of risk-sharing". Van Eijk and Gasco (2018) particularly note that when people feel mistrusted, their attitude toward co-creation becomes negative. Ostrom (2009) argues that co-production is time-intensive and costly. Benjamin and Brudney (2018) state that the willingness to donate time for co-production is a key issue for practitioners. Puerari et al. (2018) identify various costs associated with the co-creation process, including time, money, and management.

Consequently, it is worth identifying the precursors of community engagement in the co-creation process and the conditions necessary for their presence (Figure 2.6). Currently, a vast amount of literature discusses the conditions for community engagement but has paid little attention to the precursory stage of community engagement, which is crucial for attracting the participation of diverse, capable, genuine, and real citizens in the co-creation process. I propose that a sense of place is

a significant factor in fostering willingness to engage in place-making-related co-creation processes and experiences.

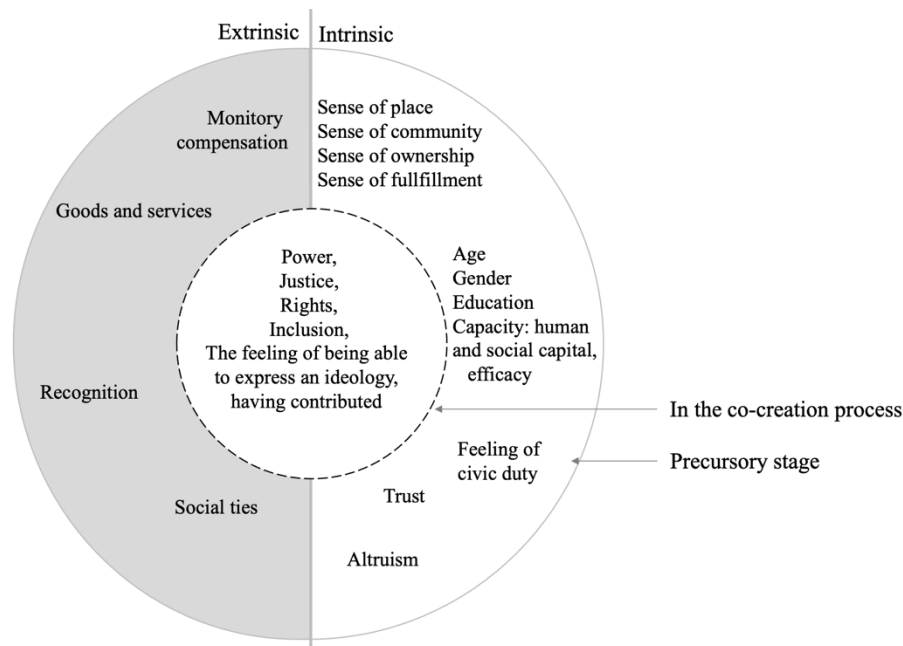


Figure 2.6: Motivations for engaging in the co-creation process

Source: Authors

2.9 The discourse on sense of place

Urban environments are rich with messages, concepts, and codes that users evaluate, comprehend, and interpret based on their experiences, expectations, interests and values. This interpreted feeling is often referred to as "sense of place" (Rapoport, 1990). Therefore, the sense of place encompasses both conscious and subconscious perceptions, emotions, and affections toward a place (Shamai, 1991). Agnew's (1987) conceptualization of place includes locale (informal and institutional relations), geographical location (physical setting), and sense of place (interpretation, meanings, and structure of feelings related to a place), indicating that the sense of place shapes the identity of a place.

Frantzeskaki et al. (2018b) describe sense of place as a "collection of meanings, beliefs, symbols, values, and feelings that individuals and groups associate with a particular locality." Shamai (2005) mentions that sense of place consists of

“knowledge, belonging, attachment, and commitment to the place or part of it.” Thus, the reviewed literature highlights three main characteristics of sense of place: the physical quality of the location, its meanings, and its functions. In general, sense of place is understood as the connection between people and places (Relph, 1976; Lewicka, 2011; Clark, 2012; Guthey et al., 2014; Rajala et al., 2020). Therefore, studying the consequences of this connection is worthwhile, as it can benefit place-making efforts and enhance people’s emotional attachment to their environment.

Several concepts, such as *Genius Loci*, place connection, place reliance, place identity, sense of rootedness, and topophilia, are employed to delineate the notion of sense of place. Phenomenologists argue that understanding the interaction between individuals and their surroundings is crucial for grasping the essence of sense of place (Low & Altman, 1992). Husserl (quoted in Norberg-Schulz, 1976) used the concept of phenomenology in 1906 to elucidate how individuals gather sensory information about the physical world. Norberg-Schulz (1976) further developed this theory by introducing the notion of *Genius Loci*, or the spirit of place, emphasizing the importance of forging an emotional connection to a location. While ‘sense’ pertains to how one perceives or feels about a place's character, ‘genius loci’ refers to the inherent quality or character of the place. This phenomenological approach uses lived experience to elucidate the bond between an individual and location (Raymond et al., 2017).

Geographers delineate sense of place as encompassing "the aesthetic, tactile, or emotional bonds individuals form with a geographical place or setting" (Steele, 1981); sociologists define it as "community attachment and local sentiment based on how individuals both understand and are oriented toward a place" (Jackson, 1994); and anthropologists describe it as "a symbolic relationship people have with a piece of land" (Low & Altman, 1992). Upon considering various definitions, it becomes apparent that sense of place comprises activities, meanings, and physical form/elements (Montgomery, 1998; Shamduddin & Ujang, 2008).

Scholars have been researching the concept of sense of place since 1968. However, out of the 2686 articles reviewed by Nelson et al. (2020) from 1968 to 2018, 50% were published from 2015 to 2018. This indicates a significant growth in scholarship in

recent years, suggesting that sense of place is a relatively new concept. Literature identifies sense of place as a form of social capital, fostering the rootedness of a place, providing a measure of the livability of a place, and creating a sense of well-being (Ellery & Ellery, 2019).

There is evidence indicating the role of sense of place in place-making, positive environmental behavior, collective actions, or co-creations. Kaltenborn's (1998) research findings suggest that residents with a strong sense of place are more willing to engage in collective action to solve environmental issues. Rajala (2020) mentions that a sense of place may motivate conservation and pro-environmental behaviors. Ellery and Ellery (2019) indicate that a sense of place allows urban planners and developers to embrace a co-production process. Research by Thompson and Prokopy (2016) suggests that a sense of place is a vital, if not the only significant, predictor of developing a commitment to collaboration.

The literature suggests that engaging in place-making, active participation, or co-creation experiences can contribute to the development of a sense of place (Bush et al., 2020; Slingerland et al., 2020a; Lee & Blackford, 2020; Fang et al., 2016; Marušić & Erjavec, 2020). Bush et al. (2020) assert that place-making offers people an opportunity to actively participate in creating and nurturing a 'sense of place'. Slingerland et al. (2020a) conducted research on place-making activities involving children and found that children who engage in such activities develop a sense of belonging to their local environment. Lee and Blackford (2020) also suggest that when individuals have positive sentiments about places created through place-making, they experience a stronger sense of place and are more willing to engage in public matters. Fang et al. (2016) argue that a strong sense of place arises from active participation and the creation of social networks. Marušić and Erjavec (2020) confirm that a sense of place is fostered through the co-creation of a living environment. Therefore, it is evident that a sense of place can be cultivated when individuals actively engage in participatory planning processes.

Many authors employ concepts such as place identity, place dependence, and place attachment to evaluate the extent of sense of place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Thompson & Prokopy, 2016; Ghafourian & Hesari, 2018). However, some scholars

interpret place identity and place dependence as components within the broader concept of place attachment (Ramkissoon et al., 2012; Lee & Blackford, 2020).

2.9.1 Place Identity

According to Proshansky's (1983) widely cited definition of place identity, it encompasses "the dimensions of self that define the individual's personal identity in relation to the physical environment, employing a complex pattern of conscious and unconscious ideas, feelings, values, goals, preferences, skills, and behavioral tendencies relevant to a specific environment." Hague and Jenkins (2004) further emphasize that meanings, experiences, memories, and actions are integral to forming place identity and assert that it is fostered through socialization. Lalli (1992) contends that place identity is related to self-identity. Therefore, place identity is largely understood as a subjective social construct rooted in an objective physical setting (Peng et al., 2020).

According to Nanzer (2004), attachment to a place also stems from personal identity. While various forms of identity exist, such as political, spatial, family, community, and ethnic identities, this research focuses on place identity due to its significance in participatory forms of spatial planning (Hague & Jenkins, 2004). Place identity develops as individuals attribute meanings, experiences, and actions to a place through their complex interactions with the environment, a process nurtured through socialization. Hague and Jenkins (2004) further affirm that individual identity evolves through both direct and indirect interactions within society. Hou and Rios (2003) conducted research on the development of a waterfront park in Oakland, California, highlighting the importance of collective identity in fostering collaboration among stakeholders, with the design process serving to construct place identity.

Among the three conceptual approaches to place identity identified by Peng et al. (2020) - the cognitive-behavioral approach, the health and well-being approach, and the collective action approach - the collective action approach aligns with this research as it explores the influence of place identity in collective values and fostering opportunities for collective action. Additionally, Amundsen (2001) presents four aspects of place identity: spatial qualities (location, architecture, etc.), characteristics

of the inhabitants (values, customs, physical appearance), social conditions, and social relations between inhabitants, and culture and history. Moreover, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) examine place identity by considering four identity principles: continuity, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and distinctiveness. Continuity relates to past experiences or memories in the environment that form a concrete background of oneself. Self-esteem involves a positive conception of oneself based on social values (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Self-efficacy pertains to an individual's confidence in their capacity to fulfill situational requirements, while distinctiveness refers to the unique relationship a person has with their home environment, clearly set apart from any other form of connection (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). Additionally, familiarity is a significant principle of identity, indicating that individuals who are acquainted with a location possess information about it and can recognize its symbols (Shamai, 1991).

2.9.2 Place attachment

The personal connection and emotional bond a person forms with a particular place are simply defined as place attachment (Suntikul & Jachna, 2016). This concept originates from the field of psychology, and as Tuan (1977) suggested, "people and place have a special attachment relationship," a concept he termed "Topophilia." Schoarls mentions place attachment is fostered when an individuals interact with a setting directly and long-term (Tuan, 1977). It has been identified that place attachment contributes to pro-environmental behavior (Scannell & Gifford, 2010). Although place attachment is understood from various perspectives, this research aligns with the perspective of urban sociologists. Scannell and Gifford (2010) explain a three-dimensional framework for understanding place attachment: person, process and place (Figure 2.7).

This research considers the personal dimension as important, as it indicates that the sense of place attachment is stronger when the setting evokes memories of personally significant experiences. However, the place attachment of locals and tourists differs: locals are attached to their bonding ties and the socio-cultural aspects of places, whereas tourists are attached to environmental features. When considering attachment to a specific place, this research focuses on attachment to a residential neighborhood,

as it represents the "optimal level of abstraction" (Lewicka, 2011). Furthermore, group-level place attachment is explained as how people become attached to a place through community processes or collective practices. Among the three subcategories of the process dimension, the behavior level is particularly important to this research, as it elucidates how the length of residence relates to place attachment and how the reconstruction of place influences attachment.

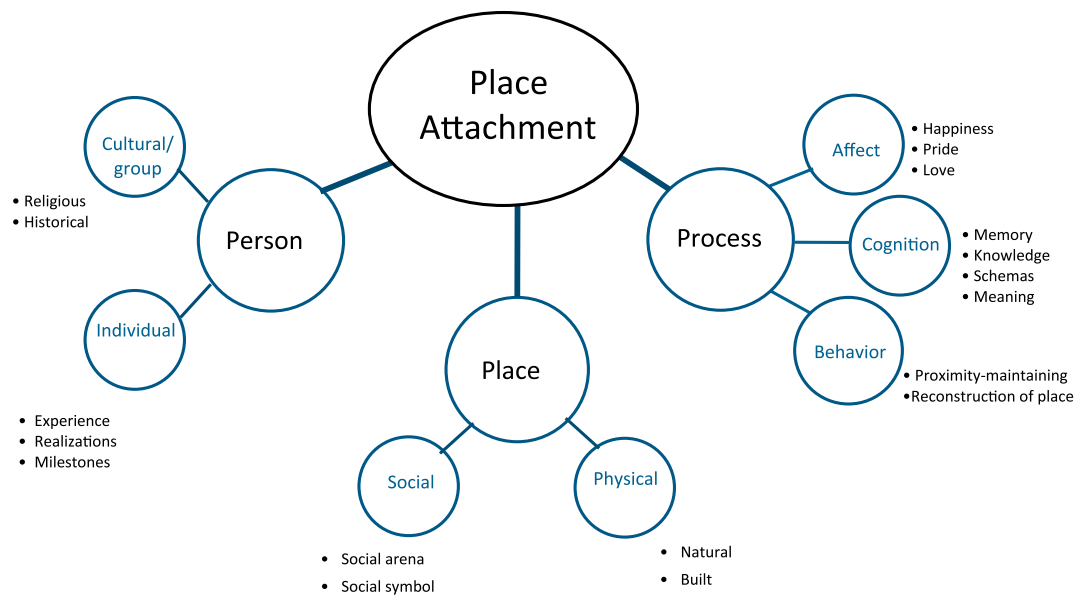


Figure 2.7: The tripartite model of place attachment

Source: Scannell and Gifford (2010)

Regarding the place dimension of place attachment, scholars identify social attachment as comprising social ties, a sense of belonging to the residential area, and familiarity with neighbours (Riger & Lavrakas, 1981). Physical attachment consists of the length of residence, ownership, and plans to stay (Brown et al., 2003). When people perceive that a place provides conditions to fulfill their functional needs and supports them in achieving their goals, they tend to feel more attached to that place (Williams et al., 1992). Dameria et al. (2020) identify the feelings of pride, connectedness, and belongingness as principles of place attachment. The feeling of pride reflects users' attachment to the place because it offers them choices (Ujang, 2008). The feeling of being connected to a place includes experiencing nostalgia or "a sense of loss" (Smith & Campbell, 2017). Dameria et al. (2020) state that the level of connection is

determined by the strength of memories and stories associated with the place. Lalli (1992) explains a sense of belongingness as the feeling of being integrated into a place.

Lewicka (2011) lists the reasons and consequences of place attachment. Longevity of residency emerges as one of the strongest socio-demographic determinants, followed by age, education, social position, property ownership, community size, having children, and mobility. Social determinants include the sense of social security, participation in social activities, and the depth and breadth of community links. While it is challenging to categorize and establish theoretical connections precisely, the physical features of residential settings also serve as predictors. Bonaiuto et al. (2003) suggest that building aesthetics, density, availability of greenery, access to services, and upkeep are among the physical predictors. Regarding consequences, place attachment causally contributes to improving social capital, developing a sense of coherence, and increasing the willingness to engage in activities within the residential area or in the preservation of natural resources.

If focus more on the relationship between willingness to engage in activities and place attachment, scholars have identified a potential link between place attachment and people's actions toward neighborhood development (Brown & Werner, 1985; Kyle et al., 2003; Gross & Brown, 2008; Lewicka, 2011; Fresque-Baxter & Armitage, 2012; Lee & Blackford, 2020; Kamalraj et al., 2019). For instance, Brown et al. (2003) suggest that place attachments are nurtured when people interact with the environment and neighbors, and when there is ongoing personalization of space and upkeep. They also find that place attachment is important for neighborhood revitalization, indicating its potential to aid community development efforts.

Brown and Werner et al. (1985) suggest that people invest in places and act in a manner that reflects their level of attachment, a finding echoed in Saegert's (1989) research on housing in Harlem. Perkins et al. (1996) find place attachment is a positive predictor of participatory actions in community-based organizations at the grassroots level. Liu et al. (2018) examine the relationship between involvement in the City International Band Festival, place attachment, and co-creation. Their findings suggest that place attachment is enhanced because involvement and co-creation act as valid mediators in this relationship, confirming the effectiveness of co-creation in fostering place

attachment.

However, some scholars mention a weak relationship between place attachment and willingness to participate in community activities (Lewicka, 2005; Payton et al., 2005; Perkins & Long, 2002; Uzzell et al., 2002). Lewicka (2005) suggests there is an indirect link between these two constructs, with neighborhood ties serving as a mediating variable. Similarly, Payton (2003) found that social capital mediates the relationship between these two constructs and later identifies social trust as a partially mediating variable. According to Scannell and Gifford (2010), the relationship between place attachment and willingness to undertake actions on behalf of the place depends on the type of attachment: civic or natural. They found that natural place attachment predicted pro-environmental behaviors. Fresque-Baxter and Armitage (2012) also state that the higher the attachment to a place, the more likely individuals are to express behavioral intentions to engage in place-based planning actions. Lee and Blackford (2020) confirm in their study that place attachment is positively associated with place-making, which includes participation, investment of time, effort, money, and motivation for the protection of both physical and social capital.

2.9.3 Place dependence

The concept of place dependence, according to Nanzer (2004) and Suntikul & Jachna (2016), refers to the suitability of a place to fulfill one's functional needs and objectives. It primarily focuses on how the physical environment of a place, including its facilities, amenities, services, and geographic location, enables individuals to achieve their personal goals and fulfill their behavioral needs more effectively than available alternatives. Therefore, place dependence is contingent upon the specific needs and objectives of individuals and can be assessed relative to other potential locations (Ghafourian & Hesari, 2018). Ramkissoon et al. (2012) affirm that when an individual relies heavily on a particular place, they are less inclined to relocate, indicating a greater sense of loyalty.

Place dependence emerges when a place holds significant identification and importance for its users (Williams et al., 1992). It relies on the strength of the connection between an individual and a specific place (Nanzer, 2004; Ujang, 2008).

Ghafourian and Hesari (2018) suggest that place dependence develops when individuals are content with their neighborhood. However, their case study on Mehr public housing highlights that a lack of job opportunities in the vicinity, as well as insufficient recreational, commercial, healthcare, and educational facilities, can diminish place dependence. Conversely, their study findings confirmed a direct positive correlation between residential satisfaction and place dependence.

Place dependence plays a crucial role in shaping place identity and attachment, as it involves the interaction between people and places. It can be assessed based on place quality and expectations (Alrobaee & Al-Kinani, 2019). Dameria et al. (2020) identify three principles related to place dependence: evaluation, preference, and unwillingness to relocate. Jorgensen and Stedman (2001) describe the connection between place dependence and evaluation as follows: "Place dependence is often experienced after an evaluation is made about how well a setting serves goal achievement, given a range of alternatives" (p. 234). The principle of preference arises from comparing other places with the current one in terms of meeting individual needs and goals (Ujang & Zakariya, 2015). The third principle, unwillingness to relocate, stems from a desire to maintain a long-term relationship with the place by making efforts to remain there.

Lee and Blackford (2020) investigate the role of rural placemaking in fostering residents' place dependence. They highlight that frequent engagement with local governments for place-making initiatives and the presence of public spaces reflecting local identity enhance both place dependence and identity. Bricker and Kerstetter (2000) similarly suggest a positive correlation between high levels of community involvement and agreement with place identity and place dependence.

2.9.4 Measuring sense of place

Many studies have endeavored to define or measure sense of place and its various aspects (Relph, 1976; Shamai, 1991; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; McCunn & Gifford, 2014; Lin & Lockwood, 2014). Sense of place has been explored across a spectrum of disciplines, and its definition and measurement models are adapted to suit these contexts (Lewicka, 2011). The literature review indicates that the measurement of sense of place can be categorized into six types.

Firstly, the authors employ factors such as length of stay, ownership type, residential status, and socio-demographic characteristics to gauge the sense of place (Hay, 1988; Counted et al., 2018). However, these methods do not directly offer insights into the level or origin of the sense of place, thus serving only as proxies (Lin & Lockwood, 2014).

Secondly, scholars from various disciplines have employed concepts such as place identity, place dependence, and place attachment in relation to the sense of place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Thompson & Prokopy, 2016; Ghafourian & Hesari, 2018). Similarly, Dameria et al. (2020) elaborate on the dimensions and principles of the sense of place (Table 2.3). The arguments put forth by Jorgenson and Stedman (2001) in support of their multidimensional framework of the sense of place appear compelling and statistically robust. By understanding the cognitive, emotional, and conative underpinnings of the sense of place, researchers can better “explore the potential for complexity in the concept.” Employing a scale to assess the sense of place indicates the relative strength of respondents' sense of place, yet it may not fully reveal the formation process of the sense of place.

Thirdly, researchers employ qualitative methods to delve into the sense of place. Through this approach, respondents' own words, photo-elicitation techniques, drawings, and other means illustrate the relationship between people and place (Gunderson & Watson, 2007; Stedman, 2004). The qualitative interview method holds value in its ability to gather in-depth and rich information (Mitchell et al., 1993). However, a limitation of this method is its inability to determine the relative strength of the sense of place or its dimensions.

Fourthly, researchers employ novel methods such as spatial methods (Brown, 2004; Urlaub et al., 2023), machine learning approaches (Song et al., 2021), and social media data analysis (Kusumowidagdo et al., 2023). While these approaches offer convenience in data collection and analysis, they may provide fewer opportunities for respondents to engage in meaningful conversations.

Table 2.3: Dimensions and principles of sense of place

Principle		Reference
<i>Place identity</i>		
Distinctiveness	Clearly distinct from any other type of relationship	Stedman (2004); Twigger-Ros and Uzzel (1996)
Continuity	Past experience provide concrete background	Bernardo and Palma (2005); Bradley et al. (2009); Hawke (2011); Twigger-Ros and Uzzel (1996)
Familiarity	Possess knowledge about the place and possible to identify symbols	Bradley et al. (2009); Nasser (2003); Stedman (2003)
<i>Place attachment</i>		
Feeling of pride	Ability of provide choices	Brown et al. (2003); Hawke (2011); Scannell and Gifford (2010)
Connectedness	Sense of loss	Jorgensen and Stedman (2011); Chen et al. (2014); Tan et al. (2018)
Belongingness	Feeling 'at home'	Kasarda and Janowitz (1974); Tuan (1990); Lalli (1992)
<i>Place dependence</i>		
Evaluation	Compare to other alternatives to determine how important this place for goal achievement	Jorgensen and Stedman (2001); Smaldone et al. (2005)
Preference	Prefer the place compared to other places	Jorgensen and Stedman (2001); Stokols and Shumaker (1982); Ujang and Zakariya (2015)
Unwillingness to move	The desire of maintaining a long-term relationship	Scannell and Gifford (2010)

Source: Adopted from Dameria et al. (2020)

Fifthly, sense of place is evaluated across a series of phases or degrees, as outlined by Relph (1976) and Shamai (1991). Relph (1976, p. 51-55) delineates seven distinct degrees of sensing a place, categorized broadly into three levels of "outsideness" and three levels of "insideness", ranging from the lowest level of alienation and uninvolvedness (referred to as "existential outsideness") to the most intense and profound sense of connection with a place ("Existential insideness") (Table 2.4). Insideness signifies the degree of belonging and sense of community an individual experiences in relation to a place, while outsideness describes feelings of detachment, separation, or division between the self and the place (Relph, 1976).

Shamai (1991), on the other hand, presents a scale comprising seven levels of sense of place, namely: (0) absence of any sense of place, (1) awareness of being located in a place, (2) sense of belonging to a place, (3) emotional attachment to a place, (4) identification with the goals of a place, (5) active involvement in a place, and (6) willingness to sacrifice for a place based on behavioral aspects. Shamai developed these levels through a review of the literature and quantitative examination within the Toronto Jewish community, employing a deductive and quantitative approach. However, Lin and Lockwood (2014) note that while these phases indicate the level of sense of place, they do not fully consider the physical dimensions of a place and have limited capacity to establish the strengths or sources of attachments.

Table 2.4: A distinction between seven different degrees of sensing a place

Outsideness	Insideness
1. Existential outsideness -Self-conscious and reflective uninvolvement -alienation from people and places 2. Objective outsideness -deliberate adaptation of dispassionate attitude -places things having certain attributes 3. Incidental outsideness -places experienced as background -places incidental to activities in them	4. Vicarious insideness -second-hand experience without visiting in place -deeply felt involvement e.g. by artistic experience 5. Behavioural insideness -place as set of objects, views and activities arranged in certain ways -sight most important element of experience 6. Empathetic insideness -deliberate effort of perception -openness and respect to place 7. Existential insideness -place full of significant without deliberate or self-conscious reflection -deep and complete identity with place

Source: Relph (1976)

Sixthly, scholars often employ a mixed-methods approach, which, according to Duggen et al. (2023), is the most commonly adopted method. For instance, Jorgensen et al. (2006) utilized a combination of a postal questionnaire and semi-structured

interviews to capture residents' sense of place. Similarly, Li et al. (2023b) employed mixed methods to investigate how touristification affects residents' sense of place, employing three data collection methods: document analysis, qualitative interviews (involving 75 individuals), and a questionnaire survey (with 1563 participants), supplemented by mapping exercises. While this approach offers a more integrated assessment of sense of place, it can be challenging to implement when faced with data limitations. Additionally, the literature review highlights the six main approaches used to measure sense of place, each with its own prospects and constraints. However, it's worth noting that the majority of these studies have been developed and tested within the context of the Global North.

2.10 Sense of place and the co-creation

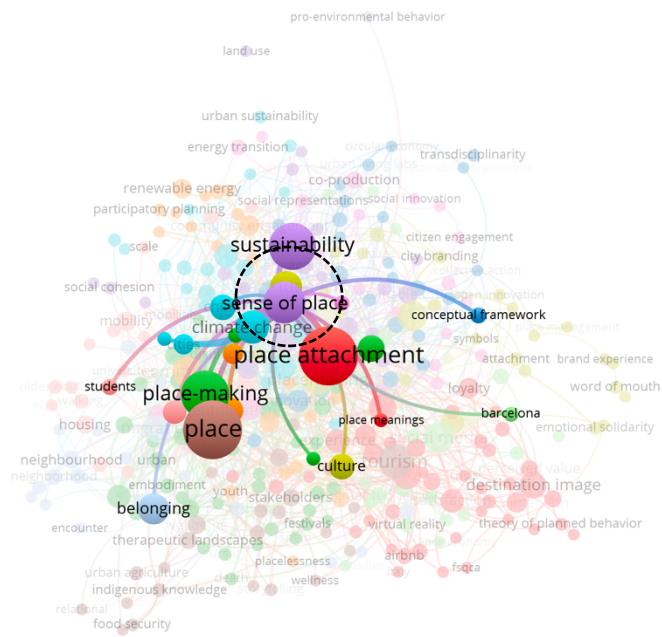
This research systematically investigates whether the existing literature has elucidated the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation. To gain a preliminary understanding of the topics and relationships, a bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer software version 1.6.18, with 1634 articles gathered from the Scopus database (Van Eck & Waltman, 2010). Keyword co-occurrence analysis aided in comprehending the research themes and topics. Each color in Figure 2.8 represents a keyword cluster, and three significant clusters were identified. The dominant clusters (in red, blue, and green) offer an overview of the key aspects of research in sense of place and co-creation. Cluster 1 (red) appears to be tourism-related, comprising keyword clusters such as destination, image, attractions, and satisfaction.

Similarly, cluster 2 (blue) represents the anthropology cluster, encompassing keywords such as human, age, privacy, housing and health. The third cluster (green) signifies the urban planning cluster, including terms like sense of place, cities, neighborhood, design and community. While all keywords were reviewed in this analysis, author keywords were examined at the next level to understand the relationship between the co-occurrence of keywords such as sense of place, place attachment, place identity, place dependence, co-creation, environmentally responsive behavior, participatory design, place-making, and collaborative planning.

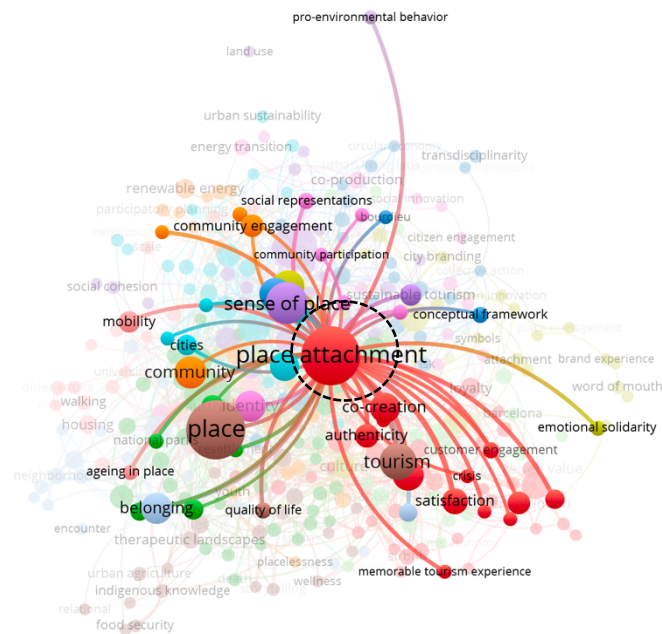
It was observed that sense of place co-occurred with other keywords, including sustainability, place-making, place, place meaning, place attachment, and belonging (Figure 2.9a). Place attachment emerged as a frequently used keyword in this research domain. When examining the relationship between keywords, place attachment was found to co-occur with terms like sense of place, community, cities, quality of life, satisfaction, belonging, and notably, with keywords such as co-creation, community engagement, community participation, social representations, and pro-environmental behavior (Figure 2.9b). Similarly, focusing on the keyword co-creation revealed co-occurrence with terms such as place attachment, social cohesion, branding, satisfaction, governance, and urban resilience (Figure 2.9c).

Figure 2.8: Keyword clusters

2.9a



2.9b



2.9c

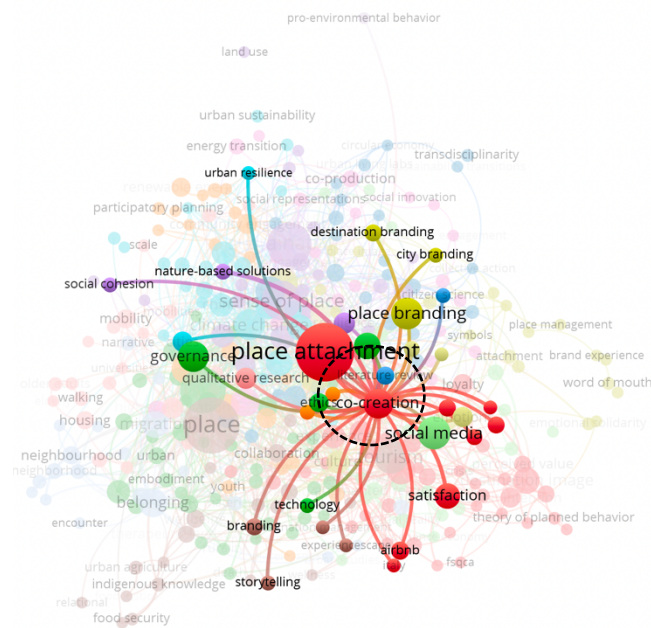


Figure 2.9a: Co-occurrence of sense of place keyword with other keywords

Figure 2.9b: Co-occurrence of place attachment keyword with other keywords

Figure 2.9c: Co-occurrence of co-creation keyword with other keywords

Source: Author

At the same time, the number of articles published by country was also mapped using Scopus data (Figure 2.10). It reveals that the highest number of publications are from the United Kingdom (469) and the United States (222) respectively, while only 14 countries in the Global North have published more than 50 publications. However, many countries in the Global South, including Sri Lanka, have not produced a single publication on this topic. This analysis underscores the necessity for further research to investigate the relationship between sense of place and co-creation in the Global South.

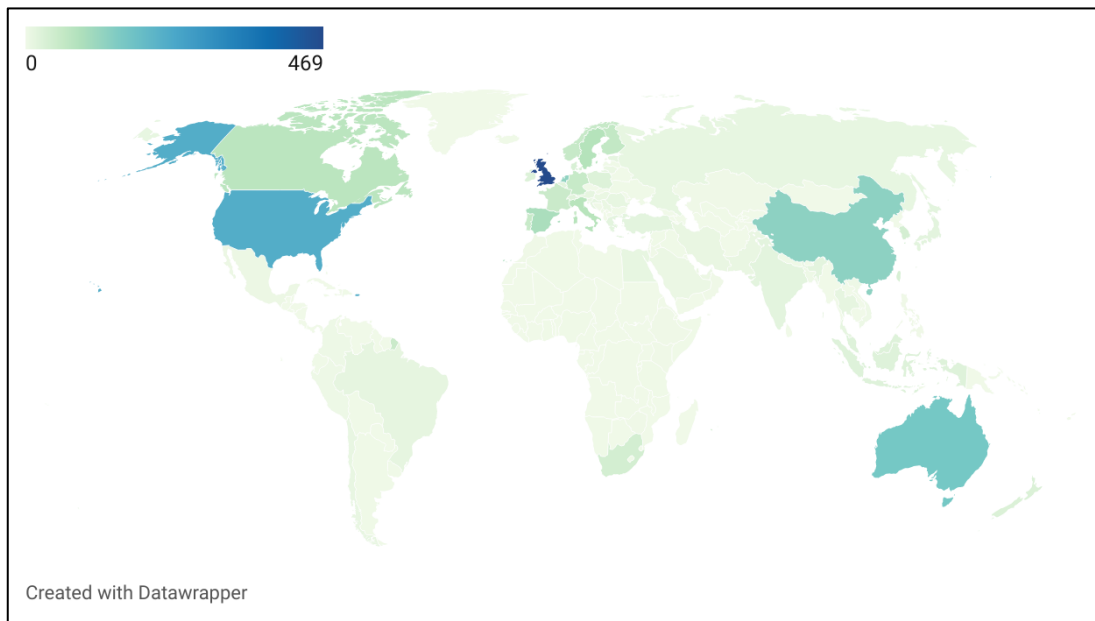


Figure 2.10: Number of publications by country

Source: Author

Moreover, 75 articles were considered for further review, and of these, 22 articles were selected for an in-depth examination. Out of those, 9 empirically identified the relationship, while the remainder hinted at a potential connection, often by citing other scholars (see Appendix 1). Among the 75 articles, most studies qualitatively examined single or multiple case studies, characterizing them as exploratory research endeavors. Quantitative studies constituted only 8% of the total, with 2% utilizing mixed methods. Hence, as noted by Voorberg et al. (2014) in their review, the qualitative approach predominates in the study of co-creation practices. This observation suggests that urban planning studies related to co-creation are predominantly context-specific. Regarding the year of publication, over 66% of the articles were published from 2017 to 2022, mirroring the proportion observed in the articles selected for this study (see Figure 2.11).

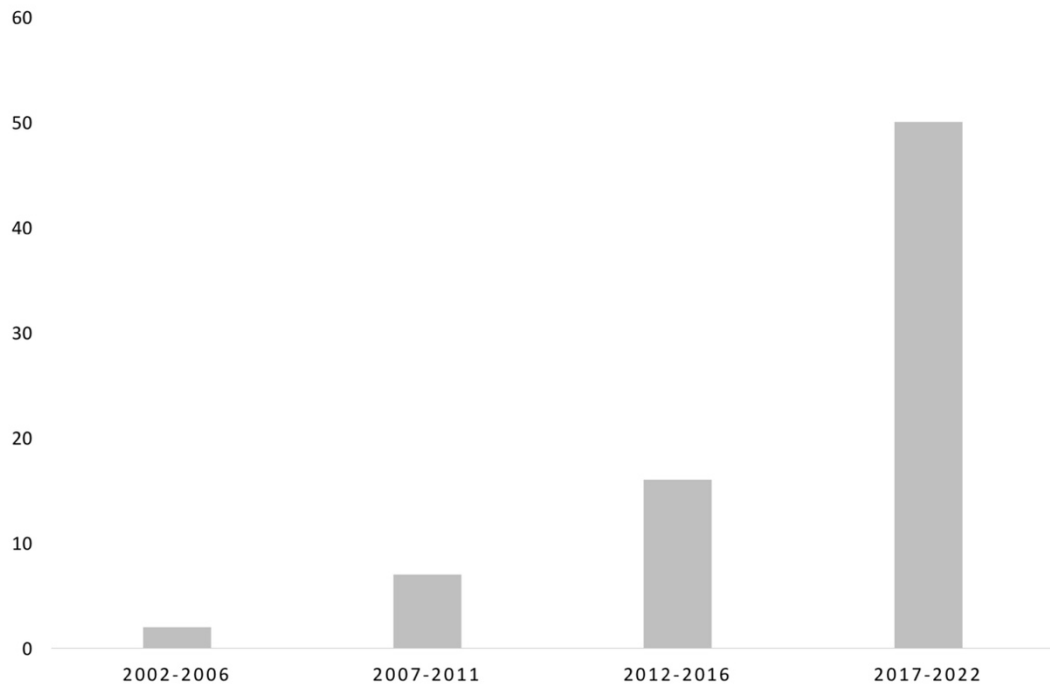


Figure 2.11. Year of publication

Source: Author

The concept of sense of place encompasses several related sub-concepts, including place identity, place attachment, place dependence, and sense of community. Similarly, terms such as environmentally responsive behavior, neighborhood revitalization, experimentation, place-making, participatory design, and collaborative planning are often associated with the co-creation concept in this literature. However, none of the articles specifically explored the relationship between sense of place and co-creation within the context of urban place-making.

2.10.1 The role of sense of place in co-creation

In the literature, environmental psychology and urban planning have traditionally been studied as separate disciplines. However, Manzo and Perkins (2006) argue that integrating perspectives from both fields is crucial for gaining a comprehensive understanding of how urban plans impact people's experiences of place and how psychology influences community planning. They specifically discuss the connection

between place attachment and individuals' willingness to take action in their environment.

In recent years, numerous researchers have explored the relationship between sense of place and collaborative planning, place attachment and community participation, as well as sense of place and participatory urban development (Thompson & Prokopy, 2016; Erfani, 2020). Many authors have highlighted the importance of this relationship (Stoica et al., 2022; Hadjilouca, 2015; Lewicka, 2011; Füller et al., 2011; Pueriari et al., 2018).

Among the reviewed literature, some studies, such as those by Füller et al. (2011) and Thompson and Prokopy (2016), offer empirical insights into the connection between sense of place and co-creation. Füller et al. (2011) examine the perceived sense of community and the co-creation experience in jewellery design, confirming the positive influence of a sense of community on co-creation practices (Figure 2.12). The authors suggest that fostering social interactions among participants can enhance this relationship.

Thompson and Prokopy (2016) investigate the preservation of farmlands and open spaces, finding that sense of place significantly influences collaborative planning. They affirm that a strong sense of place is a key predictor of commitment to collaboration. Additionally, they note that individuals with a robust sense of place are more inclined to trust and collaborate with others in joint activities.

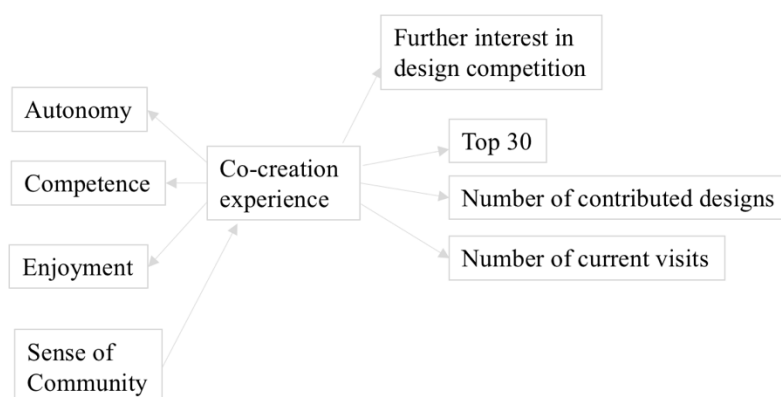


Figure 2.12: Conceptual model developed by Füller et al. (2011)

Authors frequently highlight the importance of social capital, trust, and the identification of place meanings when addressing the impact of sense of place on the co-creation experience. According to Manzo and Perkins (2006), residents' understanding and expression of place meanings are essential to their engagement in the community. They contend that addressing place meanings is crucial to the success of projects led by community leaders, planners, and designers who aim to encourage community involvement.

The significance of place meanings is underscored by Hadjilouca (2015) and Lewicka (2011) in the contexts of place-making and environmental actions, respectively. Hadjilouca (2015) contends that elements such as the physical environment, cultural heritage, local values, and collective memories contribute to place meanings, thereby influencing sense of place.

Similarly, authors identify social capital as another factor indicating the role of sense of place in co-creation. Some authors conceptualize social capital as community-based resources inherent in a social network (Amarawickrama, 2022). Manzo and Perkins (2006) observed that social capital can facilitate a more successful participatory planning process. Additionally, they noted that individuals who are more attached to their neighborhood tend to invest time and money in it. They further suggest that both place attachments and social capital can be accessed or developed through participation in community planning, and the absence of either can impede public commitments. These observations highlight the interconnectedness of social capital, place attachment, and community actions. This is supported by Gustafson (2009), whose empirical study in Sweden demonstrated that stronger involvement in local initiatives is typically linked to social capital.

The literature suggests that trust is also an expression of sense of place (Thompson & Prokopy, 2022; Norberg-Schulz, 1976). Lewicka (2011) found that individuals who are attached to a place tend to trust others more, develop better relationships with neighbors, and have a more positive attitude toward their place of residence, all of which are positive factors for collaboration. Slingerland et al. (2020b) mention that trust is important for fostering a sense of belonging and connecting with the environment. They describe actions that they took to build trust among participants in

outdoor play activities and co-creation with children. Payton et al. (2005) reveal a significant connection between place attachment and community actions: increased place attachment directly boosts trust and indirectly enhances community involvement, while increased trust directly encourages community participation. Thus, trust serves as a link between place attachment and community involvement. Thompson and Prokopy (2022) also find that individuals with a stronger sense of place are more willing to trust and collaborate with other community members to identify solutions to common problems.

However, some authors argue that there is no direct relationship between place attachment and willingness to participate in different types of social activities (Gosling & Williams, 2010; Lewicka, 2005; Perkins & Long, 2002). While some authors identify neighborhood ties (Lewicka, 2005), social capital (Payton, 2003), and trust (Payton et al., 2005) as mediating factors between place attachment and co-creation, there are still differing views on this topic.

In this context, scholarly works suggest that sense of place plays a role in co-creation, although there are conflicting views. Furthermore, empirical testing of this relationship has primarily occurred in non-spatial or non-urban studies. Therefore, further research is necessary to comprehensively understand the role of sense of place in the co-creation experience within the context of urban place-making.

2.10.2 Influence of co-creation on sense of place

Some scholars in their studies suggest that co-creation enhances the sense of place (e.g., Casais & Monteiro, 2019; Teder, 2018; Marušić & Erjavec, 2020; Slingerland et al., 2020a; Deng, 2021). Casais and Monteiro 's (2019) study on place branding provides evidence of residents' involvement in co-creating the Porto City brand, reflecting their sense of place. However, the research highlights issues with effective communication among key stakeholders during the city-brand co-creation process. Teder (2018), in his literature review on place-making, argues that place-making in public spaces should be rooted in the philosophy of co-creation, a process that generates a new (or renewed) sense of place by linking space with communities.

Moreover, place attachment is enhanced when individuals have more opportunities to connect with their built environment (Thompson & Prokopy, 2016). Slingerland et al. (2020a) mention that participatory design methods, aimed at supporting children in co-creating outdoor place activities for place-making, can increase the sense of place. According to the authors, this is due to the flexibility of materials, tasks, and roles in the participatory design process, which allows for adaptation and creates an engaging environment that fosters connection and engagement with the neighborhood. Deng (2021) argues that individuals attribute meaning to the geographical environment through interactive social activities. According to Tuan (1977), when a place is given a specific meaning, the geographical space transforms into a place and can evoke emotional attachment in users. Building on this theoretical background, Deng's (2021) conceptual framework addresses the research gap by exploring the relationship between the co-creation experience and tourists' sustainable behavior. One of his research hypotheses is that "the co-creation experience in heritage tourism has a positive impact on place attachment." However, the paper does not present any empirical study. Marušić and Erjavec (2020) argue that active co-creation of living and working environments fosters a sense of place among people. They also advocate for co-creation to enhance inclusiveness and stakeholder integration.

Meanwhile, some scholars empirically test the relationship between co-creation and related notions of sense in various contexts and fields (for example, Zhang et al., 2019; Ellery & Ellery, 2019; Suntikul & Jachna, 2016; Frantzeskaki et al., 2018b). Among the literature, Zhang et al. (2019) analyze the role of place attachment and festival satisfaction as mediators in the relationship between festival visitors' satisfaction with the co-creation experience and their festival re-patronizing intention. According to the authors, place attachment encompasses place identity and place dependence. The findings reveal that satisfaction with the co-creation experience translates into participants' psychological attachment to a brand because the process adds value to the person. Satisfaction is positively associated with place attachment. However, results indicate that place identity is not positively associated with the festival re-patronizing intention. Consequently, it implies that when people experience a satisfying brand co-creation process, it leads to a sense of place.

Moreover, Liu et al. (2018) examined a festival setting in Taiwan where co-creation involved organizing an event to attract tourists and examining the mediating effect of co-creation on involvement and place attachment constructs (Figure 2.13). This study confirms that the causal relationship between involvement and place attachment is direct, positive, and significant but is also mediated through co-creation. The authors conclude that co-creation is valuable for maximizing place attachment if local knowledge and products are incorporated. Sunkul and Jachna (2016), in a quantitative empirical study in Macau, confirm the integration of the concepts of co-creation and place attachment, primarily as increased involvement in tourism corresponds to increased place attachment (Figure 2.14). The authors note that attachment to the place is enhanced when tourists have a comprehensive experience that engages them emotionally and cognitively, allowing for personal growth, self-expression, and community awareness. However, the results indicate that the ratings for the place-dependence items are higher than those for the place-identity items. Although the results reveal a relationship between co-creation and place attachment, there is no strong indication that participation in co-creation greatly affects the aspects of place dependence and place identity. Moreover, this study relates to tourism and co-creation to produce services and products, not urban places.

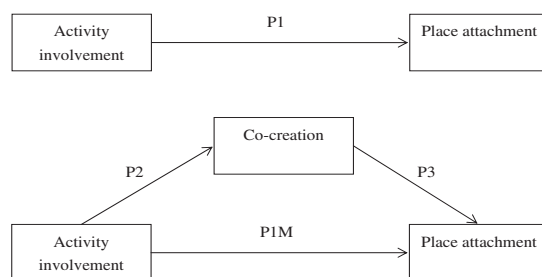


Figure 2.13. Conceptual model developed by Liu et al. (2018)

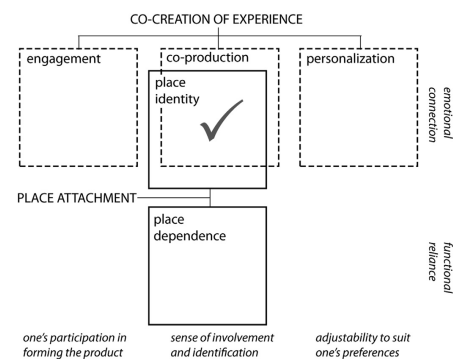


Figure 2.14. Conceptual model developed by Sunkul and Jachna (2016)

Ellery and Ellery (2019) develop a theoretical framework to illustrate the role of place-making as a strategy for developing a sense of place (Figure 2.15). They assert that creating a sense of place can be achieved through participatory strategies and place-

making. Furthermore, they emphasize that sense of place-oriented co-creation is more than just a means of developing spaces; it also strengthens the community's ties to the place and empowers people to take a more active role in managing and maintaining their environment. Additionally, it enables individuals to initiate incremental changes independently and at lower costs, enhances the political voice of the community, and promotes community management of the living environment. These outcomes serve to strengthen and nurture the community's sense of place, as articulated by Ellery and Ellery (2019, p. 246), "[t]hese can all evolve while continuing to foster and strengthen the community's sense of place".

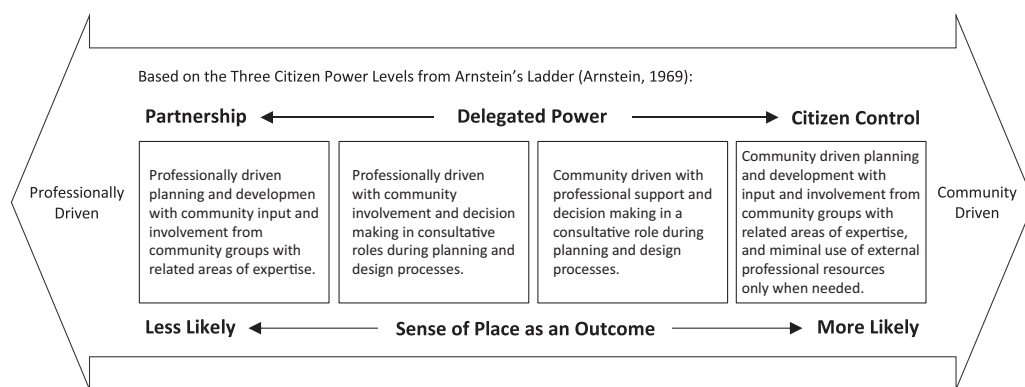


Figure 2.15. Conceptual model developed by Ellery and Ellery (2018)

Frantzeskaki et al. (2018b) observe that the sense of place results from inclusive, open, and socially reflexive processes of experimentation. They conducted a qualitative study on urban living labs in Rotterdam as a form of urban experimentation, employing a longitudinal research approach. As Frantzeskaki et al. (2018b) elaborate, the sense of place is both produced and reproduced through social networks, while experimentation facilitates the creation, alteration, and renewal of collective relationships. In addition to fostering the formation of social networks, experimentation is crucial for generating new narratives of place, co-producing knowledge on innovative practices, and establishing new relationships between people and their environment. These innovative approaches to neighborhood development, involving symbolic places and alternative practices, contribute to the formation of place identity and the enhancement of community cohesion.

The review highlights several methods to enhance the sense of place. Specifically, place-making (Slingerland et al., 2020a; Teder, 2018; Ellery & Ellery, 2019), place branding (Zhang et al., 2019; Casais & Monterio, 2019), participation in tourism activities (Liu et al., 2018; Suntikul & Jachna, 2016), and fostering strong partnerships and self-directed participation (Jiang et al., 2020) are identified as significant factors in developing the sense of place.

Moreover, it is evident that the co-creation process fosters the creation and re-creation of new social relationships and interactions, provides space for individuals to utilize their human and social resources, allows for adaptation to the process, facilitates holistic experiences fostering personal growth and self-awareness, empowers individuals to initiate incremental changes, amplifies the political voice of the community, promotes community stewardship of the living environment, and culminates in the creation of a satisfying place where people feel connected. Consequently, co-creation also enhances the sense of place. Some scholars have recognized and empirically tested the causal relationship between co-creation and the sense of place in tourism and place branding-related literature. Thus, this review underscores the necessity for comprehensive urban place-making-related research.

This literature review reveals several gaps in research regarding place co-creation. Firstly, there are limitations in the exploration of the role of the sense of place in the co-creation experience. Secondly, there is a lack of research examining the situation in the Global South. Thirdly, there is insufficient investigation into the outcomes of participation in place co-creation.

2.11 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the literature review, it becomes evident that the process of place-making can be significantly enhanced through a co-creation approach, although achieving genuine community participation remains a considerable challenge. While research indicates that concepts such as the sense of place play a role in co-creation, empirical validation within urban place-making literature is notably lacking. Similarly, although some studies suggest that co-creation experiences contribute to fostering a sense of place, the available literature on this relationship within an urban context is

limited. Furthermore, the relation between the sense of place and the co-creation experience remains largely unexplored in urban settings. Recognizing this research gap, the present study seeks to investigate the interplay between the sense of place and the co-creation experience.

This chapter reviews existing literature, defining co-creation as a process that actively involves citizens in the place-making endeavor as engaged and responsible actors. Scholarly works propose that the dimensions of Verleye's co-creation experience scale can serve as a useful scale can serve as a useful tool for probing into the co-creation experience. Additionally, the sense of place, understood as the connection between people and place, has been studied through various lenses, frequently focusing on the dimensions of place identity, place attachment, and place dependence dimensions. Consequently, this research adopts these three dimensions of the sense of place along with their sub-dimensions (Dameria et al., 2020).

