

REMAKING THE FORT: FAMILIARIZATION, HERITAGE AND
GENTRIFICATION IN SRI LANKA'S GALLE FORT

by

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ABSTRACT

Seeking to widen the existing literature on postcolonial cities, this thesis conducts an inquiry into the multilocality of postcolonial space. Through ethnographic research in Sri Lanka's Galle Fort, it investigates how different social groups differently use and interpret the city's former colonial built environment. Specifically, it examines how the postcolonial city is socially produced and constructed as a place of home for local communities, a World Heritage Site, and a gentrifying neighborhood. Using interviews, observations, and spatial analyses, it teases out the local, national, and transnational socio-economic forces that drive these processes, as well as the power-dynamics and resistances that come into play. It finds that postcolonial uses of space often relate to, and sometimes recall, social struggles that characterized urban space under colonialism. Drawing on these findings, it highlights the importance of studying social relations, heritage management, and gentrification in postcolonial cities in conversation with literatures on colonial urbanisms.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS USED

ICOMOS	International Council on Monuments and Sites
UDA	Urban Development Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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I dedicate this thesis to all those who know and love Galle Fort.

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

Sri Lanka's southern highway terminates at the Pinnaduwa intersection. At the junction where the access way meets the old Galle Road, the vehicles that moved unencumbered along the slick, newly built highway slow down to join a traffic jam of three-wheelers, motorbikes, vans, and buses crisscrossed by pedestrians and the occasional herd of bulls. Arriving at Galle Road, a white circular lighthouse comes into view across the bay. Erected on ramparts built in the sixteenth century—a stark contrast to the highway speeding Sri Lanka toward a new image of modernity—this lighthouse provides the first glimpse of the walled town that extends into the waters of the Indian Ocean.

The Galle Fort originated as a colonial fortress. Located along major sea routes in the Indian Ocean, Galle was a thriving pre-colonial port with ships arriving from China, India, and the Arab Coast. In the sixteenth century, when the Portuguese occupied the island's coast, they built a military garrison in Galle. Later, the Dutch occupied the Fort in the seventeenth century and fortified it further. The British, who followed, used it as their administrative center for the south of the island. Today, decades after the island's independence, the Fort is home to almost two thousand Muslims, Sinhalese and Tamils, who reinhabit its colonial townhouses. Living within the walled town, these residents see themselves as a distinctive multiethnic community, and often assert that they remained united while Sri Lanka's ethnic tensions escalated into a civil war that spanned the past three decades.

The idea that the Fort is an exceptional place is not only held by residents, but also by local and international heritage authorities. In 1988, UNESCO declared the Fort a World Heritage Site. Since then, multiple state institutions have been working to conserve the Fort's colonial architecture and enforce strict building regulations. With its World Heritage status, the Fort has grown popular as a tourist site and is currently undergoing tourism-based gentrification, as expatriate investors and hoteliers, primarily from Europe and North America, buy properties from local residents and establish private villas and boutique hotels. As a result of these property sales, the Fort has lost close to one third of its local community and significant spatial and demographic change is underway. It is evident today that multiple groups and actors, negotiating social and economic forces at local, national, and international scales, are shaping postcolonial space in Galle Fort. Yet we know little about the significance the colonial built environment has for each group, the social and economic relations between them, and the material and symbolic impacts their visions of history have on the Fort.

This thesis asks the following question: How do the various actors and social groups of Galle Fort produce and construct its postcolonial space? For the purposes of this project, I use Low's (1996) framework that describes the social production of space as the creation of material settings and social construction as the formation of its symbolic associations. I use the term "post-colonial space" specifically to recognize that the Fort is a product of colonialism and has since developed diverse contemporary functions and meanings. My focus on postcolonial space is particularly important for an investigation of the Fort's social and economic dynamics because the colonial townhouses have not only become central to local social life but they are also prime real

estate in an international property market and involved in a process of gentrification. Further, these townhouses constitute a source of conflict between residents who want to modify them and heritage managers who want to preserve their colonial architecture.