However, it is imperative to explore both the sense of place and the co-creation experience within the context of urban place-making to fully grasp their intricacies. When examining the relationship between these two constructs, the literature suggests a relationship, thus guiding the conceptualization of this research for operationalization in the subsequent chapter.

This research conceptualizes the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience as follows (Figure 2.16):

- Co-creation is a process of involving citizens in the place-making process as active and responsible actors.
- The dimensions of the co-creation experience are social experience, economic experience, cognitive experience and hedonic experience.
- Sense of place, the connection between people and place, comprises the notions; of place identity, place attachment and place dependence.
- An intrinsic motivation for citizens to engage in co-creation practices can be sense of place
- Sense of place can be fostered when a citizen experiences co-creation

- Therefore, there is a relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience.

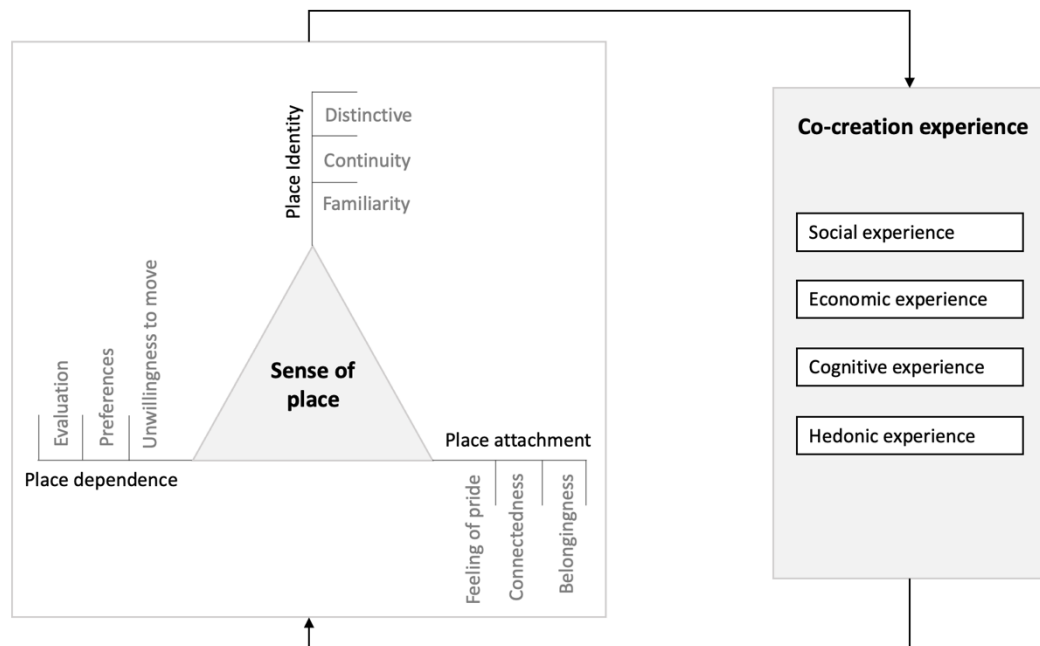


Figure 2.16. Conceptual framework

Source: Author

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Yin (2003) emphasizes that “the research design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study’s initial research questions and ultimately, to its conclusions”. This chapter explains the ontological and epistemological theoretical foundations that address the “what” and “how” of the research questions. The primary research question in this study is: What is the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience?. Subsequently, this study explores the research questions: 1) *What constitutes sense of place?*; 2) *How does the community experience co-creation?* and 3) *How do sense of place and co-creation experiences relate?*. The aim is to logically elucidate the sequence of the research process and provide justification for the decisions when necessary, answering the research questions. This methodology chapter will begin by outlining the structure of the research process, approach to theory development, methodological choice, data analytical approach and the chosen case study. This chapter presents the qualitative research strategy underpinning the abductive process, which guides this empirical study. Furthermore, this chapter will delve into the methods employed for data collection, including details about the sample, the sample selection process, and ethical considerations. Finally, it will explain the methods of data analysis based on themes and address any limitations of the study.

3.2 Research process framework

Understanding research philosophy is vital for social scientists as it provides clarity in designing, conducting, analyzing and interpreting research. A well-thought-out research philosophy underpins ontology, axiology, epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology, and methods. Saunders et al. (2015) illustrate this complex methodological framework with the metaphor of an onion, aptly named the ‘research onion’ (Figure 3.1).

First, it is necessary to grasp the concepts of ontology (studying what exists in reality), epistemology (the definition of acceptable knowledge) and axiology (role of values) related to this research (Guba & Lincoln, 1982; Lawson et al., 2007). In this research, the primary focus is on studying ‘people’ placing it within the realm of social ontology. In the philosophical stance, scholars often discuss five main philosophies: positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism (Saunders et al., 2009). According to positivists, the world exists outside of ourselves, and its characteristics should be quantified using impartial techniques. Like natural scientists, positivists focus on observable social reality “law-like generalizations”. As a result, people believe that knowledge of reality is precise and clear. Positivist research follows an empiricist approach, designed to yield pure, unbiased, uninterpreted and value-free data. Simultaneously, they regard social entities as genuine in the same manner as tangible objects and natural occurrences. Therefore, they can use quantitative data analysis methods and possibly find causal relationships and generalize the outcomes. Moreover, positivist researchers use existing theories as a basis for developing hypotheses, which are then tested, either confirming or refuting them.

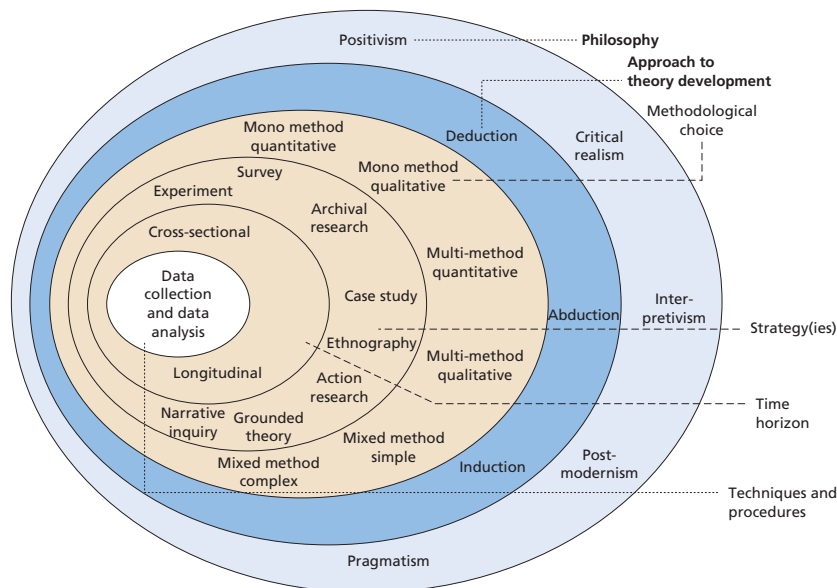


Figure 3.1: The research ‘onion’

Source: Saunders et al. (2015)

Moving on, critical realism directs its attention to explaining observable events and experiences in terms of the underlying structures of reality that shape them. Critical realism uses two basic phases to help understand the world (Reed, 2005). It looks at the feelings and things the researchers actually encounter firsthand, and then it explores how the researchers' minds interpret these things. Critical realists generally posit that what a researcher represents is only a fraction of the broader, more comprehensive reality.

Investigating the underlying causes and mechanisms of visible social phenomena to explain them is a defining characteristic of critical realism research. Thus, such research often entails in-depth historical analysis of social structures and their historical evolution. Epistemological relativism, which holds that knowledge is situated within a particular historical context and that social facts are the product of social constructions by humans, existing independently, is recognized because of this historical research (Saunders et al., 2009). Regarding axiology, critical realists typically embrace a range of methods for analyzing causations, extending beyond quantitative methods. It is imperative to recognize that the research outcomes are influenced by the researcher's social background, personal experiences, and values. As a result, critical realists should take action to minimize biases.

On the other extreme of positivism is interpretivism, which contends that reality is socially produced and given meaning by individuals rather than being objective and external. In contrast to universal 'laws' like the world view of positivists, interpretivists mention people are different, they have different cultural backgrounds, and therefore, they make different means in different contexts and times. Consequently, interpretivism research aims to generate novel understandings and interpretations of social environments and circumstances. Interpretivism is a more subjectivity-oriented philosophy and in terms of axiology, interpretivism focuses on multiple interpretations of research information and data. Consequently, the values and views held by researchers are also significant. Interpretivism is the best philosophy if the goal of the study topic is to examine a special issue and acknowledge contextual variances.

Subsequently, scholars introduce postmodernism and pragmatism ontological philosophies. Postmodernism argues the role of language and power are the key aspects for reality to exist. Postmodernists argue our world is created through language. Giving voice and credibility to suppressed and oppressed ways of seeing and knowing is the goal of postmodern research. The researchers may use any form of data- texts, images, conversations, voices and numbers -to investigate the phenomenon in-depth. Pragmatism reconciles both objectivism and subjectivism and perceives knowledge, experiences and values as instruments of thought and action in specific contexts. Pragmatists follow the practical effects of ideas. A pragmatic approach to research poses a problem and seeks out real-world answers as opposed to theoretical distinctions.

However, the research objectives cannot be achieved by following positivist philosophy due to several reasons. Firstly, it is necessary to understand the feelings (sense of place is a feeling) of people and it is hard to measure and depict with numbers. Secondly, as sense of place varies according to culture, context and time, outcomes may not be generalizable. Moreover, this research contests postmodernism as the aim of the research would not focus on absence, silence and oppressed/repressed meanings, interpretations and voices. Further, the research aims are not to find practical solutions to a problem; thus, it does not fall into pragmatism. Subsequently, this research may choose between interpretivism or critical realism, both are against positivism, concept dependent and need interpretative understanding.

However, the critical realism philosophy frames this research more successfully for several reasons. Firstly, when studying the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience, it may be possible to observe some form of community engagement in the co-creatin process, but the reasons for their engagement cannot be perceived. Therefore, when it is necessary to learn the bigger picture of their decision to engage, critical realism provides a framework. At the same time, when exploring the underlying reasons for the decisions, it is necessary to study people's culture, context, structures, mechanisms and events that matter. Second, critical realism disagrees with the anti-naturalists' conclusion that causality has no bearing on social science. According to Sayer (2004), the researcher must attempt to identify what

causes social change produced; thus, social science should deal both with causal explanation and interpretative understanding. As this research aims to find a relationship and a cause-effect, rather than using positivism-based correlation analysis, the phenomenon can be explained in depth by following critical realism.

3.3 Approach to theory development

Selecting a strategy for theory building is beneficial because it allows for better decision-making regarding the research design and accommodates limitations (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). Deductive and inductive approaches are two main strategies for reasoning the research. Testing a theory and the conclusions that follow logically from a set of premises is known as a deductive strategy. On the other hand, when there is a logical argument that fails to connect the observable premises and conclusion, an inductive approach is used to develop a theory (Ketokivi & Mantere 2010). The third method is abductive, which can be used to create or alter a current theory that is then tested by gathering more data.

According to Saunders et al. (2015), the deductive approach has some important characteristics. Specifically, it can clarify the causal relationship between concepts and variables and the necessity of operationalizing concepts to facilitate measurement and allow for potential generalization. Thus, the deductive approach usually uses quantitative and structured methodology. As per the literature review chapter, an exact theory is related to the research question could not find. Existing discourses are oriented more toward critical realism; therefore, a deductive approach would not be appropriate. Some characteristics of the inductive approach include a particular concern with the context, the study of a small sample and the utilization of qualitative and varied data collection methods. Shifting from theory to evidence and evidence to theory—basically, combining induction and deduction—is the fundamental feature of abduction. Peirce (1929) argues rather than induction, abduction provides a guide to empirically based theory construction.

When deciding between deductive, inductive and abductive methods for theory development, abduction is the most appropriate approach. The two main concepts that explored in this research, the sense of place and co-creation experience have a

substantial theoretical background. Therefore, it may be possible to follow a reflexive, interactive or iterative process: collecting data, interpreting it with theories, and collecting data again to fill the gaps and build the theory further. Abduction is, therefore, a reflection of the process of creative inferencing and verifying these conclusions with more information. As such, abduction aligns with the conventional grounded theory suggestion of iteratively switching between data and theory.

3.4 Qualitative method

This research mainly questions '*what is the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience?*' and research questions are, '*what constitutes sense of place?*', '*how does the community experience co-creation?*' and '*how do sense of place and co-creation experiences relate?*'. This research explores the answers to these 'what' and 'how' questions from ground realities. The literature review in the previous chapter indicated that it is not possible to rely on existing theories to answer these questions. Therefore, this explorative research will follow a qualitative research approach to achieve the aim.

Qualitative research, according to Creswell and Poth (2007), starts with presumptions, "a worldview, the potential application of a theoretical lens, and the examination of research topics that delve into the interpretations that people or groups make of social or human problems". To explore this issue, qualitative researchers use an evolving qualitative approach to inquiry, natural settings that are considerate of the subjects and locations, inductive data analysis that finds themes or patterns, and data-gathering methods. The final written report or presentation extends the literature or issues a call to action while incorporating participant voices, the researcher's reflexivity, and a sophisticated description and interpretation of the issue.

This definition helps to further justify the decision to follow a qualitative approach. This study also begins with the assumption that people would not continuously be involved in the place co-creation process unless they have strong intrinsic motivations like the sense of place, and vice versa. However, the literature view shows that this assumption can only be partially explained by using existing theories. As this research is about people, their activities, their psychological intention of being involved in

place-making, and their perception and connection with the place, these sensitive data to be collected from people. Thus, it would be appropriate to use a qualitative approach.

When listening to people's co-creation experiences, not only their words and voice matter but their context. Therefore, data should be collected in a setting appropriate to the person and place under study. In contrast to the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach always encourages the researcher to have frequent and direct contact with people in their natural settings. Moreover, people-place interaction is difficult to capture with existing quantitative measures. Importantly, experiences and feelings are unique to a person and cannot be converted to a number and thereby into a statistical mean. As a result, a qualitative research approach, rather than a quantitative one, is better suited to investigate the study topics.

Williams (2014) argues that place-making is defined by an ontological and epistemological diversity that views location as a means of both perceiving and comprehending the world (Cresswell, 2014). Typically, qualitative researchers employ multiple methods of data collection to properly comprehend complex entities and phenomena. Generally, document surveys, audio-visual materials, observations, interviews, workshops and focus group discussions are incorporated to complete the study comprehensively. In that sense, too, a qualitative approach is appropriate for this research.

3.5 Data analytical approach

Once it is decided that this research falls under the critical realism philosophy, Creswell and Poth's (2007) work supported finding an approach from the five main qualitative methods (narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study). While reviewing the characteristics of each approach, it was excluded the inappropriate ones. Narrative research, for example, focuses on exploring the life of an individual, but the research question aims to explore the sense of place and co-creation experience, necessitating the study of many participants engaged in place co-creation. Ethnography would not be suitable as it examines the shared patterns of an entire cultural group. Additionally, ethnographic research typically requires extensive

participant observations to become thoroughly familiar with the group, but the co-creation experiences may include past phases that can only be explored by referring to documents and conducting interviews with participants.

Next, the case study approach is used to gain a comprehensive understanding of a case. Though it is studied as a case in this study, focus on only one aspect of it: the experiences of co-creation and participants' sense of place. Therefore, the case study approach can be excluded. Hence, it is necessary to decide between phenomenology and grounded theory. Phenomenology involves studying multiple people who have shared an experience to extract meaning from it, leading to a description of a universal experience. This would not be suitable for the co-creation experience, as people may have different reasons for their engagement and varied present experiences of the co-created place. Moreover, phenomenology aims to describe experiences, while grounded theory goes beyond that level by generating a theory. Grounded theory involves developing a hypothesis based on evidence and researching a procedure, action, or interaction involving numerous people. Therefore, the ground theory approach is ideal for exploring the research questions, while also incorporating characteristics of other approaches supplementally.

Moreover, this study explores a social matter, and grounded theory delves deeply into social issues. Glaser and Strauss (1967) introduced grounded theory as an outcome of their sociological research. This theory has been widely recognized in the annals of qualitative research. According to Bryant and Charmaz (2007), grounded theory is an organized, inductive, and comparative method of conducting research in order to develop a theory. The approach is intended to support researchers in maintaining ongoing engagement with their data and participation in their developing analyses. Data analysis and collection occur simultaneously, each helping to streamline and inform the other. Grounded theory integrates empirical checks into the analytical process and encourages researchers to consider all plausible theoretical explanations for their empirical findings. The technique of iteratively alternating between empirical data collection and emergent analysis results in increasingly focused data and theoretical analysis.

Grounded theory has several benefits, including its intuitive appeal, capacity to stimulate creativity, potential for conceptualization, methodical approach to data analysis, and provision of rich and deep data. Its intuitive appeal in its flexibility allows the use of many types of data from any discipline. Promote creativity means that grounded theory pushes researchers to avoid preexisting theoretical biases and does not skew the creation of a theory, making it a creative discovery process. The logic of regular memo writing and continual comparison can be used to conceptualize grounded theory (Glaser, 1978). This method of developing theories is derived from the “continuous interplay between data collection and data analysis” (Myers, 1997).

Grounded theory's methodical approach to data analysis ensures that emergent theories of credibility and rigor. According to Charmaz (2006), “grounded theory has rigor that is not taken into consideration in other qualitative techniques because of systematic procedures such as simultaneous data collection and analysis, as well as the ongoing comparative logic and theory that arises from the data”. She also states that a researcher can create an original analysis and oversee, manage, and expedite data collection using a grounded theory technique. Additionally, the grounded theory approach offers resources for "making sense of the data" and encourages the researcher to gather detailed descriptions using various data-gathering techniques. Rich data can provide the researcher with sufficient context regarding the subjects, procedures, and environments. Furthermore, rich data should "show what lies beneath the surface" and highlight any historical trends.

However, there are disadvantages to following the grounded theory approach. The analysis process is exhaustive, time-consuming, energy-intensive and laborious. It is also not a simple task to abstract and comprehend concepts. According to Annells (1996), researchers should not "be hurried," as it could take months to refine the theory centered on the core category. Additionally, scholars identify methodological limitations, namely, “muddling qualitative methods, generational erosion, premature closure and methodological transgression” (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1996). Moreover, there are some controversial ideas about the literature view when following the grounded theory approach. Some researchers suggest conducting the analysis before beginning the literature review (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 2008) while

others argue that literature is needed for methodological reasons, to situate the research and to set the stage for forthcoming chapters (Schreiber, 2001; Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Charmaz, 2006). Further, there are some conceptual differences among scholars discussing the grounded theory approach.

According to Glaser, grounded theory is a work in progress that requires additional data collection for testing and verification. Conversely, Strauss contends that since verification occurs in the data throughout the generation process, theory may be applied in practice without the need for additional verification (Hallberg, 2006). According to Hallberg (2006), another source of ambiguity is the conclusion of grounded theory. Occasionally, the theory is presented as a hypothesis to be investigated further (Glaser, 1978), as narratives (Strauss & Corbin, 1990), or even as anecdotes that highlight connections and classifications (Charmaz, 2006).

3.6 Case study

Case studies are regarded as "quintessential social science" components because they emphasize learning, building, discovery, and problem-solving (Van Wynsberghe & Khan, 2007). To investigate the co-creation experience and its relationship to sense of place empirically, this study selects one scenario. Stake (1995), a proponent of the case study approach, argued that a single case study enables focused attention on the intricate nature connected to a particular place or society. According to study objectives, focusing on a specific area and conducting a comprehensive analysis of the people and environment is more appropriate than a broad investigation of multiple situations (Yin, 2013). A single case study is seen as a strength, acknowledging the critical realism viewpoint and enabling a critical emphasis on the problems and complexities of one example under specific conditions (May, 2011).

It is challenging to choose a case study from Sri Lanka to address research questions. The reason is that the term 'co-creation' is new to the Sri Lankan urban planning domain. However, in practice, public participation has been incorporated into the different levels of planning (national, regional, local, site, and place) in Sri Lanka to a varying degree. Most of the urban development activities conducted by planning institutions cannot be considered co-creations because public participation is at the

‘information’ level of the participatory ladder. Moreover, most of the planning processes end with the production of a planning document and do not process to the implementation stage. Further, some urban development activities are merely infrastructure developments rather than place-making. Therefore, it difficult to simply choose any plan or project which is implemented in Sri Lanka.

On the other hand, at the grassroots level, ‘*shramadana*’ is a popular means of collective efforts that mostly take place at the site or place level with active public participation. However, short-term and recurrent improvement activities, such as cleaning activities are typically undertaken through ‘*shramadana*’. Most participants in ‘*shramadana*’ are local inhabitants or members of related communities, along with religious leaders, police, *Grama Niladari* (lowest-level administrative officer) and lower-level administrative officers, but there is no wider stakeholder participation. Moreover, ‘*shramadana*’ is more popular in rural contexts than in urban contexts. I could not find any ‘*shramadana*’ initiatives that led to place-making with a considerable level of collaboration.

Against this backdrop, this research considers three main actions to choose a case study. The first was contacting urban planners who work at planning institutions in Sri Lanka. The second was contacting people who work with NGOs in Sri Lanka and the third was conducting a desktop survey, including scanning social media data. For the first two methods, the author asked one question of the contacted person: ‘Do you know any planning activity in Sri Lanka, preferably leading to urban place development, that allowed public participation at different stages of the project?’. If the answers are positive from the first contact, contact another person to cross-check the information. In some instances, it was necessary to visit the place to check whether such developments had the qualities of a place. However, the first and second actions were not successful, and could not find a suitable case that met the basic criteria of case selection.

Meanwhile, this study proceeded with the third action by googling or checking social media to find an NGO or CBO’s website or Facebook page that focused on maintaining a place. The website or page needed to be up-to-date and active. A few such Facebook pages in Sri Lanka was found, but some were more focused on social development and

empowering the community of the area than combining such developments with physical development. Finally, 'Beach Park Management Society' Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/BeachParkManagementSociety>) was chosen which documents active community activities undertaken at Crow Island Beach Park. As the next step, it was necessary to conduct another desktop survey to understand the development process of Crow Island Beach Park. It was necessary to find contacts of officers who were involved and contact a social development officer to learn about public participation during the development process. He mentioned that public engagement was good during the project, so it was necessary to visit the beach park to verify the nature of the place. Finally, the Crow Island Beach Park Development Project is selected as the case study.

3.7 Data collection

In line with common practices in qualitative research, this study employed a variety of data sources, including document reviews, observations, interviews, and the examination of social media information. The data collection process necessitated multiple visits to Crow Island Beach Park to gather information and facilitate the analysis. This approach aligns with the iterative nature of grounded theory research, where data collection and analysis occur in a continuous "zigzag" pattern: researchers venture into the field to gather data, return to the university to analyze the collected information, go back to the study area for further data collection, and repeat this process iteratively (Creswell & Poth, 2007).

3.7.1 Document and social media data review

Becker et al. (2012) explain that documents can serve as valuable sources of data. They further note that empirical investigations can utilize various types of documents. As described by the authors, these may include personal documents, official state documents, official documents from private sources, and social media outputs, among others.

Furthermore, as Riain (2009) pointed out, papers and other archive materials can be contrasted to our current views, which, when seen through a modern lens, might shed light on previous actions and behaviors. Nonetheless, documents should supplement

field notes and interviews because they are not core data sources. The gathered information was categorized using the formal, informal, and official documentation typology developed by Hammersley and Atkinson (2019). Triangulation was done using informal documentation, such as data collected from websites and social media. Several key documents are referenced in the context of the Crow Island case, including "Coastal Changes of Crow Island and Its Environs" by Madduma Bandara (1989), "The Development of Urban Open Space and Environmental Disruption: A Case Study with Special Reference to Crow Island Beach Park, Colombo" by Rewathy and Hafsa (2019), "Constructing Common Grounds: Everyday Lifeworld Beyond Politicized Ethnicities in Sri Lanka" by Piyarathne (2014), and documents from the Metro Colombo Urban Development Project. Furthermore, the Facebook page of the Beach Park Management Society (BPMS) served as an ideal data source for obtaining information about various activities conducted by BPMS members, including photographs and videos documenting these activities (Figure 3.3).

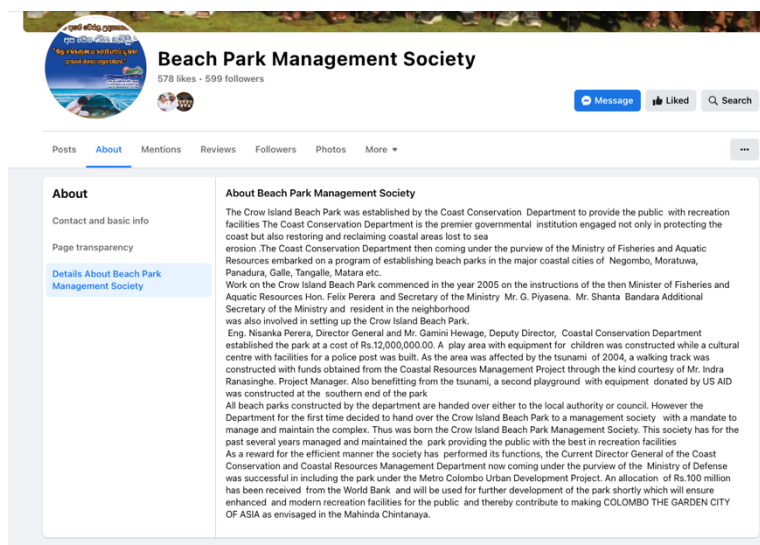


Figure 3.3: Facebook page of the BPMS

Source: Facebook page of BPMS

3.7.2 Observation

According to Saunders et al. (2009), observation is a methodical process that includes observing, documenting, characterizing, analyzing, and interpreting the behavior of others. Participant observation and structured observation are the two primary forms

of observation that they introduce. While participant observation is qualitative and focuses on understanding the meanings people ascribe to their behaviors, structured observation is quantitative in nature and measures the frequency of acts.

Guthrie (2010) mentions three types of observers: participant, non-participant and hidden. Among these, participant observation was employed to identify the co-creation experience and sense of place in the present context, providing valuable insights for triangulation. This approach was particularly useful when used in conjunction with semi-structured interviews, as it provided context and deeper understanding in cases where interviews alone did not yield sufficient information. It is noteworthy that the observations encompassed not only the examination of individuals or activities but also the purposes of the location itself.

After gaining familiarity with the functions of Crow Island through social media, the researcher contacted the vice president, Sumudu, of BPMS to request participation in the 2023 Art Competition. Sumudu then referred the researcher to Gemunu, a founding member of BPMS, who suggested visiting Crow Island on the day of the Art Competition. During the visit, Lanarolle provided a comprehensive two-hour tour of Crow Island, offering detailed explanations along the way. This visit allowed the researcher to obtain contact information for potential respondents and become familiar with the community. One respondent agreed to an interview the following day. This visit also provided an opportunity to observe the organizing capabilities and qualities of the co-creators, including how they initiate relationships with outsiders.

Subsequently, the researcher had the chance to observe three significant events organized by BPMS in Crow Island: the Deepawali celebration, the Independence Day celebration, and the commencement of the Urban Forest Project (Figure 3.4). In addition, the researcher participated in approximately five Shramadana events and joined a University of Moratuwa team for one of them, enabling observation of BPMS members' behavior during collaborative events. Except for one interview, all activities took place in Crow Island, allowing for the observation of typical functions occurring there. In total, the Crow Island Beach Park and co-creation processes were observed for approximately nine months, spanning from October 2022 to July 2023.



Figure 3.4: Timeline of observations

Source: Author

3.7.3 Interviews

In research studies, interviews are a popular approach for gathering data, especially in qualitative research. According to Becker et al. (2012), interviews are one of the most commonly used methods in qualitative research. They distinguish three main categories of interviews: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured.

As described by both Becker et al. (2012) and Saunders et al. (2009), semi-structured interviews combine elements of both structured and unstructured interviews. They involve pre-determined questions and guidelines but allow flexibility in question order and wording. This approach permits interviewers to adapt their questions as the interview progresses, maintaining the study's focus while enabling participants to express their views freely.

It is noted that there is no universally accepted 'best practice' sample size when undertaking qualitative research (Duggan et al., 2023). Guidelines for grounded theory research, as suggested by Creswell and Poth (2007), recommend conducting between 20 to 60 interviews, with participants chosen theoretically through a process known as theoretical sampling. Some evidence suggests that theoretical saturation can be achieved after 12 interviews (Guest et al., 2006). Theoretical sampling involves selecting interviewees based on their potential contributions to theory development. When data collection reached a point where new interviews no longer yielded fresh insights, the process was halted, indicating theoretical saturation. Theoretical saturation, as defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), means that additional data no

longer contribute to the development of category properties, providing the researcher with empirical confidence in the category's saturation.

The selection of members of BPMS as interview respondents in this study was guided by five criteria (Figure 3.5). First, respondents should have experience with Crow Island Beach Park development activities. Second, they should be actively involved in the Beach Park Management Society (BPMS). Third, respondents should exhibit a genuine interest in discussing the research topic, ensuring depth and personal investment in the co-creation experience and sense of place. Fourth, respondents should be willing to engage in lengthy interviews, and fifth, they should grant permission for their interviews to be recorded and data published in the dissertation. Initially, the research followed purposive sampling. Subsequently, the snowball method was employed to identify participants engaged throughout the co-creation process, resulting in the inclusion of snowball sampling characteristics in the research. In summary, the interview process began with a homogeneous sample and evolved into a heterogeneous one as theory development progressed.

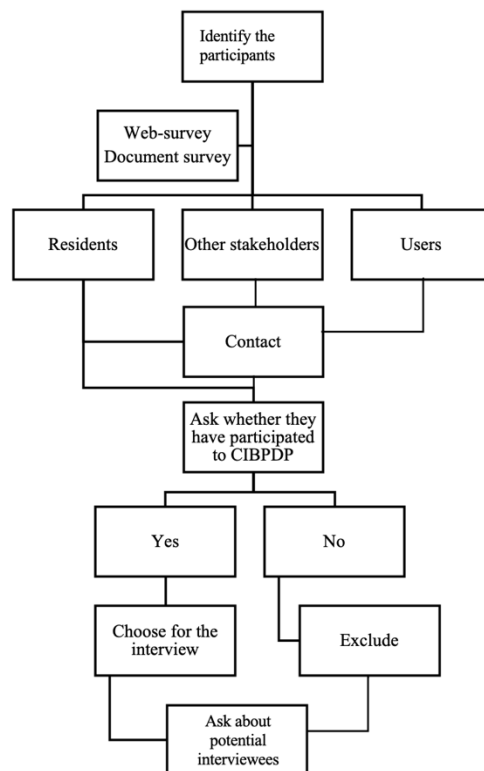


Figure 3.5: Interview respondent selection process
Source: Author

An interview guide was created that included fundamental questions covering the key questions as follows and a list of sub-questions designed to delve deeper into specific responses (Appendix 2).

“Please tell me about your experience with the Crow Island Beach Park Development activities”.

“How do you describe your feelings regarding Crow Island Beach Park and its environs?”

The interview process unfolded in an exploratory manner, resembling an explorative interview approach, as outlined by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). Furthermore, the conversational style of the interviews fostered trust between the researcher and the participants.

During the phase of interviews, the one-to-one interview method was used which means individually meeting with each potential respondent at a location convenient for them (Ryan et al., 2009) (Figure 3.6). They could choose between their home or the beach park for the interview. Before proceeding, each participant read and signed an informed consent form (provided in English), and the researcher discussed their right to withdraw from the study at any time, addressing any questions they had. The interview durations ranged from 30 minutes to 2 hours and 30 minutes and recorded them using the voice recorder feature on a mobile phone. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the interviewees' backgrounds and the length of each interview.



Figure 3.6: Conducting interviews

Source: Author

Table 3.1: Details of respondents

	Name	Age	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation	Minutes
1	Nalaka	54	Male	Sinhala	Government servant	00.46.40
2	Mohamad	56	Male	Moor	Private company	00.58.50
3	Gemunu	62	Male	Sinhala	Retired gov. servant	02.30.03
4	Murshida	45	Female	Moor	Housewife	02.09.53
5	Sumudu	52	Female	Sinhala	Housewife	01.00.38
6	Leelananda	57	Male	Sinhala	Private company	01.30.00
7	Richard	58	Male	Tamil	Foreign company	00.55.56
8	Nanda	75	Female	Sinhala	Retired gov. servant	01.08.56
9	Seetha	61	Female	Sinhala	Retired gov. servant	01.15.49
10	Thilanka	42	Male	Sinhala	Businessman	00.33.52
11	Lalith	48	Male	Sinhala	Businessman	01.15.40
12	Lanarolle	70	Male	Burgher	Retired businessman	01.00.58
13	Saman	52	Male	Sinhala	Government servant	00.45.30
14	Kumar	54	Male	Tamil	Self-employed	01.16.58
15	Nissanka	72	Male	Sinhala	Retired gov. servant	01.29.00
16	Sriyani	70	Female	Sinhala	Government servant	00.34.46

Source: Author

Flick (2004) categorizes four types of triangulation methods in qualitative research. This study employed the data source triangulation method to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomena. In addition to interviews, observation, document review, social media data, and conducted interviews with three

key stakeholders from government organizations (Table 3.2). The selection of these stakeholders followed the snowball sampling method, with the number of interviews determined by the saturation level. The primary question posed to them was:

"Do you believe that your participation in the beach park development project is crucial for fostering positive feelings about the environment and society in the Crow Island area?"

Furthermore, information gathered from local government politicians, officers from the Colombo Municipal Council, officers from the Sri Lanka Low Land Reclamation and Development Corporation (SLLRDS), officers from the National Physical Planning Department, and members of the Non-Governmental Organization known as Clean Ocean Force during our meetings at Crow Island Beach Park.

Table 3.2: Details of interviewees _Officers

	Role	Organization	Minutes
1	Social Development Specialist	Metro Colombo Urban Development Project	00.58.09
2	Social Development Specialist	Metro Colombo Urban Development Project	00.22.54
3	Landscape Architect	Urban Development Authority	00.50.36

Source: Author

3.7.4 Time horizon

One important component of a well-designed research study is the impact of time. According to Easterby-Smith et al. (2012), research designs can be divided into two groups according to the temporal focus of the study:

1. Cross-sectional studies
2. Longitudinal studies

As described by Becker et al. (2012), a cross-sectional study involves investigating a phenomenon at a single point in time, whereas longitudinal studies entail examining a phenomenon at multiple points over a specific period. Saunders et al. (2009) noted that when an investigator aims to study a phenomenon as a "snapshot" captured at a

particular moment, the research has a cross-sectional time horizon. On the other hand, if the researcher intends to create a series of "snapshots" to represent events over a given duration, it is called longitudinal.

When considering the co-creation experience, a longitudinal study might have been ideal. However, since the CoExplore, CoDesign, CoExperiment, and CoImplement phases of the Crow Island Beach Park Development have already been completed, a cross-sectional study was conducted to explore the past co-creation experiences of individuals in participating in the co-creation process and their sense of place.

3.7.5 Ethical issues

This research ensured that the information collected from individuals was ethically sound by taking several measures, considering that gathered personal and emotional data that divulged the details of respondents' experiences. First, a consent form was implemented (Appendix 3) before the data collection process, which informed participants about their rights as research subjects. In participation, interviewees were required to sign the form to provide their consent. Secondly, all the data in the report are presented in an anonymized format, using fictitious names. This approach was employed to protect the confidentiality of the respondents and any names or identities they mentioned in their responses.

3.8 Data Analysis

Before conducting data analysis, a specific procedure was followed to process the interview data, as outlined in the following sequence: Firstly, the interview recordings were transcribed, and in some cases, translation from Sinhala was required as some responses were in Sinhala. Secondly, it was imperative to meticulously review the transcripts and listen to the recordings multiple times to ensure accuracy. Additionally, transcripts were cross-referenced with field notes at certain points to facilitate triangulation. Thirdly, the coding process commenced by systematically organizing the data through coding (Hammersley, 2007).

3.8.1 Data analysis in general

Coding is the initial stage of analyzing qualitative data, and ATLAS.ti software made this process faster. Coding is a heuristic procedure that permits fluidity, as Saldaña

(2021) emphasizes, ensuring that the process stays dynamic and organic. Throughout this process, consider the various interpretations that might arise from the data and existing literature. The literature provides descriptions of a variety of coding techniques that together make up "the analytical processes through which data are dissected, conceptualized, and integrated" (Matavire & Brown, 2008, p. 140). Srivastava and Hopwood (2009) remind that codes do not form in a vacuum. They are influenced by research goals, interpretations of the facts in light of theoretical framework, subjective viewpoints, ontological and epistemological assumptions, and innate understanding of the subject. In coding approach, Saldaña's (2021) suggestion was followed to adopt a "pragmatic eclecticism" (p. 47) when making choices about coding methods. Further, the research questions and data necessitated the use of Thematic Analysis to address the research inquiries effectively.

Thematic analysis is a popular qualitative research technique that involves identifying, analyzing, and summarizing patterns—or themes—in the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) have described Thematic Analysis as "grounded theory-lite" due to its similarities with certain aspects of Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006; Glaser, 1998; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). These similarities include the use of Grounded Theory techniques for developing categories and concepts. In contrast, the classic Grounded Theory avoids reviewing the existing literature to maintain a theory generation process free from preconceived ideas. The concern is that reviewing the literature may lead the researcher to impose existing ideas onto the data. Nonetheless, Strauss and Corbin (1997) recommend conducting an initial literature review because it can enhance theoretical sensitivity, raise questions, and provide supplementary insights. In this study, apart from the initial literature review conducted at the outset, several subsequent literature reviews were conducted at different states of the research. This ongoing and iterative literature review process was driven by the needs of the study. Each research phase's findings served as a roadmap for the subsequent step, which required looking for pertinent ideas in the literature.

This research applied various approaches to Thematic Analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013) including inductive, deductive, and latent approaches. The researcher aligned the emerging themes with personal interpretations of the materials that were reviewed.

The methodology intrinsic to qualitative research informed observations of the patterns and data analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Saldana, 2013; Stake, 1995).

Reflexive iteration (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009) was applied to Thematic Analysis, which entailed revisiting the data again and making connections between the emerging codes and the insights, leading to a more complex understanding. Reflexive iteration analysis was viewed as a reflexive process rather than a repetitive task. Srivastava and Hopwood (2009, p. 76) described it as "[a] key to sparking insight and developing meaning". This research occasionally employed the conceptual framework to formally engage in data analysis (Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). This allowed the researcher to generate and combine two sets of themes: those that emerged from the data and those guided by existing literature. The approach was directed by the following core concepts related to the idea of co-creation experience: social, economic, cognitive and hedonic (Verley, 2015). The data was iteratively analyzed, assigning and contrasting the final codes with existing works. Each step allowed for frequent shifts between inductive and deductive thinking; by comparing the codes and categories with relevant literature, the researcher constantly made and verified recommendations based on the literature.

In addition to identifying code categories, quotation categories, and themes, qualitative analysis facilitated the results through co-occurrence matrices, which helped find relationships between the qualitative data. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p.3), "a matrix is essentially the "crossing" of two lists, set up as rows and columns and takes the form of a table". Some advantages of using matrices are that they allow the researcher to assess patterns and associations in the data and make complex data more understandable (Bazeley, 2009; Nadin & Cassell, 2004). Al-Khanbashi (2020) has previously mentioned the utility of matrices in qualitative research, as they aid in organizing, summarizing, simplifying, and correlating pertinent data. Verdinelli and Scagnoli (2013) also found that matrices are the most commonly used visual displays in qualitative articles, being adaptable and resourceful.

This research uses a matrix-like experience pyramid, considering the existing literature (Tarssanen & Kylanen, 2005) (Figure 3.7). Some authors have used the experience

pyramid to illustrate the customers’ emotional and meaningful experiences in line with potential personal change (Tarssanen & Kylanen, 2005).

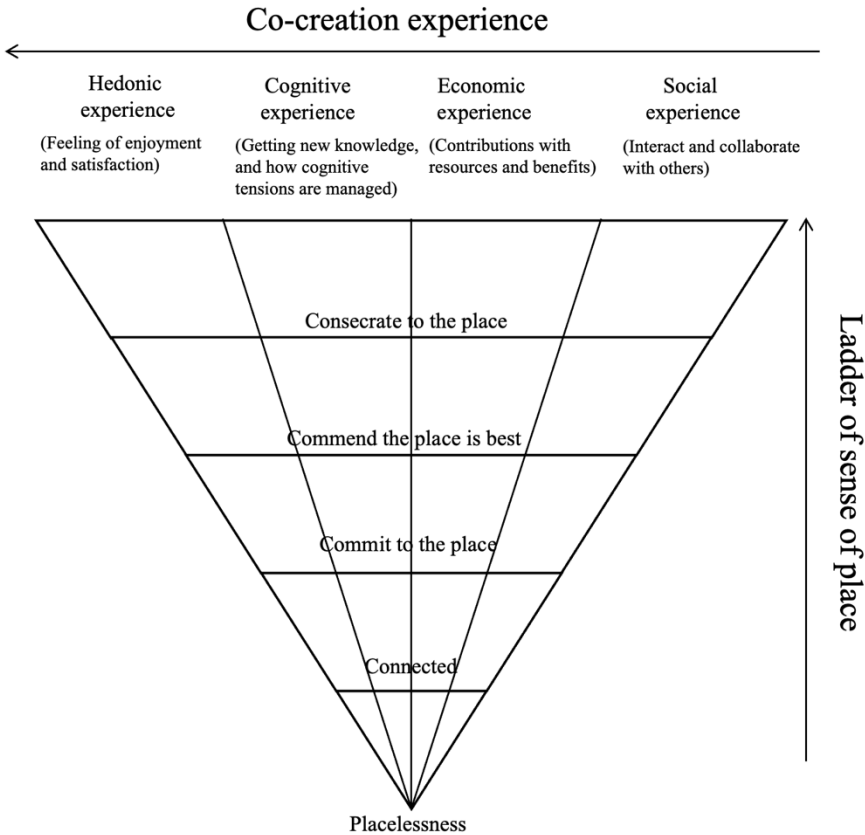


Figure 3.7: Matrix-like pyramid to analyse the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience

Source: Author

This pyramid comprises co-creation experience dimensions arranged horizontally and sense of place ladder items arranged vertically. Co-creation experience dimensions appear in each level of sense of place, as an individual moving in the co-creation experience cycle with a particular sense of place level is different from another. The matrix was filled with quotations or evidence to support the relationship between each dimension. The tip of the inverted pyramid indicates placelessness, where there is no indication of the co-creation experience. The inverted pyramid shape serves as a metaphor, illustrating that as one person progresses through the ladder, there is a potential for acquiring more co-creation experiences based on the responses obtained.

However, a matrix is not the endpoint of the analysis. Further interpretations are needed to find meaningful conclusions after assessing patterns and associations (Nadin & Cassell, 2004). This will determine how the sense of place and co-creation experiences relate and the pattern of that relationship.

Accordingly, the main analytical approach of this research is abductive, involving frequent shifts between data and theories. Thus, instead of using the classic grounded theory strategy, thematic analysis is employed as the analytical strategy. A summary of the methodological procedures and data analysis methods is illustrated in Figure 3.8.

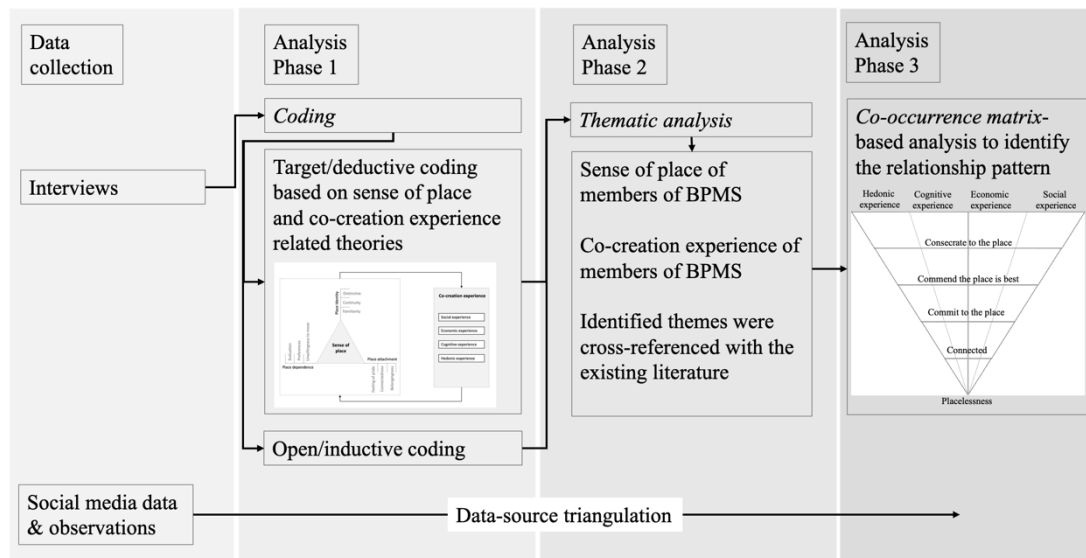


Figure 3.8: Process of analysis in abductive approach

Source: Author

3.8.2 Analysis to reveal the social experience

In addition to employing qualitative content analysis to comprehend the social experience of co-creators, this research sought to visualize the social network in a qualitative manner. Conventional social network analysis primarily follows a quantitative approach aimed at measuring the strength, density, frequency, and direction of network relations (Heath et al., 2009; Luxton, 2021). However, this quantitative approach has been criticized by scholars for reducing complex social relationships to numerical data, rendering them abstract and formal (Crossley, 2010; Martin & Wellman, 2011).

In contrast, as noted by Luxton (2020), qualitative social network analysis offers an understanding of the narrative and story behind the network. While there are fewer qualitative social network analysis studies, this should not be interpreted as an indication of inferiority; rather, it reflects the challenge of establishing a qualitative perspective in a field dominated by quantitative research (Heath et al., 2009).

Qualitative approaches are considered valuable since networks and networking are viewed as cultural phenomena (Curran & Saguy, 2001). According to Edwards (2010), qualitative network data can be subjected to content analysis to investigate meanings, perceptions, and dynamic processes, in addition to being converted into numerical data for statistical study. The contextual information provided by this qualitative data is essential for understanding structural measures. A narrative approach, as advocated by Carpentier and Ducharme (2005), can also contribute to understanding the evolution of a social network.

The primary data collection method used was interviews and content analysis was employed to identify all actors, including individuals, groups, or organizations involved in the network (Edwards, 2010). Whenever a respondent mentioned the name of an individual, group, or organization, these names were recorded in rows and columns of a matrix. It is important to note that this social network represents actors involved in the co-creation process, not all connections of the respondents. After identifying all actors, an iterative process was undertaken to fill in a matrix indicating the strength of relationships between them (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3: Strength of the relationship between actors

	A	B	C	D
A		0	1	5
B	0		2	1
C	1	2		0
D	5	1	0	

0-No contacts 1-Contact once 2-Contact rarely 3-Contact annually 4-Contact monthly 5- Contact weekly /every day

Gephi 0.10.1 was utilized to generate the visualization of the social network based on this matrix. The overall layout was achieved using the Force Atlas layout algorithm, which functions by aligning nodes connected to hubs in clusters around those hubs and pushing highly connected nodes away from one another (Paranyushkin, 2011). Both the network diagram and interview transcripts supported identifying patterns and clusters. Therefore, the social experience of the co-creators was discerned through the examination of social network diagrams, content analysis, and thematic analysis.

Writing up the findings was done in an iterative and reflective loop. The analysis proceeded as the findings were recorded, reflecting on the findings regularly, going back to the analysis, compiling specific findings, reflecting once more, and so on. As is frequently the case with statistical studies, writing is seen as an essential component of the analysis process rather than a final step in Thematic Analysis, which is bolstered by Braun and Clarke (2006).

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter described the study design, covering methodology and approaches. It presented the 'onion' research methodological framework, which is made up of six interconnected components: time horizons, research strategy, methodological choice, research philosophy, research approach to theory building, and qualitative data collection and analysis techniques (Figure 3.9). All these components were discussed in detail, along with the reasoning behind the particular selection of each component.

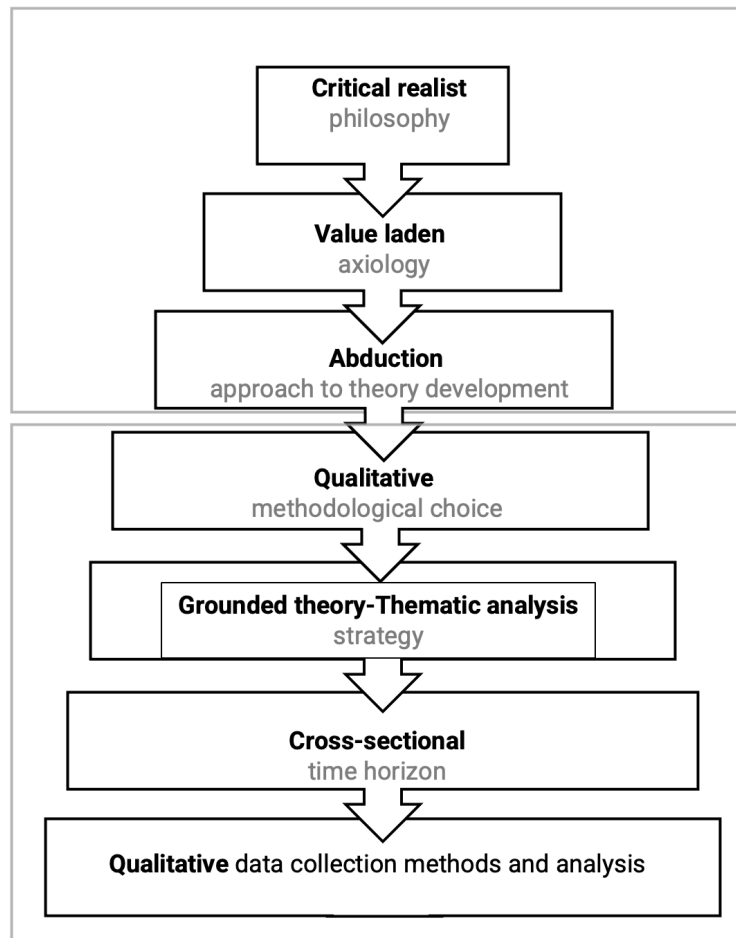


Figure 3.9: Research framework with research stances

Source: Author

Complemented by a case study approach, the grounded theory-based thematic analysis was combined for the research design. Furthermore, it discussed the data collection and analysis methods and their limitations. A qualitative approach was adopted to data collection, employing methods such as observations, document analysis, social media data analysis, and interviews. Thematic analysis served as the overarching analysis method and social network analysis was incorporated to enhance the understanding of the sense of place and co-creation experience.

Most importantly, this chapter provides a roadmap to guide the researcher through the following three chapters, which delve into empirical research – the case study of Crow Island Beach Park and its environs. Chapter 4 aims to address the research question concerning the sense of place of individuals participating in the making of Crow Island

Beach Park. Chapter 5 is dedicated to answering the research question regarding the co-creation experience, and Chapter 6 focuses on addressing the research question related to the relationship between the sense of place and the co-creation experience.

CHAPTER 4

Sense of place in the context of Crow Island

4.1 Introduction

The literature proposes the challenge of comprehending sense of place. Steele (1981, p.9) defines sense of place as “an experience created by the setting combined with what a person brings to it”. Scholars have explored the qualities of sense of place through place dependence, place attachment and place identity. Despite extensive scholarly study of sense of place using these aspects, the practical application of this concept remains limited due to its complexity, the lack of consensus on its definition, and the challenges in measuring this feeling (Lewicka, 2011). The complexity deepens when considering why sense of place matters during the co-creation of places and how place co-creations impact people's experiences, cognitions, emotions, and behaviours. Consequently, the full exploration of the meaning of sense of place remains an ongoing endeavour.

This chapter presents findings under the research question: *what constitutes sense of place?*, using the qualitative approach. The first part of the chapter introduces the study of this research and a qualitative data collection, observations, interviews, participation in events and stakeholder meetings and document review were done from October 2022 to July 2023 in Crow Island. The interviews were translated and transcribed by using intelligent verbatim transcription and coded by using ATLAS.ti software.

The second part comprises three sections focusing on three concepts of sense of place. The primary analysis is grounded in existing literature. Subsequently, the sub-aspects within each dimension are presented. These include evaluation, preference and unwillingness to move under place dependence; feeling of pride, connectedness and belongingness under place attachment; and distinctiveness, continuity and familiarity under place identity (Figure 4.1). Each subsection is then organized to explore the sense of place among respondents regarding Crow Island Beach Park. Narratives are used to support the findings, which are further discussed in light of existing literature. Through iterative and reiterative reading, coding, and theme identification from

transcripts, a ladder of sense of place emerges, elaborated upon in the latter part of this chapter.

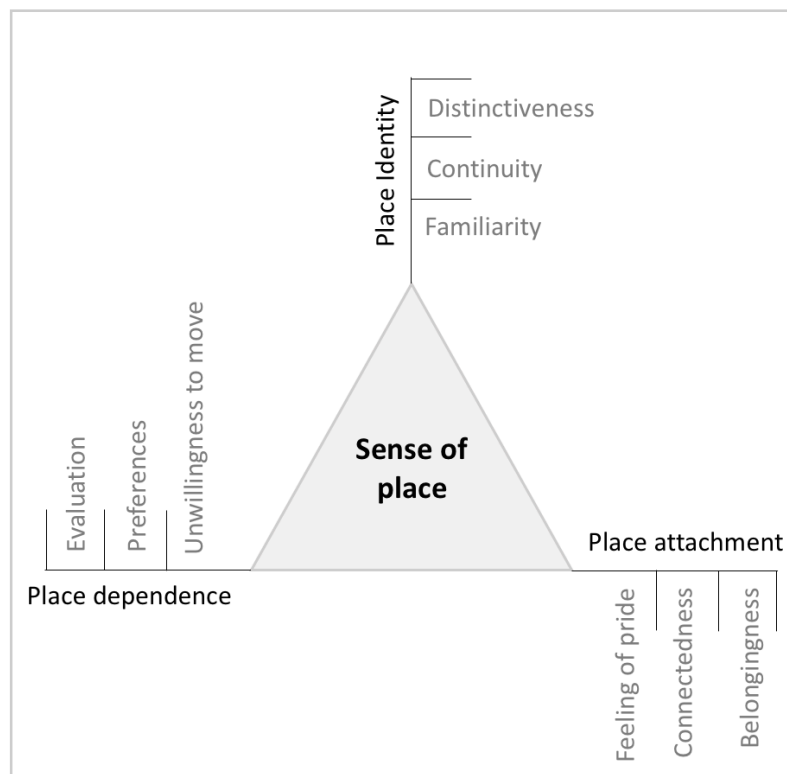


Figure 4.1: Sense of place dimensions

Source: Author

This chapter advances the discussion on the sense of place phenomena by emphasizing the importance of community perceptions and attitudes in place-making. This chapter additionally broadens the existing models that assess the complexity.

4.2 Context of Crow Island Beach Park case study

Crow Island, situated near the mouth of the Kelani River, was originally an island but has since been connected to the mainland through reclamation efforts (Figure 3.2). Encircled by a two-kilometer-long canal known as Vistwyke, the canal's name is believed to have been derived from a Dutch governor. In the Sinhala language, Crow Island is referred to as "Kaka Dūwa" or "Kakadūpatha." The island spans approximately 29 hectares and contains approximately 700 residential units,

accommodating a diverse population of around 3,500 individuals representing various ethnic and religious backgrounds.

Crow Island Beach Park, a public park, is entirely owned by the Colombo Municipal Council. The island's boundaries are demarcated by the Naval Base and the NARA premises to the north, a residential and commercial mixed neighborhood to the east, a lagoon to the south, and the Indian Ocean to the west. The neighboring residential area is densely populated and includes housing developments as well as two underserved settlements known as 'Bokkuwatta' and 'Peris Watta.' Mattakkuliya, the surrounding locality, is a culturally and racially diverse community.

With its high aesthetic natural qualities and abundant resources to meet Northern Colombo's recreational needs, Crow Island Beach has a lot of potential. The World Bank-funded Metro Colombo Urban Development Project was involved in the development of Crow Island Beach Park. The total allotted land area is 7.8 hectares.

The primary objective of this development initiative is to "enhance the beach's recreational quality while preserving its natural scenic beauty and providing supplementary amenities for visitors." The project includes a range of facilities, such as an information center, a restaurant, resting pavilions, a community center, a parking area, a children's play area, a jogging track with outdoor exercise equipment, a cycling track with designated cycle parking, an open play area, a safe bathing area, showers, washrooms, changing rooms, viewing decks, boardwalks, a picnic area with picnic huts, additional restaurants, kiosks, a lifeguard tower, a waste management system, and a stormwater management system.

The next sections discuss the sense of place of Crow Island Beach Park users focusing on three concepts of sense of place: place dependence, place attachment and place identity.



Crow Island Beach Park

Figure 3.2: Location of Crow Island Beach Park

Source: Author

4.3 Place dependence

This section examines the respondents' perceptions of Crow Island in terms of meeting both their needs and goals in life. It primarily focuses on whether the physical environment (facilities, amenities, services, and geographic location) of the place can help individuals achieve their specific goals (functional needs and behavioral goals)

more successfully than other known alternatives.

The respondents mentioned several reasons for their decision to migrate to Crow Island (Figure 4.2). The majority of responders from Crow Island claimed they have depended on it ever since they moved there.

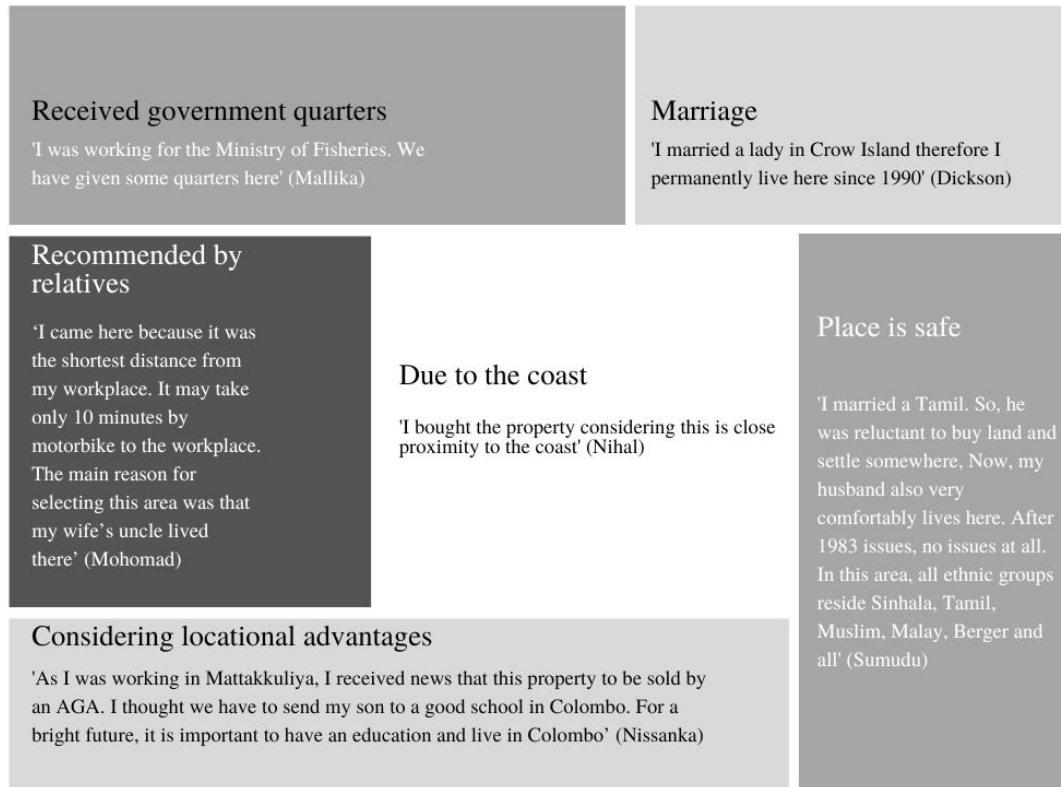


Figure 4.2: Reasons for in-migration

Source: Author

According to the literature, place dependence encompasses sub-aspects, namely, evaluation of place, preference for the place and unwillingness to move from the place. Analysis of interviews in line with those sub-aspects of place dependence will be presented in the following sections. It is noteworthy that respondents share similar characteristics of evaluation and preference and usually, these replies appeared in their responses to the question on unwillingness to move.

4.3.1 Evaluation of place

A place may have to satisfy the citizen's goals and desires in comparison to another place (Zolotov et al., 2018). This comparison is termed evaluation and it denotes the

level of place dependence (Dameria et al., 2020). The respondents refer to both tangible and intangible aspects to compare Crow Island to other available options.

According to the responses, place dependence is associated with the services provided in the place, such as beneficial resources and recreational opportunities. Like average citizens, Crow Islanders also judge the physical quality of the place. People mainly depended on the place because it is located within the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) limit. According to the responses, CMC seems to be the best urban center in Sri Lanka with all the services to live, work and play. Seetha explained;

For about 10 years, we lived in different congested and unliveable places, so we wanted to settle in a place where we could conveniently travel to the workplace. We chose this place because it is convenient to get services. We thought we had many more years to go to work.

Living in a quality residential area in Colombo is generally, unaffordable for government servants when considering the property values. However, the government housing scheme in Crow Island was a great benefit for the government servants, particularly because they got an opportunity to possess freehold ownership. The majority of respondents also migrated from other distant areas of the country, and they believe they may be able to house their relatives who come to Colombo for services if they live within the CMC limits. Seetha further explained;

Some other reasons for residing in this area are that we are not able to own a property in Colombo otherwise and our relatives who live in remote areas and want to get a service from Colombo can use the accommodation in our place. Then they have support from us.

Abd Ghapar et al. (2016) also explain that social and physical characteristics of a place influence place dependency and many residents depend on the urban areas due to their working places and availability of socializing opportunities. Crow Island also reflects a similar phenomenon. More respondents brought up access to physical infrastructure such as accessibility, public transportation, electricity, water, street lighting, sewage system, solid waste collection systems and social infrastructure such as the best schools in Sri Lanka, proximity to the general hospital, popular religious places, parks, play areas for children, proximity to the public library as a reason for settling Crow Island. Some respondents shared the same idea as Nalaka mentioned about the reasons for his dependence on the place, *'In terms of location, this is a really good area. For*

example, it is possible to send children to good schools, other facilities are available, like supermarkets, because of their proximity, the services are easily accessible'. The market range of this area is walkable. Within a 5-minute' walk, the residents of Crow Island can access a range of shopping options. Nissanka and Nanda's primary motivation for purchasing a home in Crow Island was to enable them to send their children to the top schools in Colombo. They currently have the choice to leave, but they choose to remain because, as they are old and have concerns about health needs, they prefer to reside close to the city's major hospitals. Nissanka stated 'if you just consider the time-distance from this place to Navaloka hospital or general hospital, it is about ½ hour or less than'.

Though the respondents' initial decision to settle in Crow Island was motivated by tangible, serviceability-related reasons, their dependence on the place at present is supported by more intangible and place-meanings-related facts. Richard explained, *'I used to go for angling here. I can go to the river mouth or beach. So, I can meet my friends. Everything is there'*. As a nature lover, Lalith described how much he depended on walking on Crow Island beach. He compares his experience of walking along Crow Island beach with other good walking options in other areas of Colombo. He even analyses the quality of the place by using Google Maps.

This is heaven in the morning... Assume we walk in Torrington, there are many vehicles all around. Just think about the Sugathadasa stadium, it's in the middle of the urban area. I just checked with the map, from Crow Island's side the next land we meet in the world is Kenya. So, the breeze we get in the morning is purified through the entire ocean strip (Lalith).

Galle Face is popular as the best beach recreational area in Colombo and some claim it is the best in Sri Lanka. Nalaka felt that Crow Island Beach Park, which showcases some environmental aspects, is even better than Galle Face (Figure 4.3).

This beach park is even better than Galle Face [the most famous recreational beach in Colombo] because it is very hot and sunny without any greenery, but this area is shady and comfortable even during the daytime. This place has diverse ecosystems, including the marshy land on the other side. Such areas are really beautiful.

A Muslim respondent added *'Another reason for living in this area is the multi-ethnic community. In such neighborhoods, there are fewer problems'* (Mohamad). In his

opinion, the social mix would change their attitudes to settle in this place. When people work together to co-create a place, they can see the value of the community. Leelananda explained, *‘When we come here, despite the race, everyone talks as ‘machang’ [a Sinhala term to show friendliness]. Even when there are personal problems, they listen and give support’*.



Figure 4.3: Environmental characteristics of Crow Island

Source: Author

It is interesting that one respondent evaluated the value of Crow Island in comparison to the most prestigious residential neighborhood in Sri Lanka, demonstrating how dependent he is on the place: '*...this area is more attractive than Cinnamon Garden*'. (Saman).

The respondents express geographical place dependence when it comes to the aspect of evaluation because they assert that they are related to and dependent on Crow Island (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981). People become more connected to the area as they interact with it daily through contacts and experiences on Crow Island where they co-create. First, people assess a place based on tangible aspects, and second, when discussing place dependence, it is dependent on one particular place or element of a place and takes into account the positive and negative qualities of a wide radius of their surroundings.

4.3.2 Preference for the place

In general, the respondents state their preference for the residential and recreational area of Crow Island in comparison to other places in terms of their psychological well-being, goal-directed activity and context availability (Pretty et al., 2003). As mentioned earlier, this aspect and place evaluation have a lot to share. It was nevertheless possible to understand that they prefer the place based on psychological well-being. These respondents expect to access urban services, but they have a deep feeling of living in a calm and quiet environment with strong social ties, which is a main characteristic of the village environment where they spent their childhood. Leelananda is still very much attached to his home village and he expects that quality from Crow Island, '*the attachment to the village and the missing feeling has filled by this beach area for us*'. Seetha emphasized, '*... usually if we stay in a village, we know everyone in the village, likewise, we know everyone here and we get used to this society* [සාමාන්‍යයෙන් අපි ගමක නිටියෙන් ගමේ ඔක්කම අය දන්නවා වගේ, මෙතෙක් ඔක්කොම දන්න නිසා අපිට හුරුයි]'. Thus, the findings of this study highlight that not only the past experiences of a particular place but also the past experiences of another sensible place influence the place dependence feelings.

Another reason people prefer to live on Crow Island and the reason for their dependence is their ethnicity. Crow Island is a residential area for Sinhala, Muslim, Tamil, Lansi and Burger, therefore none of the ethnic groups tries to dominate another group. As there are only about 700 houses, everyone knows each other and BPMS brings all people together by giving due respect. A Buddhist temple, Hindu Kovil, Mosque and Church are located in the vicinity and religious leaders work closely with the community. Because of these facts, people feel comfortable interacting with others, working with others and protecting others when required. As Crow Island is popular due to its ethnic harmony, there is a good demand for properties from different ethnic groups. This situation is explained well by Murshida's husband during the interview:

When considering ethnic cohesion too this area is better. When considering the Easter attack [several bombs were blasted in churches around the country on Easter day, 2019], the church is on one side, the mosque is on another side and people are here, but no one is harmed. It was the case during wartime too. This mix of ethnic communities is very good. Some minor ethnic people used to buy properties due to this cohesion.

Furthermore, some respondents emphasized that they would prefer to live on Crow Island when concerning safety, particularly the safety of women. A few elements that contribute to safety are the residential design of attached homes, the island's single entry, and the fact that BPMS has taken necessary steps to establish safety by minimizing risks. Gemunu said, *'There are no safety issues for women as this is like a village'* and Seetha confirmed,

I told the family members that we do not have any fear about living alone in this area now. As houses are very close and others do not too much search for private matters, if my husband is not at home, no one knows whether I'm alone, and I do not feel fear. When I come back from work, I like to walk along this canal road. From the beginning to the end, everyone talks and smiles very nicely.

Murshida agreed with Seetha's statement, adding, *'I know everybody here. In an emergency, I do not have a fear of going out, even at night'*. She further explained that Crow Island is not disserted like her previous hometown, Dehiwela, where her mother got depressed as she was alone there, *'My previous living area, Mt. Lavinia is very disserted. Even during the daytime, it is very difficult. My mother got depressed as she was alone there'*. However, both Crow Island and Dehiwela are urban residential areas

in Sri Lanka, but Crow Island has village characteristics due to the level of social relationships developed through the co-creation process.

Apart from psychological well-being, some respondents prefer and depend on Crow Island because the beach and natural environment support them in achieving their goals, like a healthy life. Almost all respondents visit the beach daily for walking, jogging with dogs, or angling. Using a quantitative study, Prayitno et al. (2021) confirm that environmental quality greatly influences determining place dependence. Though the respondents like to do home gardening, they do not have enough space on the plots they own, so they achieve their goals by using the beach parkland for planting. Nalaka explained some reasons why Colombo North people depend on the Crow Island beach;

Most of the houses in the Colombo area are in a compact environment, as two sides of the house are usually covered, even without ventilation. But when going to the beach, the entire environment is different, so people use the beach as their home garden.

Likewise, the respondents indicated that their preference for the place constitutes psychological well-being-related factors like the desire to live in a village-like environment, feel comfortable and confident living in an ethically harmonious residential area and desire to live in a safe neighborhood. Further, the respondents mentioned that goal-directed activity availability in Crow Island is also a reason for their preference. These factors are highly interrelated with their migration decisions.

4.3.3 Unwillingness to move from the place

Most of the respondents desire to maintain a long-term relationship with the place because they have been in the place for a long time, thus, they adapted to the place and worked to improve its quality to their expected level.

All respondents firmly stated with a satisfied smile that “*we would not out-migrate*”. However, some respondents had an idea to out-migrate about 10 years ago due to their attachment to their previous living environment or because they wanted to live in a calmer and quieter area. As Kumar’s previous home village is Nuwara Eliya, he has a strong sense of place in that area, so he stated, “*I had an idea to go to Nuwara Eliya those days and told my wife to get a transfer from her job. But she said that as this is*

her known place, let's be here. She doesn't like the cold climate. Now we do not have any idea to go anywhere'. Gemunu was born in Matara but studied in Colombo; therefore, he was already familiar with the society and environment of Colombo. However, he has work experience in the upcountry. His wife too from Matara and is now a retired teacher. He said, 'We were thinking of moving to Welimada [a town in central part of the island) once, but my wife is now adopted and says we lived here for a long time'.

Some respondents reside in Crow Island while they have options to move out. Richard has dual citizenship in Norway and Sri Lanka, but he firmly states he would not migrate. Nanda is about 75 years old and lives alone at her house. She has some options if she decides to migrate, yet she does not like leaving the place as she has lived about 40 years in Crow Island,

My son asks me to reside in their house. If I like to go, I have a separate room there. I have rented my husband's parents' house. My sister's house is there and they asked me to come, but I still like to live here. As I lived here for a long time, I do not like to go anywhere.

Both Nalaka and Nissanka have additional houses in the Colombo district, yet they prefer to live in Crow Island considering the locational advantages and social bond.

Some residents justified their unwillingness to migrate by referring to the social and environmental characteristics of the area. Murshida said, *'I prefer to live here. When considering the neighbors are not very low, and not very crowded. They are working people, businessmen, etc. When considering ethnic cohesion too this area is better'.* While the respondents are attached to the greenery of Crow Island Beach Park, their residential location decision is combined with other socio-economic and personal interests too. Sumudu said that she likes the greenery in rural areas in Sri Lanka and the land values of such areas are also low, but they preferred to live in Crow Island.

We do not have any idea of out-migrating. Some areas like Kurunegala are very green, but we feel comfortable here. We do not have any idea about other areas, though the land values are also low. This is the place we received to live. We won't out migrate [මේක තමයි අපිට ඉන්න කියලා ලැබිලිව place එක. මේක දැලා යන්නේ නෑ]

To establish a long-term relationship with the location, Lanarolle described how they transformed the area's negative reputation and restored its positive one: *'When there is*

a bad reputation the usual action would be leaving the place, but we decided to develop it and stay here'.

However, this decision might depend on the respondents' age, length of stay and strength of their social ties. Kumar (age of 58) said he would not migrate but mentioned his son's (age of 25) decision as *'After this economic and political situation he is planning to migrate'*.

Overall, evaluation, preference and unwillingness to migrate are interrelated and overlapping principles of place dependence. The respondents usually stated their extent of preference to live in Crow Island and justified their unwillingness to migrate by evaluating or comparing it with the other residential and recreational areas. Further, scholars have identified place dependence as an integral component of place attachment (Brown & Raymond, 2007).

4.4 Place attachment

Place attachment consists of social attachment and physical attachment. Social attachment comprises social ties, belongingness to the neighborhood and familiarity with fellow residents. In contrast, physical attachment consists of a length of residence, ownership and plans to stay. Thus, it is strongly linked with the dimension of place dependence. As mentioned in the previous section, when people feel that places provide conditions to fulfill their functional needs and assist them in achieving their goals, they feel more attached to that place (Williams et al., 1992). The level of attachment among Crow Island co-creators can be explained by providing evidence of different places, processes and people involved in person-place bonding (Scannell & Gifford, 2010) (Figure 4.4).

First, most respondents are attached to Crow Island due to the beach. Their first decision to settle in Crow Island or Mattakkuliya may have been influenced by aspects related to place dependence. However, they are attached to the place for long-term and satisfactory living because of the beach, environment and beach park. One respondent mentioned, *'The main reason for my decision to live in Crow Island is that my wife's house is in Crow Island. Another reason is this environment and beach'* (Richard). This is further proved by Gemunu's statement,

....my father said: 'You will never leave the place as long as the sea is there'. The beach is one of the main reasons people live in this area. We have much space to walk around, it feels like a village and it is windy. So, one of the main reasons for living here is the connection to the beach.

Second, people are attached to the place because of the processes involved. There are two main types of processes: short-term and long-term. The short-term process involves organizing events to celebrate special days (eg. Tsunami commemoration). The long-term process includes the monthly *shramadana*, which is organized throughout the month and conducted on a full moon day. In both short-term and long-term processes, people invest their valuable time and sweat to develop the place, plant trees, organize different events and seek help from outsiders. That is why Leelananda explains how participation has enhanced his attachment to the place, '*...the place we built and we feel proud [මේක අපේ නැනන්, අපි ගොඩනගනු දේ නේ එහේ ආඩම්බරයක් තියෙනවා]*'. Moreover, attachment to the process is important for evoking personal memories. Twigger-Ross and Uzzel (1996) state that memory-evoking incidents contribute to place attachment to sense of self. Gemunu's statement supports this, '*There are a lot of memories concerning place-making and social networking. I could recall such memories when reading a research report on this area. I feel like watching a movie*'.

Third, the social relationships between community members are a significant reason why people are attached to the place. The respondents proudly mention the human assets of Crow Island and how these assets contribute to their attachment. They highlight qualities such as honesty, selflessness, respect for others, listening to others and trust. Richard mentions why he is attached to the people and the place.

Gemunu always comes up with good ideas. He is the back-bone of our society. He is one of the best people I have met in my life. Because of people like Gemunu, I like to work in this society. He does not have any hidden agenda other than serving the community.

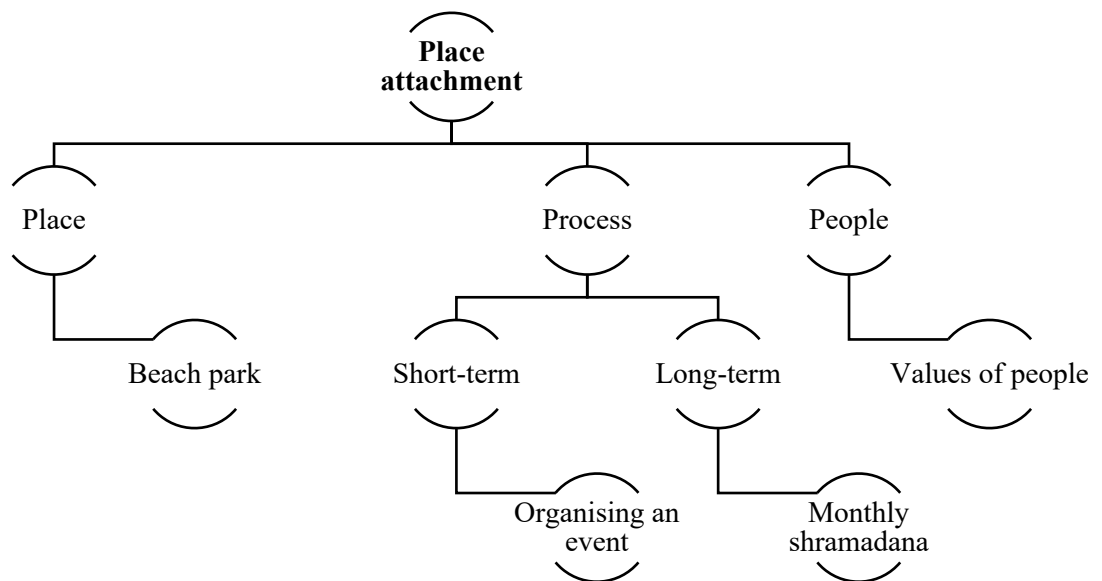


Figure 4.4: Place attachment of Crow Island co-creators

Source: Adapted from Scannell and Gifford, 2010

Likewise, the respondents are attached to the place, processes and people. This quality can be discussed under the aspects of pride, connectedness and belongingness.

4.4.1 The feeling of pride about the place

The feeling of pride is combined with the place's ability to provide self-esteem, uniqueness of the place and choices (Ujang, 2008; Dameria et al., 2020). When people feel pride, they are likely to recommend the place to others and feel comfortable identifying with it.

Before the beach park development, Crow Islanders lost their self-esteem due to the infamous Rita John murder case. Some respondents mentioned that even a three-wheel driver [similar to a cab service] was reluctant to come to Crow Island after 6.00 pm because of this incident. According to one respondent, *'people considered the place is like a dang'* (Murshida's husband). However, the residents who were attached to the beach environment decided to develop the place to restore its good reputation. Today, people are proud of the beach park development and their role in it. Nanda, a regular

user of the beach park, confirmed that the area's recognition has improved due to the beach park, *'After the beach park development, the area's reputation also changed'*.

Moreover, the feeling of pride increases when people consider that they are living in a unique place (Dameria et al., 2020). There is both tangible and intangible uniqueness embedded in Crow Island. The beach and the natural environment are a tangible uniqueness. Though there are many natural attractions in Sri Lanka, Crow Island is special because it is located within the Colombo Municipal Council area, which has the highest population density in the country (13364 persons per square kilometer, compared to the country's average of 325 persons per square kilometer). Within CMC, the residential building density is highest in Colombo North. In this context, conserving about 7 acres of land with a wetland, beach, canal, recreational park, mangrove coverage and ecological habitat is significant. Additionally, Crow Island is unique as an islet, a planned residential area for government workers, with a grid road network. The National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA) is located at one end, along with quarters of seven different government organizations, including the Army, a NAVY base, and a police station. It is adjacent to the Kelani River delta and near the Colombo Port. Murshida explains,

All sorts of attractions are located here. There is a beach, and we can see ships travel nearby due to the harbor. That advantage is not everywhere. Furthermore, there is a mangrove ecosystem too.

While the tangible uniqueness keeps people proud, the characteristics of society and social bonds are intangible uniqueness that enhance place attachment. Crow Island was initially populated with government quarters and government housing, so the occupants were middle-income, educated and Sinhala people. Later, during the Sinhala-Tamil ethnic conflict, many Tamil families from Jaffna and Mannar moved in. Through recommendations from a few Muslim families, a considerable number of Muslim households also settled on Crow Island. Mohamad mentioned, *'About 700 families live here, about 37 Muslim, about 40 Sinhala, and the rest are Tamil'*. Despite the diversity in ethnicity, religion, income, and education levels, no conflicts were recorded, even during the Civil War or the Easter attack period. Lalith proudly expressed his impression about the cohesion in Crow Island,

As I heard one day, a speaker mentioned in the Parliament that if you want to learn about ethnic cohesion, the best place you have to visit is Crow Island temple. One day I noted Mohamad (Muslim) fixing a lamp shed at the temple, Kumar (Tamil) doing wiring and another Sinhala man also was there. I said what a beautiful combination is here.

The highlight of this strong social bond among the diverse community is their co-creations in Crow Island, which improve both community and environmental quality. This involvement contributes to the active members feeling proud. Leelananda mentioned his feeling of pride and how they have established good recognition in the area:

I show our annual reports and photos to my office friends. I proudly tell them about the work that we have done. We can spread the good word to society when we all recommend the place in that way. Likewise, we can change the bad name of the place. We have attached a lot to this place. [මම පුද්ගලිකව බැඳීම් අපේ මෙනතට තියෙන්නේ මේ...]

Both tangible and intangible uniqueness keep people proud of the place, thereby increasing their attachment to it.

Another reason people feel proud is the availability of choices when living in Crow Island. The natural and artificial environment provides various experiences. Children can use the playground, young boys can play cricket, elders can use the walking path even with their wheelchairs or attend morning yoga sessions, lovers use the huts in the mangrove forest, middle-aged people walk or jog along the beach, teenagers can use the cycling track, married couples and girls can have photoshoots, families can stay all the day for a picnics, volunteers can clean the beach and Crow Islanders can collectively organize functions to celebrate cultural events. These options cater to diverse ages, sexes, education levels and interests. Richard mentioned how the physical quality of the place is supportive, *'It is much more spacious. I do not think other places in Colombo have this much spaces'*.

Additionally, people have choices due to the diverse community's interest in organizing different activities. They organize activities not only at the beach park but also outside for the welfare of needy people and the leisure needs of Crow Island residents. Murshida proudly mentioned her satisfaction with engaging in social work, *'When I go through the FB page, we have done so many projects. So, I am happy about*

it. Not everyone gets the opportunity to do such things'. Therefore, self-esteem, the tangible and intangible uniqueness and the availability of various choices make the Crow Islanders feel proud and keep them attached to the place.

4.4.2 Connectedness to the place

The level of connectedness of the respondents is implied by their statements, which indicate to what extent they will miss the place if they happen to move out and their potential reaction if someone criticizes or condemns the place (Dameria et al., 2020).

Mohamad and Leelananda explain the feeling of missing the place well. Mohamad said, *'We have a feeling about this place deeply. We need to visit the place daily. If we cannot come in the morning, the members come in the evening and spend at least 10-15 minutes.* Except for two respondents (aged more than 70 years), all the other respondents visit the place daily to fulfill their leisure needs, meet friends, or continue the practice of visiting as they have done for the past 20 years. Some respondents stated that they missed Crow Island while traveling overseas and attempted to compare it to other places they visited. Leelananda reflected on how he would feel if he migrated abroad. This statement is consistent with the feelings of other respondents on the same aspect.

Assume we migrated to another country. We cannot forget this place. We will make up our minds until we go, but I don't think we can stay at least one week. For me, it is like that. It is one of our own [අපි නිතමු අපි පිරිසටක පදිංචියට ගියයි කියලා, ඒත් මේක අමතක වෙන්නේ නෑනේ. යනකම් අපි පොඩ්ඩක් යනවයි කියලා නිත නදාගෙන යයි. ගිනිල්ලා සතියක් ඉන්න බලන්න, සතියක් ඉන්නකොට එපා වෙලා මේක මතක් වෙනවා. මට නම් එනෙමයි. ඒක ඇගේම නියෙන එකක්]

Many respondents commonly stated that a place is like "a part of our body [ඇගේම නියෙනවා]". These words are uncommon in Sri Lanka, demonstrating the depth of the connection. At the same time, when a respondent mentioned the beach park, they referred to it as "Our Beach Park [අපේ තැන]". Rawls (1971) asserted that "[a] correct conception of our relations to animals and nature" would depend on "metaphysics," which he defined as "a theory of the natural order and our place in it." This concept of "our place" serve as a basis for environmental law and is widely discussed in terms of place attachment. Gemunu explained the reasons for their attachment, the extent of their attachment and their understanding of their attachment to this public place,

This is our home garden because we have little land due to the character of this area. So, people act like they are looking after their land.

Moreover, the people who live in the residential areas outside Crow Island also use the beach regularly and feel a strong connection to Crow Island. Lalith explained, *'Though I live in Mattakkuliya, everyone in Crow Island knows me. Maybe some people think I live in Crow Island. That much closeness'*. Their local connection is because these respondents visit the place and interact with people daily (Pretty & Ward, 2001). There are not only local-to-local connections but also opportunities for local-to-external connections, as many government, non-governmental, private and educational groups come to work collaboratively with BPMS.

Moreover, people's connectedness to the place is reflected in their reactions to criticisms. Everyone who responded firmly and clearly said, *'We will listen to the constructive comments and take action, but we could argue if they condemn the place and co-creation process'*.

According to Lenzi et al. (2013), connectedness is combined with values: closure, trust and reciprocity. Apart from that, the co-creators of Crow Island have one aim: to make the place attractive to the public without expecting any personal benefit in return. Gemunu explained,

We intend to keep the public place attractive and clean, but it's different from some other party's intention [name an organization]. They claim this as the ugliest beach in Sri Lanka to take donations from different international organizations. They do not want us to clean the place. I replied directly that we have done this for 17 years as far as possible and do not allow someone to tell somewhere that this is the ugliest beach.

Not only direct criticism but the Crow Island community is aware of the different groups that come to take business or political advantages from the place. They do not hesitate to respond tactically to such forces.

However, it is apparent that this connectedness is emergent, changing, and complex; thus, place attachment is an emergent phenomenon (Williams & Miller, 2020). Respondents are concerned that young people participate less in co-creations, most likely due to a lack of connectedness, while older respondents are considering retiring from co-creation, perhaps due to other life goals.

4.4.3 Belongingness to the place

According to the responses, belongingness is implied with words such as "our place", "our event", "like our home matter", "like our child". People feel membership in the place is akin to being a family member.

Crow Island Beach Park is "a home" to many respondents. They have a feeling of being "at home" feeling towards Crow Island as the place is familiar, comfortable, secure, and emotionally attached to the place, culture, people and events they organize there. Seetha mentioned that she participates in organizing some events as she felt the event of her own, '*...we had the feeling that this is our event and we own it [නැගීමක් ඇති උනා මේක අපේ උත්සවයක්, මේක අපේතේ වගේ]*' (Figure 4.5). Leelananda also said that he feels the place is owned by BPMS members, even though it is not private property: '*Though we do not have private ownership, this belongs to us [අපිට පුද්ගලික අයිතිය නැතිවුනාට අපේතේ මේක ඉතිං, අපේ කියන නැගීම නියෙනවා]*'. Kumar also mentioned, '*I feel this area is my own*'. Nalaka elaborates this "home" feeling by describing his experience organizing an event: '*We are involved in collective work the same way we do our housework. That is the difference. Almost all members think that way*'. Gemunu explains the depth of belongingness by symbolizing the place as his child, '*We have a feeling like this is our child [අපි නඳුලු ළමෙක් කියන නැගීමෙන් මේ නියෙන්තේ...]*'.

Such a sense of "at home" exists in the minds of the respondents because they have used the location for several decades, are familiar with many people, planted trees that have grown and added value to the place, feel safe walking around, and are respected because they were involved in the creation of the place. The family members acknowledge their attachment to the location and know these co-creators prioritize location over the home. Murshida's husband said, '*This place is like her house now and BPMS works as her house matters*'.

BPMS members have some advantages due to their membership, as outside organizations frequently collaborate with BPMS (Mesch & Manor, 1998). Though the formal management of the beach park is now in the hands of the Colombo Municipal Council, they also get support, comments and advice from the BPMS.



Getting ready for the breakfast
after *shramadana*



Organizing events



Beach cleaning *shramadana*



Tree adaptation

Figure 4.5: Social interactions

Source: BPMS Facebook page

Due to their involvement in BPMS, the respondents are familiar with the entire environment and community members, and all community members know about BPMS members. Almost all respondents said, *"I know about people since I work in BPMS"*. Nanda pointed out that one advantage of knowing everyone is establishing safety. Seetha does not like to out-migrate due to the familiarity of the community. Though Lalith lives outside of Crow Island, he is very familiar with all the people and officers working there. Interestingly he mentioned, *'Crow Islanders know me as I go to the place every morning and evening. Even stray dogs in Crow Island know me [laugh]'*.

BPMS was established as people used to walk along the beach, see their friends and meet and greet. They aimed to improve the quality of the Crow Island beach. They still feel comfortable interacting with strangers if they support them to achieve their aim, indicating the strength of place attachment (Kemp & Stephani, 2015).

Moreover, these co-creators are emotionally attached to the culture and values of people. They organize the Tai Pongal Day celebration, New Year Festival, *Poson Dansela* and arrange a Christmas tree to respect each other's culture. BPMS uses both Sinhala and Tamil to communicate, respecting their members' communication rights. At the same time, when Gemunu says "*We should not expect any personal benefit from the park development*", all the others respect his thoughts as they have a perfect consensus just as family members. Therefore, it is worth noting the extent of place attachment to the "Crow Island Home".

4.5 Place identity

Place identity means the symbolic connection between people and place (Proshansky, 1983). The identity develops through direct and indirect interactions between the individuals and the individuals with the place.

In Crow Island, with the historical evolution of socioeconomic and environmental processes, individuals' perceptions or feelings of the place have changed. According to the responses, even the governor's house was located in the Modara area during the Dutch era, probably because of the proximity to the harbor. Until 1977, the elite groups occupied the lands as it was convenient to get services from Colombo city. Lalith explained,

In 1977 there was a summit in Sri Lanka and many international leaders visited Sri Lanka. So, the government wanted to construct the road from the Katunayake airport to the BMICH property. For that purpose, they resettled shanty dwellers in Mattakkuliya, Samitpura. The name derived from the housing was done for Summit. After that resettlement, the different social groups spread in Mattakkuliya; otherwise, this was a peaceful and better residential area without much complexity as it is today.

Due to this transition, Crow Island was also used by people for anti-social activities. Ganesh mentions, '*It is true that previously it was a jungle and anyone could do anything without any restriction. There was no Police or Army to restrict. That is why Rita Johns incident also happened. That sort of incident happened before too*'. Accordingly, the place identity of Crow Island to outsiders was not positive and people were reluctant to visit the place. However, the respondents accept that place identity has now changed after Crow Island Beach Park, moving towards a better direction.

Seetha mentions her experience before and after place-making, indicating the changing nature of place identity and thereby self-identity over time.

Now I work for a private company and initially, my officemates did not talk to me in a friendly way as I'm from Mattakkuliya. Later, due to my talking style, and once they knew I was not from Mattakkuliya, but from Crow Island, they told me that "we felt reluctant to talk to you at the beginning as you are from Mattakkuliya". Now, this area is also popular because of the beach park.

In addition to the place-based identity, Crow Island is considered a good example of ethnic harmony as everyone collectively works to improve the place and society. Further, this quality can be discussed under place distinctiveness, continuity in the place and familiarity with the place.

4.5.1 Place distinctiveness

A place has an identity when it has distinctive or unique qualities that distinguish it from other places. People feel involved with the place when they identify its distinctiveness. The people who regularly use Crow Island Beach Park may have a different feeling than the rest of the world regarding distinctiveness. However, this study only examines distinctiveness from the point of view of regular users.

The respondents distinguished Crow Island Beach Park from other beach parks in Colombo, other open spaces in Colombo and other beaches in Sri Lanka. They aim to make it the best beach park in South Asia, and they believe they are closer to that aim. From their statements about the place, their level of affiliation with the place can be understood. They claim the place is unique with a positive perception and mention the facts about its unique appearance, values, social experience, culture and objects in the place that people remember.

The respondents said Crow Island Beach Park has a unique appearance due to its surroundings and its natural and man-made environmental quality compared to other similar places. Lanarolle said that the other beaches in the Colombo District are either narrow or encroached by low-income communities, but Crow Island beach is wide and adjacent to a big preserved land. Due to the trees, this urban park has enough shade, which is not the case with the best beach recreational area in Colombo: Galle Face. Though the approach to Crow Island Beach has a compact residential area, it is not a

slum environment. Seetha mentioned, *‘There are naturally beautiful beaches like Unawatuna, but in a congested environment in Colombo, having an orderly beach park like this is valuable’*. Due to this uniqueness and sense of ownership, all the respondents recommend this beach park to outsiders.

Crow Island is distinctive as there is a strong Community-Based Organisation (CBO) named the Beach Park Management Society. Since its initiation in 2007, they have prescribed a set of ethics to be followed by the members: respect the members, listen to others, be honest, and be accountable for the money. Due to these values, people have a strong and firm bond with the BPMS members. Therefore, Leelananda declared, *‘This relationship is like a brotherhood [ඒ සුහදකම හරි සහෝදර බැම්මක්....]’*. An additional value is embedded in this unique social tie among the people, especially when the actors are from diverse socioeconomic and political backgrounds. Thus, they can get a unique cultural experience as well. On the Tai Pongal celebration, many male participants wore traditional Tamil dresses to respect and enjoy the others' cultural events (Figure 4.6). Likewise, celebrating all main cultural events in Crow Island Beach Park is a reason for the participants to develop a strong identity, which is barely noticeable in other public places in Sri Lanka.



Figure 4.6: Celebrating different cultural events

Source: Author

Anton and Lawrence (2014) mention the way people decorate their homes indicates the people's sense of uniqueness and, thereby, distinctiveness. Similarly, the way the Crow Island community co-created the place, maintaining the volunteer work to organize functions to keep the place alive. Moreover, another distinctive aspect of Crow Island Beach Park is that BPMS members remember every object in the park. One reason for this fact is that people are actively involved in making the place and they adopted trees. Leelananda said, *'Everyone knows who planted each tree'* and Mohamad mentioned, *'Gemunu pays attention to everything'*.

Listening to the experiences of these co-creators, it is evident that not only is the place distinctive but so are the people, as they have sacrificed a lot for the place's development with good intentions and now have a strong sense of fulfillment.

4.5.2 Continuity in the place

The aspect of continuity was understood by referring to the past experiences or memories of the respondents concerning Beach Park. It indicated that the respondents' previous interactions with the place offered a factual background for people to have sense of place.

The respondents mentioned that they prefer to continue volunteering to preserve Crow Island's good name. Mohamad stated his willingness to continue the previous good works that they have done, *'We like to continue the work for the place [අපේ ආසාව නියෝජනයේ මේකම කරගෙන යන්න නමයි]*'. His statement further reveals how their past co-creation experiences provide a concrete background.

The respondents have several plans for the future too. All respondents mentioned that they have an idea to create an urban forest at the park's southern end. They justify their idea by saying that this project would conserve the natural environment from encroachments, provide a calm and quiet place for older people and benefit the poor people who live in the Southern end. Their present intention is to conserve the natural environment while making a recreational area. Therefore, past actions and experiences in place play an important role in maintaining individual and group identity.

Further, all respondents are deeply concerned about the continuation of co-creation as the young generation's involvement is minimal at present. Nalaka mentioned, *'There*

is one issue: the young generation is not yet participating. We are considering some strategies to get the young people involved, as there should be someone to continue these activities after our generation'. This proves the respondents' expectation of persistent sameness with the present place identity (Uzzell, 1996). Consequently, the respondents' motivation is to continue the good place identity "across the time and situation" (Breakwell, 2015). They have had a practice of having breakfast together after *Shramadana* since 2007 and that practice continues at present too despite the economic crisis. Leelananda mentioned, '*We are continuing to have breakfast together after Shramadana since the beginning*'. Apart from BPMS members, outside organizations also participate in *Shramadana*, yet they share the food with anyone who contributes the beach cleaning. During my empirical study, I participated in *Shramadana* with about 75 university students and BPMS arranged breakfast for about 125 people, including all students, members of the environment police, CMC laborers and BPMS members. Likewise, they do not want to change their good practice in any circumstance, so continuing the same practice enhances the identity of BPMS.

Moreover, the respondents' statements suggest that they have place-referent continuity and place-congruent continuity (Twigger-Ross & Uzell, 1996). Lalith said that this place becomes a marker for emotionally significant past events and actions, '*For fifteen years I'm taking a unique experience with different types of people [මට දැන් අවුරුදු 15 තිස්සේ මාර අත්දැකීමක් තියෙන්නේ... එක එක ජාතියේ මිනිස්සු... ඔය මිනිස්සුත් එක්ක මට කාක දූපතේදී ලබා ගන්න ලැබිලිව අත්දැකීම් මාර දෙයක්...]*' denoting the place-referent continuity he has. Meanwhile, Gemunu revealed his personal quality, '*If I decide to do something, I will endeavor to accomplish it in some way*'. However, he accepted that he could not achieve such aims alone and said, '*We will need the help of others to accomplish this*'. While the other respondent said that '*we cannot escape from Gemunu, he always calls and tells us to participate and works to have to proceed*'. This shows the place-congruent continuity; Gemunu feels that Crow Island fits with personal interests.

Now, these co-creators feel that the place is congruent with their sense of themselves as a "creator of a beach park". Mohamad who is involved in any development activity in Crow Island said, '*The residential area also depends on us*' and Lalith, who is

conserving the environment, frequently says, *'I'm an environment man'*, as he engages in many environmental conservation activities by living in proximity to Crow Island.

4.5.3 Familiarity with place

The respondents are familiar with Crow Island due to their intimacy with physical environment, their involvement in its development, their past and present activities and their relationships with the people involved. BPMS members have achievement memories regarding the place, thus, they have emotional connections too.

Except for one respondent, all the others are migrants to the Mattakkuliya area. Though their settlement dates vary, they know about the main historical incidents, such as the government's decision to construct houses for government officers, Rita John's murder, the Tsunami in 2004 and the establishment of BPMS in 2006. About two-thirds of the respondents participated in the first BPMS meeting, which was conducted under a tree (*Kottan gaha*). During interviews at Beach Park, respondents would often proudly point out this tree and mention their first meeting. Leelananda said, *'Our first meeting was conducted under a tree over there. I participated in that also'*. They later organized their first formal meeting at NARA. Since then, they have organized an Annual General Meeting (AGM) every year, committee meetings every month: *'We are taking committee meetings monthly at our office'* (Gemunu), *Shramadana* on every full moon day: *'Every full moon day too we get together to work'* (Saman) and meet each other every day at the beach: *'at least few members meet here every day'* (Richard). As these people spend more time at Crow Island, they develop interpersonal relationships and strong social bonds.

Moreover, the extent of familiarity among the social network is evident when the respondents say, *'Even the monk at this Buddhist too knows us with our names'*. One respondent emphasized that their biggest strength is knowing each other, *'The biggest advantage for us is that we know everyone'* (Seetha).

The respondents were familiar with the BPMS's procedures, ethics and norms. They strive to continue good practices from the past into the present and future. However, they express doubt about giving main positions to newcomers due to a lack of familiarity. Thus, the respondents believe familiarity is crucial for future co-creation.

They are formulating strategies to involve the young generations to familiarise them with BPMS matters.

Due to the involvement in BPMS, people are familiar not only with those in Crow Island but also with outsiders. Murshida explained her extensive familiarity with people now, *'I got many contacts through BPMS. As I was the president, people contacted me before they came. Now everyone in Crow Island knows me and I have contact with many outsiders too'*. Meanwhile, outsiders become familiar with the place and BPMS through the up-to-date Facebook page. They use modern communication strategies to share information, thus branding their place. Additionally, BPMS keeps members familiar with co-creation activities through a WhatsApp group to regularly share information. This helps people know who is involved and understand past and present activities. Accordingly, familiarity with the place is enhanced with regular social contact, and people feel they are a part of it.

According to Shamai (1991), when people are familiar with a place, despite the lack of emotional connection, they possess knowledge about it and can identify symbols in that place. Perhaps people who come to Crow Island Beach Park for more than two days can get familiar with its physical environment. However, when considering the respondents' knowledge about the physical environment, the level of familiarity is different. Thousands of trees have been planted in Crow Island Beach Park at different times, yet, as Richard said, *'Everyone knows who planted each tree'*. As BPMS members, people have such pleasant memories that their environmental image is associated with past experiences related to the place.

Similarly, the respondents possess knowledge about all natural and man-made structures. During the interview, Lalith described all the special species in the wetland, the places they inhabit, and the time we can be observed. Gemunu expressed a desire to write a book due to his deep familiarity with the place and co-creation experiences. This intimacy with Crow Island has grown not only because of the physical environment but also because of the activities and the people they know and interact with in the place (Korpela, 1989).

Consequently, familiarity related to place identity is not only about intimacy with the physical environment but also involves the internal and external society, social systems, activities, procedures and the level of participation in shaping the environment.

4.6 A ladder of sense of place

In this context, the empirical study in Crow Island provides a means to understand people's sense of place and how people act when they have sense of place. Steele (1981, p.9) defines sense of place as "an experience created by the setting combined with what a person brings to it". Therefore, the transcripts are read iteratively to understand the interaction between respondents and place. An axial code was assigned whenever a respondent mentioned they had interacted with the place physically or psychologically. These codes emerged openly. Then, it was possible to identify patterns and discover themes by clustering codes (Table 4.1). Through this inquiry, it is possible to identify different themes related sense of place. Shamai's (1991) work largely influenced this identification of themes. His sense of place scale has seven levels: not having any sense of place, knowledge of being located in a place, belonging to a place, attachment to a place, identifying with the place goals, involvement in a place, and sacrifice for a place. He derived these levels by reviewing literature and quantitatively examining them among the Toronto Jewish community.

When reviewing the emerged themes, it is understood that they take the form of a ladder, "a Ladder of Sense of Place" (Figure 4.7). It is a ladder because it shows the level of sense of place from the feeling of placeness to the highest, consecrate to the place over personal goals. In between, there are three levels, connected to the place, committed to the place and commending the place is best.