Given the material and spatial vestiges of its past, the Fort's colonial origins are immediately apparent to anyone entering it: The British coat of arms is embossed into the arch of the harbor facing gate; scattered around the Fort's perimeter are bastions, tunnels, gunpowder magazines and dungeons; and the granite ramparts built by the Portuguese and Dutch still encircle the town and constitute its most striking physical feature. Yet the social world that unfolds within these walls is by no means frozen in colonial times. Five times a day, a call to prayer rings out from the mosque on Leyn Baan Street, and its minarets rise above its classical columns and arches. Residents have reinscribed the town's spaces with local meanings, turning colonial buildings into Sufi lodges and a Buddhist temple, adapting their houses to suit their everyday needs. Presently, city administrators are attempting to curb residents' modifications to these colonial townhouses and working to restore them to their appearance during Dutch rule to retain their heritage value. The Fort's expatriate hoteliers have further stake in the colonial architecture, as they market their establishments to tourists by evoking nostalgic narratives about the colonial past. These varied articulations of space show how different people use and interpret the Fort's colonial built environment in different ways. These functions and meanings, while linked in some form to the colonial past, are firmly anchored in the present and have much to do with social and economic forces shaping the town today.

This study focuses on the present iterations of the past. To this end, it asks the following: How has the Galle Fort functioned as a place where people live, a place to preserve the past, and a place marketed to tourists as consumable heritage? How are these spatial formations connected to economic and social forces at local, national, and international scales? To study postcolonial space, I focus on three social constructions of the contemporary Fort: the Fort as a hometown for local residents, as a World Heritage Site, and as a neighborhood undergoing tourism-related gentrification. I conduct my inquiry with three different groups of people who have stakes in the Fort: local residents from a cross section of ethnic and class backgrounds, administrators and architects responsible for managing the Fort's heritage, and European and North American expatriates who own property in the Fort. I pursue slightly different lines of inquiry with each group. With the local residents, I ask, how do they adapt the Fort's colonial urban forms for their everyday needs and what new meanings have they ascribed to the colonial built environment? Also, how does the Fort's structure shape the way they negotiate their ethnic, class, and gender differences? With the local heritage administrators I inquire, what purposes drive their efforts to protect and manage the Fort's heritage and what premises and values guide their decisions about what should be preserved and restored? Further, how do they negotiate the tensions of preserving the town and making it livable for today's residents? With the expatriates I ask, what individual desires and transnational social and economic processes have drawn them to invest in this former colonial city, in an island far-flung from the global metropolitan centers they have lived in? How have they renovated the Fort's derelict colonial buildings and transformed them into "colonial chic," marketable to an exclusive tourist clientele? Through these questions I attempt to

attend individually to the concerns of each group, yet broadly address the connections between them and the different ways they all remake the Fort's colonial urban landscape.

At the heart of this project are issues of space, place, and power. My first concern is to explore the relationship between people and postcolonial space. I investigate the everyday ways in which residents, restorers, and expatriates each use and assign new meanings and values to the Fort's colonial spaces, and how their social exchanges and social boundaries are spatialized in the walled town. My second concern is with power. To this end, I analyze how forms of power and hierarchy are structured within the local community along lines of class, ethnicity, and gender, and how people negotiate them in everyday spaces. I also examine the relationship between power and heritage management by investigating how bureaucrats' efforts to protect the colonial urban environment have become tied to exerting social control over the population within it. I then analyze how residents adapt to, circumvent, or disregard these building regulations as ways of resisting authority and moving forward with their lives. Finally, I attend to the question of how, and to what degree, flows of transnational capital funneled by well-heeled expatriate investors have restructured the Fort, its spaces, its economy, and its local community. To explain the pertinence of such a study I turn to a review of the relevant literatures.

CHAPTER 2:

THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF POSTCOLONIAL SPACE

Colonial Urbanisms and Postcolonial Space

Cultural geographers and historians have established that European colonists used urban planning to facilitate colonial rule (Jacobs 2003, King 1995). For instance, colonial explorers and surveyors used cartography and systems of classification to demarcate their territorial boundaries and restructure the relationship between people and the land (Anderson 1991, Clayton 2003). Colonial spatial production also depended on the nexus of power and knowledge as urban planners relied on sociological data to establish military control, regulate activities, and maintain a comprehensive political order in the colonies (Rabinow 1989, 1990). Scientific discourse on sanitation further drove colonial efforts to reorder urban space according to regimes of hygiene (Archer 2000, Hosagrahar 2005, Rabinow 1989). Urban design too served to exhibit colonial authority and inspire awe through the “architecture of spectacle,” which placed monuments, governor’s residences, and town halls at elevated locations.