Table 4.1: Combined the merged codes into themes: variation of sense of place

Quotations	Reflections with literature	Themes
Have not visited the place for years though lives in proximity, do not have intension to visit the place, Have being there one day, but no idea to visit again	“Scary place”, ‘nowhere’, “depressing”, “brutal”, “ugly”, “unhealthy”, “spiritually degrading” and “wasteland” (Kunstler, 1994, p. 15); “non-place” (Webber, 1964); “no meaning” (Relph, 1976; Houston, 1978; Jacobs & Appleyard, 1987; Hayden, 1997); "there's no there, there" (Arefi, 1999) “Nowhereness' and “otherness” (Garreau, 1988)	Placelessness
Walking, jogging, visiting the sea, residing, exercising, playing, meeting friends, washing dogs, washing the legs from sea water, talking, mingle with people, relaxing, using as a home garden	“Associate with a particular locality” (Williams & Stewart, 1998); “Knowledge of being located in a place” (Shamai, 1991); “feel safe or particularly comfortable” (Sarbin, 1983, 341); “my meeting place” (Davis, 2017); “I’m part of it” (Gosling & Williams, 2010); “perceived accessibility”, “perceived safety” and “willingness to visit” (Li et al., 2023a)	Connected to the place
Planting trees, securing the neighbours, arranging the place and refreshments to conduct events, conducting awareness programs for environmental conservation and future plans, organizing workshops for empowerment, working to get funds from government organizations, contacting political power authorities to get support, <i>shramadana</i> , participating in meetings, financial contribution, organizing events, cutting grass, cleaning, suggesting development proposals, feeling of doing	“more voluntary participatory behaviors” (McCunn & Gifford, 2014); “takes an active role in the community” (Shamai, 1991); “I like to contribute to the city” (Hummon, 1992); “involved in surrounding environment and pay more attention” and “pro-environmental intention or behavior” (Yu et al. 2019); “willing to contribute to joint actions” (Michael et al., 2016)	Committed to the place

Quotations	Reflections with literature	Themes
something for the society, tree adaptation (planting, watering, cleaning and fencing), participating events, maintenance, conserve the nature, hold positions in BPMS, form two CBOs (BPMS and Death donation society), paying membership fees		
More spacious than other areas in Colombo, the widest beach in the Colombo, ethnic harmony, organize events to celebrate cultural significance, like a village though located in Colombo, Park is more shady than other beach parks, diverse eco-system, educated, rich and people with good values, high property values, a strong social network with outside links	“Say positive things”, “encourage friends and relatives to visit” (Culha, 2020); “more willing to recommend the attraction to their families and friends” (Tsai, 2016; Asan & Daskin, 2022); “best place to do the things I enjoy”; “my favorite place to be” (Stedman, 2004; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001)	Commend the place is best
Feel like an own child and care, feel like an own home garden and maintain, feel like a part of the body, Feeling of “we gave value” to the place, do not expect any financial or personal benefits in return, put life in risk, change the personal attitudes and interact, Forget about the education level, richness, social status, culture, religion and political ideologies when work, Act upon if someone damage physically or with words, Try to take actions if there is potential harm to the place, give priority for co-creations over family matters, cannot forget the place when going somewhere, thus, bring seeds and plants, the feeling of born for this place, feeling of “our place”.	“Sacrifice of important attributes and values such as prosperity, freedom, or, in the most extreme situation, life itself”, “deepest commitment to the place” (Shamai, 1991)	Consecrate to the place over personal goals

Source: Author

These themes form a ladder, as each successive level acts as a prerequisite for the subsequent one; for instance, without an initial connection to the place, the likelihood of forming a committed attachment to it remains limited. Hence, establishing a connection with the place stands as a prerequisite for reaching the highest level of sense of place. This ascertain finds validation in the work of Kincheloe et al. (2006), who mentions that sense of place emanates from knowledge garnered through lived experiences. Furthermore, an intimate familiarity with the place serves as a fundamental element in developing and nurturing a profound sense of place. The findings also reflect instances where people reach the top of the ladder and then step down to a lower level due to some personal preferences. Moreover, it is essential to note that without an initial commitment, the prospect of reaching a state of consecration remains unattainable.

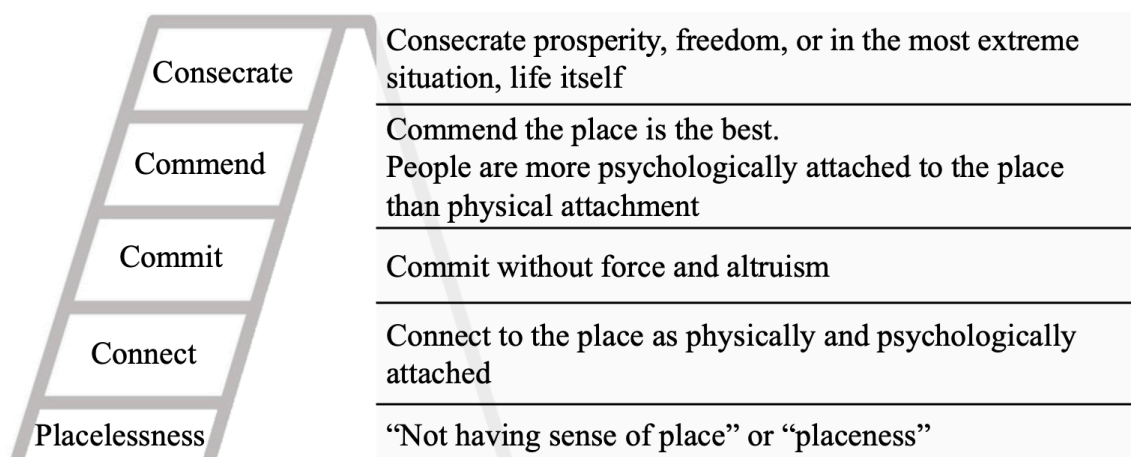


Figure 4.7: A ladder of sense of place

Source: Author

4.6.1 Feeling of placelessness

For all respondents, Crow Island Beach Park is a meaningful place. Nonetheless, some respondents conveyed instances where other individuals had visited the park once or twice but lacked a resolute intention to return. For example, Gemunu said, *'My wife went to the place in 2013 but has not visited again since then and has no interest at present to visit and get any benefit though the place is located within a 5-minute walk'*.

Further, Leelananda mentioned, *'one family threw their waste to the ground, not in the waste bin'*, and he believed that kind of behavior comes from not having a sense of place. Scholars identify this level as “not having a sense of place” or as “placelessness” (Relph, 1976; Tuan, 1977; Shamai, 1991; Kusumowidagdo & Wardhani, 2019). However, as Relph (2017) suggests, both place and placelessness are evolving phenomena. Therefore, individuals within this category might potentially be on the point of transitioning to the level of establishing a connection with the place.

4.6.2 Connected to the place

The responses indicated that the people connected to Crow Island for different reasons. It considers the people-place interaction pattern by referring to the responses. The results show that people first became connected to the area because of their residential location. They visited the beach because of its natural beauty, after which they visited the place regularly, which led to the development of some social interactions. Finally, both the environment and people became the reasons for feeling connected to the location. However, it is noted as a place dependent; they would maximally visit one time per week, but if they start to become committed to the place, they may visit more frequently. The degree of connection becomes even more significant as one climbs the ladder to the next level. According to this logic, perhaps those connected to a location are more numerous than those who commit to it.

It is important to distinguish whether the sense of place is just a connection. When considering the Crow Island respondents, they are connected to the place as they have been since residing at the place and as a habit. While Lalith said, *'When I was 10 years old, I used to go to the Kirala jungle with my friends and now I walk on the beach regularly'*, Nissanka stated, *'Whatever the thing, I used to walk and exercise on the beach in the morning; if I could not go in the morning, I go in the evening'*. Someone might argue these acts are a natural attitude of people, but not a sense of place. However, when they responded to questions about their willingness to out-migrate, they pointed out the strength of the connection. Statements like *'Every morning I want to go to the beach and get wet my legs. I feel the comfort'* (Saman) and *'One of the main reasons for living here is the connection to the beach'* prove that some people have more than a connection. Additionally, it demonstrates that for the subsequent

rungs of the sense of place ladder, these individuals could sow the seeds of sense of place by their initial connection with the locale.

4.6.3 Commitment to the place

According to the responses, frequent connections with the place lead to a feeling of commitment to the place. Planting trees on Crow Island Beach is a noteworthy example of such a commitment. However, a deeper examination reveals that the respondents who undertook this task were not merely feeling plant a tree; they felt personally engaged in tasks spanning from planting to watering, fertilizing, fencing, and cleaning, all the way until the trees mature. This comprehensive engagement was termed “tree adaptation” (Figure 3). Consequently, the degree of community participation (whether short-term or long-term) varies according to the sense of place among participants. Ellery and Ellery (2019) also suggest that community commitment to place-making promotes a sense of place, but how the community participates may vary. This, in turn, influences the degree to which a sense of place is developed through the process of place-making.

Additionally, when the possibility of a harvest is feasible, they derive contentment from the experience itself rather than anticipating personal gain from the harvest. In such a situation, the disparity in the sense of place between a mere visitor who comes to plant a tree and the residents of Crow Island becomes apparent. The latter possess an altruistic quality stemming from their sense of place. According to prevailing literature, sense of place is combined with values such as closure, trust and reciprocity, but these findings suggest altruism is also a significant value. While planting a tree might appear as an ordinary task to a visitor, it carries profound meaning for the co-creators of Crow Island. It proves the fact that the Crow Island community’s involvement is voluntary, aligning with Schnell and Hoof (2012) assertion that voluntary work encompasses “engagement in self-selected duties, which correspond to personal interests, and can be regarded as meaningful and useful for oneself and others”.

According to what has been made clear, people’s commitment to the place is not a result of external coercion. While existing literature claims that stakeholder pressure

is a central and indispensable determining factor of a company's environmental proactivity (González-Benito & González-Benito, 2006), this research suggests that such pressure is unnecessary within a voluntary organization whose members are committed due to sense of place and satisfaction. The satisfaction gained from this commitment is explained by Lalith as *'I proudly tell these collective works have done by us'*. Furthermore, their level of resource allocation towards place-making underscores their willingness to commend the place, dispelling any reluctance.

4.6.4 Commend the place is best

As the respondents commit to the place, they perceive it as having flourished and the community as being empowered, leading them to unequivocally acclaim Crow Island as the best. Saman mentioned firmly, *'I do not think I can find a better place than this'*. When considering the sub-dimensions of sense of place as outlined by Dameria et al. (2020)- namely distinctiveness, the feeling of pride, evaluation and connectedness - these factors underpin why people claim Crow Island is the best. At this stage, their attachment to the place is more psychological than physical. Lalith mentioned some facts that illuminate the perception of outsiders even considering the place as best in terms of ethnic cohesion. He recalls, *'I heard one day some speaker mentioned in the Parliament that if you want to learn about ethnic cohesion the best place you have to visit is Crow Island'*.

Additionally, their commendation of the place is best becoming evident through consequential actions; sustained co-creations, property investments, maintaining social relationships, upholding values, and giving popularity to the place and its functions through social media or other media. This fact is exemplified by Richard, who mentioned, *'We have good transparency and good democratic values in the society'*. He asserts that these good governance principles are due to his involvement in co-creation.

Amarawickrama (2022) highlights dimensions of a collaborative climate such as access to the decision-making process, accountability, adaptiveness, public deliberation, facilitative leadership, trust building and trust. This research also makes known the significance of such good governance principles in co-creations and how

people commend, attach to the place and preserve their identity by practicing such principles. The collective commendation from both insiders and outsiders serves to draw more people who feel placeless into its fold, facilitating future developments. In this scenario, it transcends a mere commendation and morphs into a claiming the place is the best - a rare sentiment towards any place. Some scholars also use, “this place is the best place for what I would like to do” to measure the sense of place (Ujang & Dola, 2007; Žlender & Gemin, 2020; Domingues et al., 2021; Gottwald, 2021). Most importantly, the respondents claimed, *‘We have a feeling like this is our child’*, representing the utmost level of commendation one can bestow upon something. This declaration lays the background for their eventual consecration to the place at the next level.

4.6.5 Consecrate to the place over personal goals

This level represents the highest sense of place, as gleaned from the responses of Crow Islanders. As noted by Shamai (1991), this highest level of sense of place involves a sacrifice for a place. At this summit, individuals commit to the place with even greater depth than in the previous stage. Such commitment extends to making profound sacrifices- be it one’s prosperity, freedom, or in the most extreme instances, life itself. The findings underscore that while Shamai (1991) typically associates the highest form of sacrifice with neighborhood or city-scale circumstances, Crow Island defies this by presenting instances of people’s sacrifices at a smaller scale.

Within the user population of the place, only a few possess this highest level of sense of place. At this level, people-place interactions are both physical (tangible actions) and psychological (meanings). Some people spend extensive periods of their day on-site or contemplating the place’s development. Some responses indicate an intriguing prioritization, where basic needs like breakfast or lunch take a backseat, even overriding family obligations. As Mohamad said, *‘Sometimes my wife says I will work for the Beach more than the home matters. We have this work in our entire body ඇමෙම නියන් වැඩ කරන්න’*. In this context, wealth, education level, and social status become secondary considerations. When a government servant cleans the place, some people inquire, *“Are you a labourer?”*, yet the respondent mentioned that experience with some pride.

A respondent shared his experience on the fateful day of the Tsunami (25 December 2004), and his statement implies that his profound sense of place led him to his life. While most people were retreating from the coastline in the face of the Tsunami's approach, this particular respondent moved forward to see the place he regularly visits.

I was at home in the morning and a garbage collecting person said to me that Crow Island had been inundated. I live in Mattakkuliya, so our houses were not affected by the Tsunami. As soon as the garbage collection man said so, I could not tell even my family, I took my bike and helmet and rode toward Crow Island. I acted like crazy as I could not believe what had happened. I wanted to see Crow Island Beach...(Leelananda).

As other scholars identified (Thompson, 2000; Kudryavtsev et al., 2012; Confente & Scarpi, 2021), the respondents expressed sentiments such as "I feel this place is part of me" and they always referred to the place as "our place". Nevertheless, the findings of this study show that the ultimate outcome of this place attachment is not centered on selfishness, but rather reflects an increased inclination toward generosity.

Based on these findings, a summary table (Table 4.2) has been developed to illustrate the positions of each respondent, guided by several considerations. Primarily, respondents' positions were determined based on their interview responses, although no systematic validation of their responses was conducted, aside from field observations and the responses of other participants. Furthermore, it is important to note that this table represents the respondents' current position; however, they have occupied different positions in the past and in the future, their position may shift toward the lower or higher rungs of the ladder. For instance, Nissanka was previously an active co-creator who occupied the top rungs based on his responses, stating, *'I feel satisfied as I involved to create a good place for people. I planted those two breadfruit trees in the park. I fertilized those trees'*. However, he now finds himself at the 'connected to the place' level due to his personal decision, as he mentioned, *'I would not actively work after 70 years'*. Additionally, respondents always progress through the previous rungs of the ladder before ascending to the next level. For example, Kumar currently occupies the 'commend the place is best' level, but he mentioned, *'Those days I do not walk, but I come to the beach with dogs and let them have a bath during the weekends'*, indicating that he was previously at the 'connected to place' level.

Moreover, when a respondent holds a position on the ladder, it signifies that the individual embodies the characteristics of the lower rungs of the ladder, but not those of the higher rungs. For instance, Murshida's placement at the 'commend the place is the best' level indicates her commitment to and connection with the place. However, she does not currently exhibit the characteristic of 'consecrating the place over personal goals'. Furthermore, Gemunu is presently at the 'consecrate the place over personal goals' level, but he indicated that he might not be in that position in the future, stating, *'As the objective achieved, we do not think it is not necessary to attach that much'*. This suggests the possibility of individuals descending from a higher rung on the ladder. Overall, these findings underscore the complexity of the sense of place phenomenon and emphasize the importance of considering respondents' current responses when measuring it.

Table 4.2: Respondents position in the ladder

Themes	Quotations	Respondents
Placelessness	<i>'My wife has been visited to the place in 2013 but has not visited again since then and has no interest at present to visit and get any benefit though the place is located within 5 minutes' walk'</i> (Gemunu); <i>'... some people throw their waste to the ground, but not to the waste bin'</i> (Leelananda)	None of the respondents are in this level
Connected to the place	<i>'During the weekend about 3000-4000 people came'</i> (Mohamad); <i>'During the weekends many underprivileged people come as this is a free area for them'</i> (Murshida); <i>'I use to go angling here'; 'For me this is valuable as I'm walking'</i> (Nanda); <i>'We lived in this land during our childhood, so we have a feeling'</i> (Thilanka); <i>'I did many things to the beach park, but I do not go to collective works now. I told them that I would not come after 70 years.. If BPMS want my support, I would support'</i> (Nissanka)	Nanda, Thilanka, Nissanka

Themes	Quotations	Respondents
Committed to the place	<i>'Sometimes, people think we are laborers and try to give us jobs. This indicates to what extent we devoted ourselves to the work'(Nalaka); 'I come to the beach for walking every morning and if I note any plastic, I remove.. We contribute with our time, labour and sometimes with money' (Saman); 'I participate for full moon day Shramadana as far as possible' (Sriyani); 'Meetings were also conducted around 7 pm as almost all members go to work. Even though it was exhausting after work, we did our best to get ready and go to the meetings. It's actually because of how we feel' (Seetha).</i>	Nalaka, Saman, Sriyani, Seetha
Commend the place is best	<i>'We can recommend others to visit the place'(Kumar); 'Now we have a very good recognition. That recognition is because of the Beach park. Nothing else. This was developed because of our initial members' efforts' (Sumudu); 'We can see the demand to this area as property values have also gone up. That means, people prefer to come. If some like to walk, they have a good environment. Now, I'm comfortable mentioning that I'm from Crow Island with anyone' (Richard); 'I do not have any idea to go another area. I feel much more comfortable in this area. When my husband goes outstation for business work, I can live alone without any hesitation. I know everybody here as I actively participate for place-making' (Murshida); 'Just compare walking around a playground and our experience of walking along the beach. This is a heaven in the morning' (Lalith).</i>	Kumar, Sumudu, Richard, Murshida, Lalith
Consecrate to the place over personal goals	<i>'As we're doing work to place since the beginning, we have a feeling deep in our minds... Whatever the things are there for us to attend, we come to this place. We cannot think of not visiting. As I said, it is deeply embedded in the mind. So in the future, too, I would work (Mohamad); If this land is allocated to a private hotel purpose, as there is potential, we do not have any chance to use this. There is no threat at the moment, but we do not know what would happen in the future. Governors can do</i>	Mohamad, Leelananda, Gemunu, Lanarolle

Themes	Quotations	Respondents
	<i>anything they want though we built this up. However, we do not allow to do that if we live' (Leelananda); 'We have a feeling like this is our child...I have no idea how many times cut the grass there. On Poya days, we sometimes returned home at noon after cleaning the place. Even our family members blame me. We managed to meet our primary goal. I'll tell you one thing: if we work for the public good without any personal ambitions or personal gain, we can achieve our goals' (Gemunu); 'When there is a bad reputation as such the usual action would be leaving the place, but we decided to develop it and stay here. It was easy to reach our goals with the team we had. Their dedication is the topmost quality' (Lanarolle)</i>	

Source: Author

4.7 Discussion

This chapter addressed the research question, *'What constitutes sense of place?'*. It is answered using inductive, deductive and latent approaches in qualitative analysis. The existing literature perceives sense of place concept under place dependence, place attachment and place identity. Further, the literature classifies the concept of place dependence as evaluation, preference and unwillingness to move; place attachment as a feeling of pride, connectedness and belongingness and place identity as distinctiveness, continuity and familiarity. This chapter elaborates that some findings of this research align with the current literature, while others add new knowledge, and deepen the understanding of the subject and some findings contradict the existing literature.

4.7.1 People depend on place based on both tangible and intangible aspects

Regarding place dependence, these empirical findings align with the existing literature, which emphasizes that people depend on a place because of location advantages in terms of their goal achievements, personal development and desirable affection (Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Brown & Raymond, 2007; Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Erfani, 2022). In addition to the existing knowledge, this study reveals that when people become co-creators, they depend more on their affection for nature, co-

creations and social networks than goal achievements and personal development. Erfani (2022) also mentions desirable affection- pride, happiness and love- are important for place dependence. The noteworthy aspect of the Crow Island community is their dependence on the social network. Ruan et al. (2019) also mention that social networks enhance the individual's adaptation to a place, thus, they are unwilling to migrate. Accordingly, this research shows that when people deeply depend on a place, they depend more on intangible and psychological aspects.

In contrast to previous research, which reveals little or no relationship between place dependence and past experience (Bricker & Kerstetter, 2000), the findings of this research show that not only the past experiences of a particular place but also the past experience of another significant place influence place dependence feelings.

4.7.2 Heterogeneity also related to social cohesion

According to the analysis, Crow Island is a heterogeneous area, particularly in terms of ethnicity. However, there are indications of a high level of social cohesion. In contrast, scholars claim that homogeneity significantly relates to community social cohesion (Sampson, 1991). Nevertheless, the respondents value ethnic heterogeneity compared to other residential areas in Colombo, and they assert that hosting diverse cultural events exposes them to social cohesion. These intangible aspects are reasons for their place dependence.

Further, Crow Island is located in the Colombo Municipal Council, which has been a compact and complex residential development. Due to the place co-creation, it has spacious village characteristics, fostering a strong social bond and thus less possibilities of isolation and depression. Existing research also emphasizes a lower rate of depressiveness and loneliness among older adults living in the countryside (Sipowicz et al., 2021).

Regarding the unwillingness to migrate from the place, it reveals that the people adapt to the place, depend on it and take actions to improve it to their desired residential quality. This research suggests that it is possible to assess the dimension of unwillingness to move by using the extent of their involvement in improving the quality of the place. Moreover, Counted et al. (2018) found that African residents aged

46-55 show more dependence on the place compared to young people. This aligns with the findings of this research, as the older respondents of Crow Island mentioned that young people are willing to migrate. Similarly, according to Anton and Lawrence (2014), a person's duration of residency in a specific area can be a reliable indicator of their place of dependence. This is the case for the Crow Island respondents, who have all spent more than ten years there and indicated their sense of place.

Furthermore, Anton and Lawrence (2014) show a positive relationship between place dependence and language proficiency, suggesting that language proficiency is not a strong factor in this research as long as people take measures to effectively communicate with community members.

4.7.3 People attached due to the uniqueness of place, process and people

The findings of this research demonstrate that place attachment can be illustrated by considering places, processes and people as it is conceptualized by Scannell and Gifford (2010). In Crow Island, the beach and the natural environment represent the place, co-creations represent the processes and BPMS members represent the people. Together, they shape the attachment to the place. These elements collectively create a functional and lively urban entity in Crow Island. As the main contributors to the place co-creation, the people have numerous memories to reflect upon. This supports Twigger-Ross and Uzzel's (1996) perception that memory-evoking incidents contribute to place attachment and a sense of self. Furthermore, people explained that they have choices in this area and can enhance self-esteem because the place, process and people are unique. Accordingly, these findings align with the research of Ujang (2008) and Dameria et al. (2020).

4.7.4 Place attachment leads to generosity

As other scholars have observed (Thompson, 2000; Kudryavtsev et al., 2011; Confente & Scarpi, 2021), the people of Crow Island have stated, "I feel the place is part of me" and they frequently refer to the place as "our place". Importantly, the findings show that the ultimate outcome of place attachment is greater generosity rather than selfishness. In the case of Crow Island, due to social network-related values like trust and reciprocity, none of the co-creators expect any personal benefit in return. Almost

all respondents respect these values as they feel like they belong at "Crow Island home". People use phrases such as "our place", "our event", "like our home matter", and "like our child" to express their belongingness. Scholars might draw inspiration from this finding when evaluating the belongingness aspect of place attachment.

4.7.5 Place identities are formed through feelings, experiences and actions

The symbolic relationship between people and place is place identity. People usually perceive place identity based on physical environmental characteristics. The findings related to place identities, such as distinctiveness in terms of ethnic harmony, uniqueness in terms of social bond, and continuous volunteering for about 17 years, align with studies that mention place identities are formed through feelings, meanings, experiences, memories and actions (Hague & Jenkins, 2004). Additionally, the statements of the respondents prove that people would argue if someone condemns the place, process, or people as the people, as they have a strong sense of place identity, as indicated by Dameria et al. (2020).

4.7.6 Unique people reflect place identity

Existing research mostly considers the distinctiveness or uniqueness of places (Scannell & Gifford, 2010; Ginting & Wahid, 2016). This research reveals that people are also distinctive, particularly given the incredible sacrifices they have made for the place. By referencing continuity theory, Raymond et al. (2010) mention that when people have good experiences with place-making, they often continue that experience into the future when considering the place identity. Consequently, BPMS members claim themselves as "creators of the Crow Island beach park" and have plans for the future.

4.7.7 Varying degrees of sense of place can be conceptualized as a ladder

Prevailing literature on the concept of sense of place firmly emphasizes the need to build a comprehensive body of knowledge on sense of place across diverse contexts and encompassing a wide spectrum of social-ecological issues (Masterson et al., 2019). This chapter contributes by presenting the outcomes of a case study in Sri Lanka, delineating the sense of place experienced by people and elucidating how the varying degrees of sense of place can be conceptualized as a ladder.

Moreover, this chapter acknowledges the dynamic nature of sense of place, as examined by Shamai (1991) and Kaltenborn (1998). Notably, Shamai (1991) constructs a sense of place scale by amalgamating existing literature and subsequently scrutinizing it through a quantitative approach. Kaltenborn (1998) adapts Shamai's constructs to design an exploratory instrument using a quantitative approach. The significance of the findings of this research lies in the deductive formulation of the sense of place ladder. This approach offers researchers the opportunity to gather data and invest additional time to deeply understand the communities.

These findings allow for the identification of individuals' level of sense of place through reference to the sense of place ladder. In evaluating a person's position on this ladder, this approach solely considers the verbal responses garnered during the interview, enabling the determination of their standing within the hierarchy. Given that the sense of place is a dynamic feeling, an individual's position can change over time, potentially ascending towards higher rungs or descending towards lower rungs. This research concedes that the notion of an individual adhering to a static sense of place level over time is implausible.

Prevailing research indicates the role of sense of place in place-making, fostering positive environmental behavior, collective actions and the co-creation experience (Kaltenborn, 1998; Rajala, 2020; Ellery & Ellery, 2019; Thompson & Prokopy, 2016). In that context, the proposed ladder serves as a valuable approach to ascertain the level of sense of place in individuals willing to participate in collaborative place-making endeavors. This approach, in turn, permits community planners and developers to embrace and leverage the potential of the collaborative process. Given that it can encompass meanings, beliefs, values, and feelings, the sense of place should be acknowledged as an emergent, evolving, and complex phenomenon. The next chapter presents the co-creation experience of the community.

CHAPTER 5

Co-creation experience in the context of Crow Island Beach Park Development

5.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the research question, '*How does the community experience co-creation?*'. As previously conceptualized in the literature review chapter, this chapter explores co-creation experience in relation to social, economic, cognitive and hedonic experiences, supported by empirical data.

The social experience is detailed through social network analysis, which allows for the identification of social network characteristics, types of actors, positions of the actors, and the co-creators' roles. While quantitative measurements are not considered, social network visualizations are supported to facilitate an understanding of the role and position of the actors within the co-creation network.

The economic experience is depicted by examining the resources individuals allocate to co-creation and the benefits they derive from it. According to the responses, labour, money and power are the primary resources allocated, while the main benefits include better health, improved social well-being and appreciation of property values. Cognitive experience refers to how new ideas, insights and knowledge are generated during co-creation. It explores the potential for learning and acquiring knowledge, as well as how to manage cognitive conflicts and tensions. Hedonic experience pertains to the enjoyment of participating in co-creation. This experience can be understood by identifying the level of satisfaction with the overall co-creation experience.

Finally, this chapter reflects on the findings in the light of literature to elucidate their alignment with previous research, add new knowledge, deepen the understanding and potentially contradict existing knowledge.

5.2 Social experience and social network

The social experience of co-creation refers to how individuals interact and collaborate with others during the creative process. According to the responses and analysis, a total

of 68 actors interacted and collaborated in the Crow Island Beach Park co-creation process. When visualizing this place co-creation-induced social network using a force cluster layout of the Gephi platform, three clusters were identified in the Crow Island place co-creation (Figure 5.1). These clusters exhibited variations in the number of actors, roles and functions. Based on the characteristics of the actors, the clusters can be named: the linking network cluster, the external volunteer cluster and the bonding network cluster.

According to the literature, the linking cluster is characterized by the presence of weak ties among unequal agents, particularly representing government institutions. These "vertical" connections acknowledge power differentials among agents within the social network (Amarawickrama, 2022; Ziersch & Arthurson, 2005; Szreter, 2002). Similarly, the external volunteer cluster is defined by members who act as bridging network participants, maintaining weak ties across different situations and possessing the potential to exchange resources, particularly between different networks (Granovetter, 1973; Amarawickrama, 2022). Furthermore, the existing literature defines the bonding network as consisting of dense, local, and horizontally linked ties between individuals who find themselves in similar situations (Ziersch & Arthurson, 2005; Amarawickrama, 2022).

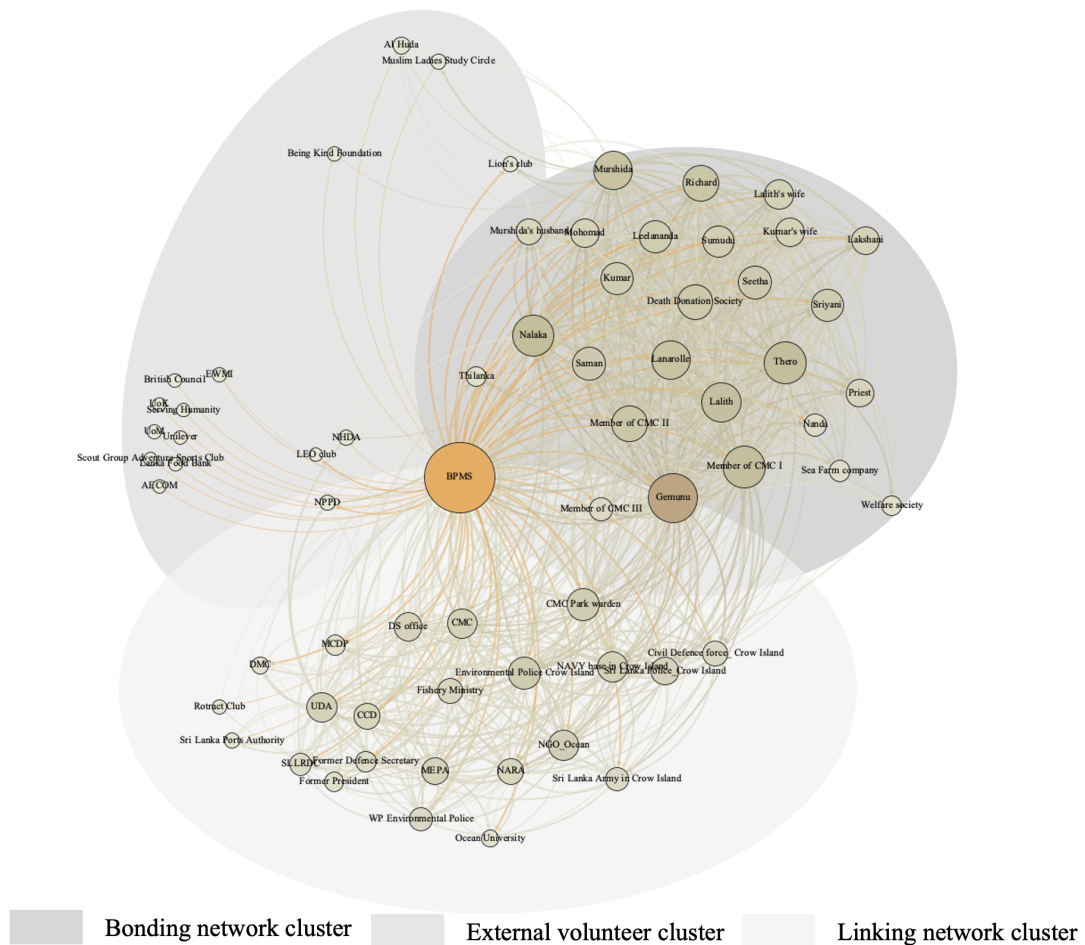


Figure 5.1: Overall social network of co-creators on Crow Island

Source: Author

5.2.1 Linking network cluster

According to the visualization, the linking network cluster comprises a larger number of actors but has a lesser tie density and lesser degree centrality for actors in comparison to the bonding network cluster. This cluster predominantly consists of government organizations endowed with resources like finance, power and expertise for co-creating the place.

Certain linking network actors have had contact with Beach Park Management Society (BPMS) and bridges in bonding network clusters since initiation. A few reasons for this continuous link are,

- 1) Involvement in CoManagement: For example, the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) is an active member in the social network as the formal management responsibility and landownership are with them.
- 2) Project proposals by bonding network actors: Bonding network actors regularly propose new projects about place-making. For instance, on 3 March 2023, a stakeholder meeting was organized in response to a BPMS request related to canal restoration, involving the Department of Coast Conservation, Sri Lanka Land Development Corporation (SLLDC), CMC, etc.
- 3) Proximity of linking actors: Some linking actors are physically located close to Crow Island. For example, the Crow Island Police, NAVY, and National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA) are all nearby organizations that participate in co-creations even with a short invitation from BPMS.
- 4) Mandatory conservation roles: Some organizations have mandatory power to conserve the beach. For instance, the Marine Environment Protection Agency (MEPA), Environmental Police, Urban Development Authority (UDA), Ministry of Fishery, etc are involved as they have mandates to manage this coastal area.

Although social network actors are abstractly categorized into clusters, some actors exhibit characteristics of other clusters. For example, SLLDC is within the linking network cluster but has connected BPMS with the International Water Management Institute (IWMI), performing a bridging role. BPMS has characteristics of both bonding and external volunteer clusters, visualizing the highest degree centrality (Figure 5.1). Mallika explained the advantages of being in BPMS, saying, *'If there is no BPMS, we have no relationship with the community, and sometimes we do not have time too to mingle with people. BPMS allows us to make a large number of connections'*. According to the responses, both the external volunteer cluster and linking network cluster connect with the Crow Island community through BPMS.

5.2.2 External volunteer cluster

This cluster encompasses government, non-governmental and private sector organizations involved in the CoManagement of the beach park, mostly on a voluntary basis. They are primarily linked through BPMS, but in some instances, actors within the bonding network connect the volunteer cluster members to BPMS. Murshida mentioned her involvement in this regard, stating, '*We have connected the BPMS with outside organizations, so I think it is a positive thing that I have done. For example, Being Kind, Lion's Club, Al-hudha, etc*'. Since the members of the external volunteer cluster do not frequently contact with the other network members, their degree centrality is low. Possibly, these external volunteers have the potential to serve as bridges, conveying the needs for the Crow Island Beach development to other resourceful actors. Lanarolle mentioned the funds they received to renovate the children's park: '*The children's park was renovated with the funds of Dilmah. That Dilmah is also connected due to a politician*'. Accordingly, co-creators get various resources and social experiences through their engagement with the external volunteer cluster within their social network.

5.2.3 Bonding network cluster

The bonding network cluster, in comparison, boasts a larger number of actors and ties. The size of each circle signifies the degree centrality, and the visualization depicts that the majority of the members in the bonding network cluster possess a higher degree centrality. This cluster primarily consists of relatives, friends and neighbours who maintain frequent contact or are linked to each other, resulting in a dense network. Coleman (1988) emphasizes the importance of dense networks as it is necessary to emerge social capital since they facilitate the sharing of resources. Lin (1999) also underscores their significance in preserving or maintaining the resources.

However, this social network has evolved over time. Initially, the majority of respondents settled in Crow Island as individuals or individual families. An exception to this was Mohamad, who was recommended to the place by a relative. Currently, around ten families of relatives reside on Crow Island. Similarly, individuals like Kumar, Leelananda and Murshida settled there after marriage, indicating that they

already had a small bonding social network on which they could reply. Additionally, others initially had limited knowledge of their neighbours. Gemunu described his social experience at the initial stages, stating, *'We've noticed the people in Beach but don't know many details. We weren't friends. I only had 2-3 friends here'*. As the residents of Crow Island owned an average land extent of 3-5 perches, they could utilize the beach for their physical, health and psychological needs. Additionally, their social needs were also fulfilled due to this public property as they got a chance to have social contacts. With time, people's social networks gradually expanded. Initially, people would see and hear other people characterized as passive contact and later they have the chance to exchange smiles, and greetings like 'Hello', 'Good morning' or say 'Bye' (Gehl, 2011). Over time, they formed friendships, walked together and played together. As a result, they decided to form a Community-Based Organisation (CBO), to improve the quality of the beach and its environment. As a result of forming BPMS, the respondents were able to further expand their social network, which now includes approximately 330 members within a dense social network.

According to the above discussion and upon reviewing the social networks of individual respondents, a similar pattern of expansion becomes evident. In general, they initially had small social networks with only a few relatives or friends. Subsequently, upon gaining membership in BPMS, they became acquainted with the entire community and joined a larger social network that included government and non-government actors due to their active involvement in co-creation efforts (Figure 5.2). Mohamad shared his experience with this social network expansion,

During my young age in the village, we lived with a large group of people. Initially, we felt some loneliness of living here without good company. We do not know who lives in the neighboring house, and so forth. Now everything has changed. Now not only neighboring houses but almost all the Crow Island people know me.

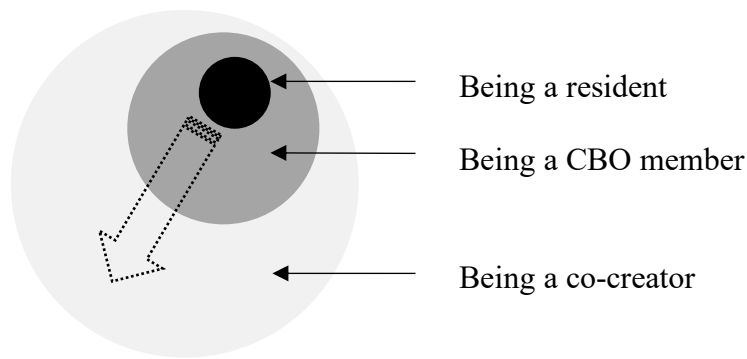


Figure 5.2: Expansion pattern of social networks of average residents

Source: Author

A common sentiment expressed by all respondents was “*Everyone in Crow Island knows me*”, which indicates the strength of the social network, the possibility of their contribution in terms of resources and their sense of pride in being recognized by others.

Among the respondents, Murshida, as a co-creator, was particularly successful in expanding her social network more extensively than many others (Figure 5.3). Despite settling in Crow Island after marriage and joining BPMS in 2015, her capabilities were recognized, and she was appointed as the president in 2016. This position enabled her to be acquainted with all Crow Island residents, as well as many bridging and linking network members. Murshida mentioned, ‘*Only after my involvement with BPMS, I got to know many people. Now everyone in Crow Island knows me and I have many outside contacts too*’. During her presidency, she acted as a bridge to bring resources into the social network. She elaborated on how her personal contacts were leveraged for the place co-creation, saying, ‘*Al-huda organization came to beach clean-up. It was a personal contact. Through that contact, we could do a dry ration project. It was a big project targeting poor people*’. An exceptional aspect of her tenure was its extension of four years due to the COVID-19 pandemic, indicating the importance of substantial duration in a leadership role with the power to effectively expand the social network. Besides, she received opportunities to expand her social network through BPMS activities. Being an active member of the Lion’s Club, she explained her connection, saying, ‘*Lion’s club once came for beach clean-up. One lady called me to join Lion’s Club*’.

bonding and linking networks. Gemunu mentioned, *'As government employees, we linked our contacts with the BPMS. We're still doing it'*. Consequently, the social network expansion of residents who already had access to the linking network cluster differed from the other respondents (Figure 5.4).

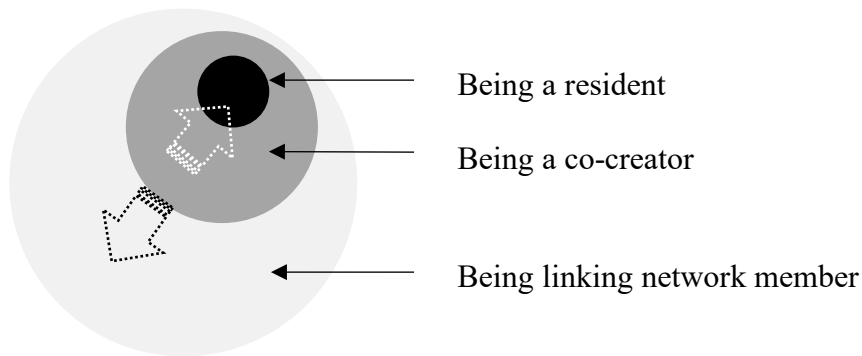


Figure 5.4: Expansion of the social network of the residents who already have access to linking network cluster

Source: Author

In addition to the community co-creators, the bonding network cluster includes various entities such as the Death Donation Society, a Welfare Society, some businesses located on Crow Island, religious leaders and local government representatives. The community involved in co-creations is highly diverse in terms of gender, education, income, ethnicity, religion and political views. However, all of them are part of the social network with a shared goal of co-creating the Crow Island beach. Lalith highlights the significance of diversity, stating, *'Due to that diversity we could gain a lot of achievements'*. In addition to the BPMS, the Death Donation Society plays a unique role in encouraging average people to become BPMS members. Seetha explains this mechanism:

There is a death donation society and people have to get the BPMS's membership first to get membership of the death donation society. Therefore, now the membership is growing. Sometimes, people think it is good to be a member of a death donation society as many people come to support them during a death.

While this strategy is essential for expanding the social network and fostering place attachment, private businessmen are also linked to the social network as they donate

some finances to organize events. These businessmen are linked through bridging actors within the bonding network cluster, namely Lalith, a businessman active in the BPMS.

Usually, relatives, friends and close neighbors are the bonding network members, but in the case of the Crow Island community, religious leaders become bonding network members due to the frequency of contacts. Whenever co-creators organize events in the beach park, they invite religious leaders. Similarly, when events are held in religious places, BPMS members participate together (Figure 5.5a & 5.5b). Nalaka reflects on this relationship, saying *'The village temple is also related to this development'*. Given the regular interactions with religious leaders and the community, their presence in the social network is significant. Moreover, it is noteworthy to mention the presence of local government representatives in the bonding social networks. Although they typically represent powerful organizations and might be expected to appear in the linking network cluster, in the case of the Crow Island Beach Park co-creation process, local government representatives frequently engage with co-creators. Sumudu explains, *'I do not personally contact many politicians, but I contact a member of CMC as when we inform him of whatever a repair, he attends'*. It is rare in Sri Lanka to note that politicians work closely with the public outside of the election period, but in this case, local government members regularly attend events and share their resources.

a.



Figure 5.5a: People participate in Temple's events

b.



Figure 5.5b: Participation of Religious leaders

Source: Author

According to this analysis, co-creation is taking place in dense and diverse social networks, thus providing participants with rich social experiences.

5.3 Economic experience

According to the literature, the presence of a social network opens the possibility of generating network-based resources for co-creations (Ho et al., 2020). The economic experience of Crow Island co-creators was twofold: their contribution of resources to co-creations and the benefits they receive by participating. When considering resource sharing, resources are generated from both members of BPMS and external contributors. In this regard, Nalaka mentioned, *'We have resources from outsiders too for different social activities'*. In terms of the types of resources involved, one respondent mentioned three main resource types: Labour, money and power. As he puts it:

There are three types of people in our society. One group is giving their labour but not much financial support. Another group gives financial support, but even they do not show their faces on the event day. Some people give money and come. The third category has power (Kumar).

Additionally, time, credentials, services and expertise are also resources within the social network used for co-creation.

5.3.1 Resources from linking network cluster and external volunteer cluster

External organizations, including government, non-government and private entities also contribute labour, money and power to facilitate the co-creation of the beach park (Figure 5.6). According to responses, the Department of Coast Conservation (CCD) initially allocated money for the construction of a road and a small children's park. Gemunu, who was involved in securing funds mentioned, *'CCD was involved in the construction of a road and a small children's park'*. Subsequently, the existing beach park underwent further development, including landscaping, buildings and infrastructure by utilizing money received from the World Bank. This was corroborated by the statement of Murshida, who said, *'World Bank agreed to fund the beach park development'*. Apart from these significant contributions, various non-governmental and private organizations contribute money to organize events and maintain the place.

In relation to this, Murshida explained that *'the children's park was renovated with the funds of Delmah'* and when organizing donations for needy people, donors provide food items.

Currently, the responsibility for cleaning and maintaining the place falls under the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC), as the power was transferred from UDA after the project's completion. Funds for cleaning are allocated through the World Bank. Sumudu described the process, stating, *'When we note the areas to maintain, we inform CMC. One CMC political representative is our member, so we inform him and thereby we can complete the work'*. Meanwhile, the Sri Lanka Police, Civil Defence officers, and Army and Navy frequently participate in beach cleaning activities. Murshida mentioned a list of other organizations that visit the place for cleaning activities related to their corporate social responsibility projects; *'Al-huda organization came to beach clean-up. Unilever, Rotaract club, Coca-Cola, Kelaniya University, Rotary club, Commando general of Army came'*. Further, her statement indicated how some resources were received when powerful actors linked to the co-creation; *'The army came due to the influence of the former president as his attention was there to this area'*.



Figure 5.6: Outsiders participation for co-creation

Source: BPMS Facebook page

Accordingly, some resources from outsiders made a significant impact on co-creation, while others have been sustained and some were provided on a one-time basis. These resources were primarily obtained because members of BPMS also contributed their resources to co-creation. Nalaka mentioned that these outside resources were received

as a sequence of the expansion of the social network; *'Our social network also expanded to harness more resources for the place's development'*.

5.3.2 Resources from bonding network cluster

When respondents mentioned their contribution to co-creation, they frequently used the term, “sacrifice a lot”. They likely employed this term because they did not anticipate receiving personal benefits in return. Referring to Kumar’s categorization, resources are discussed in terms of labour, money and power.

Labour

According to Sumudu, the most crucial resource for co-creation is labour. She further elaborated, *'If everyone provides their labour free of charge, we can also develop the other neighborhoods'*. Initially, BPMS members contributed their labour to maintain the entire park area and currently, they primarily focus on cleaning the beach and organizing events to preserve the park’s quality. Consequently, they have been able to plant numerous trees in the park. Cleaning the beach is a significant undertaking for BPMS due to the inflow of garbage from the Kelani River, which lands on the beach. Murshida explains, *'The waste comes via Kelani River, landing on this beach. So, always have to clean. People put in much effort; it is difficult and costly'*. Since 2007, BPMS members have conducted monthly *'Shramadana'* events to clean the beach and enhance the overall environmental quality (Figure 5.7). Lalith reflected on their initial involvement in the park, stating, *'We helped clean the place, cut the grass, planting trees'* and Gemunu elaborated,

We initially planted the trees. We dug a well and installed a water motor because it was necessary to water the trees. People applied fertilizer, cleaned the area, and we did the majority of the labor.

The extent of people’s involvement is explained by Nalaka as follows: *'Sometimes, people think we are laborers and try to give us jobs. This indicates to what extent we devoted ourselves to the work'*. Kumar affirms this by stating, *'There are some members who continuously work. They spend the time from the start to finish'*. Leelananda adds, *'I wonder how much we have sweated to clean this [මේක සුද්ද කරන්න අපි මොන තරම් දාඩිය හෙලන්න ඇතිද කියල මට හිතෙනවා]'* (Figure 5.8).

Further, respondents indicated that they work by disregarding their social status and livelihood, sometimes even resorting to deception with their family members. Kumar shared,

Gemunu too comes to the collective work despite his office matters. Some days he calls me on a weekday as he gets leave from the office to clean the beach... Sometimes, I tell my family that I'm going to buy parts to repair a TV and come to do collective work at the beach.

A few respondents mentioned that 'We fully allocate morning hours of full moon days for monthly Shramadana'. The researcher also observed that many people participate in Shramadana on full moon day as a priority. Leelananda said 'I have told my family not to talk to me about any family matters on full moon day'.



Figure 5.7: Monthly beach cleaning Shramadana

Source: BPMS Facebook page

Not only do people allocate their physical labour, but they also dedicate their time to various tasks, such as writing letters to different organizations, administrating and updating social media pages and maintaining good rapport with outsiders. One respondent expressed their availability by stating, 'I'm available at any time. Whenever they call me, I never miss any of the calls... I'm the admin of the WhatsApp group too. I handle many communications. Some people don't bother to take photos and information, but wherever I go, I keep a record and update the Facebook page'.

Further, they participate in meetings and hold positions within BPMS, as indicated by Leelananda: *‘If there are meetings in the evening on weekdays, we participate as soon as we receive the message’*. Additionally, some respondents actively participate in events, as exemplified by Mallika: *‘On art competition day, I took a leave from work to participate in the activities and I was there the entire day’*. In general, the respondents were reluctant to mention their contributions, emphasizing that *“all these things are collective”*.



Figure 5.8: Labor works

Source: BPMS Facebook page

Money

BPMS primarily receives money from its members. Initially, all the members are required to pay a compulsory membership fee of Rs. 500. Afterwards, members contribute money voluntarily based on their willingness to do so. According to the responses, co-creators contribute money for various purposes, including cleaning the place, planting trees, organizing events, arranging refreshments, purchasing materials, making donations to those in need and participating in both internal and external volunteer initiatives. These responses demonstrate that BPMS enjoys strong financial capacity due to members' trust. Leelananda mentioned, *‘We have a considerable amount of savings now’* and Mohamad confirmed,

Our BPMS is always at the top in terms of financial capacity. Sometimes we receive more money than we expect. We have fixed deposits for both CBOs. The Death Donation Society has Rs. 1.1 million fixed deposit and BPMS has Rs. 350,000.

Murshida, as the former president mentioned, *'We do not force people to give money'*. However, even during small gatherings, they arrange refreshments, and for the full moon day *'Shramadana'* they provide breakfast. These have been ongoing since 2007 without any forceful money collections, relying solely on volunteers' contributions. Murshida explained that providing refreshments facilitates social interaction, which contributes to expanding the social network. Co-creators occasionally contribute money to purchase goods and materials for cleaning activities. Gemunu noted that they leverage their social contacts to secure discounts when spending money on such materials. Their recent purchases of rakes and water pipes are examples of such transactions.

Another significant fundraising effort was for the tree adaptation programme. Lanarolle explained the programme: *'People adopted coconut trees. Each tree has a specific owner who is in charge of caring for it, including fencing, watering and other maintenance. Some people put the name boards of their children'*. Then, Gemunu added, *'The person who adopted the tree donated Rs.1000.00'*. Moreover, co-creators contribute money to organize events for different celebrations, namely, the Sinhala and Hindu New Year celebrations, Poson full moon day celebrations, Deepawali, and Christmas. On such occasions, people contribute money promptly upon receiving a request through a WhatsApp message. Richard explains, *'Last time we were organizing the Poson dansela, we collected Rs. 550,000 just through WhatsApp. There is a big success in money collection'*. Further, Richard elaborated on the reasons for the success, *'Members and non-members and everybody trusts us. They know there's no misuse of funds'*. Gemunu also confirmed this fact in the context of money collected for the art competition. He said, *'As soon as we spoke with an exporter in this area, he agreed to contribute Rs.500,000.00. That is due to trust'*. Further, Gemunu mentioned the members' strong emphasis on financial matters, with some members expecting stringent accountability and transparency. Therefore, they present the treasurer's report at the Annual General Meeting, certified by auditors.

When individuals attend the AGM, they are looking for accountability. They want all account information to be made public. They even ask for income and expenses down to the cent. They expect accountability when

they provide money. We have an internal auditor as well as an external auditor.

Moreover, according to the responses, in some instances, non-members and passive members of BPMS also contribute money. Occasionally, individuals who contribute money may not attend the event day but are regarded as “*silent best-wishers*”, as described by Murshida’s husband. Some people contribute money to enhance the quality of the neighborhood due to their frequent use of the place. For example, Lalith contributed about Rs. 7 million to construct a building for the temple, stating, *‘I felt I should contribute to constructing a hall for the temple’*.

Power

Power for co-creation emanates from two primary sources. Firstly, some members of BPMS hold power and utilize it to commence co-creation from the very beginning and whenever required to the present day. Secondly, BPMS holds some collective power due to its membership, its progressive work, and the principles it upholds. Both of these power types become economic resources for co-creation.

The responses highlight the importance of having at least a few members with connections to powerful government organizations. Mohamad mentioned the value of the participation of Gemunu and Nalaka in co-creations; *‘When it is necessary to send a letter, either Gemunu or Nalaka is involved, and work can be done’*. The responses from both Gemunu and Nalaka proved this statement. Gemunu said;

At the time, I was the Director of Planning for [name of the organization]. This ministry was responsible for the Coastal Conservation Department (CCD). We submitted this proposal to the CCD at the request of the residents. As a representative of the ministry, I worked on the tender committee of the CCD. So, I had authority and contacts with engineers. I used this link at the beginning. I have assigned the engineers to take care of the development of this site as I also live in this neighborhood. The engineers then paid a visit and allocated funds.

Regarding securing World Bank funds for beach park development, Nalaka communicated with the secretary to the Ministry of Urban Development and Defence. He recalled, *‘I told him about the potential of Crow Island... Then he asked to fix a date to visit Crow Island’*.

Apart from these two members employed in government organizations, some other members also hold power. For example, some are powerful as religious leaders, others as representatives to the local government authorities, some in roles within the police and still others as local elites. However, Lalith highlighted two important facts related to these individual strengths. First, the identification of diverse strengths and capacities of different members to use for co-creation. He said *'We all play different roles in this CBO as different members have different strengths.'* The second is flexibility; *'We have to be flexible when working as a CBO despite having money, power or status. That's how we have to move ahead'*. Accordingly, while members may enjoy power, comprehension and consensus on these two facts are important.

Moreover, the collective power inherent in co-creators serves as a valuable resource and can be classified as an economic experience. One main instance of using the power of BPMS to control its development is explained by Leelananda, *'One businessman who was connected to a well-known underworld figure tried to open a bar by using the car parking area. We could stop it'*. BPMS opposed this development because they foresaw the negative consequences. By using collective power, they maintained social harmony. Leelananda said, *'The general public would lose the chance to enjoy the natural beauty. It is pointless to have BPMS if such things happen and it is an injustice to the public'*. Other instances of leveraging BPMS's collective power for the co-creation were explained by Murshida, illustrating how the co-creators use their power to establish fairness and public welfare;

Different people try to get shops in this area through the Police and politicians. But BPMS could control it and give the shops to the people who were selling goods even before this major development. Moreover, three-wheel people tried to park their vehicles anywhere they liked, but BPMS controlled it and allocated a specific area as there can be issues when there are a lot of three-wheel drivers hanging around. BPMS even wrote to the president regarding such things and controlled them. When the immediate government administrations could not take action on some matters, what BPMS people did was take some brave actions and write to the president.

Further, when development occurs within or close to Crow Island, government and private organizations take action to keep BPMS members informed. According to the responses, meetings were conducted with BPMS members by the Metro Colombo Development Project when utilizing World Bank Funds and a meeting was recently

organized to inform them about the Colombo North Harbour Expansion project. Apart from that, whenever any organization uses the Beach Park for their activities or celebrations, they formally collaborate with BPMS. One example provided by Murshida is, *'Disaster Management Centre Organised its official commemoration in collaboration with us'*.

Another instance of the power of co-creators is that even though the powerful government organization (CMC) legally managed the beach park after 2016, they always obeyed the suggestions of BPMS members. Kumar firmly mentioned that in the future, BPMS members would continue to be involved in the park's management; *'if CMC gives up the management we will take care of this park as long as we live. If someone destroys the public property of this park, we are the first people who would take actions'*.

Regarding the power of co-creators, Leelananda's statement is important as he perceives the scenario if co-creators do not use their resource of power to co-create the place.

If people could not be involved in this place-making, there is a high possibility that this beautiful environment will be for private use. Maybe due to the merit of our previous birth, we could make a CBO and thus, this place has been protected for the general public [අපේ පෙර කළ ජිනකට වගේ society එකක් හදාගෙන තිබ්බ නිසා මේක protect කියල හිතෙන්නේ...].

Likewise, both the power of individuals and collective power served as a resource for the co-creation of the beach park according to the economic experiences of the respondents.

The above discussion regarding the economic experience of resources allocated for co-creation highlights that labour, money and power are important. In that vein, Murshida mentioned, *'For everything, we need money and manpower'*. However, when responding to the questions, it is significant that respondents did not seek to highlight the works or contributions that they have made; rather, they focused on their experiences and other members' contributions. When Lalith was asked to explain his experience with temple renovation, he said, *'I do not like to talk that much about that as it is like boasting'*. Further, most respondents termed it as "collective contributions". This fact is well elaborated by Leelananda;

I do not like to say that something has happened due to personal contribution, but all these things are collective... No one wanted to stand out from others. Team spirit is very important and our team perfectly had that quality and still does [සාමූහිකත්වය කියන එක හරි වැදගත්... අපේ කට්ටියගේ ඒක හොඳම තිබුණා... නාම නියෙනවා]

In that vein, identifying the level of an individual's economic experience can be challenging in the context of a public phenomenon like place co-creation. With this note, the next section further elaborates on the economic experience by considering the benefits received from co-creation.

5.3.3 Benefits received as a result of co-creation

While the co-creators have indeed reaped different benefits, those involved in co-creation do not anticipate any personal gain in return. "We do not expect any personal benefit" is a commonly echoed sentiment among many respondents. One rationale behind this principle is exemplified by Gemunu, who aimed to engage in co-creations only for their intrinsic values and insisted others do the same as advisors. Gemunu advises others suggesting, '*You will get benefits automatically in this life or the next*'. Therefore, individuals refrain from even plucking coconuts from the coconut trees they planted in the park. However, the responses reveal some benefits of co-creation.

Primarily, people used the place for their regular walks. Sumudu explained the significance of walking and its popularity among the locals: '*It is good for our health as we use the park to walk every day. Many people in this village walk now*'. Perhaps the most compelling testament to the link between walking and health benefits is Leelananda's story: '*I had to undergo bypass surgery. The doctor also said that I saved my life because I walk*'. Murshida's husband mentioned the benefits for older adults from his own experience;

This place is not only a benefit in terms of physical and psychological health. When old people are at home, a beach park is a perfect place to take them in the evening. As there is a proper path, you can even use a wheelchair and push. So there is a psychological benefit.

Therefore, people in Crow Island continue to enjoy the health benefits derived from their co-creation efforts over time.

While the social experience section primarily discusses social network formation-related information, this section also communicates social benefits. The social network

of each individual who participated in co-creation was expanded. According to Leelananda, it is not just the number of familiar people, but good friends. He said, *'There are benefits like earning good friends'*. Richard also confirmed that fact by mentioning, *'In return, I get this social network'*.

This social network consists of different people of different ethnicities, religions and cultures, therefore, co-creators can be exposed to different cultures and societies. Lalith confirmed this fact by stating, *'One main benefit of this place-making and forming BPMS was that people in different ethnic groups could mingle with the other residents in Crow Island'*. As the main contributor to the temple, Nalaka mentioned the story of the regeneration of Crow Island temple due to the involvement of co-creators. He said, *'Even the temple was reconstructed with the support of a member of the BPMS. Beach Park Management Society also joined the temple function, thus, the donations increased despite the religion'*.

The responses indicate the opportunities for women to experience the co-creation process. Women's labour force participation rate is around 30% in Sri Lanka, and most females spend their entire day inside the home (Madurawala, 2017). However, Nanda said, *'This beach park is a really good thing for the women who spend their time inside the houses. I noted how much they enjoyed once they came for picnics'*. While Nanda was a working woman, Sumudu, as a housewife, supported Nanda's statement: *'I haven't done any job before and I was just inside the house and kitchen. I even did not expect that I would do this much of things. I have gained a lot of things because of the BPMS'*. Further, Murshida, being a Muslim woman worked as President of BPMS for four consecutive years and according to her husband *"My wife participates in all the activities and she is a symbol of ethnic cohesion"*.

It is a usual practice in Sri Lanka that the relatives and visitors who come to the house are taken to an attractive place in proximity to the home. Sumudu explained, *'When visitors come to the place with children, we can take them to the beach park as we do not have any other recreational area'*. This fact was confirmed by many other respondents too as they said that *'We have a place to show for the visitors'*.

Accordingly, some social benefits are an expansion of the personal social network of co-creators, a feeling of safety due to the familiarity, improvement of religious places in the area, opportunities to participate and enjoy different events throughout the year, opportunities to mingle with different ethnic groups and get familiar with their culture, chances for women to participate and contribute for social works and as the residents have limited space in their premises, they can take the visitors to the park.

There are several intended and unintended financial benefits from co-creation. According to the plan, the park includes kiosks and a restaurant, which are expected to bring economic benefits, particularly in improving the livelihood of poor communities in the park neighbourhood. The CMC derives income from car parking fees, lavatory facilities, rent from the kiosks and from the restaurant. Additionally, one unintended but common benefit of urban planning projects is the appreciation of property values.

During the development of the urban park, the planning team designated twelve small kiosks. Richard said, *'Those who were selling goods along the street before the park development received a permanent stall for their selling activities, thus, it is a very positive thing'*. Thilanka who owned a kiosk, mentioned the mechanism of allocating kiosks to individuals with BPMS membership credentials;

BPMS supported us a lot. There was no evidence to show we did business in the beach park. However, we had to get a Rs.100 ticket from the BPMS those days. As we could show those tickets as evidence, we could get this shop. [Name of a president of BPMS] also recommended us. It was a great help to us.

Additionally, Richard mentioned that a few new shops emerged along the beach road by converting the residential properties into commercial uses. Apart from that, some mobile carts set up shop on the street sides during weekends and special events that attracted a larger number of visitors to the park. There is also a building that can be used as a restaurant; it was previously operated by a well-known high-end restaurant before COVID-19 and respondents mentioned that a tender has been issued for new ownership. This suggests business opportunities for lower-, middle- and high-class businesses.

Presently, the formal management authority lies with CMC, which generates substantial income from the place. As Mohamad confirmed, *'Parking fee is charged by the CMC'*. However, it was observed that BPMS members or those recommended by BPMS often resist paying parking fees. In addition to monthly rent from each kiosk, fees from visitors for using restroom facilities and significant revenue from renting the restaurant, another income source comes from people seeking permission for photoshoots. However, if there is a letter from the BPMS, users who do not want to pay for photoshoots often get permission through connections, as Lalith mentioned, *'if they want to do a photo shoot, they try to get permission through me'*. These facts further indicated the opportunities available to government authorities due to place-making and the impact that co-creators can have.

Every resident of Crow Island indirectly gets benefits due to the appreciation of property values. Mohamad compared the situation before and after place-making, citing property values: *'Those days people did not buy properties even for Rs. 150,000-200,000 due to the bad recognition. Some houses were sold to pay in installments. Now a property with 2 perches will be about Rs. 15 – 10 million'*. All respondents expressed this property value appreciation and Sumudu attributed it specifically to the park: *'This property is very valuable now. I think Rs. 2-3 million. As the park is close, its value is further enhanced'*. Murshida's husband also mentioned, *'Now the outsiders demand houses inside Crow Island. Those who want to have an additional house prefer Crow Island'*. Therefore, they purchase a second property and wait for value appreciation. These facts demonstrate the positive impact that a well-executed urban development project can have on the neighborhood.

Overall, in terms of the benefits of the co-creation, Lalith said, *'I joined as I nature lover, some joined to engage in community welfare, some joined as they walk regularly, some joined to get a drink, likewise various reasons'*. However, these expected benefits are primarily related to self-satisfaction rather than monetary gains.

Moreover, in relation to economic experience, their position in the social network is also reviewed. The responses illustrate that some community members contribute their labour and money in response to requests from other network members. For example, both Murshida and Kumar said, *'We cannot escape from Gemunu as he always invites*

us to come to some activities at the park'. Further, Murshida's husband mentioned the emergence of a relationship between Murshida and the temple *'As she is involved in BPSM works, the Buddhist temple also recognized her'* and Murshida mentioned some contributions she made to the Buddhist temple despite her religion being a Muslim. This fact is supported by Lalith: *'It was possible to contribute to the temple as I go to the beach'*. Further, Nalaka explained how their network position is important to expand the social network and harness resources in it.

As a consequence of organizing such activities, we could expand our network. People in the Crow Island area and the majority of Beach Park Society members have money, but they do not have a link to government officers, etc. Therefore, they like to connect with us, even though they have financial capabilities and do not have links with officers.

Likewise, it shows a strong relationship between social experience and economic experiences.

5.4 Cognitive experience

The respondents explained the cognitive experience of co-creation, highlighting how new ideas, insights and knowledge are generated during co-creation, the potential for learning and how cognitive tensions are managed (Verleye, 2015).

5.4.1 New ideas, insights and knowledge

The responses indicated the potential of generating new ideas, insights and knowledge with co-creation experience. Decisions were collective and developed through a deliberative process, with leaders suggesting new ideas and empowering other members and frequent meetings among the co-creators.

According to the responses, any new idea is implemented only after discussion with the committee members of BPMS. Leelananda mentioned, *'When we have some idea, we put it forward to the committee and discuss anything'*. He emphasized that the ideas are developed to an implementable level through collective decision-making: *'I do not like to tell that something has happened due to personal ideas, but all these things are collective'*. Richard also stressed the importance of collective decisions, stating, *'It is important to get the collective decision as the members listen well'*. However, both Leelananda and Mohamad noted that *"Some arguments are straightforward and*

strong". Mohamad highlighted the importance of deliberations, saying, *'As the decisions were made with deliberation, there were fewer chances for failure'*. Therefore, the ideas of co-creators are collective and sustainable. Sumudu confirmed, *'Members also work collectively and in a trustworthy way'*.

While new ideas are generated and implemented through a deliberative process, a few respondents mentioned that Gemunu, as an advisor, often suggests new ideas and provides insights to others. Sumudu explained the idea processing pattern; *'The members bring suggestions about the events at the meetings. Mainly, Gemunu takes forward such proposals. He usually says, "I have an idea like this...what do you think?". Then we also agree or tell our views'*. Though an individual's idea does not materialize directly, it is processed collectively before implementation. Mohamad mentioned some of Gemunu's positive interventions;

That tree-planting work was also led by Gemunu; we donated stationery for school children in Angalawatta as they were affected by a flood. Gemunu linked that work with the Youth Society; the establishment of the death donation society was initiated by Gemunu; On March 21, 2006, we decided to form a formal society. The main discussion was attended by a school teacher, Lanarolle, Gamini, Nissanka, and Nalaka; the urban forest idea was also suggested by Gemunu.

Gemunu is a government servant with prior work experience in collaborating with fishery cooperatives. As he reflected, *'All island fishery cooperatives were rejuvenated during my tenure as [position]. As a result, I gained a great deal of experience working with people and societies. So, I understand the structure of a CBO, the routine of a CBO, how to run a CBO, and how people feel'*. Thus, the participation of knowledgeable and selfless members in the co-creation process is crucial for obtaining valuable cognitive experience.

The responses indicate that BPMS committee members held formal meetings every month. Mohamad mentioned, *'We are holding committee meetings monthly at our office'*, and Sumudu stated the importance of committee members' attendance at these meetings, saying, *'To take positions in the committee, people have to play an active role. They have to participate in the monthly meetings at least three times per year'*. In addition to these formal meetings, active members would engage in discussions about further park developments whenever they met. Leelananda stated, *'Though we*

*come just to walk in the morning, we had to take meetings for the betterment of the park development’ and Gemunu recalled, ‘We used to draw illustrations of possible developments when we met on the beach back then’. It was evident that BPMS members continued to discuss important matters related to the park’s progress even beyond the monthly *shramadana*.*

Moreover, it was evident during a *shramadana* event organized in collaboration with university students, it was evident that all members were highly familiar with each other and possessed the knowledge necessary to co-organize the event in partnership with an external organization. Additionally, when discussions took place regarding the urban forest project, community members readily suggested places to procure materials at more affordable prices and provided the names of valuable contacts within their linking network. This serves as a clear indication of the knowledge they have accumulated through their co-creation experience over time. Moreover, one member earned the nickname “park master” due to his extensive knowledge of the place. According to Leelananda, *‘As soon as Lanarolle gets up in the morning he walks around the beach. Thus, we gave him a nickname: “Park Master”. He looks around and suggests further improvements’.*

Accordingly, an environment has been established to foster the generation of new ideas, insights and knowledge. People actively engage in deliberative processes because they trust their fellow participants, are guided by influential leaders within the community and have regular opportunities for discussions.

5.4.2 Learning and getting knowledge

Learning and gaining knowledge are personal benefits for participants. Since 2007, BPMS members have had numerous opportunities to learn through their involvement in a highly impactful CBO with a substantial number of participants. They have been involved in decision-making processes concerning a public place, organizing events and participating in training and awareness programmes (Figure 5.9).



Figure 5.9: Awareness of the beach park development proposal

Source: BPMS Facebook page

According to respondents, many individuals have had the opportunity to serve on the BPMS committee, holding positions such as former presidents, secretaries, or other main roles. They view this as a valuable opportunity to learn about the procedures of a CBO. BPMS holds monthly meetings and an Annual General Meeting (AGM), where various reports are typically presented. As Mohamad said, *'We are taking committee meetings monthly at our office'*. Nissanka, who served as the secretary for six years since the inception of BPMS and possesses strong writing skills, proudly said, *'I'm the one who wrote meeting minutes etc and the AGM report'*.

Meanwhile, Sumudu who had no prior work experience and is a housewife, shared her experience, saying, *'When I make the annual reports, I got support from the others. I drafted the minutes of the AGM and showed them to Murshida. Sometimes I send Gemunu, and he also points out the areas to improve. Likewise, there are supports'*. Similarly, ordinary community members have had the opportunity to learn about formal procedures and practices through their involvement with BPMS. The organization has a constitution that provides a framework for its operations. Gemunu mentioned that the constitution also includes ethical guidelines. He used his work experience to develop the constitution and shared his knowledge with other members. Feedback from the community was sought to further improve the constitution. The

inaugural BPMS meeting was well-organized, including venue, logistics and even food, which helped garner respect from the participants for the co-creation effort.

As I had experience in making fishery cooperatives, I could develop the constitution and then we translated everything into English. One day, we had a meeting at NARA to explain each clause of the constitution. We could get feedback from people too. At that time, it was a valuable experience for people visiting the NARA auditorium itself. When we used screens, multimedia, mics and gave refreshments, etc. people felt the experience. Recently also, one person appreciated the initial meetings.

Since people received valuable knowledge about the proceedings of a CBO from the beginning, BPMS was able to continue its activities for many years. Despite the existence of a Welfare society for Crow Island, which shares the same membership with BPMS, respondents noted that the Welfare Society is not as successful as BPMS in terms of the quality of the procedures. Gemunu mentioned that people even appreciate the early meetings of BPMS when comparing them to the Welfare Society.

Nalaka, like Gemunu, used his work experiences to enhance BPMS's activities, and he said how his experiences at BPMS have been beneficial for his career. He said, *'I use my skills and time for such events organized by the BPMS. These experiences are important for me to undertake my career as now I'm doing urban planning-related tasks'*. If an individual like Nalaka, who holds a high managerial position in a government department, recognizes the value of co-creation experience, it likely holds true for all the other co-creators as well.

Moreover, co-creators were able to gain substantial knowledge by organizing events. Firstly, they acquired knowledge about other members and their capacities. Sumudu confirmed, *'As we have many events throughout the year, we know each other very well'*. Nalaka also acknowledged the different capacities of individuals, explaining how tasks were distributed during the art competition day. He said, *'Different people are good at different things. Some people have financial capabilities, and some people are good at making a set with a stage and all. I was assigned to coordinate students and organize the event day'*.

Secondly, as some events are organized in collaboration with other government, non-government or private organizations, members are exposed to the working pattern of

external organizations. An international non-government organization (NGO) is also involved in beach cleaning activities alongside BPMS, MEPA and CMC. This collaboration allowed BPMS members to learn from other organizations.

Thirdly, co-creators learn ethical behavior by engaging with larger groups. They utilize social media platforms such as Facebook and WhatsApp for communication with all members. Leelananda mentioned how they maintain ethical standards by establishing guidelines for shared content. He stated,

Our social media groups also have some ethics. It is not allowed to post political posts, gossip, or adult-only content. Likewise, we have control. Everyone has political views, but we do not share those BPMS pages. At the very beginning, we imposed this restriction as soon as noticed the possibility.

Fourthly, co-creators have the opportunity to gain new knowledge as they organize diverse events. According to Mohamad, these events encompass various themes, including religious celebrations such as Christmas, Ramadan, Poson and Deepawali, cultural events like New Year Celebration, national events like Tsunami commemoration and Independence Day, cleaning initiatives, tree planting, meetings related to further park improvement, donations within the community, charitable contributions to external entities such as hospitals and disaster-vulnerable communities and member trips. Mohamad elaborated on some of these initiatives;

We are doing a New Year very grandly and successfully. We are doing a Poson dansela (sharing food freely with people) and this time we could give it to 1800 people. We are celebrating all the religious festivals like Wesak, Poson, or Christmas. When there is a disaster, we also act together for charity work. I can remember during my presidency we donated stationery for school children in Angalawatta as they were affected by a flood.

Organizing diverse events requires a variety of knowledge and skills and the cognitive experience gained by co-creators at the conclusion of each event is invaluable. As individuals work collectively, there are opportunities for them to learn from one another. This is supported by Lalith as he mentioned, ‘*Somehow, people also getting better as they have sources to expose to other information*’. Some of the events themselves aimed at knowledge dissemination. For example, there was an art competition for school children with the theme of coastal conservation.

Nalaka explained how he conducted a presentation for school children to disseminate knowledge about the coastal environment, *'I did a presentation about the sea and the beach. I showed them old photos of Crow Island Beach, beach cleaning, the best beaches in Sri Lanka and all to make the schoolchildren's minds want to draw good art'*. Accordingly, the events that co-creators organize provide opportunities for knowledge sharing within Crow Island co-creators as well as with outsiders. This was further evidenced by Mohamad: *'We have conducted numerous awareness-raising programs'*. Some of these programs focused on preventing waste discharge into the Keleni River. At the same time, BPMS members regularly shared important information on their social media platforms (Facebook page) intending to disseminate knowledge. The information about events and activities posted on their Facebook page serves as a valuable resource for other CBOs interested in volunteerism (Figure 5.10).

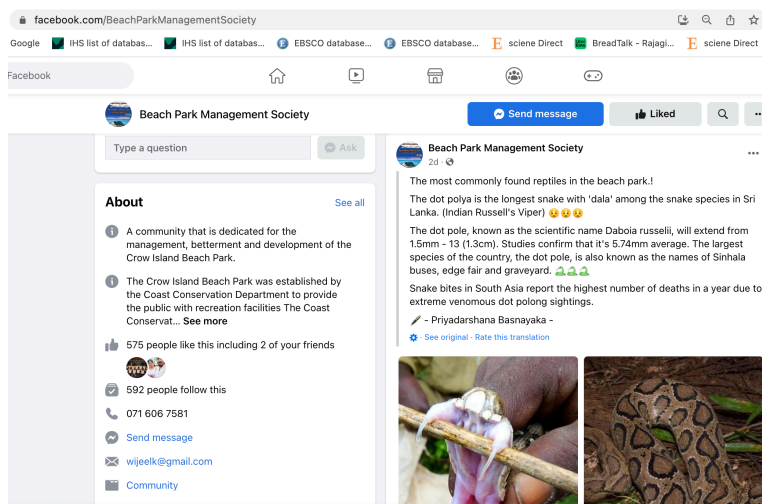


Figure 5.10: Evidence for knowledge sharing on Facebook wall

Source: BPMS Facebook page

Moreover, knowledge dissemination is not an unconscious effort. According to Gemunu, people are empowered from within the society without external force. Murshida particularly highlighted Gemunu's effort to empower individuals with good qualities to emerge as leaders. This empowerment within the society is further substantiated by Kumar's statement. Kumar was appointed as the president at one point and received support from other members, which helped him complete his tasks successfully:

I was appointed as the president too. At that time I was in India, but they appointed me. I said that I could not do it as I can't go and talk at public meetings, etc. But they said that everyone should get the leadership. However, I did my task well and others supported me.

In relation to knowledge dissemination, BPMS organized various sessions to enhance the knowledge of its members. The choice of the BPMS name was based on the idea of community-based management and a participatory approach, reflecting the concept that people manage the place. Gemunu explained the reason behind the name: *'We suggested the name by following the concepts of community-based management and participatory approach and keeping the name Beach Park Management Society, which means people manage'*. As co-managers, individuals require certain managerial skills, thus, they organize workshops. According to Gemunu, these workshops covered topics such as coastal environment awareness, citizens' voting rights awareness and SWOT analysis training; *'We invited the election commissioner to a lecture. We organized training on SWOT analysis for members and invited a good resource person. We discussed our way forward'* (Figure 5.11). Apart from internal workshops, some co-creators participated in workshops organized by government institutions, as they invited nominations from BPMS. Leelananda shared his experience of participating a workshop related to trees and how he subsequently shared his knowledge with other BPMS members.

We received an invitation to BPMS from the Central Environment Authority for a workshop related to trees and it was held in Hanthana, Kandy. I participated with another member. It was also a good experience. There we learned what are appropriate and inappropriate trees for the environment and plant terrorism etc. We acted upon that knowledge on the beach and we removed some plants.

கிதவன் சாமாசிகையி, அன்புள்ள அங்கத்தவர்களுக்கு,

11 வது கல்விக்கரம்
ஆம் ஆண்டு நிறைவு விழா

திகதி 05.02.2017 (ஓர்ப்பு) (சாயிற்றிக் கிழமை)
வேலாவி நேரம் 9.30 (சே.வி. மு.ப)
சுறாகை இடம் தாரா ஈயகையை "கேட்போர் கூடம்" நாரா நிறுவனம்

விசேஷ தேன :
1. வேரல் பரக்கரம் கை டுதுவன் கிரீம்
2. பூரவகி சன்ட டிசிகி

விசேட விரிவுரைகள் :
1. கரையோரச் சூழல் தொடர்பாக விழிப்புணர்வை ஏற்படுத்துதல்.
2. மக்களிற்குள்ள வாக்களிக்கும் உரிமை தொடர்பாகத் தெளிவு படுத்துதல்.
திரு.மஹிந்த தேசப்பிரிய, தலைவர் - இலங்கை தேர்தல்கள் ஆணைக்குழு

இல சூரோ ஈராடனா..
உங்கள் அனைவரையும் அன்புடன் வரவேற்கின்றோம்..

வேரல் டுதுவகை கைகிரீம் - கைகிரீம்
கைகிரீம் கைகிரீம் கைகிரீம் கைகிரீம்
Beach Park Management Society - Crow Island

Figure 5.11: Programmes to empower the members of BPMS

Source: BPMS Facebook page

Meanwhile, Seetha mentioned her inability to learn the Tamil language despite interacting with many Tamil-speaking people. She explained, ‘*There are many Tamil-speaking people live in this area, but yet I could not learn*’. She said that this language barrier has sometimes led to challenging experiences. This highlights that those who have the capacity and willingness had ample opportunities to empower themselves by engaging with Crow Island co-creators.

Moreover, the importance of transferring co-creation-related knowledge to the younger generation is underscored by Murshida’s husband. He emphasized, ‘*the existing leaders have really good values. It is necessary to let young people be exposed to the existing leaders*’. This sentiment was echoed by all the respondents, who commonly stated that “*There is an issue of getting young member’s participation*”. Nalaka mentioned, ‘*We are thinking of some strategies to get the young people involved*’, indicating that there is still a need for co-creators to learn and acquire knowledge on various aspects, particularly as the sustainability of the process depends on the willingness of the young generation to engage in the co-creation process.

5.4.3 Managing cognitive tensions and conflicts

Just as Crow Island co-creators work collectively and learn lessons collectively, they also collectively experience cognitive tensions, finding solutions to them in some instances, and preemptively addressing future scenarios.

The idea of place-making itself emerged as Crow Island residents collectively experienced cognitive tensions, primarily due to the Rita Johns murder case and the Tsunami disaster, which devastated the area physically and socially. According to the responses, these incidents prompted co-creators to consider converting the valuable land between the ocean and the residential area into a productive space. Nalaka said, *'Due to Tsunami, we wanted to do something. We were all convinced that this area needed to be developed'*, while Gemunu expressed that cognitive tension was the main reason for initiating place-making.

... the three main reasons for the start of this initiative are Rita John's incident, the Tsunami disaster, and the willingness of joggers. Everyone in the jogging community wanted to preserve the area clean and attractive, and everyone was wondering if it was feasible to turn this area into another Galle face.

Along these lines, the co-creation process was initiated as a response to managing cognitive tension. As people embarked on the task of creating a place on this coastal barren land, they realized the need for support from power organizations, particularly financial assistance for infrastructure development such as roads and a children's park. This second instance of managing cognitive tension was addressed by writing letters to the Department of Coast Conservation in Sri Lanka and securing funds. Mohamad explained how the first design was implemented around 2010.

As there was an empty land and we then discussed the way it should be developed to put roads, trees, benches, etc. We sent a request to the Ministry of Fishery to include our proposal in the development proposal. With Gemunu's support, we could include this proposal also in that list of proposed projects. The first design was done with our idea.

The third instance of managing cognitive tension involved raising funds for place management. Apart from the volunteers, according to Kumar, *'There was a man to do labour work and BPMS paid him Rs. 15,000 monthly'*. Further, he explained how they generated money, saying, *'We give parking lots for a small payment of Rs.20.00. As we*

receive an income, we could give a salary and take some work from the labour. We sacrificed all the work at home and stayed near the gate from 2.00 pm on Saturday and Sunday to give parking tickets'. Mohamad also added details about income generation from pavement vendors, stating, 'Then about 15 sellers were there to sell some short eats. We charged Rs. 100 for them'. Likewise, co-creators manage the financial requirements for place management.

Subsequently, co-creators recognized the need for further improvement to Crow Island Beach, given its valuable location in the CMC area. Nalaka explained how they took action to include this project in World Bank Funding in 2012.

... after trying for several months, I could talk to the secretary of the Ministry of Defence after a meeting. I told him about the potential of Crow Island and invited him to visit the place.

And Murshida continued, *'After he visited the place for the first time, the World Bank agreed to fund the beach park development'*. The respondents collectively acknowledge that the place had been developed to its current state with the support of World Bank funding and collaboration with the Urban Development Authority (UDA).

One instance of conflict management was mentioned by the respondents after park development. Crow Island residents criticized the park development, citing that car parking along the roads disrupted their accessibility. Lanarolle explained this issue and the action taken by BPMS to manage the conflict.

They designed for a few parking lots and we suggested expanding that to have more parking lots as the proposed ones are insufficient. On a holiday, this parking is full and the visitors do on-street parking, creating problems for the residents.

BPMS used its power to manage the conflicts, recognizing the importance of gaining respect from the average residents of Crow Island for future co-creations. Subsequently, the management of the beach park was formally assigned to CMC and BPMS primarily continued with *shramadana* activities in terms of management. This led to tension regarding whether BPMS members had lost their sense of responsibility and active participation. Gemunu explained how they formed a Death Donation Society to keep the membership actively engaged in BPMS society.

After the beach management duties were delegated to CMC, we changed the role of BPMS. So we were wondering about how to keep members because there was no ownership, no management, and simply volunteer shramadana. Then we proposed that a death donation scheme be established.

The Death Donation Society operates under the mother organization of BPMS. Seetha explained, *'In order to join it, one must first become a member of the BPMS. As a result, the membership is currently expanding'*. Further, she elaborated on how the organization benefits the community, *'We now all travel to the funeral home together when there is a funeral. We donate money, tents, seats, and some food'*. According to the responses, the Death Donation Society has led to more frequent meetings among members, and beneficiaries hold great gratitude toward BPMS.

Meanwhile, the BPMS organized many social events while adhering to good governance principles to reduce potential conflicts. As per the responses, inclusiveness, transparency, trust, rule of law and other ethical principles are emphasized. In terms of inclusiveness, people from different ethnic backgrounds could gain knowledge as all the communications were conducted in both Sinhala and Tamil languages. Gemunu explained this practice that strengthened social connections;

A main strategy we followed was that we always communicated something in both languages. We also made reports in both languages. Although members said it wasn't necessary, we followed the rules. The Annual General Meeting was also bilingual. We think that's also a good reason to connect with this society. Because language is a person's culture, we respect the language that means a lot to people.

Moreover, bi-lingual discussions also provided an opportunity for people to learn the other language. Seetha mentioned other strategies used to maintain equality, *'As the president of the BPMS is a Tamil-speaking person, a secretary is a Sinhala-speaking person'*. In addition to bi-lingual discussions, various effective communication methods were applied to keep the membership informed about the co-creations. They emphasized effective communication among leaders and committee members, committee members and other members and BPMS members and outsiders. Sumudu, as a committee member, shared her experience during park development-related discussions between BPMS and government organizations, *'I did not go to meetings with the government as I'm not in the main positions. Usually, the President and*

advisors went. When they go, they share all the information with the other members'. Having a WhatsApp group was an effective strategy to keep the membership updated. Murshida said, *'We use WhatsApp messages and other communications to keep the members...even though they are uncontactable always drop a note. So, they are well-informed'.* Further, Gemunu illustrated the effectiveness of real-time social media usage, *'We only sent a WhatsApp message to Dansela and did not send a letter, but we received Rs 750,000 within a few hours'.* Moreover, according to the BPMS constitution, regular users of the beach park and fishery community can obtain membership regardless of their social class. Accordingly, inclusiveness is one strategy for managing tensions.

BPMS members take necessary actions to maintain transparency regarding the work done by co-creators and the associated costs. Most of the work is documented with photographs on social media platforms, making it accessible to the public. They practice presenting the treasurer's report for the financial year to the membership at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), complete with certification from an auditor. During the AGM, members inquire about budgets and seek clarifications from the treasurer. Richard stated, *'We have a strong commitment to transparency and democratic values in BPMS'.* Murshida's husband added, *'When Murshida was involved, she insisted on having vouchers to ensure accountability and checked whether the money was returned. This helped implement the transparency principle'.* Maintaining transparency also fosters trust, as Richard noted, *'Members, non-members, and everyone trusts us'.* Thus, trust plays a significant role in managing conflicts and tensions, with Seetha summarizing it as, *'When we work, we trust, respect, and love people'.*, indicating the cohesion they maintain.

Moreover, it is essential to have a comprehensive understanding of the capacity of members to effectively manage conflicts and tensions. Kumar explained, *'We know the level of contribution and capacity of each one, therefore, no conflicts. As we have been together a long time, we have that familiarity'.* and individuals are aware of their strengths. For example, Gemunu said, *'If I decide to do something, I will endeavor to accomplish it in some way'.* and Murshida shared a similar perspective, saying, *'I don't say "No" to anything. I try to say something positive and try to do whatever is*

possible'. Furthermore, most members hold great respect for the advice provided by advisors. Sumudu explained, *'When we make decisions, we usually pay respect to our advisor's ideas, as most of the time they suggest good things'*. Advisors can play a significant role in conflict prevention, as expressed by Mohamad, who stated, *'We get the final decision after asking Gemunu. We still keep him in a respectable position'*. He further elaborated on the reasons for such respect, saying, *'Gemunu has not taken a rupee from the BPMS and will not do it'*. Likewise, maintaining ethical behaviour by the majority of members is a reason for proceeding with co-creations without conflicts and tensions. That idea is established by Nissanka's statement;

When I read the annual report, I speak in between and tell the members that this society is running continually because of our honesty. Some people form societies to earn money, but we come to give our money. [මේ සමිතිය මෙවිටර කල් දුවන්නේ අවංකකම නිසයි.]

In addition to these conflict management strategies rooted in principles and ethics, having a constitution for BPMS guides members to work in accordance with the rule of law. It was observed at the AGM that two opinions emerged regarding the selection of a committee for the following year: either continue with the existing members for another 6 months of 2023 or appoint a new committee. A debate was allowed first, following the constitution, and then a vote was conducted to determine the majority's opinion. In that respect, once a decision is made, conflicts and debates cease, as the law dictates the actions to be taken, and members respect the law. Nonetheless, tensions and conflicts can arise during the co-creation process and the cognitive experiences of the respondents have provided valuable lessons. They have implemented various strategies to manage these conflicts and tensions effectively.

Consequently, the co-creation process has provided opportunities for generating new ideas and gaining insights and knowledge, regardless of the educational differences among members. They have employed strategies to empower individuals from within the community, facilitating learning and knowledge acquisition. Additionally, they have practiced conflict and tension management strategies.

5.5 Hedonic experience

Hedonic experience can be judged based on the expectations and stimuli generated through participation in the co-creation process (Gentile et al., 2007). According to Zhang et al. (2020), hedonic experience is a positive emotional state that leads to people's satisfaction; It is the pleasurable experience participants anticipate from co-creation.

Based on both the responses and documents, the primary objectives of the co-creators, are: 1) to get the participation of relevant stakeholders to protect the environment and to create a user-satisfied beach park in Crow Island, 2) to improve the cohesiveness and cooperation among members, 3) to help the beach park users to improve their physical and psychological well-being. Gemunu, Lanarolle and Leelananda have clearly articulated their perspectives, expressing, *"Now the place is at the commendable level"*; *"Our vision is to make this as the best beach park of South Asia"* and *"This environment is also attractive and we feel proud"*. They have successfully achieved their main objective of developing the place, which is now in operation. Additionally, the transfer of park management responsibilities to the CMC, the most prominent local authority in Sri Lanka, is a significant accomplishment. Consequently, for most respondents, this place-making endeavor represents a hedonic experience, although their individual experiences may vary in intensity.

Respondents have reported hedonic experiences, deriving pleasure from interactions among participants and the outcomes of events and activities while participating in the co-creation process for 17 years. The respondents used terms such as "I'm happy," "We feel proud," "We are satisfied," "We have self-satisfaction," and "We are enthusiastic" to describe the hedonic feelings they experience. Some respondents expressed their enjoyment in the context of the entire process. For example, Seetha mentioned, *'I am genuinely happy about my experiences and involvement in beach park development activities'*, and Sumudu stated, *'Working in BPMS brings me satisfaction'*. Similarly, some explained their hedonic experience based on their engagement in specific activities. In this regard, Murshida stated, *'I'm very happy, once I complete a project. You know it is about satisfaction'*. Furthermore, some respondents expressed satisfaction with living in Crow Island, as Mohamad said, *'We are content with living*

in this area'. Moreover, some derive hedonic experiences from positive social interactions. For example, Sumudu said, *'I spend time with BPMS members happily'*, and Nalaka stated, *'We are very enthusiastic about all social work and give it a high priority'*.

Their hedonic experiences stem from various reasons, including the opportunity to interact and engage in social service. Murshida explained, *'As I interact with everyone, it has become an interesting endeavor. Therefore, I want to continue with social work'*, and Nissanka mentioned that he derives happiness from his involvement in BPMS because it allows him to serve people, saying, *'I am happy about my involvement in BPMS because I can serve people. Above all, humanity should prevail'*.

Furthermore, the respondents mentioned the ways and means they have adopted to experience hedonism. Although the core task of the co-creators is managing the quality of the place, they recognize that a place encompasses a combination of physical settings, activities, and meanings. Consequently, they not only maintain the physical setting but also organize various activities and events to keep the place vibrant. When such events are linked to cultural values, participants derive enjoyment and satisfaction from the event itself. For instance, the Break-Fast IFTHAR event organized by the Crow Island Beach Park Management Society received appreciation from the Muslim community, both within and outside Crow Island. Gemunu mentioned that they plan to organize the same event next year, as satisfied community members have expressed their willingness to contribute (Figure 5.12).



Figure 5.12: Evidence of willingness to participate

Source: BPMS Facebook page

Similar to cultural events, some respondents expressed their enjoyment of environmental conservation activities. For instance, the Urban Forest Project is a passion for Lalith, who identifies himself as "an environmentalist." Additionally, some participants derive positive hedonic experiences from the opportunities to interact with other networking groups. This occurs because some government organizations, such as the Disaster Management Centers, Western Province Environmental Police, and Colombo Municipal Council, choose Crow Island Beach Park as the venue for their events. Saman mentioned, '*Yesterday also I participated in a cleaning program with the Sri Lanka Police*', indicating his satisfaction with these collaborations.

Furthermore, BPMS members employ strategies to enhance the enjoyment of certain events for participants. For instance, they provide refreshments during meetings, serve breakfast after the Poyaday Shramadana, play music during cleaning or tree planting activities, organize trips, and host a musical show at the end of the New Year celebration (Figure 5.13). Murshida explained, *'Even for a small gathering, I always arrange some refreshments'*, and Leelananda mentioned, *'We've continued the tradition of having breakfast together after Shramadana since the beginning... It has also been a positive experience for the residents of Crow Island'*. Likewise, the respondents explicitly stated that these events bring them happiness, with one respondent saying, *'When I look at the Facebook page, we have organized so many events. So I'm happy about it'* (Murshida).



Figure 5.13: Monthly meetings of BPMS committee members

Source: BPMS Facebook page

Further, people experience satisfaction because they have been able to improve the area's previous negative reputation. Seetha mentioned that *'This place had a bad name, but now developed very well, so we feel happy'*. People are satisfied with the beach park and its environs because they can use it for their recreational needs. Murshida elaborated;

The value of this area is enhanced due to the beach park. Usually, we should have a place to go for leisure activities. In the beach park, everything is there, playground, beach, children's park, etc... because of the beach park development, a lot of outsiders came and were impressed with the BPMS too.

Additionally, the respondents of Crow Island get a hedonic experience as they could enjoy the uniqueness of the place and society. By proving that Gemunu mentioned, *'Not only Sinhalese live here, but also Moors, Tamils, Burgers and other ethnic groups, which makes it a unique experience for us'*.

While the respondents shared their hedonic experiences, some participants viewed their involvement in co-creations as social obligations rather than sources of enjoyment. Therefore, they derive more satisfaction than pleasure from these activities. Sumudu pointed out that the ultimate outcome goes beyond mere enjoyment, stating, *"In the end, we all gain self-satisfaction and psychological development"*. Moreover, all co-creators adhere to Gemunu's principle, which is *'We should not seek any benefits'*. They understand that, in return, they only derive satisfaction. As Gemunu puts it, *'This is our volunteer work, and we must find satisfaction in the good work we have done'*.

Nevertheless, some respondents express doubts about the outcomes of place-making, even though they experience satisfaction at the end of each milestone in the process. Gemunu expressed his feelings about the outcomes of place-making, saying, *'This area used to be like a village. It appeals to me immensely. Now that the place is crowded, I don't like it as much. I am sometimes saddened by the village's urbanization'*. However, Gemunu mentioned in another instance, *'We are overjoyed when observing the area now. I took some videos recently too. The trees that were planted are now big, and when walking in the early morning, it is hard to believe whether this is in the congested Colombo city'*. These contradictory views from the same person imply that the level of satisfaction varies over time.

Further, some respondents' express dissatisfaction with the collaboration with certain government organizations, believing that *"project officers wasted funds"*. The reasons for the dissatisfaction are further elaborated by Gemunu as,

The material selection is a failure. Some buildings are now dilapidated due to the usage of low-quality wood. They could have used concrete instead. Even the costs might be reduced. Some designs are not fit for our climate. We never used the structure in the south end, and it is now decaying.

Seetha also supports this fact by stating, *'We believe community participation should be there during the implementation period as the contractors decided on the materials...therefore, you can see some constructions are dilapidated so soon. In case we were consulted, we could have shared our experiences'*. However, Lalith indicates that they communicated with the contractors regarding the preferences of the community. He says, *'We told them during construction, better replace materials as some materials were not durable'*. This implies that when people do not actively participate in decision-making, they may have doubts about the outcomes and tend to express dissatisfaction.

Moreover, the analysis illustrates that social, economic, cognitive and hedonic experiences are interconnected and interdependent. Gemunu explained in a nutshell when the question 'What have you gained from the project?'.

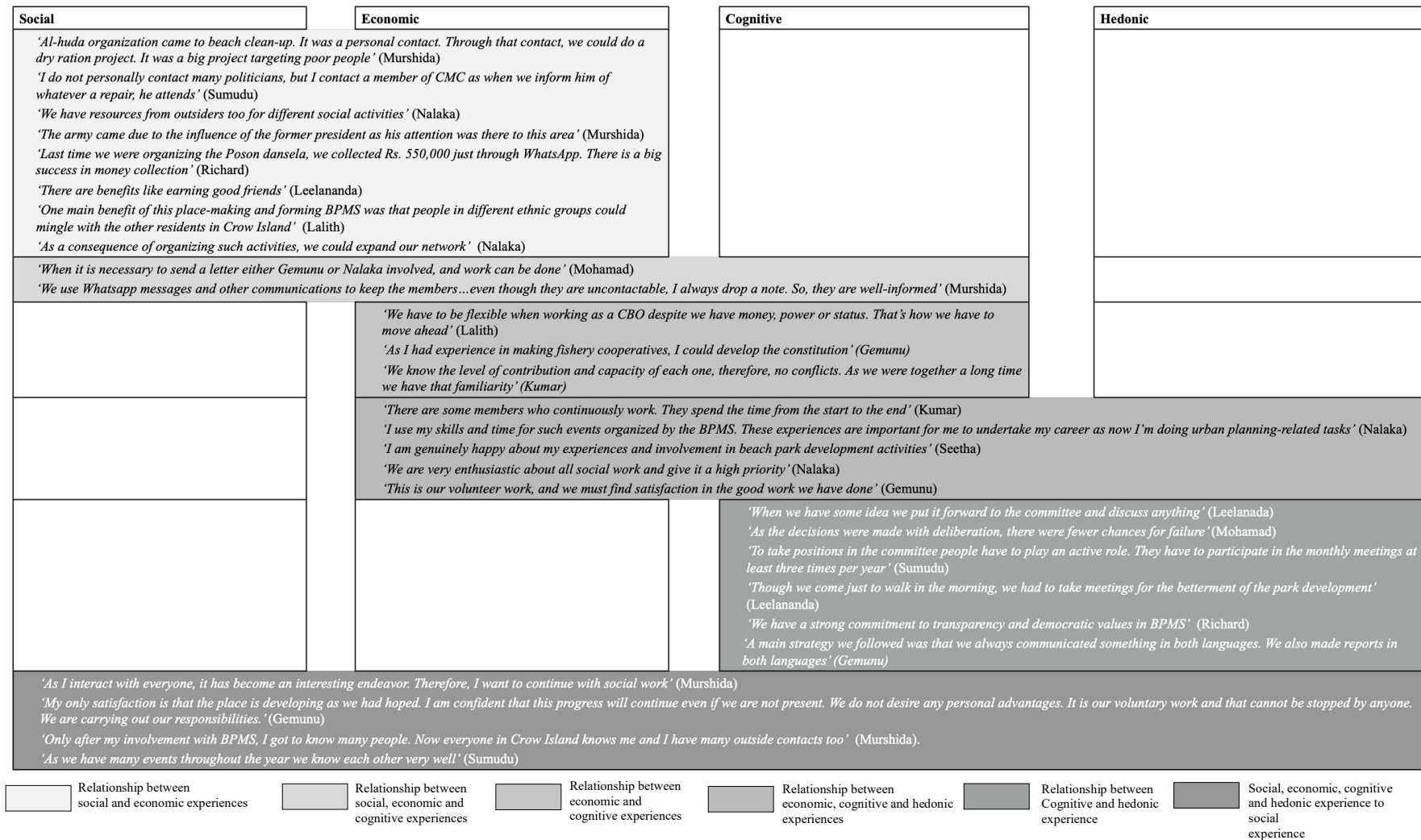
My only satisfaction is that the place is developing as we had hoped. I am confident that this progress will continue even if we are not present. We do not desire any personal advantages. It is our voluntary work and that cannot be stopped by anyone. We are carrying out our responsibilities.

5.6 Relationship between co-creation experience dimensions

Although this research does not aim to establish the relationship between each co-creation experience construct, some of the aforementioned quotations imply a pattern-like relationship among the four types of experiences outlined in Figure 5.14. Upon further analysis of this pattern, it is noteworthy to identify that social experience is the primary aspect of the co-creation experience. This is because the essence of co-creation fundamentally involves forming networks with different stakeholders. Social experience extends beyond passive contacts; rather, it involves the sharing of resources, namely labour, money and power, as indicated in this research. Consequently, it is observed that economic experience emerges with the formation of the social network. Subsequently, cognitive experiences arise because, without social and economic experiences, individuals lack the foundation for learning and acquiring new knowledge from the co-creation process. According to this research, hedonic experience is an outcome of social, economic and cognitive experiences as individuals derive happiness and satisfaction from their social relationships, benefits and new

experiences. There are no evidence or reason in this research to argue that hedonic experience exists before the other three experiences. Therefore, it is proposed that social experience precedes economic, cognitive and hedonic experiences, respectively, thus forming a co-creation experience cycle (Figure 5.15). Once participants gain hedonic experiences, it becomes a reason for their continued experience of co-creation in different phases or instances. Therefore, individuals return to the co-creation experience and know it anew in a continuous experience. However, an individual moving in the co-creation experience cycle may never be covering the same ground, but there is a possibility either to grow, remain in the same position, or quit.

Figure 5.14: Relationship between co-creation experience dimensions



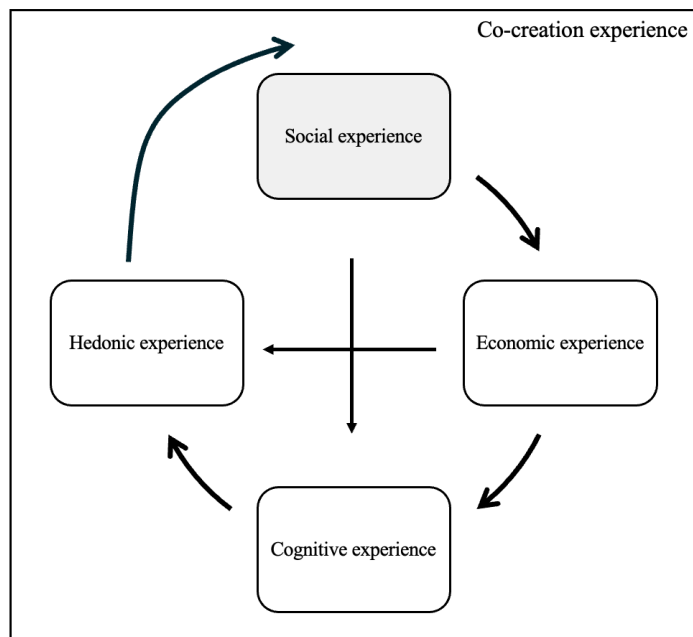


Figure 5.15: Co-creation experience cycle

Source: Author

5.7 Discussion

This chapter addresses the research question, '*How does the community experience co-creation?*'. The literature review indicates that the co-creation experience is multi-dimensional. Using empirical data, this chapter explores social, economic, cognitive and hedonic experiences. In light of the findings that emerged during the qualitative analysis, this section discusses these findings with existing literature.

5.7.1 Robust social network of co-creators

Regarding social experience, the co-creators of Crow Island appear to have a robust social network, characterized by dense, diverse and productive connections. When visualized in a social network diagram, it becomes evident that a social network comprises three distinct clusters: a bonding network cluster, an external resource cluster and a linking network cluster. Some existing scholarship has applied social network analysis to study the post-disaster recovery process, identifying bonding, bridging and linking actors (Jung & Song, 2015; Vachette et al., 2017; Vantaggiato & Lubell, 2022). However, urban place co-creation research, as per the literature review,

has not yet identified the social network of participants and the roles of actors in terms of bonding, bridging and linking network connections. Thus, this research contributes new knowledge to co-creation and social network analysis research fields.

In the context of the Crow Island case, it can be concluded that the community involved in co-creations exhibits diversity in terms of gender, education, income, ethnicity, religion and political views. However, despite these differences, they are all part of social networks to achieve a common goal: making a place. Pelling and High (2005) also mention that the social actors share interests or goals, but they may have contrasting social identities.

Further, the findings reveal that the linking network cluster includes many actors but exhibits lower tie density and lower degree centrality for its actors compared to the bonding network cluster. This observation aligns with existing literature (Macke & Dilly, 2010; Ulibarri & Scott, 2017). However, scholars have different perspectives regarding the relationship between tie density and collaborations. For instance, Sandström and Carlsson (2008) demonstrated that a high tie density encourages collaboration, particularly when there are numerous relationships between various actor types. However, Smythe et al. (2014) argue that for collaborative planning, a lower-density network works better. They suggest that an excessively dense network may become too homogeneous, which would hinder the sharing of novel and distinctive knowledge and discourage ties with individuals outside the network. Both perspectives provide insights into the case of Crow Island Beach Park co-creation because less dense but heterogeneous linking network actors bring various resources to the co-creation effort.

In comparison to the linking network cluster, the bonding network cluster comprises a larger number of actors, exhibits higher tie density, and features a greater degree centrality among its actors. According to Olsson et al. (2004), such a social network structure has a high potential for collective action and collaboration. This observation is further supported by Smythe et al. (2014), who affirm that a high degree centrality implies greater activity and collaboration, a characteristic evident among the Crow Island co-creators.