Geographers have argued that while colonial attempts to organize and construct space were effective in some cases, imperial projects also had their limitations (Jacobs 1996, 2003). Often colonial governance was heavily marked by uncertainties, anxieties and insecurities. Imperial rule around the globe was neither homogenous nor complete, and different European occupations produced various urban patterns in different colonies

(Jacobs 1996, Sen 2010). Colonial projects had internal contradictions: for instance, while some colonists constructed racialized hierarchies to legitimate European domination, others called for humanist, civilizing missions (Jacobs 1996). Even within one imperial system, there were internal fissures of competing ideologies and moralities (ibid).

Scholars of colonial urbanism have also examined how local populations dealt with European attempts to restructure space, sometimes engaging in overt anticolonial movements, and at others responding with complicity, conciliation and even blithe disregard (Jacobs 1996, p.15). For instance, in 19th century Calcutta, while colonial planners attempted to restructure the indigenous “black town” based on rationales about hygiene and agendas for surveillance, local residents continued to maintain their spatial arrangements that articulated structures of caste, occupation, gender, and religion, forcing the British to scale back their plans (Archer 2000). Overall, the literature on colonial urbanism demonstrates that urban centers in former colonies constituted sites of struggle or negotiation over the meanings and uses of space. It shows that imperial projects to change spatial arrangements in the colonies were at times effective and at others unsuccessful, and that colonized populations sometimes did and at other times did not find their relationships to place altered by European rulers.

While there have been extensive studies on colonial cities when they were under European occupation, few scholars have examined how various actors and groups use spaces and ascribe meaning to them in postcolonial years. From the literature available, we know that in some postcolonial cities, such as Kinshasa, leaders have destroyed buildings and monuments from the colonial period to erase all traces of colonialism

(Lagae 2008). In others, such as Delhi, colonial town halls and administrative buildings are still used for the governance of the postcolonial nation (Hosagrahar 2004). In many cities across the world, colonial period mansions and elite dwellings have been allowed to languish and decay (Bissell 2005, p.218), have become incorporated into the local urban fabric (Scriver & Prakash 2007, p.3), or have been used instrumentally by ordinary people with little attention to their original value as architectural icons (Collins 2005, p.290). Conversely, in places such as Singapore and Lima, city administrators or developers have initiated projects to designate colonial urban forms as heritage and convert these spaces into hotels or historic centers to attract tourists, generating criticism that the parties involved are evoking colonial nostalgia (Henderson 2011, Gandolfo 2008).

While such scholarship suggests that colonial urban forms are used in diverse ways today, no systematic study compares these usages and considers their implications for questions of power, agency, historical and economic value. How do colonial city grids, spatial forms, and the arrangement of urban space continue to shape urban life and urban dynamics in postcolonial cities? In what ways have they been adapted, appropriated, changed, and given new meanings by different groups of people? What place do colonial buildings have in the rapidly modernizing cities of postcolonial nations? How are they used to represent the past? In order to address these questions comparatively from within one fieldsite, my project studies three different postcolonial uses, interpretations, and (re)articulations of colonial urban space in the Galle Fort. The first involves local residents' adaptations of its colonial-period spaces for their everyday and ritual needs. The second is the construction of these same spaces as heritage by state

actors, architects and bureaucrats. The third focuses on expatriate investors' and hoteliers' construction of colonial townhouses as prime real estate in a property market linked to the tourist industry. I approach each groups' uses and interpretations of space with an awareness of what was "beneath and before their contemporary forms" (Burke 2006, p.961). Specifically, I focus on how these groups in their different uses of space remember the colonial past, reassert colonial spatial orders, or replace them with local ways of organizing and inhabiting space. In doing so, I attend to how dynamics of power, agency, social difference shape people's material reconstruction of colonial urban forms and their postcolonial spatial activities within them. Through such an inquiry, my project aims to expand scholarly conversations about postcolonial urban space, building on the rich body of literature on cities under colonial rule.

Prior to reviewing the theoretical questions and specific bodies of literature this study addresses, I provide below an overview of relevant Sri Lankan social, historical, political and economic contexts in order to situate my project within them. I then briefly outline the available literature on Galle Fort's history and describe its contemporary social composition.