Another noteworthy finding of this research is that linking actors located in close proximity to Crow Island, such as Crow Island Police, NAVY, and NARA, are actively and frequently involved in co-creations, similar to bonding actors. This finding aligns with the research by Glaeser et al. (2002), which suggests that proximity can influence the formation of social networks and access to network-based resources. Additionally, Wojcik et al. (2021) highlight that relationships among geographically proximate organizations are likely influenced not only by convenience and resource-sharing but also by a shared sense of purpose and connection to a specific place.

Moreover, the analysis reveals the presence of three main clusters with some degree of overlap. For example, a member of the local authority and Gemunu are positioned between the bonding network cluster and the linking network cluster, displaying characteristics of both networks. Healy and Hampshire (2002) also acknowledges that in practice, distinguishing between bonding, bridging, and linking social capital is not always straightforward due to the multiple and overlapping relationships individuals maintain with others. Additionally, Vantaggiato and Lubell (2022) identify various reasons for overlapping characteristics, including engagement in both coordination and cooperation activities and connections among different actors in both core and peripheral roles.

Furthermore, it is reasonable to categorize the external volunteer clusters as bridging social networks, as they effectively convey the needs related to Crow Island Beach development to other resourceful actors. This categorization aligns with Vantaggiato and Lubell (2022), who classify local-level environmental and advocacy NGOs as part of the bridging layer. Similarly, Putnam (2001) identifies bridging social capital as outward-looking, facilitating connections among diverse individuals. Van Meerkerk and Edelenbos (2018) refer to NGOs that link CBOs and state agencies as boundary spanners. Therefore, the terms "bridges," "brokers," and "boundary spanners" are synonymous with external volunteer clusters.

Moreover, the social network analysis reveals the presence of bridging actors within the bonding network cluster as well. This observation is in line with Smythe et al. (2014), who emphasize the importance of bridging actors that connect diverse subgroups, as they facilitate the exchange of knowledge and information, promote

trust-building, and support collective action. Similarly, when such actors establish connections with different social layers and particularly develop relationships with institutions, they acquire relative power to take leadership roles in co-creations (Woolcock, 2001). According to Andrew (2009), these actors cultivate social relationships with both linking actors and those in peripheral roles. Due to these characteristics, the findings highlight that the social network expansion of boundary spanners in the bonding network cluster is distinct from that of other actors, as they possess the capacity to channel resources effectively into co-creation. Smythe et al. (2014) also affirm that these actors are important in sharing resources between diverse actors.

In this context, a question arises as to whether the definition of the bonding network is suitable in the context of co-creation. This is because religious leaders and local government representatives also become members of the bonding network due to their frequent social connections. This perspective aligns with Claridge (2018), who notes that friendships, typically seen as bonding social capital, may also function as bridging relations, providing access to information and other groups or individuals that were previously unknown to each other. Therefore, actors' roles can vary based on the nature of the goals they pursue within the social network. Mandarano (2009) further argues that while identifying the social experience, it is essential to take into account not just the structure of the social network but also the connections between structure, collaborative processes, and embedded resources within the community.

5.7.2 Social network of co-creators gradually expands

The research findings illustrate that the social networks of co-creators gradually expand. As Gehl (2011) notes, people initially experience society through "see and hear contacts" or passive contact, and later, the intensity of contacts increases, to include interactions with close friends. This pattern holds true for Crow Island co-creators, as indicated by the development of a dense bonding social network.

Furthermore, this research highlights the advantages of being part of a CBO, as co-creators have the opportunity to become familiar with the entire community through their membership in BPMS. They also become members of a larger social network

that includes both government and non-government actors, given their active involvement in co-creation activities. While research related to the impact of CBOs on civic engagement among urban youth has mentioned that CBOs facilitate the expansion of young people's social networks (Shiller, 2013), there has been limited discussion in the context of place co-creation. However, this research aligns with Schneider's (2009) idea that social network expansion is a gradual process that requires time and capacity to build and maintain connections effectively.

Additionally, the findings suggest that co-creators benefit personally from being recognized as resourceful actors within a larger social network, which instills a sense of pride. While not the primary intention of all actors, some respondents indicated experiencing this recognition genuinely. As a result, they are inclined to connect with others and expand their social networks whenever opportunities arise. Although this finding has not been extensively discussed in the context of non-virtual, place-based social networks, research in virtual and social media-based social networks has emphasized users' expectations regarding recognition (Munar & Jacobsen, 2014).

5.7.3 Economic experience of co-creation can yield resources for further co-creation

This research primarily identifies three main types of resources that can emerge during the co-creation process due to the economic experience of co-creators: labor, money, and power. Phi and Dredge (2019) also identify these resources as types of collaborative exchanges in the context of tourism development. However, this research emphasizes that labor is the most important resource for co-creation. Labor encompasses not only the physical capacity of individuals but also their time, skills, ideas, and various capacities. Arvidsson et al. (2011, p. 212) posit that "co-creation can even be considered a form of labor," and Mattijssen et al. (2017) identify a shortage of a stable labor base as a serious threat to the continuity of volunteering. Moreover, several authors attribute the availability of these resources for co-creation to the existence of a social network, as individuals serve as sources of social capital by contributing diversity within the network (Hou & Rios, 2003; Smythe et al., 2014). In addition to the three main types of resources, the findings highlight that individuals contribute with their time, credentials, services, and expertise.

Moreover, the research findings show that funds, power, and expertise from government agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and universities are crucial for Crow Island Beach Park development. Hou and Rios (2003) also elaborate on how co-creators network with outsiders to tap resources, particularly expertise, funds, and power. As explained in relation to social experience, connections with outside organizations were established because of the influential actors within the social network, particularly local government representatives in the case of Crow Island. Guribye (2018) mentions that when local government representatives are involved in co-creations, they can identify gaps in local resources and create networks to facilitate co-creation. Accordingly, this research demonstrates that more resources can be tapped for co-creation as a consequence of the expansion of the social network. Existing discourses highlight the importance of social networks for the effective exchange of resources and the requirement for that network to be diverse (Mattijssen et al., 2017; Vantaggiato & Lubell, 2022). Notably, resources can be gained from outside organizations only if bonding and bridging network-based resources are sufficiently embedded in the social network; otherwise, external interventions may negatively affect the entire co-creation process, as mentioned by Titeca and Vervisch (2008).

The research uncovered specific characteristics of co-creation-based resources. Firstly, some resources are continuously supplied to the co-creation effort, while others are provided on a temporary basis. Titeca and Vervisch (2008) also discuss the time factor in resource availability. Secondly, the majority of co-creators contribute resources while disregarding their social status, personal goals, and commitments. This reflects a 'universal moral imperative,' as noted by Campbell (2014). Consequently, most respondents were hesitant to highlight their personal contributions, emphasizing that "all contributions are collective." Some contributors to resources may even prefer to remain anonymous. This aligns with Goldstone's (1994) notion that these participants deliberately choose to act collectively as a group for the future. Furthermore, it underscores the altruistic quality of co-creators.

Thirdly, co-creators contribute resources because the system is trustworthy, accountable, and transparent. Both Guribye (2018) and Rohe (2004) acknowledge that trust leads to more effective collective action. Fourthly, certain resources, such as

money, play a vital role in expanding the social experience and, consequently, the social network. As the social network expands, co-creators can tap into more resources. Pretty and Ward (2001, p. 214) suggest that social capital increases with use, stating that "under certain circumstances, the more it is used, the more it regenerates." Similarly, a successful co-creation process can generate collective power, which can be harnessed to promote sustainable place-making while ensuring fairness and public welfare. Koch (2013) explains that in situations where people engage in collective actions, they generate collective power. He further notes that collective power legitimizes the entire process and enables progress in subsequent stages. Sell and Sznycer (2023) also highlight several advantages of collective power, including shaping individual behavior, improving welfare, ensuring fairness and equity, and achieving desired outcomes.

Fifthly, the economic experience of co-creation can yield satisfactory outcomes when co-creators identify the potentials and capacities of other members, and when participants are flexible. Yan et al. (2019) also confirm that stakeholders with diverse knowledge backgrounds participate in social innovation, emphasizing the importance of an open and flexible social network. This finding can also align with the social responsive index and collective intelligence index, which refer to the co-creative maturity of actors, as proposed by Mačiulienė and Skaržauskienė (2020).

5.7.4 Economic experience of co-creation can yield benefits

This research identified several benefits of the economic co-creation experience, including health benefits, positive social relationships, and property value appreciation. The most significant benefit is the inclusive nature of Crow Island Beach Park, which welcomes individuals of all ages, genders, social classes, and ethnic backgrounds. Recent scholars have emphasized the value of health benefits, particularly for older communities (Corcoran et al., 2018; Lager et al., 2021). Similarly, collaborative design, as observed in the Crow Island case, has been shown to enhance social well-being (Wu et al., 2022), and property value appreciation has been linked to revitalization efforts (Ehlenz, 2019).

However, some research reveals that women have fewer opportunities to engage in co-creation experiences compared to men. Helga et al. (2022) also noted that female voices are often overlooked in co-creation efforts in Bolivia. In contrast, in Crow Island, women are not excluded, and the BPMS constitution explicitly states that at least four committee members should be women.

5.7.5 Generating new ideas, insights and knowledge through co-creation

Regarding cognitive experience, this research found that the co-creation process led to the generation of new ideas, insights, and knowledge, aligning with existing scholarship (Verleye, 2015; Legacy et al., 2014). Respondents agreed that participating in the co-creation process empowered them by providing opportunities for learning and growth. Several factors contributed to this empowerment: the presence of leaders, frequent contacts, the heterogeneity and values of members, and the system itself.

Firstly, the research highlighted the significance of leaders in facilitating successful collaborations, a point acknowledged by many authors (Huxham & Vangen, 2000; van Meerkerk & Edelenbos, 2018). In the context of Crow Island, leaders played a crucial role in providing opportunities for average members to empower themselves. Even individuals, including women, who had never worked in a formal system had the chance to learn about systems and procedures by working as committee members. Existing literature also discusses the link between participation and learning opportunities (King et al., 1998; Sultana & Thompson, 2012; Evelyn et al., 2011), with a focus on the role of leaders, as observed in the Crow Island case.

Furthermore, Crow Island Beach Park Management Society was initiated with a constitution and the involvement of respected community members, creating a favorable impression among members from the outset. Galvin (2004) underscores the importance of such a strong foundation for the sustainability of community-based organizations. Similarly, the research findings indicate that co-creations empower average community members without external involvement, a process that occurs within the co-creation itself. Dash and Thilagam (2023) note that community empowerment is a positive social implication of place-making. Meanwhile, Haro-Zea

et al. (2018) link community empowerment to sustainable development. However, Mansuri and Rao (2004) caution that excessive dominance by leaders can lead to elite capture. According to the findings of the Crow Island case, there is no indication of such elite domination, as reported by any respondent.

Secondly, the findings underscore the importance of frequent contact and events in facilitating cognitive experiences, aligning with Friedmann's (1993, p. 482) perspective that collaborative planning necessitates real-time "face-to-face interaction." In this context, Agger and Jensen (2021) also highlight the value of creating opportunities by offering knowledge and new skills through one-on-one or group support and by cultivating supportive peer relationships. Similarly, Puerari et al. (2018) emphasize that Urban Living Labs provide a platform for reflexive, adaptive, and multi-actor learning environments. They suggest that the primary purpose of co-creation is to collaborate to learn, build knowledge, and expand social networks. The Crow Island case illustrates that co-creators had opportunities to learn from a variety of actors as they organized events with external organizations. When other organizations selected Crow Island for their events, they generally collaborated with BPMS members. Puerari et al. (2018) highlight a research gap concerning the link between knowledge production and learning in Urban Living Labs (ULLs), which needs exploration in practice. This research addresses that gap by demonstrating various ways in which co-creation can lead to emerge new ideas, insights, and knowledge. However, the Crow Island case indicates that cognitive experience is often gained after working extensively with diverse individuals and achieving a variety of goals.

Thirdly, this research finds that participant heterogeneity is essential for successful co-creation. Möller and Törrönen (2003) also suggest that heterogeneity has the potential to influence the type of knowledge co-created. However, they present an alternative perspective, suggesting that heterogeneity can lead to diverse viewpoints that may be challenging to reconcile. Nevertheless, in the case of Crow Island, the decision-making environment is inclusive, and as Lockwood et al. (2010) assert decision-making processes or outcomes should not depend on factors such as race, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

Additionally, the research findings indicate several benefits of cognitive experiences. One benefit is that co-creators can utilize the knowledge gained for their career development, as mentioned by Sutinen et al. (2016). Furthermore, the opportunity to acquire knowledge is not limited to co-creators alone; outsiders also reap various benefits. Nevertheless, the findings suggest a common challenge inherent in co-creation is the reluctance of younger groups to participate actively (Malone, 1999; Van Eijk & Gasco, 2018; Mattijssen, 2022).

5.7.6 Managing conflict and tension in co-creation experience

The cognitive experience encompasses instances in which cognitive conflicts and tensions are managed. The findings reveal that further place-making becomes possible when co-creators make efforts to address these cognitive tensions. Furthermore, the responses indicate that Crow Island co-creators paid careful attention to maintaining effective communication with CBO members and outsiders to minimize cognitive conflicts and tensions. Many authors emphasize that effective communication is a key aspect that fosters trust, which is crucial for conflict minimization (Rovers et al., 2015; Pancholi et al., 2018; Pancholi et al., 2019). Coleman (1990, p. 496) also confirms that extensive internal communication within a group participating in collective action can lead to "zealous action that is collectively self-sustaining." Another strategy for effectively managing cognitive conflicts and tensions is having a constitution for the CBO, which provides a guide for members to act following established rules. North (1990) notes how CBOs are bound by institutions, and Mattijssen et al. (2017) mention that having established rules helps provide stability and continuity of management. However, BPMS also makes gradual changes to the existing rules when necessary. Consequently, BPMS members gain cognitive experience as they participate in beach park co-creation, and the level of experience varies based on the level of active participation and demographic factors.

5.7.7 Co-creators' hedonic experience is intrinsic

Hedonic experience serves as a valuable indicator to assess the overall value that people derive from their co-creation experience. According to the findings, Crow Island co-creators derived hedonic experiences through interactions with internal and

external groups, engagement in continuous and diverse place-making activities, and the tangible outcome of creating a unique place. Authors identify the hedonic experience as an intrinsic value (Warren, 2014), with co-creators expecting fun, pleasure, and entertainment irrespective of extrinsic rewards (Chen et al., 2018). This holds true in the Crow Island case, as almost all respondents mentioned that they participated in place-making for self-satisfaction without expecting any tangible benefits. It is crucial to note that, in the context of co-creation, people are more enthusiastic to participate when they have ample opportunities to interact with resourceful individuals and organizations from outside. Crowe (2010) acknowledges that community social network structure significantly influences community satisfaction, and van Bortel and Mullins (2009) identify the tendency toward satisfactory outcomes due to collective support from actors in the network governance process.

Furthermore, co-creators derive fun, entertainment, and satisfaction from organizing events. This highlights that both the physical quality of the place as a product and its functions can enhance the hedonic experience. While many studies investigate the degree of satisfaction with co-creation in relation to tourism, there is limited research related to place-making (Dekhili & Hallem, 2020; Prebensen & Xie, 2017), making this research a valuable addition to the existing knowledge. Additionally, the responses indicate that the hedonic experience extends beyond co-creators' satisfaction and encompasses their rewarding experiences and personal development (De Jong et al., 2019).

5.7.8 Enjoyment fuels further co-creation experiences

One significant finding from the research is that positive hedonic experiences lead to a willingness to participate in future co-creations. This is consistent with research by Roy et al. (2019), who found that intelligent consumers who willingly participate in value-creation activities have a similar desire. Their research also suggests that the level of satisfaction with co-creation can vary over time, as is the case with satisfaction related to other aspects (Balaji, 2014). Additionally, the research findings do not indicate any significant difference in satisfaction levels between male and female co-creators. However, Cambra-Fierro et al. (2017) discovered that in the retail banking

sector, co-creation has a greater positive impact on satisfaction for men than for women, but a stronger direct effect on loyalty for women. Furthermore, concerning co-creation, the respondents mentioned collective hedonic experience, wherein a larger number of people gather at one point in time, in one location, for pleasure and enjoyment through place co-creation (Ng et al., 2007).

5.7.9 Co-creation experience cycle is a new knowledge

Related to similar research on the co-creation experience cycle, Zhang et al. (2015) explore customer learning value (cognitive), social integrative value and hedonic value in relation to environmental stimuli and intention of future participation. However, there are no findings to understand the relationship between these three types of co-creation experiences. Roy et al. (2019) consider hedonic, cognitive, social or personal and pragmatic or economic experiences by considering co-creation as a multi-dimensional construct. Nevertheless, there are no discussions about the characteristics of these four types of co-creation experiences.

Verleye (2014) also develops a scale measuring the co-creation experience as a multi-dimensional phenomenon and the scale to reflect the extent to which customers get hedonic, cognitive, social, personal, pragmatic and economic benefits by engaging in co-creation. As per Verleye's (2014) research findings, hedonic, cognitive and social/personal experience positively affect the overall co-creation experience, whereas the pragmatic/economic experience did not have an impact. However, this research does not reveal the significance of one construct over another or the relationship between sub-constructs of co-creation experience. Accordingly, the co-creation experience cycle gives novel insights to the existing co-creation research.

In conclusion, this chapter highlights that the Crow Island Beach Park Management Society is actively engaged in the co-creation of the beach park, experiencing co-creation from multiple dimensions. Therefore, the next chapter will explore into the relationship between the sense of place and the co-creation experience.

CHAPTER 6

Relationship between sense of place and co-creation experience in the context of Crow Island

6.1 Introduction

This chapter addresses the research question: *‘How do sense of place and co-creation experiences relate?’*. As identified in the literature review, sense of place primarily includes the components of place dependence, place attachment and place identity. However, the empirical study of this research has advanced this understanding by identifying a “sense of place ladder”, which ranges from a feeling of placelessness at the bottom to be connected, committed, commendable, and consecrated to the place at the top. Furthermore, the co-creation experience is explored through the lenses of social, economic, cognitive, and hedonic aspects, culminating in the identification of a co-creation experience cycle. This chapter will examine the dynamic relationship between sense of place and the aspects of the co-creation experience.

In addition to the typical reporting of qualitative findings based on quotations, this chapter examines the relationship through a co-occurrence matrix-like experience pyramid. This pyramid comprises co-creation experience dimensions arranged horizontally and sense of place ladder items arranged vertically. The matrix is filled with quotations and evidence to support the relationship between each dimension. At each rung of the sense of place ladder, individuals can engage in co-creation at varying levels, and the progression from one step to another in the sense of place ladder is determined by the co-creation experience itself. Finally, this analysis of a matrix-like experience pyramid was instrumental in identifying an upward-spiraling relationship between the sense of place and the co-creation experience.

The findings presented in this chapter are supported by evidence from the Crow Island Beach Park Development case study. Using the exploratory method, essential concepts are derived and further discussed, taking into consideration existing literature in the later section of the chapter.

6.2 Placelessness and co-creation experience

This research interviewed 16 members of the BPMS and findings revealed that Crow Island and its environs are considered a place for all the respondents. However, their explanations indicated that some people do not feel Crow Island and its environs. These explanations help us understand the relationship between the feeling of placelessness and the co-creation experience. According to the responses, there are several reasons for the placelessness.

Firstly, some residents who live immediately outside Crow Island are of a lower income level than the Crow Island community. As a result, they hesitate to allocate time for co-creations and to develop social relationships with the members of the Beach Park Management Society. In this regard, Gemunu mentioned, *'Some people are hesitant to move with other groups. Crow Islanders speak English and behave differently when we organize a get-together or whatever. BPMS mostly consists of middle-class people'*. Gemunu called this phenomenon “class-based divergence”, which is a societal constraint to using the place and participating in co-creation.

Secondly, age is a factor that keeps some people away from the place and thus from co-creations. The responses revealed that, on one hand, the younger community does not feel connected to the place, making them reluctant to participate in co-creation. On the other hand, older respondents mentioned that they are not willing to visit or do activities as they did when they were younger. Supporting this, many respondents highlighted that *'the young generation is not yet participating'*. Nissanka, who has average economic, cognitive and hedonic experience in the present situation, said, *'I do not go to collective works now. I told them that I would not come after 70 years. ...I can make up my mind to keep silent in the co-creations with my age'*.

Furthermore, some statements indicate that people with placeless feelings do not contribute to environmental management. For example, Seetha said, *'Only members of the BPMS attend the beach cleaning activities. Non-members usually pollute the place'*. Supporting this fact Leelananda mentioned, *'One day we noted one family throw their waste to the ground. What we did was collect the waste and put it again in the dustbin while the family was looking at us. Such actions mean a lot to the people,*

rather than giving advice. As we had that much of a feeling, we did such things'. Likewise, respondents point out the value of the placeness feeling of people who come to the place in relation to place management. Murshida also stated, *'If people do not get involved, just like the playgrounds of CMC, this area would not be maintained and will be neglected. Not only maintaining but will not be improving*'. According to Seetha, a reason for feelings of placelessness is a lack of awareness about the place and its developments, meaning people cannot get cognitive experience.

The responses indicate the reasons for feelings of placelessness, its consequences, and emphasize that people with placeless feelings are unwilling to contribute to place co-creations. However, the respondents mentioned that about 3000-4000 visitors come to Crow Island Beach Park on weekends. Respondents like Leelananda, Lalith and Kumar clearly stated that they felt connected to the place even before they began participating in place co-creation. In this vein, people who do not have co-creation experience may still have a sense of place.

When reflecting on these findings with the pyramid-like matrix, the tip of the inverted pyramid indicates placelessness where there is no indication of the co-creation experience. The findings suggest that people cannot gain a co-creation experience without connecting to a place.

6.3 Connected to the place and co-creation experience

According to qualitative analysis, it is possible to identify how the quality of the place has changed throughout the last 20 years in Crow Island to co-create it as a place (Figure 6.1). The next sections explore the relationship between sense of place and co-creation experience dimensions.

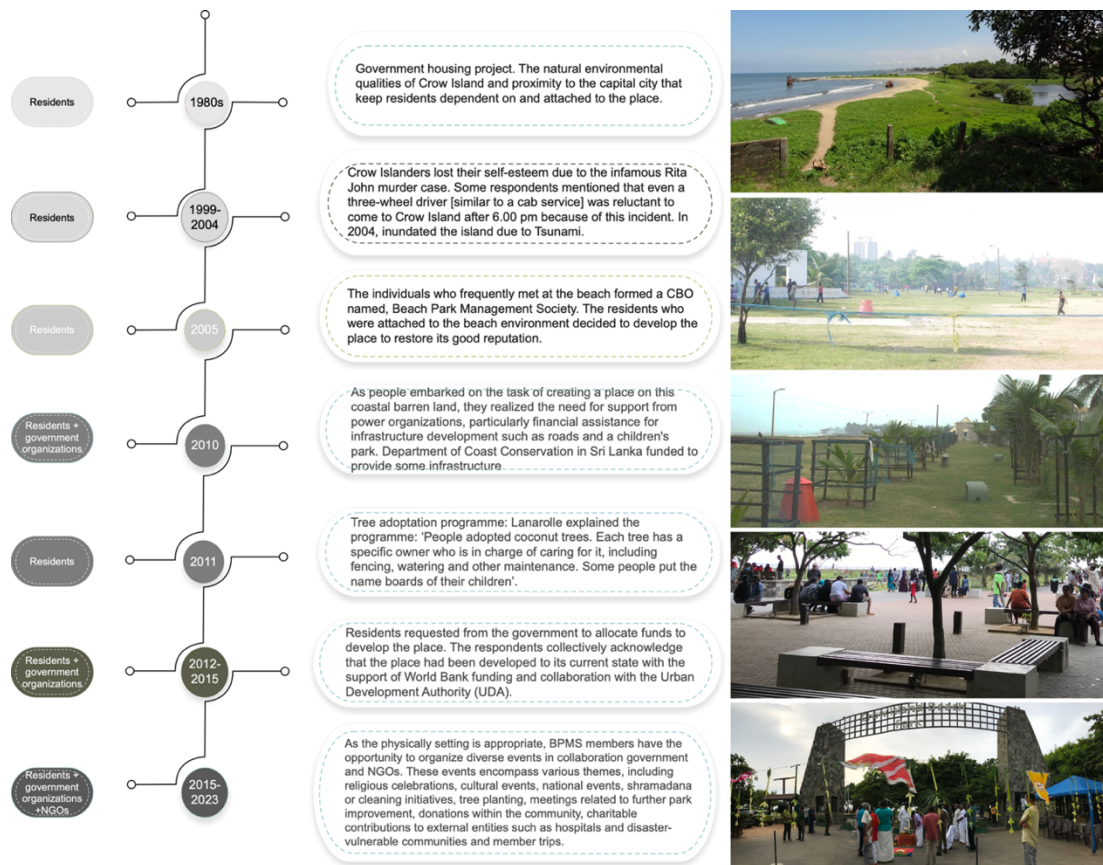


Figure 6.1: Co-creation process and change of sense of place of Crow Island Beach Park

Source: Author

6.3.1 Connected to the place and social experience

When discussing the sense of place of Crow Island co-creators, Chapter 4 revealed the environmental and social qualities of Crow Island that keep people dependent on and attached to the place and contribute to its identity. The responses related to social experience and connection to the place suggest that social relationships develop as people come to enjoy the environment. Mohamad stated, *'...one of the main reasons is the attachment to the environment. If there is no beach and land adjacent to that, people will not get together'*. Mainly Crow Island people get the social experience because they have a CBO: the Beach Park Management Society. They could form that CBO as several founder members use the beach for morning jogging. Gemunu explained, *'We wanted to form a CBO because we jog every day... Everyone in the jogging community wanted to preserve the area clean and attractive'*. Further, he

mentioned the primary membership criteria to join the BPMS: *'To get the membership people have to come to the beach for fishing, walking, playing, selling, or whatever. It's pointless giving membership to non-visitors'*.

Once the BPMS was formed and began various activities, more members who were already connected with the environment joined the social network. Gemunu added, *'Many people joined the BPMS because they love the place'*. Lalith confirmed this, saying, *'...when I walked one day, I noticed some people doing a planting programme. As I'm a nature-friendly person, I inquired about that from another villager who I was familiar with. He asked me to join the BPMS...'*. Lalith could enter into a social network rich in social capital due to his interest in the environment of Crow Island. This shows how people get social experience as a result of their connectedness to a place or place attachment.

Moreover, the responses indicated that the connection to the place feeling is further enhanced by their social experience. For example, Leelananda, a Christian, is recognized by the monks of the Buddhist temple. He said, *'The monk at this Buddhist temple knows us by our names as we work for the beach. So, we feel proud as we are non-Buddhists'*. Richard explained *'... I have good recognition....I'm able to go out and do something for society with a special focus on environmental conservation'* and he is currently a leader of BPMS.

Consequently, the findings indicate the connection to the place is causal to the enhancement of the social experience of co-creators as well as due to the enhanced social experience co-creators further connected with the place. Thus, the relationship connected to the place and social experience is reciprocal.

6.3.2 Connected to the place and economic experience

The responses indicated that people contributed resources to place co-creation due to their connected to the place. Lanarolle, Leelananda, Nalaka and Lalith said *'We were interested in the environment, we wanted to develop it'*. While people who live in Crow Island are connected to the place due to its environmental quality, outsiders viewed it poorly due to the 'Rita John's incident'. Therefore, Lanarolle explained they wanted to regain the damaged place identity by using their labour, money and power. This

indicates that once people feel connected to the place, they contribute their time, money, labour and power to conserve and further develop it.

Nalaka explained how he used his influence to obtain the government's involvement in a development project in this area. He communicated with the Secretary of the Ministry of Urban Development and Defence about the need to develop Crow Island. When the Secretary did not visit the place on his first invitation, Nalaka told him '*This is my residential area*'. According to Nalaka, the Secretary paid special attention to this statement and fixed a date for the visit. The Secretary then spent about two hours walking around Crow Island and decided to implement a development project in the area. This indicates that his decision was driven by a connection to the environment. Moreover, people wanted to do something for the betterment of their village, as Saman mentioned. These pieces of evidence emphasize the instances in which people use their influence when they are connected to a place.

Likewise, Lalith used his money for the renovation of the Crow Island temple as he regularly visited the beach. He said, '*I happened to contribute to the temple as I go to the beach. 99% is because I go to the beach*'. Moreover, most of the other co-creators initially volunteered to provide labour to clean the beach as they were regular walking groups, according to Gemunu and Kumar. Furthermore, the connection with the environment benefits the Crow Island community by providing public space for the people living in congested environments. Nalaka explained, '*... people use the beach as their home garden,*' as the community only owns about 2-3 perch lands.

Additionally, the economic contribution of the co-creators enhances their connectedness to the place. For instance, Leelananda mentioned, '*At the beginning, we wanted to make a place just to come and stay as it was a really nice environment*' and after experiencing the co-creation, he stated, '*We have an attachment to the place because of this tree adaptation*'. Further, Leelananda expressed '*We felt a gap in our lives if we could not see the beach even in one evening*'. The findings reveal that frequent visits allow people to contribute to place-making. Mohamad added, '*We pay attention to whether everything is in order*'. This evidence shows that aspects connected to the place and economic experience are cyclically related. However, Leelananda's statement, '*My family members come to the place, and participate in the*

events but not actively work for co-creation. It would be really good if the young community actively participated in the future', revealing that not all connected people can gain economic experience.

6.3.3 Connected to the place and cognitive experience

According to the responses, people feel connected to Crow Island because the beach provides them with mental relaxation. Saman mentioned that he does not want to migrate from Crow Island, stating, *'We are receiving good sea breeze. When getting onto the rooftop, I can see both sunrise and sunset. The environment is beautiful. It is possible to see the sea. It is only about 100m from my house to the beach park'*. Firstly, according to Gemunu, the people who jog in the morning had the opportunity to learn physical exercise from Navy officers. As per Leelanada's response, *'We used to play volleyball with Navy officers until it got dark. They played on one side'*. Due to this initiation, the connection between community members improved, leading to the decision to form a CBO. Interaction with the Navy still exists, and Navy officers help with beach cleaning work.

Meanwhile, participation in co-creation also provides cognitive experiences. By attending BPMS activities, people can mingle with knowledgeable individuals and learn new things. Supporting this, Murshida's husband said, *'Since the beginning, some capable people have been involved with BPMS'* and Sumudu also mentioned, *'All people in BPMS understand each other well'*. According to Sumudu, the connection with community members who provide cognitive experience is a reason for them to be attached to the place, stating, *'Gemunu always says that women's participation should be there... As we have mingled with BPMS people for about 15 years, we feel like they are our relatives...we do not want to migrate'*.

Moreover, Gemunu's comparison of the welfare society and BPMS reveals the importance of cognitive experience for people to connect with society. He said,

Recently also one person appreciated the first meeting of BPMS as people compared the quality of welfare society...the general behavior of welfare society was not good. They did not know the general procedure of conducting a society, and I canceled my membership. At the very beginning, we [BPMS] set the background to move forward despite conflicts.

This clearly shows the importance of cognitive experiences for being connected with society and feeling respect for it.

Consequently, there is evidence that connectedness with the place leads to cognitive experiences when people participate in co-creation. As a result of these cognitive experiences, people become more connected to the place. Furthermore, it is important for people to gain cognitive experiences from the initiation of the co-creation process.

6.3.4 Connected to the place and hedonic experience

Though the level of hedonic experience varies depending on the nature of a person and over time, the responses show that people can have a hedonic experience when they feel connected to a place. As emphasized previously, the beach is the main attraction and a reason for people to live in Crow Island. Richard, the immediate past president of BPMS, shared his initial experience of joining the co-creation network: *'I did not have plans to join the beach park at the beginning. I was angling here. In those days, I had to become a member of BPMS to fish inside the Navy camp area...As everything was perfect and there was no corruption or anything and people were good, I started to be active.'* This statement proves that place attachment is the primary cause of his hedonic experience.

Once the beach was converted into a beach park through co-creation efforts, many people became connected to the place. Seetha explained the before and after scenarios of the beach park development and how the number of visitors has increased, enhancing their hedonic experience: *'Before this place-making was done, the entire area was like a brown land. Still, people came. But when the place was properly made, a lot of visitors came. They like to enjoy the freedom here and get the sea breeze with the entire family'*. Seetha's statement is confirmed by Murshida, who also mentioned that the number of people connected to the place has increased with the place co-creation. Now, many outsiders are also involved in co-creation, experiencing hedonic pleasure: *'The main reason for that difference is the beach park. Previously, only residents were involved, but now many outsiders come to do something on the beach. Even professionals come. When company CEOs come, they get a WOW feeling about the place'*. Similarly, people who have been co-creating from the beginning also

mentioned, *'We feel this is our place'* (Leelananda). However, when too many people are connected to the place to get a hedonic experience, as Nalaka mentioned, *'many visitors...are bothering the residents [Crow Islanders]'*. This is supported by Nanda's statement:

As I noted on Sundays, many visitors come to the beach park, maybe more than the number of visitors to Galle Face. We cannot go outside. In the past, when there was no car park, many vehicles parked on the street. Then people requested the construction of a car park through BPMS. It is good that there is a BPMS.

Nanda's statement implies several facts, firstly, many people are now attracted to the beach after the place co-creation by the Crow Island community; secondly, the place co-creation is distracting the residents as the place is crowded and disturbs residential activities; thirdly, Crow Island co-creators continue to engage in co-creation to solve problems due to their connection to the place; and fourthly, people feel satisfied when they involve to solve problems. Consequently, these facts show the varying nature of connected to the place feelings and hedonic experiences and possible relationships.

Overall, it was revealed that the environmental and social qualities of Crow Island are reasons for people to feel connected to the place initially. Therefore, such individuals tend to participate in co-creation to further enhance the qualities of the place. However, the findings elucidate that certain respondents are only interested in remaining at the connection to the place level without demonstrating a willingness to progress to subsequent steps on the sense of place ladder (Figure 6.2). Their reluctance to commit is rooted in the absence of an aspiration to further develop the place and make it crowded with many visitors. When the place becomes crowded with numerous visitors, the respondents perceive it negatively. For instance, Nanda said, *'We cannot go outside on Sundays due to crowds'*. Such reasons lead to an unwillingness to gain further co-creation experiences.

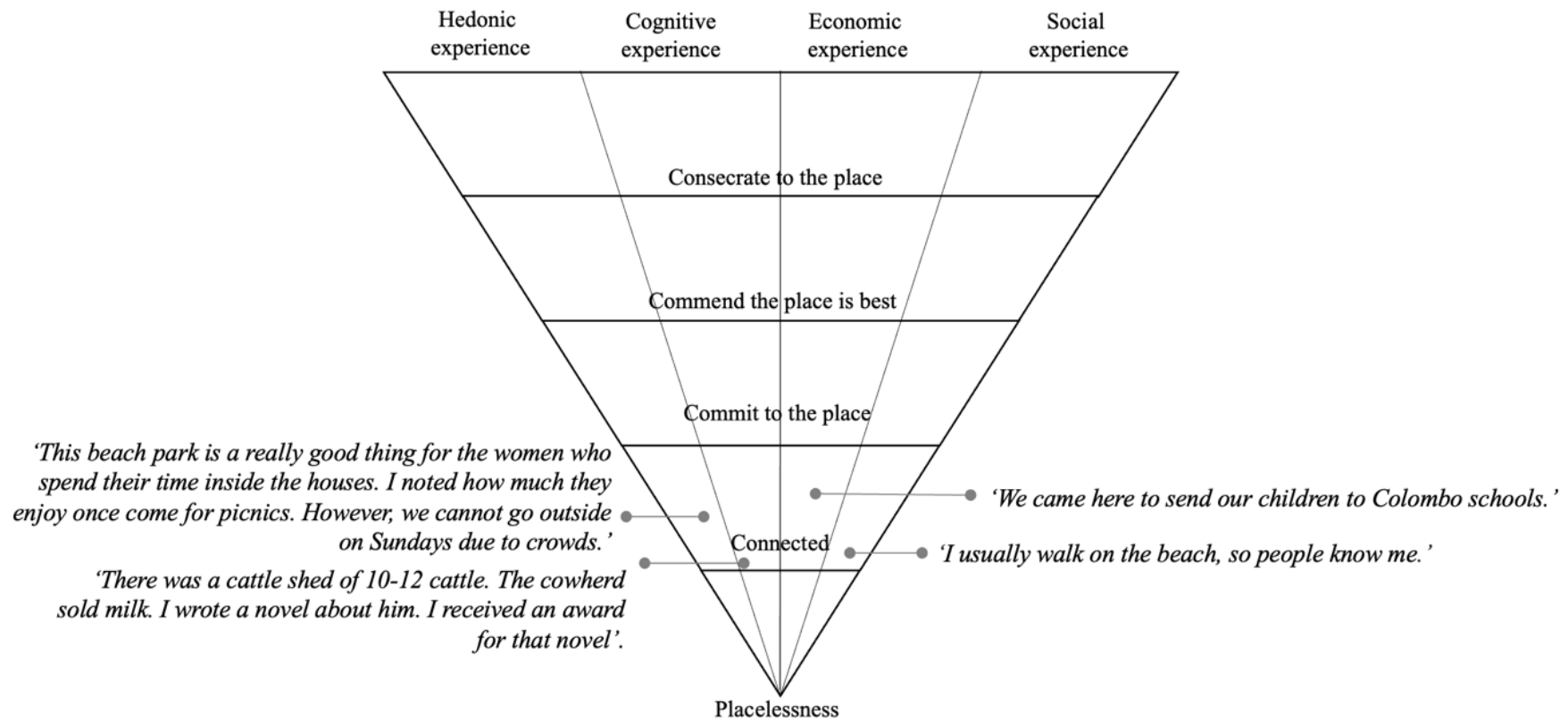


Figure 6.2: Relationship of sense of place and co-creation experience of the respondents who are connected to the place level of sense of place ladder

Source: Author

6.4 Committed to the place and co-creation experience

Commitment is an indication of sense of place as it reflects a positive emotional attachment to the place or a desire to be connected (Jafri, 2010; McCunn & Gifford, 2014; Erdogan & Cavli, 2019). According to Jorgensen and Stedman (2001), a sense of place ranges from the absence of sense of place to a profound commitment toward a place, and Markey et al. (2019) state that a sense of place transforms into a commitment to a place.

6.4.1 Committed to the place and social experience

This section discusses the relationship between commitment to the place and social experience. Some respondents straightforwardly mentioned that their social network has expanded as a result of their commitment to the place. In this regard, Nalaka, who has high social experience, said *'As a consequence of organizing such activities [social works], we could expand the social network'* and Murshida added *'As this is our village I felt I should be involved. When I participate in BPMS, everyone knows me'*. Meanwhile, Nissanka mentioned how separated they were before the beach park development:

Lanarolle is also the type of person who does not talk much with people. Though he noted me when I was walking, he did not even smile those days. But now, we are best friends. As we worked at the beach, we made friends.

Gemunu expressed a similar sentiment, *'People didn't talk to us back then. They were very separated. After the formation of BPMS, people started chatting and gathering'*. Moreover, respondents elaborated that their social network gradually expanded to a satisfactory level as a result of their attachment and commitment: *'I started friendships with my friends as I began to work for the environment. I love nature and like planting trees. That's when I started to mingle with other members. Now everyone in Crow Island knows me'*. Gemunu illustrated the holistic situation: *'There is a significant community connection due to participation'*.

On the other hand, the responses indicated that social experiences were important for further developing the place (Figure 6.3). For example, Lanarolle mentioned, *'It was easy to reach our goals with the team we had, and the tasks were not difficult'*.

Murshida also mentioned *‘I like to do environmental projects on Crow Island because I’m comfortable with the crowd here’*. Additionally, Murshida’s husband added: *‘She is recognized due to the social work that she has done for the beach park’*. Therefore, the discussion depicts the reciprocal relationship between social experience and commitment.



Figure 6.3: Social experience influences future place development

Source: BPMS Facebook page

Furthermore, another statement by Murshida reveals that co-creation-related social experiences not only enhance the commitment of the local group but also attract outsiders. According to Murshida, when outsiders notice the social network and commitment of BPMS members, they too tend to commit to the place. She explained,

Usually, when people come to the beach park, they look for people who are active and involved with the place. Then, as there is a society, they get connected, get the membership and do the work. Thereby, we can get donations for maintenance activities. If there was no BPMS, people would just visit the place and would not contribute to further development.

Interestingly, she received opportunities to expand her social network to outside organizations and further engage in collective efforts that happen outside due to her commitment to Crow Island. Murshida added, *‘I work for my residential area. Lion’s Club once came for a beach clean-up. One lady called me to join the Lion’s Club. So, I’m attached to Lion’s Club Jawatta. If any projects come through that, I get involved in those too’*. Moreover, Murshida explained how she became a bridge and used the

social network to further commit to Crow Island co-creations: *'Through that contact, we could do a dry ration project'*. Likewise, commitment is a reason to expand the social network from bonding networks to bridging and linking networks, which in turn provides more social capital to commit to place co-creation and vice versa.

Respondents mentioned several benefits of this relationship: *'We can address the needs of different people'* (Gemunu); *'There is an unbelievable unity'* (Leelananda); *'Because of collective commitments, everyone knows each other, so no one comes to hurt another'* (Murshida); Social recognition (Mohamad and Murshida) and Externalities as Nalaka mentioned, *'We don't even take meetings for the temple's society, but it is proceeding well due to the success of the Beach Park Management Society. The members of BPMS ask about the activities of the temple and try their best to contribute'*.

However, the relationship between these two aspects has negative consequences. As Mohamad mentioned, *'Sometimes the inhabitants think everything should be done by the BPMS. If some general incident happens, people tell us we did not pay attention'*. This indicates the potential of some social network actors to be passive and depend on other active members. Moreover, Gemunu reflected on his memory regarding tree adaptation. He said, *'We named the trees with the owner's children's name and even take photos regularly to see the growth of the trees. In most cases, children planted the trees and trees grow with children'*. However, the respondents mentioned that their children are not committed to place-making now despite nominally being part of the co-creation process.

6.4.2 Committed to the place and economic experience

The co-creators of Crow Island Beach Park are committed to the place, thus gaining economic experiences. Further, some responses indicate economic experience is a reason for their commitments. Statements like *'We involve them in the same way we do our own housework'* (Nalaka), succinctly express the relationship between these two aspects.

Primarily, the co-creators contribute labour, money and power as they feel committed to the place. When Mohamad mentioned, *'It has not changed our attachment to this*

area. Whatever work we have, we work for the place. We would not leave the place', which implies that he provided labour due to his feeling of commitment to the place. The words '*attachment*' and '*would not leave the place*' are directly connected to the sense of place phenomenon as well.

Further, Mohamad explained his commitment to the place, particularly recalling a recent event, '*I usually don't take leave from work, but for that art competition, I took a leave and was here throughout*'. This statement conveys the extent of commitment to the place and the phrases, '*work more than home matters*' and '*work in our entire body*' are better evidence of the relationship between commitment and economic experience, differentiating some average acts from the commitment to the place.

Moreover, not only do co-creators contribute money to the co-creations, but they also save money for the future as they feel committed. To support this, Gemunu said, '*While we are doing activities, we save some money*'. Both Gemunu and Nalaka mentioned instances where they used their power as government employees to incorporate Crow Island Park development into government development proposals. Therefore, these are not just work duties, but commitments. While the co-creators economic experience mainly involves contributions, the benefits are minimal because the general norm, as per the responses, is that "*we should not expect anything in return from this social work*". As Buddhists both Saman and Gemunu mentioned, '*We got an opportunity to gain merits for the next life*' indicating that they do not expect tangible benefits. These statements help to understand the nature of commitment and the relationship between co-creators' commitment and economic experience.

As a result of economic experience, Murshida's husband said that commitment to the place has improved: '*My wife's attachment to the beach has increased*'. Thus, '*the house matters*' implies the level of feeling of commitment Murshida has for the Crow Island beach after experiencing co-creation. Moreover, when other people see the economic experience of co-creators, they tend to commit to the place. Richard said,

About 70% of large trees were planted by founding members. They are not expecting anything from anybody. Therefore, we have a nice beach park. When I see what they have done, I get a lot of motivation. So, I want to continue the good things that they have done.

This statement further illustrates that co-creation experiences are reflected on the ground and provide motivations for people to attach and commit to the place. Accordingly, the case study provides evidence for the relationship between commitment to the place and economic experience.

6.4.3 Committed to the place and cognitive experience

The responses reveal a commitment to the place, in the sense of a place ladder, which is an ideal position to experience new ideas, insights and knowledge and to manage cognitive conflicts and tensions. Moreover, due to the qualities of individuals and the collective appearance of the co-creators, further avenues for commitment are opened.

The values preserved by the BPMS to facilitate the process of gaining cognitive experience include giving priority to the goals and objectives of the CBO; treating all the members equally; respecting the ideas of others; promoting democracy; members responsibly attending to the matters of the CBO; honesty, openness and discipline and sustainably conserving the nature of the Crow Island beach. These values are mentioned in the constitution of the CBO. Gemunu, committed to forming the constitution, made it known among the members and always reminded them of the need to proceed according to the constitution. Gemunu received such cognitive experiences due to his work experiences, thus, bridging and bringing external knowledge to place-making. Gemunu explained; *'As I worked to form Fishery cooperatives, I understand the structure of a CBO, the routine of a CBO, how to run a CBO, and how people feel. I contributed that knowledge to the formation of the BPMS'*. However, Gemunu reminded us that it is not an easy task to build awareness and gain consensus, mentioning; *'We worked hard to make people aware of this. Some are blaming me'*. Therefore, when proceeding with co-creations, conflicts are predictable. In situations where reputed people in the village are committed to the place, it is possible to control the potential conflicts. Lalith explained,

I think my membership provided strength to the BPMS due to the reputation we have in this area. In some instances, people do not oppose the work BPMS is doing as we are also members... I think I have public relations skills as well. Some work that cannot be done by educated people can be done when we are involved.

Likewise, when committed people already have cognitive experiences, it is important for commitment and thereby to the cognitive experience of other participants.

As is mentioned repeatedly, people select BPMS if they need to commit to the place. Establishing this fact, Murshida mentioned, *'After I joined BPMS only I gained experience'*. As she committed, she received cognitive experience too, as noted by her husband, *'Now she realized her capacities and values for the benefit of the area'*. Sumudu, who has very high cognitive experience, indicated that commitments through BPMS were an opportunity for her to gain cognitive experience: *'Those days I was not that talkative. I did not like to mingle with Crowds. I just stayed on the side. After I joined BPMS, I became a talkative person and I could expand my social network. When I make the annual reports, I get support from others'*. Not only women like Murshida and Sumudu, who stay at home, but government officers like Gemunu also learn lessons due to their commitments. He said, *'I think I received some indirect benefits for my job too from this social work'*. With or without being a member of BPMS, according to Saman, it is possible to gain cognitive experience of commitment by recognizing the value of the place. Saman, a field officer of a local authority, once managed Crow Island Beach Park. As a resident of Crow Island, he said that he is committed to the place and as a result, he gained cognitive experiences that are important for his career:

Previously, I did not have enough knowledge about the plants, natural ecosystems, beaches, rivers, etc. We were just doing our job. After I came to Crow Island, I started loving trees. There are so many types of reptiles on the beach. Some people kill those reptiles, but I say this place belongs to animals and throw them toward the beach. I protect bird eggs. I think I have released about 200 turtles to the ocean...these experiences are really important for my career too.

Richard explained some cognitive benefits of dealing with beach park matters by prioritizing values such as *'no corruption'*, and *'Whoever comes up with a good idea, others also support it'*. Seetha mentioned that as a result of such cognitive experiences among committed people, it was possible to create a safer place:

When thinking about the BPMS's active members, everyone is good. They all have unity [ඔක්කොම එකා වගේ, හරි හොඳයි]. So the biggest advantage for us is that we know everyone. We have a safe feeling as we are members of BPMS [මේක භයානක නමක් තිබ්බ තැනක්, ලේසිනට හැඳුනා].

Consequently, the feeling of committing to the place is an opportunity to gain cognitive experience and when people have cognitive experiences, their commit to the place feeling is enhanced.

6.4.4 Committed to the place and hedonic experience

When people feel committed, they ultimately gain hedonic experiences as well. According to the empirical study, participants with hedonic experiences make more commitments. There is ample evidence to show that people received hedonic experiences as a result of their intention of commitments. For example, Murshida said, *'Working for the beach park by being a member of BPMS is a mental relief for me'* and she further added, *'I'm very happy once I complete a project [collective effort]. You know it is the satisfaction'*. She showed a straightforward connection with place attachment and commitment, stating, *'My attachment to the place also increased as I did something good for the residential area'*. Moreover, she feels proud about her residential area as she contributed to its development, *'Wherever you are living, you have to love the place. It is not simply living here, but we have done something'*. Similarly, Kumar mentioned, *'We are happy as we could create a place like this. We do not tell we have done this much work for this but we are happy'* and Gemunu, who still regularly uses the park, noted how much he enjoyed their past commitments, *'We are overjoyed when observing the area now. I took some videos recently too. The trees that were planted are now big and when are walking in the early morning, it is hard to believe this is in the congested Colombo city'*. This statement also indicates that their feeling of commitment is the key to their hedonic experience.

Lalith committed to the temple's development due to his attachment to the beach park. He mentioned, *'We have a self-satisfaction as we engaged to this development. When I go to my rooftop, I can see the temple and beach as well as I can hear the pirith. I have a feeling like I did something for the village'*. Some respondents said the commitments provided a hedonic experience because they felt the commitments were not just for a particular small place but for the country and nature. For instance, Saman mentioned, *'When involved in such things, I felt like we are doing something to nature and ultimately to the country'*. Accordingly, people gain hedonic experiences while

engaging in co-creation, at the completion of the co-creation, after a period when noting the development and when considering the scale of the commitment.

According to the responses, commitment-induced hedonic experience is not only for the group who committed but for the outsiders who use the place too (Figure 6.4). Nanda mentioned, *'Because of the beach park development, a lot of outsiders came and were impressed with the BPMS too. Some people are attached to the beach park on their very first visit and consequently visit frequently for jogging, etc.'*. It is observable when visiting the beach park that the place is now an inclusive, liveable and enjoyable place for many people. Therefore, as a person who does not actively participate in co-creations, Murshida's husband mentioned, *'The members of BPMS represent society. They are doing a great job. That is why we are also backing them up. It is for everyone. It is a pride for us. For leisure, this place is ideal'*.

Moreover, the responses indicate that once people get a hedonic experience, they further commit to the place. For example, Murshida mentioned, *'Now it has become an interesting thing. Therefore, I like to move forward and continue social work'*. Sumudu added that they bring plants or seeds if they visit other parts of the country, thinking it is possible to plant them on the beach. She said, *'I used to bring some plants even when I go to my village ...We feel like bringing something for the beach park development when we go somewhere... Now we feel happy when seeing the place'*. This statement indicates that these co-creators remember the place even when away from it, which is an expression of place attachment.

Several respondents mentioned that their next expectation is to develop an urban forest at the southern edge of the park. Leelananda explained their next plans and background for their expectations, *'There are some further improvements to be done. As we are involved in developing the place, we have a further attachment to it. We have been discussing the urban forest idea for a few months now, and it is our next expectation'*. It was possible to observe that these co-creators commenced the urban forest park in collaboration with other stakeholders as another co-creation project. Due to this reason, Crow Island Beach Park is a combination of several co-creations, not just one. Such further continuation of commitments is possible because the co-creators were

empowered, they have values, they have a social network, they have resources and they are enthusiastic.



Figure 6.4: Many recreational users during weekends

Source: Author

According to the above analysis, before feeling committed to a place, individuals need to establish a connectedness to it. Once people feel committed to the place, according to the responses, they usually get a membership in BPMS (Figure 6.5). Thereby, their social network expands, as mentioned by Nalaka and Murshida. This insight suggests that obtaining membership in a well-established Community-Based Organization (CBO) catalyzes their resources (economic experience) to further the development of the place. As a result, individuals who have feelings of commitment express their satisfaction with membership in BPMS. However, some individuals decide to remain committed at the place level without moving up due to negative thoughts about the proceedings of BPMS. For example, Seetha mentioned her inability to learn the Tamil language despite interacting with many Tamil-speaking people. She explained, *‘There are many Tamil-speaking people who have BPMS membership, but I still could not learn. Therefore, sometimes I cannot actively engage in some discussions’*. Likewise, she said that this language barrier has sometimes led to challenging experiences. Therefore, individuals with some negative experiences, mainly related to their social experiences, are reluctant to commend the place as the best.

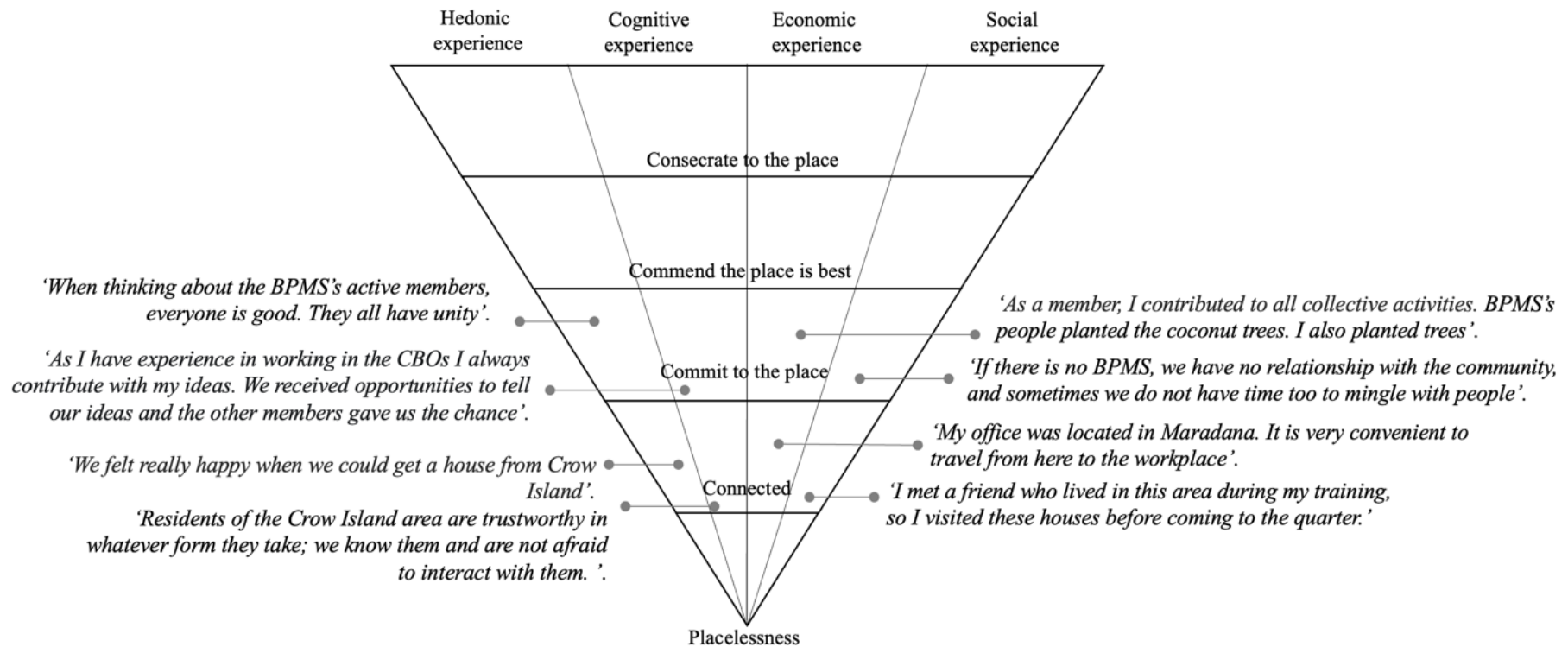


Figure 6.5: Relationship of sense of place and co-creation experience of the respondents who are in commit to the place level of sense of place ladder

Source: Author

6.5 Commend the place and co-creation experience

6.5.1 Commend the place and social experience

According to the sense of place ladder, after people connect and commit to the place, they start to commend the place. Commendation implies that individuals openly appreciate the quality of the place.

Some respondents commend the place because it provides personal benefits, such as safety, good neighbours and harmony. For instance, Sumudu mentioned, *'We don't fear living in this area. Neighbors also take care of us'*. Regarding the quality of the community, Richard said, *'If I have any personal matter too this social network would help me. It is a big thing as I was surrounded by a big crowd, not only a big crowd, they are good people'*. Lalith highlighted the ethnic harmony of the place, saying, *'One main benefit of this place-making and forming BPMS was that people of different ethnic groups could mingle with the other residents in Crow Island'*. Therefore, social experience contributes to commending the place.

Additionally, people commend the place because it provides opportunities to develop social networks. Kumar mentioned: *'We could get together as there is a place. There's not much space at our homes, so this beach was a good place to get together. No restrictions too'*. It should be noted that having a public place is a primary tool that can enhance the overall quality of a residential neighborhood. Crow Island demonstrates that this public place does not need to be highly developed; rather, it is important to provide opportunities for people to shape it according to their preferences in collaboration with other actors.

Moreover, many outside organizations collaborate with BPMS due to their effort in improving the place (Figure 6.6). When a place reaches a commendable level, the potential for social network expansion also increases. Seetha mentioned, *'Recently also one politician came as he recognizes the BPMS and quality of the place. So we had a small meeting and planted some trees with him. Likewise, if some important person visits the place, we definitely plant trees to mark the occasion'*. This statement illustrates how an outsider can quickly contribute to this co-creation with the support of BPMS. This is further confirmed by Gemunu, who said, *'This is an excellent area*

to work for many volunteers, schoolchildren, and organizations’ and by Murshida, who added, ‘We always go forward and volunteer to do ground support for the activities done by the outside organizations in Crow Island Beach Park’. These actions are possible due to a strong social network.

Furthermore, as Crow Island has gained a better identity among the outsiders, the residents living there also enjoy an improved identity. Seetha shared her experience of working in a new workplace, ‘... due to the BPMS, we feel comfortable living here. This area was also converted into a real place due to the activities and initiatives of BPMS’.



Figure 6.6: Outside organizations collaborate as the place and people are commendable

Source: BPMS Facebook page

Therefore, having an attractive environment, including a beach, contributes to a good social experience, and the social experience people receive while co-creating is essential for making a better place. This explains the reciprocal relationship between commending the place and social experience.

6.5.2 Commend the place and economic experience

Crow Island Beach Park is in a commendable position due to the economic experience of the people, as observed and reported by respondents. Sumudu emphasized that Crow Island now receives recognition because of the beach park, *'Now we have very good recognition. That recognition is because of the Beach Park. Nothing else. This was developed because of our initial members' efforts'*. She added, *'I have an attachment to this area because of the Beach Park'*. Supporting this, Mohamad explained the initial intention of the co-creators: *'We thought that this place should be made attractive and inclusive. Our children should have a proper social environment'* and he confidently claimed, *'We are the ones who were involved in giving value to this area'*.

Further, respondents' initial goal to make the "best beach park" and their contributions towards that goal enable them to commend the place. Gemunu said, *'Our aim is to make the best beach park in South Asia. We have almost achieved this objective'*. Each respondent proudly mentioned the impact of their economic experience on the quality of the place. Some respondents highlighted the importance of labour for the place's development: *'This park looks nice and looks quality due to the trees; those trees were planted by us'* (Lanarolle). Others mentioned monetary contributions, claiming the place is better now: *'I do not know of any faults of BPMS or beach park... I'm a lifetime member of the BPMS. I paid Rs. 500 monthly as the membership fee'* (Nanda). Respondents also noted the impact of power on place-making: *'The recognition of Crow Island is now different than in the past. Now people consider this as a better area. When we made the place, we demanded some security with a Police station. So, people who come to do anti-social activities are now reluctant to come. If we notice some bad behaviour, we inform the Police'* (Lalith).

Moreover, the respondents commend the place by reflecting on the benefits they receive. Regarding overall quality improvement, Saman mentioned, *'Due to BPMS, this park has developed as well as improved the quality of Crow Island'* [කාක දූපත වෙරළ උද්‍යාන සමිතිය නිසා නමයි වෙරළ උද්‍යානය හදුනන් කාක දූපත වැඩිදියුණු උනෙන්]. Seetha also highlighted the overall benefit as:

We feel comfortable living here. This area was also converted into a real place due to the activities and initiatives of BPMS. In a way, this area develops properly, receives good recognition because of the development and people get benefits' [එක පැත්තකින් මේකට ද තැනක් ආවා. මිනිස්සුන්ටත් ප්‍රයෝජනයක් ඇති උනා. මේක පිළිවෙලකුත් උනා, පිළිගැනීමකුත් ඇති උනා].

Additionally, some statements indicated that economic experience contributes to establishing a safer place in Crow Island, leading to commending the place. Leelananda mentioned, *'Our intention was to make a quality place. Not only buildings but make a place where people can come with a secure feeling and stay freely...now we achieved our objective'*. Murshida's husband appreciated the co-creators, their contributions and the place by stating, *'When a set of people take the challenge and do something to represent the entire society, it is a great thing. If this sort of development is not here, we have to go abroad to visit such places. Likewise, we create our environment to attract our people'*. This statement indicates that the beach park's quality is considered by residents to be almost up to international standards.

Furthermore, when the place is commendable, there is a possibility to receive more contributions. For example, Richard said, *'There is a big success in money collection'* as it is not difficult to collect money from contributors due to the success of the place-making activities and the quality of the co-creators. Murshida agreed, stating, *'Whenever an organization looks for a place to plant trees, due to the involvement of BPMS, they choose this location'*. She explained how they protect the trees and ultimately see a commendable environment: *'We keep a note about every tree. That is how such things can be protected. Now trees are grown up very nicely and it adds a lot of value to the place'*. These statements illustrate the multi-directional relationship between the commending place and economic experience.

6.5.3 Commend the place and cognitive experience

Analysing responses related to commending the place and cognitive experience, reveals a relationship. Respondents commend the place as they experience the intangible attributes of the place and the community.

Some people commend the place as they feel safer residing in Crow Island, despite being from minor ethnic groups, calling Crow Island the best example of "Ethnic Cohesion". Murshida reflected on her experience related to a conflict between Muslim

and Christian communities in other parts of the country. She admired the positive acts of the Buddhist temple for conflict resolution: *'When there was an issue after the Easter attack, the temple gathered all people and protected the people. It was the case during wartime too'*. Due to the respect developed for the Buddhist temple, people contribute to it despite their religion. Thus, people can further expand their cognitive experience with different cultures and religions.

Additionally, respondents commend the place as many functions happen year-round due to the good leadership. Murshida's husband understood that these functions are not just activities but have meaning, *'We are happy as we can see the success in our eyesight. Due to the set of values of BPMS advisors, more than the activity they focus on the meaning of it'*. Elaborate on this statement, most of the objectives of the functions aim to enhance community quality, environmental quality or the economic value of the place. As a result, these functions improve overall place quality, enhancing people's cognitive experience and elevating the place to a commendable level.

Moreover, the government and international organizations have recognized the capacities and power of the Crow Island community, particularly through BPMS's work. BPMS members are invited to awareness or public consultation sessions related to different development programmes and projects. The Crow Island Beach Park Management Society Facebook page lists awareness programmes such as the Colombo North Port Expansion, making Crow Island Beach Park a sightseeing area for local and foreign tourists, renovating the canals of Crow Island and public consultation related to the Metro Colombo Development Project. When the members participate in such programmes organized by external power organizations, they can further improve their cognitive skills by networking and learning from the experts.

However, there are concerns among respondents about the risk of not having future leaders to continue the co-creations. Murshida's husband expressed his concerns, saying, *'If no good emerging leaders, we will experience the collapse of the social system during our lifetime. If so, we would feel so upset'*, Mohamad said *'If at least one person is there, he can pull the others for their good works'* and Gemunu mentioned, *'I am confident that this progress will continue even if we are not present'*. Nissanka, the first secretary of the BPMS, who always admires *'This society is running*

continually because of our honesty' offered a possible solution: *'Some people think when there is a mechanism people will adapt it. It is necessary to let young people be exposed to the existing leaders as the existing leaders have really good values'*. Accordingly, while the place is commendable now, it is required to continue the opportunities for cognitive experiences to ensure future betterment. Overall, the aspect of commending the place and cognitive experience are reciprocally related.

6.5.4 Commend the place and hedonic experience

The relationship between commending the place and the hedonic experience is evident through the responses. Nearly all the members involved in co-creation commend the environmental quality of Crow Island because they were connected to the place and have received a hedonic experience by conserving and improving it over the last 17 years. Lalith mentioned the distinctiveness of the place compared to other jogging facilities in Sri Lanka and its locational advantages, referring to the World Map. He reflected on how they worked to protect the environment, thereby enhancing their hedonic experience:

I consider the beach as a resource as we used to walk every morning. We tried to protect it. This development causes us to protect nature while people receive a place to recreate. I think nature is protected because this development is the reason for protecting the rest of the mangroves in this area. Otherwise, different power authorities could use it for different development projects. So, we have self-satisfaction from engaging in this development.

Thus, this statement suggests a cyclic effect: commending the place encourages people to participate in co-creation, leading to a hedonic experience, which in turn allows people to commend the place.

Apart from that Mohamad mentioned, *'It is not even necessary to tell, but Crow Island Beach is popular. We are very happy about that. We have a feeling about this place deeply as we worked for it'*, Kumar stated, *'After this place further developed, it is very attractive, and everyone happy'* and Nissanka mentioned, *'I feel satisfied as I am involved in creating a good place for people'*. These statements provide strong evidence of how people tend to commend the place when they have a hedonic experience and vice versa.

Many respondents emphasized that Crow Island now has recognition because the beach park was co-created by initial members of BPMS. Sumudu expressed: *'Now we have very good recognition. That recognition is because of the Beach Park. Nothing else. This was developed because of our initial members' efforts'*. Moreover, many of them already possessed pre-existing bonds within a social network, which have now expanded and strengthened due to co-creation. For instance, Mohamad decided to live in Crow Island based on his uncle's recommendation. Similarly, Kumar and Murshida, who married individuals from Crow Island, have their spouses' familial ties. The now mention, *'Because of the beach park everyone knows each other'* and further, *'we have contacts with institutions now'*. Moreover, the respondents commend the place by reflecting on the benefits they receive. Regarding overall quality improvement, Saman mentioned, *'Due to BPMS, this park has developed and improved the quality of Crow Island as well'*. According to these statements, a cyclic effect emerges: commending the place encourages people to participate in co-creation, leading to a hedonic experience that, in turn, allows people to commend the place.

One main reason respondents commend the place is that the social events they organize are crucial for gaining all types of co-creation experiences. Social events and giving publicity to such events through social media catalyze garnering external volunteer support, attracting organizations to choose Crow Island as a venue for their events. For instance, the Disaster Management Centre selected Crow Island Beach Park to commemorate the Tsunami of 2004. Further, responses affirm that a network of interconnected actors facilitates the pooling of resources for co-creative endeavors (economic experiences). Apart from events, the physical and environmental significance of the place and the quality of the community contribute to its attractiveness. Saman who compared the qualities of Crow Island in relation to the best residential area said, *'... when considering the value of the environment, society and people this area is the best'*. Consequently, when a place possesses the appropriate qualities in terms of locale, location, and meaning, it is lauded as the best by its inhabitants (Figure 6.7). According to the responses, the majority of active co-creators remain at the level of commending the place as the best.

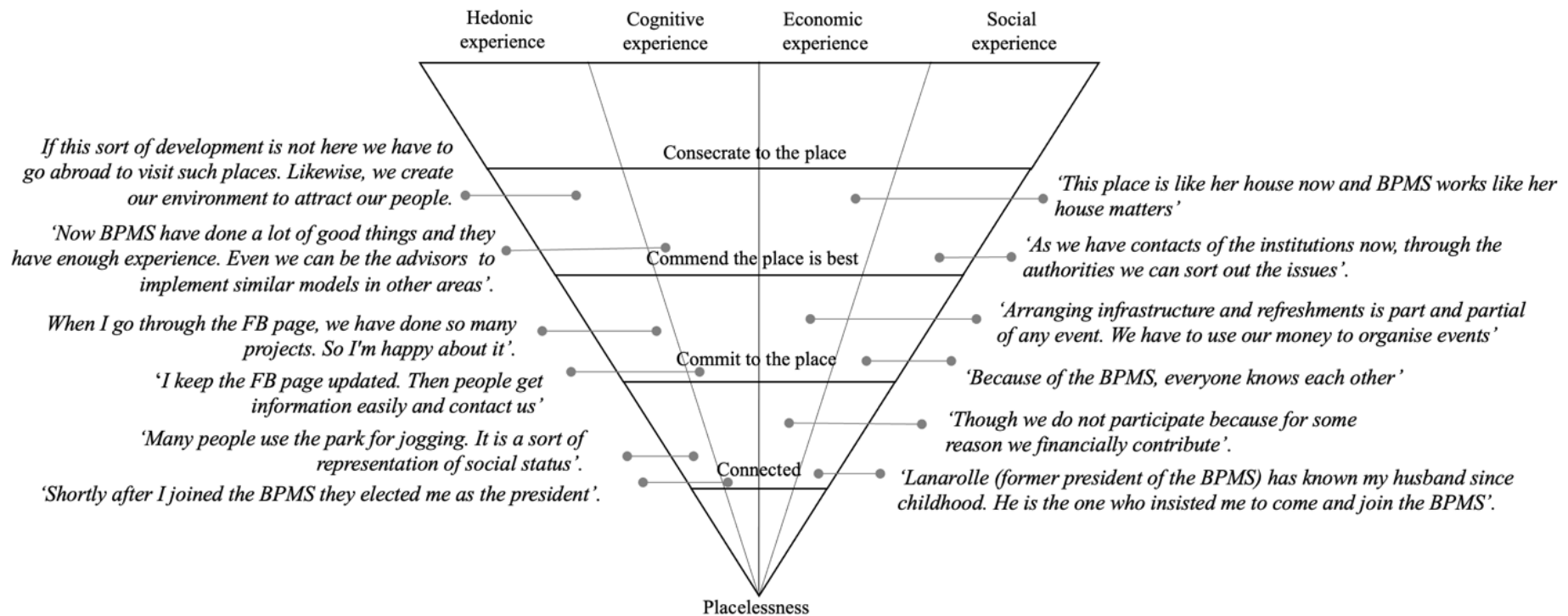


Figure 6.7: Relationship of sense of place and co-creation experience of the respondents who reached the commend the place level

Source: Author

6.6 Consecrate to the place and co-creation experience

The deepest level of sense of place can be realized through the level of consecration. When considering the responses, it is possible to identify the relationship between feeling consecrated to the place and the co-creation experience.

Some responses related to economic experience show that people contributed as they felt consecrated to the place. For instance, Gemunu said, *'Everyone spends money without reservation'*, implying that people contribute money whenever required without expecting anything in return. Typically, people earn money for personal use, but these co-creators spend their hard-earned money for the betterment of Crow Island. People listen to Gemunu because he leads by example, with 17 years of experience urging them to sacrifice more for the place. This is supported by Mohamad's statement:

As we're doing work to the place since the beginning, we have a feeling deep in our minds...Whatever things there are for us to attend, we come to this place. We cannot think of not visiting. As I said, it is deeply embedded in the mind (හිතේ ඇන්දිලා තියෙන්නේ). So in the future, too, I would work.

Leelananda also highlighted that they received a place like this to co-create due to the merit of their previous birth. *'Maybe due to the merit of our previous birth, we could make a CBO and thus, this place has been protected for the general public (අපේ පෙර කළ පින්කට වගේ soceity එකක් හදාගෙන තිබ්බ නිසා මේක protect කියල හිතෙන්නේ...)'*. This statement emphasizes the value of the place to these co-creators and the depth of their co-creation experience.

Additionally, several respondents (Mohamad, Gemunu, Kumar, Murshida, Leelananda) mentioned that their family members proudly say that *"work for the Beach more than the home matters"*. It is also noted that some members come to work with their entire family (Lalith) and some even allocate their houses for the work of BPMS. Leelanada stated, *'Lanarolle's house was open to us anytime'*. Observations reveal that some co-creators miss their meals or spend the entire day working, bringing food from home to share with others.

Further, some people miss their life goals as they feel upset if they cannot participate in co-creation. For example, Gemunu was advised to observe *sil* [some good practices

of Buddhists] on full moon days, but he has participated in *Sharamdana* for the last 17 years. He explained how difficult it was to use that day even for spiritual development activities, emphasizing his bond with the place and people.

I did not attend the Shramadana yesterday [full moon day]. I observed sill at home. However, the day before, I spoke with everyone and double-checked everything, such as who was participating, who contributed, and who arranged breakfast for the attendees. I was thinking about whether to come only for an hour and then observe Sil. However, if we are to observe sil, we must do it early in the morning. Likewise, if I am unable to participate, I am disappointed. Others call and inquire about my absence. If there is a problem, other members call me, just like they would inform the matters to the father of the house.

Despite their dedication, they understand that the place they care for is not their private property. As Gemunu said, ‘*This is not ours, but we are caring for it as ours*’ [මේක අපේ නෙවෙයි. එත් අපි අපේ කරගෙන යනවා] (Gemunu). This statement reveals the relationship between the deep feeling for the place and the co-creation experience. Leelananda’s account of risking his life on Tsunami Day in 2004 further illustrates this dedication. On Tsunami Day [in 2004], Leelananda came to the beachside unconsciously as he predicted some disaster could happen to the place, while his family members worried about his life. Leelananda reflected on his experience ‘*I felt compelled to come as someone told me that Crow Island was inundated with seawater. Selflessly I came as the place is that close to me*’. Even after 19 years, this dedication remains strong. Leelananda stated they do not allow any organization to use the public land for private purposes:

If this land is allocated to a private hotel purpose, as there is potential, we do not have any chance to use this. There is no threat at the moment, but we do not know what will happen in the future. Governors can do anything they want though we built this up. However, we will do not allow that to happen as long as we live [පාලකයින්ට ඕනෑ දෙයක් කරන්න පුළුවන් අපි මේක හදුවන්, ඒත් අපි එහෙම කරන්න දෙන්නේ නෑ අපි ජීවත්වෙලා ඉන්නකම්]

Kumar, who has feelings of being consecrated to the place and a high level of hedonic experience, summarized that they have sacrificed for the place, thus, they have a hedonic experience as well as for others also they provided a good experience in Crow Island: ‘*We do all these sacrifices as we love this place. In a way, we know we can never finish cleaning this beach as waste comes every day, but if we clean in the*

morning, at least people come in the evening can walk'. Therefore, it is clear that the feeling of consecration to the place and the co-creation experience are reciprocally related (Figure 6.8).

The respondents feel consecrated to the place, initiated co-creation with their attachment to the natural environment and their bond with society. Their cognitive experience as leaders was crucial to progress, as they respected the rules and values of the BPMS constitutions and the capacities of other members. When these respondents reached the level of commitment to the place, their enthusiasm to keep the place functioning was key to commending the place. Therefore, making a place involves not only a physical setting but also integrating people and organizing regular functions, which are crucial in fostering a higher level of sense of place. This analysis reveals that the deepest level of sense of place is not about expecting tangible benefits, but a deep psychological feeling based on the place.

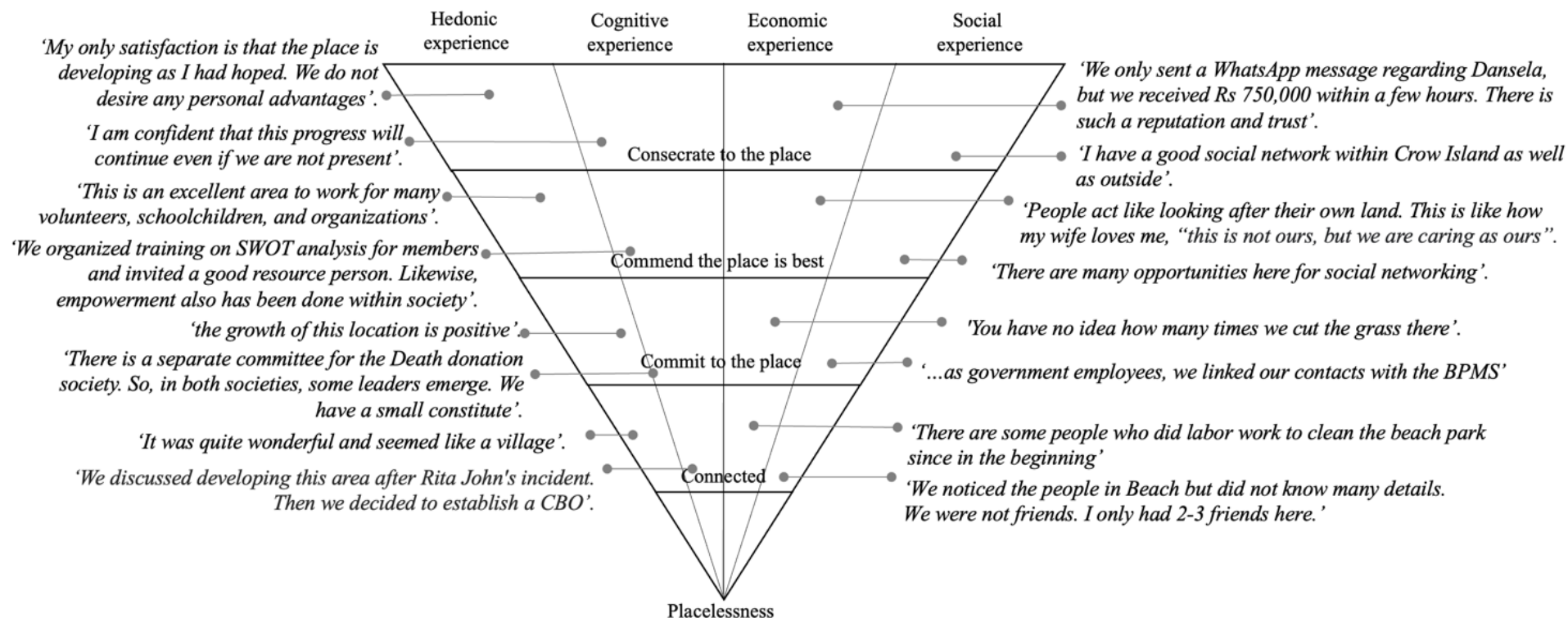


Figure 6.8: Relationship of sense of place and co-creation experience of the respondents who reached the consecrate to the place level

Source: Author

6.7 Sense of place and co-creation experience

6.7.1 Relationship in general

In this research, the varying degrees of sense of place are identified through five aspects: placelessness, connected to the place, committed to the place, commend the place and consecrate the place. Meanwhile, the co-creation experience is comprehended through social, economic, cognitive and hedonic experience.

In some instances, the respondents directly expressed that the reason for their co-creation is the sense of place. For example, Mohamad said *'I think sense of place is the reason of our involvement. We all have a feeling about this place. That is why they are coming to work. We are surprised when thinking about our team. Everyone thinks the same way about the development of this area'*. This statement implies not that not only Mohamad, but others also sense that place is the reason for their co-creation experience. Some respondents identified the value of sense of place for co-creation: *'It is good to have people like us for any development project as we participated from the beginning, we have a sense. People have to participate, otherwise, they do not have a sense (මිනිස්සු සහභාගී වෙන්න ඕනේ...නැත්නම් මිනිස්සුන්ට හැගීමක් නැතේ)* (Kumar). This statement makes it evident that if people do not participate, they lack a sense of place. Accordingly, sense of place and the co-creation experience are reciprocally related.

Other responses also indicate the relationship between dimensions of sense of place and co-creation experience. Leelanada said *'The reason for our participation is our place attachment'*, and Kumar said, *'My connection with the environment has existed since I can remember something. So, I like to work in the environment. As we also used the beach as youngsters, the idea of development makes me interested in it'*. Seetha added, *'It is all about the sense. It is the sense of belongingness'* (ඒක ඇත්තටම ඉතිං හැගීම තමයි. අපේ කියන හැගීම). Accordingly, for some people, the sense of place feeling emerges at the beginning, for some as a result of co-creation, or for others when noting the final output. Leelananda's statement encapsulates the reason for co-creation, the sense of place and the expectations of co-creators.

All of us are attracted to the place and its beauty. We are born for this place and it will go forward though we die one day. Others also should

have the opportunity to note the beauty in future too. (අපි මැරුණා කියලා මේක නතර වෙන්නේ නෑ..මේක යයි..මේක යන්ඩ් එපැයි..මේවිචර අමාරුවෙන් ගොඩනගා ගන්න දේ..හැමකෙනාම මේක දැකලා, මේකට ආසා වෙලා, මේකටම කියලා ඉපදෙන මිනිස්සු...මේකෙ සුන්දරත්වය දකින්න ඕනේ හැම කෙනාටම ඉස්සරහටත්).

6.7.2 Upward spiraling: relationship between sense of place and co-creation experience

According to this matrix-like inverted pyramid-based analysis, this research conceptualizes that the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience is not only reciprocally related but also follows an upward spiral pattern. The upward spiral primarily occurs because co-creation experiences propel individuals upward on the ladder of sense of place, and this enhanced sense of place enables them to engage in more comprehensive co-creation experiences.

Placelessness feeling is the bottom level of the spiral, signifying that individuals refrain from engaging in place co-creation when they find themselves at the placelessness level of the sense of place ladder. Co-creation experiences begin with individuals establishing a connection with the space. Subsequently, they forge social connections, participating in networks to acquire social experiences, thereby unlocking economic, cognitive, and crucially, hedonic experiences. Among these, the hedonic experience holds particular significance, acting as a catalyst for individuals to progress to the next level of the sense of place ladder. The process continues at subsequent levels of the spiral, as illustrated in Figure 6.9. Finally, the intertwining sensations of consecrating the place and the co-creation experience reciprocally influence each other, completing the spiral of the sense of place and co-creation experience. At this stage, as co-creation experiences accumulate, only a limited number of co-creators can sustain themselves in this tier due to personal commitments. It is noteworthy that the spiral does not advance beyond the level of consecrating to the place. Instead, the findings of the Crow Island Beach Park case study suggest the potential for a backward-spiraling phenomenon. These findings illustrate a discernible pattern of receiving each type of co-creation experience, suggesting that the co-creation experience acts as a catalyst, propelling individuals to progress to the next level of the sense of place ladder.

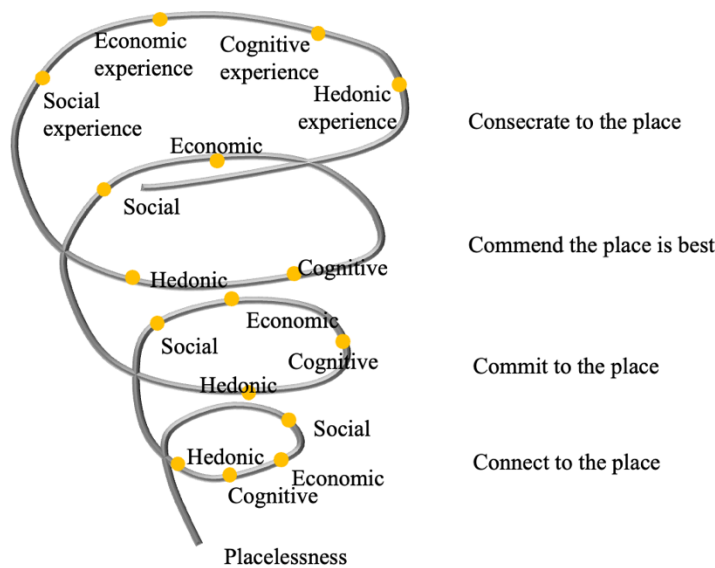


Figure 6.9: Upward spiral of Sense of place and co-creation experience

Source: Author

6.8 Discussion

This chapter provides insights into the relationship between the sense of place and the co-creation experience. This study relates the five levels of sense of place - placelessness, connected to the place, committed to the place, commend the place as the best, and consecrate to the place - to the four sub-dimensions of co-creation experience: Social, economic, cognitive, and hedonic. While the main finding of this study reveals the reciprocal relationship between sense of place and co-creation experience, some findings align with the existing literature, some add new knowledge and some contradict previous findings.

6.8.1 Class-based divergence is a reason for placelessness

Regarding the relationship between the feeling of placelessness and the co-creation experience, it was found that low-income people are reluctant to co-create with people of different social classes, a phenomenon termed “class-based divergence” by a respondent. Fraser (2005) indicates that community work is bound up with power, status and resources. Smith et al. (2013) mention that higher educational attainment and income levels are significantly and positively related to greater involvement in

resource-related activities. Dragouni and Fouseki (2018) state that unemployed people show a low willingness to participate due to limited financial resources and psychological impediments. According to the responses of Crow Island co-creators, these psychological factors are related to feelings of placelessness as well as to low participation in co-creation.

6.8.2 Placelessness depends on demographic factors

In terms of placelessness and demographic factors, Smith et al. (2013) and Mowen and Rung (2016) identify age as a factor in involvement in resource planning and management, with older individuals being more likely to be involved. This is true in the Crow Island case, as young people exhibit feelings of placelessness and are less likely to be active in co-creations. However, in the case of Crow Island, respondents over 70 years of age also showed feelings of placelessness, despite having been involved in co-creation during their younger and middle years. They cited a lack of energy and a focus on spiritual development as reasons for their low willingness to participate. This finding is novel to this research area. Meanwhile, existing literature observes that females show more willingness to participate than males (Dragouni & Fouseki, 2018), but this is not true in the Crow Island case, where both females and males participate actively.

6.8.3 Presence of the natural environment collects and connects individuals for co-creation

Regarding the feeling of connect to the place and co-creation experience, this research shows that Crow Island Beach is the anchor that collects and connects people for co-creation, aligning with existing literature (for example, Bridge, 2002; Johnson et al., 2014). As conceptualized by Hamzei et al. (2020), the place is not only a geographic facet with physical and spatial elements but an anthropocentric facet with functional and emotive factors. The diverse activities organized by co-creators at Crow Island Beach contribute to the social experience, enhancing the place's anthropocentric quality. Johnson et al. (2014) state that the visible presence of residents engaged in everyday social activities creates a vibrant, authentic and successful place, fostering

social interaction. Therefore, Crow Islanders' connection with the beach fosters social interactions and expands their social network.

Other than connecting to the natural features of Crow Island Beach, engagement in co-creation fosters collective memories, feelings about the neighbourhood, length of stay, satisfaction with social contacts and support between people. Weijs-Perrée et al. (2017) and Lewicka (2010) also mention social contacts are an important predictor of place attachment. Furthermore, more interaction opportunities arise from frequent visitation as people connect and depend on the place. This research illustrates how such visitors contribute their resources to place-making.

All respondents mentioned that they received a unique social experience due to the ethnic cohesion in their environment. Livingston et al. (2008) argue that social cohesion is the most important factor affecting place attachment. In this context, social experience and connection to the place are related. However, some authors argue that people living in urbanized and high-density areas feel a weak connection to their living environment (Hanibuchi et al., 2012). Yet, Crow Island is located in one of the most dense and urbanized areas in Sri Lanka. Therefore, it can be argued that even in an urban area, people can have strong connections if they gain high social experiences. Another novel finding of this research is that people who provide more resources for co-creation are more recognized within the social network. According to the literature and findings of this research, people tend to contribute more resources as they connect to a place. The connection to the place enhances social interactions and social networks provide opportunities to access social resources and it is important to identify the characteristics and conditions related to such social capital (Mowen & Rung, 2016). Accordingly, this study addresses this research need to some extent, as it shows a relationship between an economic experience (social capital) and a connection with a place.

The use of power is conceptualized as an economic experience, as this research shows that the feeling of connection to a place is related to the use of power. Mihaylov and Perkins (2014) discuss this relationship, mentioning that when people are connected to their neighbourhood, they have community place attachment, fostering a collective

sense of community identity, stability, power and development. Subsequently, this research shows that economic experience is reciprocally related to the sense of place.

6.8.4 Connectedness to the place makes learning opportunities and joy

When people are connected to a place and people, they get opportunities to learn from other knowledgeable people, thereby improving their cognitive experience. Goldstein and Butler (2010) also assert that when people participate in collective work, some old people organize gatherings and impart knowledge. In the Crow Island case, it is not only old people but also those with working experience who are important for imparting knowledge, particularly about conducting a Community Based Organization (CBO). Westermann et al. (2005) also recognize that collective action interventions require rules, procedures and skills to build institutional capital on a relational capital base. This system allows participants to build and sustain trusting relationships and social learning (Goldstein & Butler, 2010). Therefore, this finding reveals two main points: some people are more willing to connect to the place for cognitive experience, and when a connected actor has cognitive experiences, it positively impacts co-creation.

At the same time, this research shows being connected to a place is important for gaining a hedonic experience and vice versa, aligning with Dragouni and Fouseki's (2018) research. Additionally, this research finds that the number of people connected to the place has increased with place co-creation, and outsiders tend to participate in place co-creation for hedonic experiences. However, the findings also indicate some negative outcomes related to connected to the place and hedonic experience, when many outsiders connect, local residents are disturbed and develop negative feelings about the place.

6.8.5 Commitment expands the social network boundaries

Regarding social experience and commitment to the place, this research finds that there is a possibility of expanding the social network when people commit to the place. Further, the responses indicate that social network expansion opportunities are available not only for local residents but also for any outsiders who volunteer to commit. In turn, locals get more opportunities to expand their social networks,

motivating them further for co-creations. Moreover, as identified by Mihaylov and Perkins (2014), this research explains social experience is important for creating emotional bonds among bonding, bridging and linking network members. Chung et al. (2017) mention that the relationship between commitment to social networks and satisfaction has not yet been explored; thus, this research is an instance of filling that research gap. The Crow Island case illustrates some benefits of the relationship between commitment to the place and social experience, namely, unity, inclusiveness, social recognition and understanding the capacity of other actors. Meanwhile, a new finding from this study is the possibility of the emergence of silent actors due to the high commitment of visible key actors in the social network, highlighting a negative aspect related to commitment and social experience.

6.8.6 Commitment feeling generates resources

Similar to the relationship between the aforementioned aspects, the commitment to a place and economic experience are also reciprocally connected. Empirical evidence shows that economic experience or contribution – such as labour, money and power – are possible because people feel committed to the place. For instance, expressions like *‘work more than home matters’* and *‘work in our entire body’* highlight the relationship between commitment and economic experience, differentiating some average acts from a strong commitment to the place. Gray et al. (1989) identify this as a quality of an effective collaborative process, and Kyrönlampi et al. (2021) explore it in relation to children’s sense of place, mentioning that feeling ‘at home’ in a place is aligned with the concept of sense of place. Furthermore, some scholars use ‘home’ as a metaphor for a place where one experiences familiarity, comfort, emotional attachment, and safety (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Kirova, 2016). Additionally, while the present research discusses the monetary contribution of co-creations, it also shows that some actions of saving money for the future are motivated by co-creators’ commitment to the sustainable development of the place.

6.8.7 Social development can be expected when individuals with cognitive experiences have commit to the place feelings

There is empirical evidence justifying the relationship between cognitive experience and commitment to the place. The key findings related to this phenomenon are novel

in this research domain. Firstly, it was found that when reputed people in the village have committed to the place feelings, it is possible to control the potential conflicts. Secondly, it shows that when people with commit to the place feeling already have cognitive experiences, it is important for co-creation and thereby enhances the cognitive experiences of other participants. Thirdly, findings illustrate that because they intended commitment, people gain cognitive experience regardless of their previous experiences, social status, or gender. Overall, the findings corroborate existing literature that mentions place attachment involves active involvement in the place's matters for social development (Hummon, 1992; Lewicka, 2013).

6.8.8 People feel commend distinctive places that enhance their experiences

This research shows that people feel proud about the residential area and the place as they also contributed to its development. They illustrate that the distinctiveness of the place has been established due to the co-creation effort. Additionally, findings show that in some instances, commending leads to hedonic experiences because that feeling is perceived not just for a particular small place but for the country and nature. Moreover, a hedonic experience benefits not only those who commend but also any place user. These findings illustrate how people are further willing to commend the place. These findings are novel as those are rarely discussed in the existing literature in this research area.

Further, the findings reveal that people commend the place as it provides opportunities to expand their social network and social experiences. Further, the findings corroborate existing literature that explains people-place connection, social bonding and identity are also vital aspects of participation at both the personal and community levels (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Perkins et al., 1996). Then, in terms of economic experience, some respondents commend the place for personal benefits, such as safety, good neighbors and harmony. The same findings are mentioned in the literature, as formal and informal social encounters in parks can be a valuable resource for strengthening neighborhood social ties, health, and well-being (Baur et al., 2013).

Existing research indicates that place identity influences social capital. This research shows that when a place is commendable, there is a possibility to receive more

contributions from the social network actors (Pitas et al., 2021). Further, findings show a cyclic effect between commending the place and hedonic experience: commending the place encourages more people to participate, when people participate, they get a hedonic experience and when people have a hedonic experience, they commend the place.

6.8.9 People commend the place when co-creators and co-creations are diverse

This research finds that social network actors are heterogeneous but have successfully engaged in commendable place-making. This finding contradicts Goldstein and Butler (2010), who state that fostering better landscape collaboration is often an effort by a relatively homogeneous group. However, the social bond and meanings are important for motivating individuals to take action to preserve their culture and community (Tan & Tan, 2023; Tan & Tan, 2020; Tan et al., 2018).

Further, this research shows that the co-creation of a place is not only about forming a physical environment but also about organizing meaningful and diverse functions. It reveals that these meaningful functions are important for community quality, economic gain and environmental quality of the place. Othman et al. (2013) also agree that some events become part of the memory of that space and the things seen, heard and smelled during the event are synonymous with the place and events influence the people's association with the place, which may mean the sense of place. Effective place-making by co-creators of Crow Island has created a sensible environment with the features prescribed by Pancholi et al. (2015): a supportive and accessible management environment, a vital and collaborative economic environment, a vibrant, open and creative physical environment and a well networked and eventful people environment.

6.8.10 An individual's position in the spiral mainly depends on both the level of sense of place and the co-creation experience

Regarding the upward spiral of the sense of place and co-creation experience relationship, several specific facts are found. Firstly, findings illustrated that some respondents are only connected to the place level but unwilling to commit to place-making as their priority is to use the place for better residential use. Existing research

also indicates the possible adverse impact of place-making, particularly disturbances to residents (Öztürk, 2022; Akbar & Edelenbos, 2021). Extending this knowledge, this research shows that if people perceive the co-creation experience negatively, they will not commit to further place-making, thus not gaining a deep sense of place.

Secondly, this research shows that to move towards a deep sense of place, individuals better not rely solely on the benefits or economic co-creation experience. Davenport and Anderson (2005) also recommend people-place interactions beyond the tangible and instrumental, including symbolic and emotional aspects.

Thirdly, concerning the relationship between cognitive experience and sense of place, this research emphasizes that co-creations are better initiated under well-established CBOs, as they provide social guidance and help people commit to the place level. Otsuki (2016) confirms that CBOs facilitate residents' everyday place-making, reshape governance and produce sustainable services.

Fourthly, regarding social experience and commitment to the place, this study reveals the potential for expanding the social network when individuals are committed to a location. This aligns with Coblenz (2021), who demonstrates that place-making contributes to developing social networks, local communities, and the sustainability of knowledge dynamics. Further, Ho et al. (2020) also mention the existence of a social network creates opportunities for generating network-based resources for co-creations. Literature and findings from this research converge on the idea that individuals are inclined to contribute more resources when connected to a neighborhood park (Mowen & Rung, 2016). While Chung et al. (2017) note a lack of direct evidence supporting a positive relationship between commitment to social networks and satisfaction, this study contributes to filling this research gap.

Fifthly, Agnew (1987) suggests locale, location and sense of place are key elements for a space to become a place. According to this research, all three elements can be successfully achieved if people co-create a place. While this research highlights place co-creation, it extends the knowledge by noting that people involved in place co-creation commend the place as the best.

Furthermore, when individuals forge connections with a place and its inhabitants, they gain valuable opportunities to enhance their cognitive experiences. Goldstein and Butler (2010) acknowledge that participation in collective endeavours often involves seasoned individuals organizing gatherings to share their knowledge. The Crow Island case study extends this perspective, revealing that knowledge-sharing is not confined to older individuals; those with prior work experience also play a crucial role in imparting valuable insights, especially regarding the general procedures of running a Community-Based Organization (CBO). Westermann et al. (2005) also recognize that successful collective action interventions require establishing rules, procedures, and skills to construct institutional capital upon a foundation of relational capital. Consequently, this system facilitates the development and maintenance of trust-based relationships and social learning (Goldstein & Butler, 2010). This finding underscores two significant observations: first, individuals are more inclined to connect with a place when cognitive experiences are accessible, and second when committed actors undergo cognitive experiences, it positively influences the co-creation experience.

Accordingly, social, economic, cognitive and hedonic co-creation experiences and varying levels of sense of place; connect to the place, commit to the place, commend the place as best and consecrating to the place collectively determine the individuals' position in the upward spiral.

6.8.11 The deepest level of sense of place is fostered through higher co-creation experiences as it is metaphorized in the top loop of an upward spiral

Most importantly, this research explains that making a place is not only about creating a physical setting but also integrating people and organizing regular functions, which are crucial in fostering a higher level of sense of place. This finding aligns with the existing research highlighting that place-making is more than just establishing a physical setting when it is done as a collaborative exercise (Tan & Tan, 2023; Tansukanun, 2022; Cilliers & Timmermans, 2014; Friedmann, 2010). Moreover, the deepest level of sense of place is fostered through higher social, cognitive and hedonic experiences rather than benefits-based economic experience. Accordingly, this research emphasizes the individuals in the top loop are strong with co-creation

experiences and even willing to sacrifice their life goals for place-making, therefore, at least a few of such participants are crucial for sustainable place co-creations.

6.8.12 The spiraling up dynamics between the sense of place and co-creation experience is a novel research finding

Overall, this chapter answers the research question: *how do sense of place and co-creation experiences relate?*. It reveals, with evidence and in light of literature, that sense of place and co-creation experience are reciprocally related, and there is a spiraling up process.

The initial conceptualization of this research has evolved when deductively answering the research questions. In the light of the literature review, sense of place was conceptualized with the sub-dimensions of place dependence, place attachment and place identity, while co-creation experience was conceptualized as social, economic, cognitive and hedonic experience. However, the findings of this research depicted that when answering the first research question, sense of place varies and thus takes the form of a ladder. When answering the second research question, the co-creation experience dimensions take the form of a cycle. Subsequently, when answering the third research question, the combination of these two forms provided that the reciprocal relationship between sense of place and co-creation experience takes the form of an upward spiral (Figure 6.10).

The "spiraling up" phenomenon delineates a process where a heightened sense of place not only increases the likelihood of obtaining a co-creation experience but is reciprocally influenced by it. Prior scholars have acknowledged spiraling up relationships in diverse contexts such as community transformation and social capital (Emery & Flora, 2006), tourism development and community capital (Kline & Knollenberg, 2015; Stone & Nyaupane, 2018), and social capital and community sustainability (Richmond & Casali, 2022) and this research contributes a novel perspective by unveiling the spiraling up dynamics between the sense of place and co-creation experience. The prior studies in the Sri Lankan context discuss forms of collective actions through CBOs that establish networks between members and external stakeholders (Uphoff & Wijayarathna, 2000; Ekanayake, 2006; Gunasekara et

al., 2017; Ekanayake et al., 2022). However, these studies offer limited or no exploration of the implications for sense of place. Likewise, the studies on sense of place or related concepts within Sri Lankan context are few (Kamalaraj et al., 2019; Wijesekara & Munasinghe, 2021; Kethusha & Sooriyagoda, 2022;), and little attention has been paid to the relationship with co-creation. Therefore, this research offers fresh insights for both researchers and practitioners in Sri Lanka.

Moreover, this research highlights that individuals at the top tier of the spiral are even prepared to die for the place, making the identification of such individuals essential for successful place co-creation. While some studies in the Sri Lankan context (Priyankara et al., 2023; Wijetunga, 2018) emphasize the significance of volunteers for development activities, these are generally focused on non-urban place-making context and grassroots initiatives. Therefore, recognizing selfless volunteerism, deeply rooted in a sense of place, emerges as a novel finding. This is especially relevant in the context where social workers are often driven by Buddhist values, which encourage philanthropy (Somananda, 2022; King, 2009). Furthermore, the research suggests that the number of individuals who reach this level of deep engagement is limited, as such selflessness is rare. This could be a particular characteristic of the Sri Lankan context, where in Buddhist teachings discourage attachment, which is believed to obstruct the path to Nirvana (Rahula, 2007). However, the relationship between Buddhist values, selfless involvement in place-making and sense of place is only indicated in this research and limitedly explored in the current literature.

Moreover, previous research in the global context has also theoretically indicated (Ellery & Ellery, 2019), empirically confirmed in non-spatial planning studies (Füller et al., 2011; Liu et al., 2018), and confirmed in non-urban contexts (Suntikul & Jachna, 2016; Thompson & Prokopy, 2016) that co-creation experiences can strengthen the community's sense of place and vice versa. This study empirically establishes this phenomenon by examining a case within an urban place-making context.

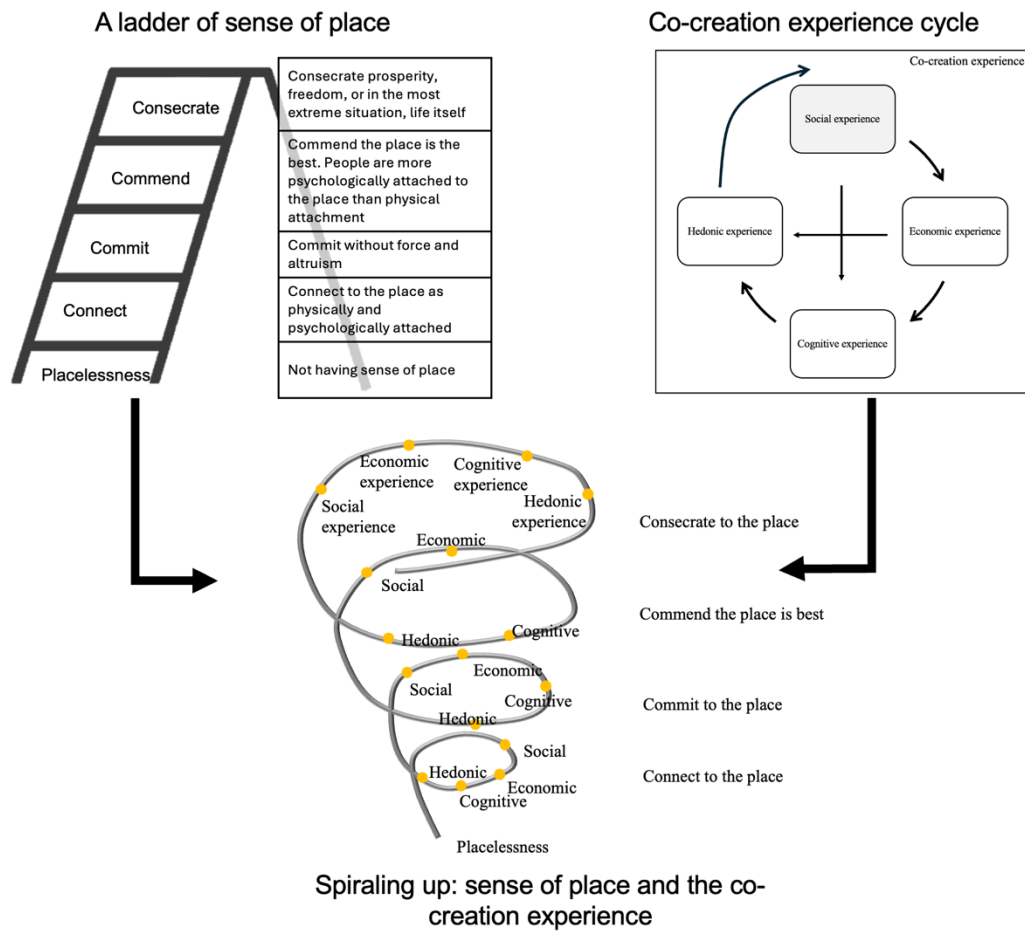


Figure 6.10: Relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience

Source: Author

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

Sense of place, the connection between people and place, is important for the quality of life and determines public participation in planning proposals. This research has addressed gaps in co-creation and sense of place literature. Firstly, co-creation, embedded in the collaborative planning paradigm, is evolving as an innovative strategy for engaging stakeholders and fostering the generation of new values and products within urban planning. Advocates such as Fainstein, Healey, Forester, and various planning theorists underscore the imperative of public involvement in urban development. Despite these endorsements, individuals staking projects may perceive participatory processes as time-consuming, uninteresting, and frustrating. Hence, there is a critical need to identify substantial motivations that drive active community participation.