Sri Lanka: National, Historical and Geographical Context

Sri Lanka is an island in the Indian Ocean, 65,610 km² in size (see Appendix 1 for map), with a population of approximately 20,653,000 (Central Bank 2011). Its society is heterogenous and its citizens use various markers to differentiate themselves. Ethnic, religious and class identities take primacy in contemporary Sri Lanka's politics of difference, yet these identities continue to be inflected by gender and caste distinctions

(Holt 2011, p.2).¹ Sri Lanka has a small urban upper class (some with rural property assets), burgeoning urban middle and lower classes, and a large rural peasantry.² Ethnically, the Sinhalese comprise 73.9%, Sri Lankan Tamils 12.7%, Indian Tamils 5.5%, Muslims 7.1%, and others 1% of the population (Central Bank 2011).³ In terms of religion, most Sinhalese are Buddhists, most Tamils are Hindu, and each group has Christian members (Winslow & Woost 2004).⁴ The Muslims are the only ethnic group that identifies itself, and is identified by others, by religion (ibid.). Sri Lankans use three main languages: Sinhala and Tamil, spoken by their respective ethnicities and by Muslims, and English, spoken by urban upper-middle classes.

Out of the island's recorded history, the colonial period is the most relevant to my project. Sri Lanka was colonized by three groups of Europeans: the Portuguese (1506 – 1658), the Dutch (1658 – 1796) and the British (1796 – 1948). Their colonial projects were driven by different motivations and had uneven effects on the island (Holt 2011). The Portuguese and the Dutch, unable to colonize Sri Lanka's interior, focused on monopolizing the spice trade and engaging in missionary activities in the coast (De Silva 2006). Also, the Portuguese sought to convert local subjects to Roman Catholicism, while

¹ Drawing from Rogers (1994), Winslow and Woost suggest that the emphasis on ethnicity is relatively recent, and partly a product of nineteenth century British sociological classification (2004, p.4). A number of other scholars have shown how at various points in the island's history and in various geographic regions, social distinctions such as caste (Roberts 1982, Jayawardena 2000) and differences within ethnic groups (Daniel 1996) have taken the dominant role in producing group affinities and tensions.

² The 1981 Census indicates that 72.2% of the population is rural, 21.5% is urban, and 6.3% resides in plantations. The 2011 Census when made public will have the updated results.

³ The report notes that these figures are from the 1981 Census. The data from the 2001 census contains inaccuracies as it was conducted during the civil war and the entire population was not counted. The latest census was conducted in 2011 but its results have not been released yet.

⁴ The 1981 Census indicates that the population by religion is comprises 69.3% Buddhists, 15.5% Hindus, 7.6% Muslims, 7.6% Christians, and 0.1% Others (Central Bank 2011)

the Dutch proselytized Protestant Christianity (ibid.). The Dutch invested heavily in the cinnamon trade, which they expanded using bonded labor from the caste of cinnamon peelers (ibid.). The British, who colonized the entire island, made long-standing social, economic and political changes, including establishing vast plantations for tea, rubber and coconut; a network of roads and railroads linking the interior to the coast; and English-language schools to cultivate a westernized indigenous elite (Holt 2011, p.230, 231). Today's politics continue to be marked by social struggles prevalent in the colonial period, such as anti-conversion movements, caste and class rivalries, and Sinhala and Tamil nationalisms.

The island's contemporary ethnic politics constitute one of the most important social dynamics of the country. Following Sri Lanka's independence in 1948, tensions grew between the majority Sinhala government and minority Tamil groups seeking their language rights, fairer political representation, and eventually a separate homeland in the north and east. In the mid 1980s, particularly after the 1983 anti-Tamil riots, a full scale war waged between the Sri Lankan government and Tamil militant groups, out of which the LTTE (Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam) prevailed after eliminating the others (Thiranagama 2011, p.2). This war lasted close to three decades and its long and brutal history was marked by military battles in the north and east; the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people; and intense militarization in major cities (ibid.). The conflict affected all of Sri Lanka's main ethnic groups, as documented in the extensive body of

scholarship on the island's war.⁵ Several ceasefires were unsuccessful and the one that lasted between 2002 and 2008 was followed by a year of intensive warfare.

In May 2009, the Sri Lankan military, led by the Mahinda Rajapakse government, brought a decisive end to the war by defeating the LTTE. The final stages of the war appear to have been remarkably brutal, and remain a topic of controversy on the island. Three years hence, majoritarian rule and marginalization of minorities persists. Thus far, the Sri Lankan government has resisted taking adequate steps to bring about a political solution to this problem (Kadirgamar 2012), although its internal committee, the Commission of Inquiry on Lessons Learned and Reconciliation (2011) has provided some useful recommendations for post-war reconciliation. Today the island's political climate remains charged: debate and dissent about these issues continues in sections of civil society. A range of protests and strikes has emerged in public sectors, universities, and trade unions including the free-trade zone. These have arisen in response to various bills put forth by the state, its repressive measures against opposition, cuts in funding for education, and the deepening economic problems in Sri Lanka (Kadirgamar 2012, p.25, 29).

While the Rajapakse regime rejects international intervention in domestic postwar politics, its postwar economic agenda has embraced approaches to development that increasingly allow global financial forces to shape the island's economy (Kadirgamar 2011b). Prioritizing macro-economic infrastructure development, the government has actively pursued large-scale projects for building roads, highways, ports, and airports,

⁵ For key anthropological accounts, see Thiranagama 2011 (for Tamil and Muslim experiences); Tambiah 1986 (origins and early years of conflict and 1983 riots); McGilvray 2008 (epilogue on Tamils and Muslims in the East); Spencer 1990 (for origins of conflict and broad range of perspectives); Winslow and Woost 2004 (for the role of economy in war).

financing these projects through high-interest loans, including bilateral loans from China, Japan and India and multilateral loans from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (Kadirgamar 2011b). Many of these projects are tied to the government's efforts to boost tourism to bring in international capital and meet its goal of attracting 2.5 million tourists by 2016, projecting a dramatic increase from the 600,000 tourist arrivals in 2010 (Kadirgamar 2011b). To further revitalize the tourist industry, the state is promoting real estate investments in up-market hotels and providing multi-year tax holidays for large tourist-related investments (Kadirgamar 2011a). Capitalizing on these incentives, both local and foreign investors are building hotels in the coastal belt and also converting colonial manor houses and tea plantations into boutique hotels, catalyzing a speculative real estate boom tied to tourism.

The Rajapakse regime's economic agenda constitutes what Kadirgamar (2011b) has termed Sri Lanka's "second wave of neoliberalism." The J.R. Jayawardena government initiated the first wave in 1977, when it put in place widespread economic reforms that further opened the country's markets to foreign investment and international trade (Kadirgamar 2011b, Richardson 2004). The economic growth that followed was also tied to a boom in the tourist industry, but following the inception of the war, the island saw a sharp decline in tourism and many tourist-related businesses experienced substantial losses (Crick 1994). In between these two economic landmarks--the reforms of the late seventies and postwar years--the UNP government headed by Ranil Wickremasinghe also attempted to further liberalize Sri Lanka's economy following the ceasefire in 2002. Galle Fort's real estate boom and gentrification, which this study addresses in Chapter 5, had their origins in this brief period of economic restructuring

during a temporary hiatus from the war. My findings in Galle, based on this earlier period of economic reform, may help predict changes that await other cities in Sri Lanka that are presently drawing the attention of state actors and international hoteliers for their potential as tourist attractions.

Finally, as my study is based in coastal Sri Lanka, it is relevant to consider the impact of a natural disaster that had critical social and economic consequences for communities living along the coast. On December 26th 2004, the Indian Ocean Tsunami hit the island's coastline, took an estimated 30,000 lives, displaced people and caused substantial human and environmental devastation (Boano 2009, p.763). The disaster and the recovery efforts enabled by a flood of international aid had uneven economic and social impacts on different areas of the coast (Brun & Lund 2008, p.277). Galle, the city I study, was severely damaged by the Tsunami. However, the Galle Fort, which is surrounded on all sides by ramparts and contains an extensive underground drainage system, remained physically unaffected and saw no loss of life. However, discussions with residents during fieldwork suggest that the Tsunami did leave a powerful symbolic imprint in their collective memories. Also, Galle gained substantial international attention due to the Tsunami and the Fort drew a considerable number of tourists and foreign expatriates who gathered there for security. My research suggests that this international interest left a lasting impact on the Fort's economy (see Chapter 5).

Galle Fort: A Brief History and Demographic Outline

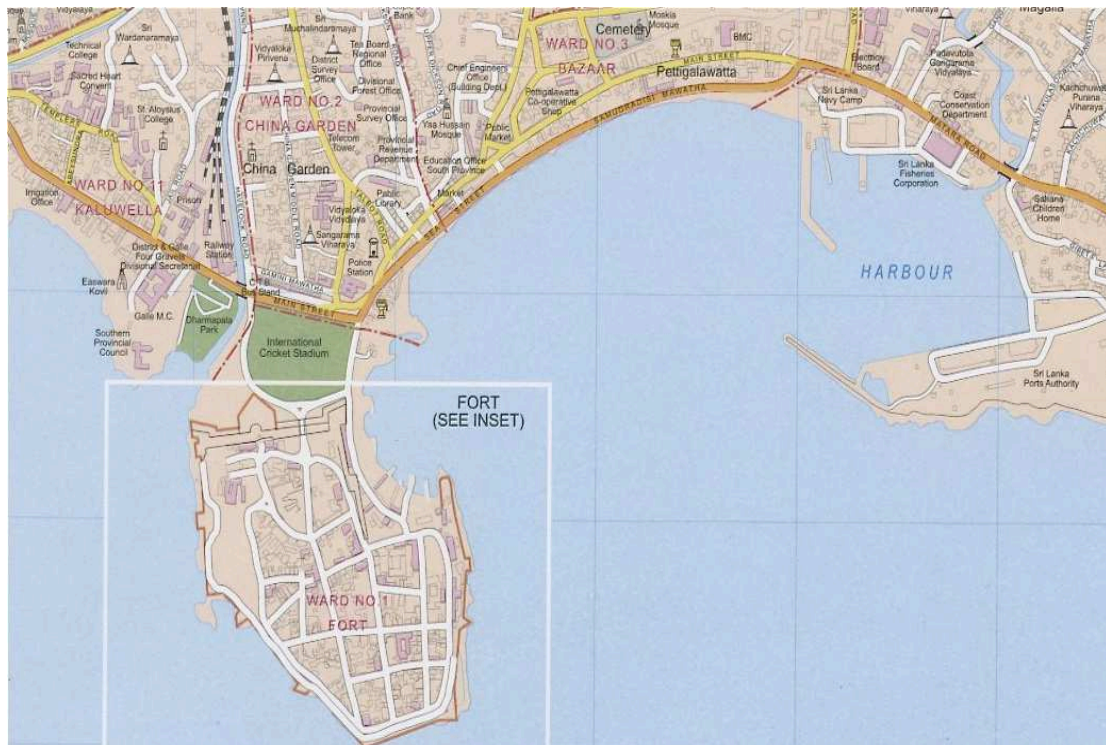


Figure 1: Map of Galle Fort with harbor view (Sri Lanka Survey Department 2006)

The Galle Fort is a walled town attached to the coastal city of Galle in Southern Sri Lanka. The Fort covers an area of over 100 acres and its ramparts encircle a 2.4km perimeter (Wijeratne 2005). As a port city, Galle has a long history of trade and migration; its earliest documentation is found in Casmias Indicipleustas’s travel notes of 545AD (Wijeratne, 2005). Written records and engravings from the fourteenth century onwards indicate that Chinese, Arab and South Indian traders frequented the port, and that Chinese junkets, which came through the Straits of Malacca, stopped in Galle en-route to Malabar or the African coast (ibid). Galle has seen over 400 years of colonial rule, corresponding to the successive European colonial occupations in the island,

beginning with the Portuguese in 1506, the Dutch from 1658, and the British between 1796 and 1948.

Portuguese, Dutch, and British maps suggest that the Fort's arrangement of space was continuously changing through the different colonial periods. The Portuguese set down the first fortifications in 1588 (Wijeratne 2005). Confident of their maritime prowess, they chose not to fortify the town from the seaside and only built ramparts on the landside to protect the Fort from attacks from local kings in the interior (Kuruppu & Wijesuriya 1992). By the time the Dutch occupied the Fort in the sixteenth century, the Indian Ocean had many European nations competing for power, including the British, French, Danish, Spanish and Portuguese. To protect the Fort and defend Galle's harbor, the Dutch added 36 fortifications on both the land and sea sides (Kuruppu & Wijesuriya 1992, Wijeratne 2005). They also established a street grid characteristic of towns that came under their rule. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Fort lost its military uses. Under the British, the Fort primarily functioned as the administrative and legal center of the south of the island (Wijeratne, 2005).

As the most intact colonial fortified city in Sri Lanka, the Galle Fort has drawn the attention of both local and international historians, architects and archeologists. In 1988, UNESCO declared the Fort a World Heritage Site, accepting the Sri Lankan state's nomination of the city for its World Heritage List. It was the first