Secondly, contemporary literature places a heightened focus on delving into the significance of the sense of place within urban planning and design, acknowledging it as a crucial element in making places that align with human needs (Erfani, 2022; Cartel et al., 2022). Essentially, the sense of place signifies the intricate connection between individuals and their surroundings (Relph, 1976; Lewicka, 2011; Clark, 2012; Guthey et al., 2014; Rajala et al., 2020). However, there is still a need to explore the complexity of the sense of place, with a particular emphasis on enhancing the significance of urban places. Researchers delve into the outcomes of place-making and note that participation in co-creation offers a chance for individuals to cultivate a 'sense of place' (Bush et al., 2020; Marušić & Erjavec, 2020; Slingerland et al., 2020a), albeit without empirical testing as of yet.

In light of these considerations, the primary objective of this study was to explore the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience. To address this objective, three key research questions were posed: RQ1 What constitutes sense of

place?; RQ2 How does the community experience co-creation? and RQ3 How do sense of place and co-creation experiences relate?.

To align with the outlined research objective and research questions, a methodological framework was developed, that uses a qualitative approach as a basis and integrates it with the grounded theory. The selected case study was Crow Island Beach Park and its environs in Sri Lanka, a place that evolved through collaboration with various stakeholders. Apart from observations and secondary data, sixteen community members, engaged in the co-creation process and now integral members of the Beach Park Management Society were interviewed. These interviews were audio-recorded, subsequently translated and transcribed, and the transcripts were systematically organized using qualitative analysis software, specifically ATLAS.ti. The initial coding phase encompassed both targeted (deductive) coding and open (inductive) coding. In the subsequent phase, in thematic analysis, a comparative analysis of codes and categories with relevant literature facilitated the creation of code groups and, consequently, the emergence of overarching themes. The relationship between dimensions was determined by understanding the patterns of themes and co-occurrence matrices.

In addressing the three research questions, this chapter presents five key conclusions. Furthermore, it discusses both theoretical and practical contributions. Additionally, the chapter critically examines various conceptual, theoretical, and methodological limitations of the research, explores potential avenues for future research, and offers recommendations.

7.2 Constituting elements of sense of place

7.2.1 Conclusion 1: Sense of place constituted by place dependence, place attachment and place identity

In broad terms, the sense of place is commonly construed as the connection between people and place (Relph, 1976; Lewicka, 2011; Clark, 2012; Guthey et al., 2014; Rajala et al., 2020). Many authors employ the dimensions of place identity, place dependence, and place attachment to explore sense of place (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Thompson & Prokopy, 2016; Ghafourian & Hesari, 2018). Notably, this

research also acknowledges the potential for understanding the concept of sense of place through these three sub-dimensions.

Additionally, this research adds new knowledge related to these three sub-dimensions. According to the prevailing literature, place dependence primarily revolves around whether the physical environment of a location supports individuals in accomplishing their specific goals more effectively than a known alternative (Zolotov et al., 2018; Dameria et al., 2020). The findings of this research indicate that place co-creators place greater dependence on their connection with nature, co-creation, and social networks than on goal achievements and personal development.

The literature underscores that place dependence encompasses sub-aspects, specifically the evaluation of the place, preference for the place, and a reluctance to relocate, and the research findings align with these sub-aspects. Concerning the evaluation of place, respondents agree that there is a high level of social cohesion despite the heterogeneous nature of Crow Island, particularly in terms of ethnicity. Notably, scholars assert that homogeneity significantly correlates with community social cohesion and, consequently, place dependence (Sampson, 1991). Remarkably, respondents place a higher value on the ethnic heterogeneity of Crow Island compared to other residential areas in Colombo. They emphasize that hosting diverse cultural events exposes them to socio-cultural diversity. These intangible aspects serve as reasons for their place dependence.

While the quality of place dependence manifests in the form of unwillingness to migrate, the findings highlight that place co-creators are not only unwilling to migrate but also take proactive measures to enhance the quality of the place to meet their desired standards as they like to live in a quality place. Consequently, this research suggests that assessing the dimension of unwillingness to migrate can be accomplished by examining the extent of their involvement in improving the quality of the place. Furthermore, Counted et al. (2018) observed that older African residents aged 46-55 depended more on the place compared to young residents. This aligns with the findings of this research, as older respondents from Crow Island noted that younger individuals are less dependent on the place and are willing to migrate. Similarly, Anton and Lawrence (2014) suggested that length of stay in a specific geographic setting could

be considered a significant predictor of place dependence. This fact is also confirmed in this research as most of the respondents have resided in Crow Island for more than ten years, revealing their developed sense of place.

Another important aspect of the Crow Island community is that they depend on social networks. Ruan et al. (2019) noted that social networks can enhance an individual's adaptation to an area, leading to a reduced willingness to migrate. Additionally, Anton and Lawrence (2014) demonstrate a positive relationship between place dependence and language proficiency. This research also illustrates that when people feel convenient to communicate, they can develop a social network as well as feel connected with the place.

In terms of place attachment dimension, this research aligns with Scannell and Gifford's (2010) conceptualization of place attachment. This study indicated the possibility of demonstrating place attachment by considering the interplay of places, processes, and people. Respondents mentioned that they have agency in Crow Island and its environment and can bolster their self-esteem due to the uniqueness of the place, the processes involved, and the people they engage with. Notably, the findings suggest that the ultimate outcome of place attachment is an inclination toward greater generosity rather than selfishness. The results reveal that, owing to values associated with the social network, such as trust and reciprocity, none of the co-creators anticipate personal benefits in return for their contributions. Virtually all respondents hold these values in high regard, feeling a strong sense of belonging to "Crow Island home." It is noteworthy that individuals frequently use phrases like "our place," "our event," "like our home matter," and "like our child" to express their deep sense of belonging. Scholars may draw inspiration from this finding when evaluating the belongingness aspect of place attachment.

In terms of place identity, a place acquires an identity with distinctive or unique qualities that set it apart from other locations. While existing research primarily delves into the distinctiveness or uniqueness of places (Scannell & Gifford, 2010), this study unveils an additional layer—the distinctiveness of the people themselves, particularly in light of the remarkable sacrifices they have made for the place. Moreover, Anton and Lawrence (2014) highlight that the way people decorate their homes can reflect a

sense of uniqueness and distinctiveness, a concept echoed in the active involvement of co-creators in place-making and their continuous volunteering to organize functions. Furthermore, the active involvement of individuals in shaping the place has endowed them with a familiarity with its many details. Understanding the aspect of continuity was facilitated by referencing the past experiences and memories of the respondents. Co-creators express a sense of congruence between the place and their identity as "Creators of a beach park." The findings related to place identity, encompassing distinctiveness in terms of ethnic harmony, uniqueness in terms of social bonds, and continuous volunteering spanning 17 years, resonate with research suggesting that place identities form through a nexus of feelings, meanings, experiences, memories, and actions (Hague & Jenkins, 2004). Responses indicate that individuals hold a strong sentiment about place identity, and they would vehemently argue against any condemnation of the place, process, or people.

As a result, this research shows the possibility of reflecting sense of place through three integral dimensions: place dependence, place attachment, and place identity. Moreover, sense of place of Crow Island responses is also constituted by place dependence, place attachment and place identity. It delineates specific facets within these three dimensions in the context of Crow Island Beach Park and its environs, thereby contributing significantly to the existing literature with substantial new knowledge.

7.2.2. Conclusion 2: Sense of place has varying levels and it can be illustrated with the metaphor of a ladder

The findings of this study extend current conceptualizations and measurement models of the sense of place, suggesting that existing scales may inadequately capture the complexities inherent in this phenomenon. While attempting to comprehend the sense of place among co-creators, the data indicate that it is a dynamic and complex phenomenon. It is difficult to conclude that every individual participating in co-creation and responding to interviews has an identical sense of place. Against this backdrop, this research further analyses to find the varying levels of sense of place. Acknowledging the profoundly subjective and phenomenological essence of the sense of place, it is noteworthy that practically any collection of unique experiences can

share certain commonalities with other individuals or groups. Employing an inductive qualitative approach, numerous recurring themes surfaced during the analysis of interview-derived data, forming a conceptual progression. The findings reveal distinct levels of progression from the feeling of placelessness to being connected, committed, commending the place as the best, and ultimately consecrating the place over personal goals. These themes collectively contribute to the development of 'a ladder of sense of place,' structured around people-place interactions.

This research recognizes the dynamic nature of the sense of place, a concept extensively explored by Shamai (1991) and Kaltenborn (1998) who investigate its complexity. Shamai (1991) developed a sense of place scale by synthesizing existing literature and examining it using quantitative analysis. Conversely, Kaltenborn (1998) adapts Shamai's constructs to develop an exploratory instrument using a quantitative approach. While these two pieces of research take a deductive approach, the significance of this research lies in the inductive formulation of the sense of place ladder. In determining an individual's position on this ladder, the approach mainly considers the interview responses, providing clues about their position within the ladder. Given the dynamic nature of the sense of place, an individual's position can evolve, potentially ascending to higher rungs or descending to lower ones. This research acknowledges that expecting an individual to adhere to a static sense of place level over time is implausible.

This approach provides researchers with the chance to move away from 'helicopter' or 'parachute' research, where they merely descend onto communities to collect data without investing additional time in gaining a deeper understanding of the communities. This research is novel as it illustrates the interconnected nature of its levels. Each step in this ladder serves as a precondition for the subsequent one, presenting a novel and comprehensive perspective.

In essence, this study shows a sense of place ladder derived through an inductive qualitative approach seamlessly integrated with insights drawn from existing literature. The utilization of this inductive and qualitative approach confers a distinct advantage, allowing for the identification of nuanced contextual underpinnings of the sense of place phenomenon. Notably, the inductive findings align with established

measurement scales, thereby expanding the scope of current knowledge. The central outcome of this research materializes as a sense of place ladder, effectively catering to the interests of both academic and professional stakeholders. This ladder delineates the diverse levels of the sense of place and can be developed as a method to assess individuals' sense of place and harness people-place interactions in the place-making process. Ultimately, this research introduces a more grounded approach coupled with a simplified scale, facilitating the assessment of the sense of place among individuals in any given context.

7.3 Crow Islanders' co-creation experience

7.3.1 Conclusion 3: Social network as the foundation of the co-creation experience

This study underscores the significance of employing social network analysis for evaluating co-creation experiences encompassing social, economic, cognitive, and hedonic dimensions. Utilizing a qualitative data-based social network analysis, the research illustrates how co-creators in Crow Island collaborated for place-making, forging new connections and enhancing existing bonds. While some studies quantitatively measure the role of social capital in collaborative planning (Innes & Booher, 1999; Fliervoet et al., 2016) and qualitatively apply social network analysis to assess relationships in collaborative planning processes (Mandarano, 2009), these contributions provide limited insights into how the structure of social networks facilitates or constrains co-creation (Innes & Connick, 1999; Margerum, 2002; Leach & Sabatier, 2005). This research sheds light on the valuable benefits of employing social network analysis to assess social experiences, particularly in understanding how the structure of social networks plays a pivotal role in facilitating or limiting the co-creation process.

Firstly, the social network diagram depicts three primary clusters of co-creators: the bonding network cluster, the external volunteer cluster, and the linking network cluster. Furthermore, the graphical representation underscores the significance of each actor through the size of their respective circles. Consequently, the analysis supports understanding the actor's role, position, and relationships with other actors in the network. Such knowledge is important for enhancing existing relationships and

identifying potential actors at the boundaries to expand the network. Employing this social network analysis in the early phases of the co-creation process could enlighten practitioners on the necessity for facilitating constructive dialogues and research initiatives that seek to establish common ground between different stakeholders. Moreover, it can effectively bridge the interests and foster a more collaborative environment.

Secondly, the characteristics of each cluster provide insights into the potential for co-creation. With its comparatively high tie density, the bonding network cluster suggests an enhanced potential for collective action and collaboration. Well-connected networks within this cluster facilitate effective communication, and collective action, foster mutual trust, and contribute to conflict prevention and management (Olsson et al., 2004; Bodin et al., 2006; Carlsson et al., 2008). However, Fliervoet et al. (2016) indicate the potential adverse effects of high density, as too many ties may lead to a sense of obligation to please a majority of collaborative partners.

Simultaneously, within the bonding network cluster, only a few actors maintain contact with outsiders. Therefore, achieving consensus for place co-creation among all bonding network members could be challenging, as Bodin and Norberg (2005) noted. The Crow Island co-creators addressed this challenge by adhering to a predetermined set of values, wherein the decision-making process involves a member suggesting an idea, committee deliberation, gathering input from advisors, and implementing the action collectively.

On the contrary, a lower tie density exists within the external resource cluster; however, these actors function as bridges connecting external resourceful individuals to the bonding network cluster. Granovetter (1973) identifies networks with such characteristics as bridging networks, where weaker ties between individuals with diverse backgrounds hold the potential to facilitate the exchange of a variety of resources, particularly between different networks. Similarly, actors within the linking cluster also possess weak ties, signifying relationships between unequal actors; nevertheless, they have the potential to wield power and expertise (Ziersch & Arthurson, 2005). Consequently, the characteristics of each cluster suggest each potential to contribute to economic, cognitive, and hedonic co-creation experiences.

Thirdly, upon closer examination of the larger circles within the social network, it becomes evident that these actors foster stronger relationships among the bonding network cluster, external resource cluster, and linking network cluster. Furthermore, these influential actors contribute substantial resources to co-creation, resulting in elevated economic experiences. They assume leadership roles in establishing processes and procedures for place co-creation, empowering other actors and leading to heightened cognitive experiences. Additionally, they derive enjoyment from the process and outcomes, thereby experiencing elevated hedonic experiences. Morgan-Trimmer (2014) acknowledges the potential of network analysis in conceptualizing network brokers who exert influence over local decision-making. Similarly, this research underscores that social network analysis is a valuable tool for practitioners to identify influential and potential co-creators. Moreover, it can be inferred that central actors in social networks tend to garner higher co-creation experiences.

Accordingly, upon examining the nature of main clusters, ties, and actors, this research establishes the profound significance of social networks as a cornerstone for various co-creation experiences. While existing research highlights the importance of social networks in fields such as criminal investigations (Strang, 2014), education (Wang et al., 2015), industrial development (Xiaochun & Xiaolong, 2015), market research (Lux & Alfarano, 2016; Muzam, 2023), and housing financing (Amarawickrama, 2022), there has been limited empirical exploration of the crucial role of social networks in collaborative initiatives like co-creation. Thus, identifying co-creators as integral actors within social networks, guided by social network theory, represents a novel endeavor in urban place co-creation research.

7.3.2 Conclusion 4: Co-creation experience consists of social, economic, cognitive and hedonic experience and forms a co-creation experience cycle

This research expounds on the idea that when individuals express the intention to participate in co-creation, they establish connections with members of the bonding network cluster. Subsequently, as they plan additional place-making activities, the bonding social network expands by incorporating linking actors with the support of members from the external volunteer cluster. Therefore, social experience is the foremost experience co-creations gain during the process.

This study uncovers that the existence of a social network creates opportunities to generate network-based resources for co-creations, aligning with existing literature. The economic co-creation experience involves a dual aspect: individuals contribute resources to co-creations and reap benefits through participation. Resources such as labour, money, and power are shared within the social network, although scholars hold differing views on the relationship between tie density and collaboration. Some scholars contend that high tie density promotes collective action (Sandström & Carlsson, 2008), while others argue that a lower-density network works better for collaborative planning (Smythe et al., 2014; Amarawickrama, 2022). They suggest that a higher-density network might become overly homogeneous, hindering the flow of new and diverse information and discouraging connections among actors in other networks. Both perspectives offer valuable insights into the case of Crow Island Beach Park co-creation. Less dense but heterogeneous linking network actors bring diverse resources to the co-creation effort. Another notable finding is that resources from outside organizations can only be acquired if bonding and bridging network-based resources are sufficiently integrated into the social network; otherwise, external interventions may adversely impact the entire co-creation process.

Moreover, certain resources, such as money, are critical in expanding the social experience and, consequently, the social network. As scholars have noted, the more the social network is utilized, the more it regenerates (Pretty & Ward, 2001, p. 214). Consequently, these findings highlight the interdependence of the economic experience and the social network-based social experience of co-creators.

As discussed, the sharing of labor, money, and power within the social network are the resources for co-creation and it is considered an economic experience. Conversely, the cognitive experience consists exchange of information, knowledge, and values. According to the findings of this research, some characteristics of the social network foster cognitive experiences. These include the presence of leaders capable of empowering other members, an optimal tie density facilitating collective efforts, and an environment conducive to decision-making through a deliberative process. Existing research also underscores the significance of leaders (Huxham & Vangen, 2000; van

Meerkerk & Edelenbos, 2018) and frequent contacts (Friedmann, 1993) in facilitating successful collaborations.

Moreover, as new knowledge, the findings suggest that cognitive experience is often gained after working extensively with diverse individuals and achieving a variety of goals. Another significant finding is that co-creators have opportunities to learn from various actors as they organize events with external volunteer cluster members and linking network cluster members. Subsequently, the learning opportunities are not only for co-creators but for all place users. Further, the responses highlighted the potential of empowering individuals within the capacity of the group of co-creators despite the support from formal organizations. In that context, both social and economic experiences are important in getting cognitive experience. Similarly, this research indicated that both individual and collective power can be used as a resource during the co-creation process in managing conflicts and it is possible to gain respect and resources from both active and passive users for future co-creations.

The findings reveal that social experiences contribute to enhancing hedonic experiences. Initially, individuals engaged in place co-creation enjoy the company of neighbors who visit and use the beach. As they worked on improving the beach, more outsiders joined them, leading to an expansion of their social network. The responses highlighted that interacting with resourceful actors from outside is a source of pleasure for many active BPMS members. Research supports the idea that providing ample opportunities for interaction with resourceful individuals and organizations from outside can enhance enthusiasm for participation (Crowe, 2010; Mullins & van Bortel, 2009). Similarly, social experiences contribute to the level of hedonic experiences for co-creators.

Furthermore, this research explains the potential for hedonic experiences through economic experience, when contributing resources to place co-creation and using the place. As external and linking cluster members contribute to environmental management through the BPMS, social experiences also underlie the hedonic experiences. Alexander and Hamilton (2015) discuss the possibility of utilizing the resources of local communities in place-making to enhance hedonic value. In this

context, the sequence of generating hedonic experiences is from social experiences to economic experiences and, consequently, to hedonic experiences.

Moreover, the findings reveal that each respondent had an opportunity to gain new knowledge about the place and social system due to their diverse social network. In line with this finding, Pancholi et al. (2019) also identify place-making as an innovative and knowledge-intensive activity. Another finding is that certain issues and conflicts could be more successfully resolved as educated and powerful actors in the social network contributed without reservations. Prevailing literature also acknowledges that resourceful stakeholders can solve collective action problems (Bridoux & Stoelhorst, 2022). Consequently, both the quality of the place and the people improved to create a satisfactory neighborhood on Crow Island. In other words, cognitive experiences result from social and economic experiences, and hedonic experiences stem from those cognitive experiences.

Finally, hedonic experiences are crucial to completing the co-creation cycle by motivating people to remain connected in the social network. In line with this finding, Higgins (2006) mentions that the hedonic nature is a determinant of engagement strength, and Hsu et al. (2011) confirm that hedonic experiences bind like-minded people together.

As a result, the findings of this research lead to the conclusion that the social network serves as the bedrock for economic, cognitive, and hedonic co-creation experiences. The co-creation experience unfolds as a cycle where the social experience takes precedence, followed by subsequent experiences in the realms of economic, cognitive, and hedonic dimensions. Furthermore, positive hedonic experiences contribute to the amplification of the potential for ongoing co-creation experiences.

7.4 Sense of place and co-creation experiences relate reciprocally

7.4.1 Conclusion 5: An upward spiral of the relationship between sense of place and co-creation experiences

The findings of this research confirm a reciprocal relationship between sense of place and co-creation experiences and further discuss how this relationship unfolds. Sense of place is crucial for individuals to engage in co-creation, and, in turn, the co-creation

experience enhances the level of sense of place. As previously mentioned, sense of place comprises place dependence, place attachment, and place identity. This varying degree of sense of place is conceptualized as a ladder with rungs from bottom to top, representing placelessness, connect to the place, commit to the place, commend the place as the best, and consecration to the place over personal goals. Simultaneously, co-creation experience encompasses social, economic, cognitive, and hedonic sub-aspects. The co-creation experience unfolds as a cyclical process, with social network-based social experience serving as the foundational element, followed by economic, cognitive, and hedonic experiences. This cyclical nature underscores the multifaceted dimensions through which individuals engage in the co-creation process, highlighting the pivotal role of social interactions in initiating and sustaining this dynamic community endeavor. Based on the function of sense of place ladder and co-creation experience cycle, this research further reveals that it is not only a reciprocal relationship but also an upward spiral relationship between sense of place and co-creation experiences.

This study highlights the importance of understanding the reciprocal relationship between the sense of place and co-creation experience to complete sustainable place co-creations. It emphasizes the potential for utilizing co-creation experiences as a means to foster a deep and meaningful sense of place and the possibility of gaining outstanding co-creation experiences when moving up the sense of place ladder. Urban planners are encouraged to carefully examine how places acquire meanings and values for individuals, and, in return, how people actively participate in shaping their immediate living environment to construct a profound and significant sense of place.

7.5 Theoretical contributions

The collaborative planning paradigm underscores the pivotal role of community participation in planning, aiming to foster inclusivity, sustainable communities, and effective governance. In recent years, an expanding body of planning literature has delved into concepts like co-production (Brandsen & Honingh, 2018), co-design (Stelzle & Noennig, 2019), and co-financing (Amarawickrama, 2022). These concepts are embraced as new participatory strategies that highlight collaboration between

public organizations and citizens, intending to produce services that benefit society at large (Van Eijk & Gasco, 2018). Amid various collaborative planning concepts, this research establishes that co-creation is the most fitting term to describe the collaborative approach to place-making. Furthermore, it illuminates a clear connection between place-making and co-creation. While co-creation has gained recognition in disciplines such as marketing, tourism, business studies, computer science, and design science (Greenhalgh et al., 2016), limited research discusses place-making as co-creation, despite the critical role of active community participation (Teder, 2018; Foth, 2017; Leino & Puumala, 2021). In this context, this research contributes by advocating for the consideration of place-making through the lens of co-creation philosophy.

Furthermore, the concept of sense of place has recently garnered increased attention in academic research, spanning environmental psychology, geography, and urban planning literature (Ellery & Ellery, 2019; Erfani, 2020; Escolà-Gascón et al., 2023). Despite the extensive literature on sense of place, there remains a scarcity of empirical research delving into how sense of place is intricately involved in place-making. Crow Island Beach Park in Sri Lanka presented an opportunity to scrutinize the constituents of Beach Park Management Society (BPMS) members' sense of place and its influence on place-making. In exploring the sense of place concept in relation to co-creation, this research discerned varying degrees of sense of place, thereby proposing a ladder of sense of place. The ladder notably addresses research gaps, specifically the absence of methodologies that encompass the diversity inherent in the sense of place concept and the lack of context-specific measures for sense of place (Relph, 1976; Shamai, 1991; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; McCunn & Gifford, 2014; Lin & Lockwood, 2014). Overall, this research offers a distinctive perspective by formulating a sense of place measurement scale through an inductive qualitative methodology, thereby contributing novel insights to the multifaceted discourse surrounding sense of place.

Concerning the co-creation experience, this study methodically explores it in relation to place co-creation. Notably, this work represents a novel and emerging research area as one of the first to scientifically examine the place co-creation experience. This research differs from previous literature in that it explores the co-creation experience of community members who are actively engaged in place-making, rather than

concentrating on empirically evaluating the co-creation experience in the context of business and marketing, which revolves on customers. This study offers deep insights into the aspects of social, economic, cognitive, and hedonistic experiences, so contributing to a more complex understanding of the place co-creation experience.

Hence, this research affirms the intricate nature of the place co-creation experience, recognizing it as a multidimensional phenomenon. Moreover, it underscores the distinct significance of each dimension, with social experience serving as the foundational element and economic, cognitive, and hedonic experiences forming subsequent layers that operate cyclically. This study reveals, in essence, how the place co-creation process evolves and becomes deeply ingrained in a social network. Thus, by presenting the idea of the place co-creation experience cycle, the study adds something significant to the literature on co-creation and place-making. Interestingly, this study examines the dynamics of co-creation experiences in Sri Lanka, a remarkable contribution to the global south context, because earlier research mostly focused on co-creation experiences in Western social contexts (Mohammadi et al., 2021).

Most importantly, this study addresses a significant gap in the literature by highlighting the critical impact of the sense of place in the co-creation experience. The relationship between co-creation experiences and sense of place is examined; this relationship has not received much attention in the field of spatial planning research. Employing an inductive qualitative methodology, this research delves into the intricate, spiraling-up relationship between the sense of place and co-creation experience, introducing novel perspectives to the place co-creation literature. Through documenting the people-place relationship, this research provides insightful information about how communities participate in the co-creation of urban environments and successfully manage them when working with outside resources. Thus, the study addresses knowledge gaps in the domains of participatory design, environmental management, neighborhood revitalization, and environmental stewardship. Additionally, this study provides empirical support for the claim that place co-creation is a particularly promising approach to understanding place. While earlier studies (Ellery & Ellery, 2019; Fridmann, 2010; Madanipour, 2006) have

emphasized the significance of establishing a sense of place through participatory tactics and place-making, this study offers an empirical explanation for this link. It also elaborates on the ways in which this relationship promotes community resilience, empowerment, and social cohesion.

Furthermore, by exploring the issue in greater detail and providing a wealth of knowledge for planning literature, the qualitative technique used in this study offers a clear advantage. Using an inductive qualitative approach, this study developed novel elements like a potential sense of place measurement scale, a co-creation experience cycle, and a spiraling-up model that illustrates the relationship between sense of place and co-creation experience, departing from conventional methodologies based on existing literature.

Contrary to prevailing quantitative measures that often capture the presence of sense of place in a limited manner, the proposed ladder in this research addresses significant gaps by offering a methodology that acknowledges the diversity inherent in the sense of place concept and provides context-specific measures. Although prior research has frequently employed quantitative methods to examine the nuanced importance of each variable, this study highlights the limitations of doing so. Given the collaborative nature of co-creation events, some interviewees expressed reluctance to disclose personal commitments. Therefore, this study confirms that qualitative methods of data gathering are more helpful when examining studies connected to collaborative planning. Additionally, by using theme analysis instead of traditional grounded theory techniques, this study brings methodological innovation. This method—often referred to as grounded theory-lite—involves a continuous process of examination of the literature that is iterated reflexively (Clarke & Braun, 2013; Srivastava & Hopwood, 2009). Therefore, the successful qualitative methodological fusion of case study research and thematic analysis is demonstrated.

7.6 Practical contributions

On a practical level, this research firmly identified the role of co-creation in place-making. In other words, active community participation is the key factor of place-making. Some authors identified the need for an approach that actively intervenes in

“the production of space” and “the spatially constructed order” in terms of the production of meaning, knowledge, discourses and institutions among various actors (Elden, 2004; Lefebvre, 1991). Further, the literature recommends a creative approach as it is more effective than categorization-based scientific approaches (Ranciere, 2003). In this context, this research depicted co-creation as an active process where interested stakeholders are actively creating during the place-making process.

Additionally, this research shows the value of incorporating a sense of place into place-making, emphasizing the importance of community members contributing to the entire co-creation process, from co-initiation to co-management. This study demonstrates how a sense of place can foster effective co-creation experiences and identify patterns in individuals' behavior and attitudes during their engagement. Therefore, in relation to place-making, this research suggests that a potential policy instrument, co-creation may serve as a platform to produce knowledge and resources. To actualize this, the corresponding strategies and tools discussed in this research include forming a Community-Based Organization, having a constitution and set of values, maintaining a place-centered development focus, providing empowerment opportunities, ensuring frequent contacts, enabling due deliberation and agreeing to adapt to other good governance principles. Accordingly, place co-creation would not only broaden social acceptability for planning but would also enhance the knowledge development and active participation of community members in shaping their own neighborhoods. Urban planners and policymakers can consider the place co-creation concept more strategically as a mechanism to engage active community participation, including their resources, acceptance and contribution to place management.

When focusing on the sense of place, the present perception is that physical design can enhance the unique identity of a place, but it is only one dimension of the multidimensional conception of the sense of place (Beidler & Morrison, 2015). This study, however, elaborates on the role of intangible aspects in developing a strong sense of place in an individual's mind. Designers and planners who expect to embrace the sense of place for the built environment may plan beyond the physical dimension and consider providing a co-creation experience to people when planning and designing the places. Thus, this research attempts to build an applicable sense of place

scale. It particularly underscores the importance of acknowledging the varying degrees of the sense of place, especially concerning community participation in place-making and environmental management. Perhaps the most powerful message from this study for urban planners, environmental planners and community leaders is the potential for employing the sense of place ladder to comprehend individuals' varying levels of sense of place and use it to enhance community participation throughout the place co-creation process. This, in turn, holds the promise of elevating both the liveability and sustainability of places to a more desirable level. Moreover, understanding the level of sense of place can suggest contextually sensitive place designs with continuous events, communal interactions, shared experiences and lifelong learning opportunities.

Moreover, this research provides wide-ranging insights for practitioners in integrating participants' sense of place into place co-creation, thereby allowing those willing to contribute to meaningful place-making. In contemporary planning, design and management, the synergy between the sense of place and co-creation experience holds significant potential, especially as governments face financial constraints in urban development. Knowledge about these two concepts and their reciprocal relationship helps planners to better target participatory activities with a better understanding of participants' attitudes. This research aims to prompt critical reflection on the narrow top-down planning approach prevalent in contemporary cities, suggesting collaborative place-making as an alternative for sustainable urban development. Beyond implications for urban planning and policy formulation, this study provides empirical support for using the sense of place and co-creation experience spiral as a metric to gauge individuals' levels of co-creation experience and sense of place. This focus is particularly noteworthy as it addresses the often-overlooked component of an individual's attitude toward volunteering.

Overall, this research makes substantive contributions to the field, offering new insights into the nuanced dynamics of the sense of place and co-creation experience. It serves as a valuable resource for informing urban planning strategies, emphasizing the pivotal role of fostering social connections, creating economic opportunities, and providing avenues for cognitive growth within community-driven place-making initiatives.

Moreover, this research is useful not only for urban planners but for community members who are willing to initiate place co-creations. Regarding the details of the community participation strategy itself, the commitment of the members of the Beach Park Management Society (BPMS) to engage in discussions with local people underpinned a successful approach to conducting deliberations with different stakeholders. Admitting the planning dilemma of a strong government, the poor community participation mechanisms and technocratic planners, this study reveals that individuals motivated by place co-creation play a significant role in urban planning practice (Yuan et al., 2021).

Moreover, this research demonstrates that Community-Based Organization (CBO) participation in collaborative planning is a very active, positive and promising strategy for successful place-making. BPMS itself could centered on a dense and resourceful social network, allowing members to expand boundaries; thus, it serves as a good precedent for collaborative practitioners. Considering the good governance principles that BPMS followed during the co-creation process, a well-established CBO can directly influence the policy cycle between planning and place-making through its collaborative governance (Teets & Jagusztyn, 2015). Therefore, this research indicates that the traditional top-down governance structure has been blurred through co-creation, leading to the establishment of a community-managed public place with high social acceptability.

7.7 Limitations

The study focuses on a single case study in a specific country, thus in terms of external validity this research has a methodological limitation. It is imperative to mention that the results cannot be generalized to other urban development initiatives of different scales and contexts. Moreover, the results may differ in other countries with different decision-making cultures. For example, some European countries have already introduced co-creation projects, as they value consensual political and administrative cultures in which deliberation and consultation among stakeholders are relatively common practices. In Sri Lanka, similar practices called ‘Shramadana’ emerge as a purely bottom-up approach for addressing small-scale spatial issues. Likewise,

institutional or community practices may differ in many other countries around the world.

Further, the results obtained may be particularly attributed to Sri Lanka, which has a unique socio-cultural context centered on traditional values, strong interpersonal relationships and Buddhism-based spiritual values, especially a decade ago. Therefore, the phenomenon of sense of place and co-creation experience may not necessarily mirror those in other countries. However, the main research findings, including the proposed ladder of sense of place, the co-creation experience cycle and the spiraling-up relationship between sense of place and co-creation experience, present significant frameworks that can be tested and examined in different contexts beyond the specific case study.

Being a qualitative study, it is essential to acknowledge that some results may exhibit differences, even if the same research methodology is repeated. The methodological choice to perform qualitative research through interviews can result in bias (Babbie, 2003). Respondent's answers are subjective and may change over time. However, while it is an inherent issue of qualitative research, reliability is maintained as much as possible by incorporating other data collection methods such as observation and document analysis. Additionally, I visited Crow Island Beach Park continuously for about eight months for data collection purposes. Interestingly, when I spoke to the same respondents about six months after their initial interview, a noticeable shift in openness was observed. Particularly, in relation to the questions regarding co-creation experiences, initially, the respondents aspired to highlight positive experiences to outsiders to give a good impression, as they were proud of their contribution. However, as trust was built between the researcher and the respondents, some revealed more sensitive information. This highlights a limitation of the qualitative data collection method, as it is uncertain when a respondent feels comfortable sharing their true experience with the interviewer and whether they are likely to provide reliable answers.

Another limitation encountered in this research, which may also be true for other collaborative planning-related studies, is that individuals are often reluctant to claim some of the contributions, considering "everything is done as a collective effort".

Similarly, some respondents who have contributed significantly may not be interested in mentioning their efforts or may not be communicative enough to explain well. This qualitative data collection issue was solved to some extent by conducting several rounds of interviews with 16 respondents. This iterative process allowed for a more comprehensive understanding of individual contributions, overcoming some limitations associated with the qualitative data collection method.

When considering the time frame of this study, it is necessary to acknowledge that the responses might be sensitive to the instability in Sri Lanka due to the COVID-19 pandemic and concurrent economic and political circumstances. The backdrop of substantial numbers of individuals contemplating out-migration from the country, adds a layer of complexity to participants' responses. Another concern is that the respondents have been participating in co-creation since 2006, and the interview was conducted in 2022/2023. Given that the sense of place encompasses meanings, beliefs, values and feelings, the responses may be sensitive to time, incidents, experiences and circumstances.

Moreover, it is essential to note that the interviews, and analytic and academic components of this study are primarily undertaken and completed by me. These efforts have been inherently time-consuming, with all interviews resulting in extensive transcripts totaling hundreds of pages. There would have been so many other interesting angles from which those insights could have been discussed and the subjectivity of the research could have been mitigated by collaborative analysis involving a team of analysts. However, different data sources facilitated triangulation and minimised such limitations.

7.8 Future research works

Drawing from the main findings, contributions and limitations of this study, several areas for future research can be identified. Firstly, there are three key findings revealed in this study by following the qualitative research approach: the ladder of sense of place; the co-creation experience cycle and the upward spiral of the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation process. These three inductively generated

outcomes can be operationalized into inductive mixed-methods approach-based research in the future to test these phenomena in different contexts.

Additionally, addressing methodological limitations, such as concerns about generalizability, could be achieved through rigorous comparative research. Conducting in-depth investigations in at least two other distinct locations with varying socio-economic contexts would offer valuable insights into the transferability and applicability of the identified phenomena. This approach would enhance the robustness of the study's conclusions and contribute to developing a more universally applicable framework for sense of place and co-creation experiences in diverse urban settings.

Both sense of place and the co-creation experience are dynamic. This research allows respondents to reflect on about 15 years of historical incidents based on feelings and experiences. Some research on sense of place has been conducted as a longitudinal study, enabling a better understanding of how sense of place can respond to place and socio-economic changes (Hay, 1988; Shamai et al., 2012; Quinn et al., 2019). Ideally, the relationship between sense of place and the co-creation experience can be studied by following a longitudinal research approach or an action research approach to a fuller understanding of the phenomenon. Accordingly, the research gets the opportunity to observe the actions of co-creators through participatory research methods and identify the circumstances and sequence of co-creation activities over time.

Moreover, this study considers the sense of place and co-creation experience of community members, but future research can expand to explore sense of place and the co-creation experience of all stakeholders engaging in the co-creation process. At the same time, some responses indicated a poor level of co-creation experience among the young generation. Therefore, future works can focus more on those demographic categories to confirm this fact and explore the reasons for their level of engagement, which has vital practical implications.

Another timely area of research would be studying the same relationship under participatory e-planning. Some steps of place co-creation can be conducted through

participatory e-planning. Thus, it would be worthwhile to explore the role of sense of place in that context and whether sense of place is enhanced if people engage virtually. Accordingly, this study lays the background for further exploration from many perspectives. The study's multidimensional nature facilitates additional research and considerations, providing opportunities for in-depth studies that can contribute to a richer understanding of the topics. Future endeavors could encompass a range of themes, including but not limited to examining specific aspects of co-creation experiences, the co-creation experiences of other stakeholders, exploring the dynamics of sense of place of people in different spatial planning contexts, and exploring the broader implications of co-creation in diverse planning contexts.

7.9 Recommendations

The current debate in the field of participatory planning approach is highly critical. On one hand, it argues that genuine participation, which emerges from individuals' experiences, is often overshadowed by the dominance of elected representatives. On the other hand, it highlights that participants often lack a genuine interest in engaging throughout the place-making process. Planning practitioners typically decide who participates, where, when and whether the participation process is effective. Real active participation should not be a situation where decision-makers keep community members at a 'safe' distance from actual decision-making. In this scenario, planners, acting as good mediators in the decision-making process, need to allow interested community members to participate in place-making. Therefore, identifying the individuals who have motivation for participation and understanding their level of sense of place is important for gauging their potential contributions. Therefore, this research recommends using the ladder of sense of place to assess the engagement level of individuals involved in the decision-making process.

Martin (2003) mentions that the neighborhoods function as sites of political activism. The Crow Island case study also shows that local politicians often use neighbourhoods to fulfill their political agendas. However, Community-based organizations (CBO) are ideal power organizations at the neighbourhood level to meet real community needs. Currently, CBOs focus on multiple common-interest issues such as health, housing,

young generations' needs and welfare, but rarely concentrate on place-making-based objectives. Inspired by BPMS, it is recommended to form a CBO for each neighbourhood, either as a decision by the community members themselves or by urban planners, with the objective of place development. Moreover, when forming a CBO, it is essential to establish a set of rules and values of the CBO as a foundation, a set of goals and objectives, and inclusiveness, particularly by avoiding class-based divergence. Systematic formation of CBOs and empowering community members, either through external power organizations or within the CBO, is necessary. For example, CBOs can compete for external funding if members are trained to write proposals, and they can generate income by transforming their place into a tourist destination through effective place-branding. This research supports recommending the formation of CBOs targeting place-making in neighbourhoods and empowering their members.

Moreover, aligning place-making strategies with community development institutions is crucial for realizing place co-creation. Place co-creation is not just about enhancing the aesthetic value of a place but using this aesthetic quality to achieve community outcomes. Salzman and Lopez (2020) describe a similar concept called creative place-making, which entails partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically influencing the physical and social character of a place. Enhancing public safety, increasing company viability, and bringing life to both public and private settings are all part of this process. Such a complex and comprehensive process cannot be achieved without institutional support- not to dictate the process and practices, but to recognize the products or places produced by people. Therefore, planning procedures need to incorporate flexible and holistic metrics for executing locally derived development priorities. With a special emphasis on community development, this study aims to highlight the prevalence and driving force behind institutions likely to participate in place-making from policymaking to place co-creation.

Furthermore, urban planners and policymakers need to understand the level of place co-creation experience as it contributes to individuals' further commitments, satisfaction levels and most importantly, their sense of place. This understanding underpins people's willingness to initiate further place-making. Environmental

managers, alongside urban planners, can apply the spiraling-up model of the relationship between sense of place and co-creation experience to suggest alternative policies in sustainable planning, thereby developing sustainable local communities.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Summary of the articles subjected to in-depth review to find the relationship

Year	Authors	Title	Country	Field	Aim	Method
2005	Shamai (Scopus, WoS)	Sense of Place: An Empirical Measurement	Israel	Urban Planning	A scale of sense of place is constructed to organize the literature and distinguish among different levels of intensity of 'sense of place'.	Quantitative
2006	Manzo and Perkins (Scopus, WoS)	Finding Common Ground: The Importance of Place Attachment to Community Participation and Planning	USA	Urban Planning	Draws connections between the environmental and community psychology literature on place attachment and meaning with the theory, research, and practice of community participation.	Literature review
2009	Aitken and Campelo	The Four R's of Place Branding	New Zealand	Urban Planning	Investigates the interactions and relationships between people and their place to identify the constructs that are interwoven into those interactions and influence the nature of the brand.	Qualitative
2011	Füller et al. (Scopus and WoS)	Why co-creation experience matters? Creative experience and its impact on the quantity and quality of creative contributions	Austria	Jewellery design	Explore the impact of the perceived sense of community of members on their co-creation experience.	Quantitative
2011	Maria Lewicka (Scopus, WoS)	Place attachment: How far have we come in the last 40 years?	Poland	Urban Planning	This article reviews research in place attachment and organizes the material into three sections: research, method, and theory.	Literature review
2015	Hadjilouca	Enhancing 'active co- existence', in contested public spaces, through co- creation and social engagement.	Cyprus	Urban planning	This paper examined the practice of socially engaged design and how it can enhance active co-existence and place-making	

Year	Authors	Title	Country	Field	Aim	Method
2016	Suntikul and Jachna (Scopus & WoS)	The co-creation/place attachment nexus	Macau	Urban Planning; Tourism	Explores the zone of conceptual overlap between these two models e a co-creation/place dependence (or more specifically engagement/place identity) nexus	Quantitative
2016	Thompson and Prokopy	The Role of Sense of Place in Collaborative Planning	USA	Urban Planning	This paper focuses on understanding the collaborative process as a critical aspect of building community capacity to respond to change and uncertainty in the landscape.	Quantitative
2018	Frantzeskaki et al.	Sense of place and experimentation in urban sustainability transitions: the Resilience Lab in Carnisse, Rotterdam, The Netherlands	The Netherlands	Urban Planning	Examines notions and socially engaged design practices of place-making and co-existence in contested public spaces;	Qualitative
2018	Liu et al.	The Effect of Activity Involvement on Place Attachment with Co-Creation as a Mediator	Taiwan	Urban Planning and Tourism	Examines the mediating effect of co-creation on involvement and place attachment constructs.	Quantitative
2018	Puerari et al.	Co-Creation Dynamics in Urban Living Labs	The Netherlands	Urban Planning	This paper focuses on co-creation dynamics in urban living labs, its associated learning and knowledge generation, and how these possibly contribute to urban sustainability transitions.	Mixed-methods
2019	Zang et al.	Co-creation experience and place attachment: festival evaluation	Macau	Urban Planning	The analysis focused on the role of place attachment and festival satisfaction as mediators in the relationship between festival visitors' satisfaction with the co-creation experience and their behavioral intention to attend the festival.	Quantitative

Year	Authors	Title	Country	Field	Aim	Method
2019	Casais and Monteiro	Residents' involvement in city brand co-creation and their perceptions of city brand identity: a case study in Porto	Portugal	Urban Planning	Analyses the process of involvement of residents in the co-creation of a city brand, their understanding and expectations about that process and their perception of the fit between the created city brand and their sense of place identity	Qualitative
2019	Fabrizio Montanari	Creativity, Co-Working and Sense of Place in Collaborative Workspaces	UK	Office space management	To offer some insights on a relevant contemporary phenomenon and stimulate the debate on the social and cognitive dynamics that actually happen in the office spaces	Qualitative
2018	Teder	Placemaking as co-creation – professional roles and attitudes in practice	Norway	Urban Planning	The paper reviews current literature on placemaking and co-creation in order to identify suggested professional roles.	Literature review
2019	Ellery and Ellery	Strengthening Community Sense of Place through Placemaking	Australia	Urban Planning	Explores the role of placemaking as a strategy for developing a host community's sense of place	Literature review
2019	Wu-Yan et al.	Sustainability-oriented social innovation design: The value of Co-creation	China	Urban Planning	How stakeholders realize sustainable social innovation through co-creation.	
2020	Jiang et al.	Co-Creating for Locality and Sustainability: Design-Driven Community Regeneration Strategy in Shanghai's Old Residential Context	China	Urban Planning	This article proposes two design-driven strategies: enabling residents to become innovation protagonists and facilitating collaborative entrepreneurial clusters based on the reorganization of community resources.	Qualitative
2020	Marušić	Understanding co-creation within the public open space development process	Republic of Slovenia	Urban Planning	The focus is on defining the comprehensive structure of interlinks and detailed explanation of supportive co-creation activities	

Year	Authors	Title	Country	Field	Aim	Method
2020a	Slingerland et al.	Engaging Children to Co-create Outdoor Play Activities for Place-making	The Netherlands	Urban Planning	This paper proposes a participatory design method, grounded in literature, to support children in co-creating outdoor play activities for place-making.	Qualitative
2021	Deng	The Role of Visitors' Co-creation Experience in the Sustainable Development of Cultural Heritage Sites: A Conceptual Framework	Macau	Heritage Management	Examine the relationship between the co-creation experience and tourists' sustainable behavior	Literature review
2022	Stoica et al.	Place Brand Co-Creation through Storytelling: Benefits, Risks and Preconditions	UK	Urban Planning	Use of storytelling to instigate place brand co-creation	Qualitative

Appendix 2: Interview guide

1. Please tell me about your experience with the Crow Island Beach Park Development activities.

Social Experience

- 1.5 Tell me about the people you have met through participating in the project? Who are they? How did they involve in this development?
- 1.6 Could you interact with government officers and other stakeholders? Who are they and what was the role?
- 1.7 Explain your experience when working with others? Did you trust them? Do you think it is a pleasant experience?
- 1.8 Do you have a desire to further interact with participants for future developments?

Economic Experience

- 1.13 What are the social or economic benefits you received by engaging in Crow Island Beach Park Development activities?
- 1.14 What are the social or economic benefits of this place-making to the residents of Crow Island?
- 1.15 Explain the overall benefits of this project
- 1.16 Do you think this project proceeded in a way to improve the social, economic and environmental benefits?

Cognitive Experience

- 1.9 How did you contribute? What skills, expertise and resources have you shared?
- 1.10 Was there a good collaborative climate for you to share your ideas?
- 1.11 Could you get new knowledge, skills or experiences by participating the Beach Park Development Activities?
- 1.12 What are the skills, expertise and resources brought to the project by other stakeholders? If you can remember, mention the names.

Hedonic Experience

- 1.1 Are you a volunteer in Crow Island Beach Park development?
- 1.2 What motivated you to be a volunteer?
- 1.3 Are you satisfied with the overall experience? Why?
- 1.4 Why you continue Beach Park Development activities?

2. How do you describe your feelings regarding Crow Island Beach Park and its environs?

Distinctiveness

- 2.1 Do you think Crow Island is having a unique character in terms of environmental, social or other perspectives?
Do you think this character is further enhanced after the beach park development
- 2.2 Do you think Crow Island is a pleasant place to be? Why?

Continuity

- 2.3 Explain whether you feel positive as you involve to develop this beach park.
- 2.4 Do you think you are a part of this area?
Do you feel it more as you involve with people and use the beach park after the development?

Familiarity

- 2.5 Have you always lived here? Has it always been like this?
What noticeable changes happened after the beach park development?
- 2.6 Do you think you have good memories of this place? Please explain some strong memories you have.

Feeling of pride

- 2.7 Do you feel comfortable mentioning that you are from in this area/ Do you feel comfortable mentioning you frequently use this area?
What was your feeling in this regard before the beach park development?
- 2.8 Do you recommend this place as a must-see place for visitors to Colombo? If so, why?
Do you think the beach park development made it more comfortable to recommend this area to visitors?

Connectedness

- 2.9 What is your feeling if someone criticizes this neighborhood?
Whether the way you respond has changed after the beach park development?
- 2.10 What would you miss if you had to leave this area? Why?

Belongingness

- 2.11 Do you feel that this is a place of yours?
Do you feel it more after the beach park development?
- 2.12 Among the other beach park developments in Sri Lanka, do you think Crow Island Beach Park is important to you?
Did you identify the importance of this neighborhood over the other places before the beach park development?

Evaluation

- 2.13 Compared to other places, how important this place to fulfil your expected desires?
- 2.14 Do you think facilities and utilities provided for education, pleasure, etc are commendable in this neighborhood compared to other areas?
Whether you considered facilities and utilities provided for education, pleasure, etc are better in this area before the beach park development?

Preference

- 2.15 Do you think you made a right decision by selecting this neighborhood to live in?
Whether your decision has changed or established more after the beach park development?
- 2.16 Do you think for the activities you like to do, the setting and facilities provided in this area are the best?
Do you think whether your understanding is improved after the beach park development?

Unwilling to move

- 2.17 Do you think you have to live in this neighbourhood since you are dependent on the place (accessibility, job, etc)?
Whether you feel more dependent after the beach park development?
- 2.18 Would you be sorry to leave here and live somewhere else? If no, like where? Why?
Whether you had any idea to leave before the beach park development? If yes, like where? Why?

Appendix 3: Consent form for data collection

Name of research candidate	T L M Meetiyagoda
Applied through the Department and university:	Department of Town & Country Planning, University of Moratuwa
Study is for:	Doctor of Philosophy

Research Title	Relationship between sense of place and co-creation process
Expected Outcome and Benefits	There is a discourse that highlights the inability of traditional policy-centric approaches to tackle some urban issues (Pappas et al. 2020). Therefore, different stakeholders get together and produce formal and informal networks to find creative solutions. There is limited research describing the applicability of co-creations in the urban planning and design domain and its consequences. Thus, this research argues strong sense of place can be a reason for a successful co-creation process, as sense of place is a phenomenon that can strengthen the association between people and place.

Participant Consent Form		Yes	No
1	I have read and understood the information about the project and the researchers have explained them to me as well.		
2	I understand the content of the research project described by the researcher		
3	I understand that my personal information I have provided for this study will be treated confidentially		
5	I understand that the primary researchers would take appropriate care to safeguard the security and integrity of the data		
6	I give my consent to using the collected data for publication purposes with the personally identifiable information removed. I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous		
7	I understand that I will not have any personal benefit from the research.		
9	I have the right to withdraw the data I have provided at any time, to the extent that they have not been used in any publication at the time of withdrawal		
Contact information of the researcher: T L M Meetiyagoda Tel: 0716037340 Email: meetitlm@uom.lk		Contact information of the Supervisor: Prof. P K S Mahanama Tel: 0777571284 Email: mahanama@uom.lk	
10	Participants Name:	Signature:	Date:
11	Name of Researcher T L M Meetiyagoda	Signature:	Date:

Adapted from participants consent form, Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka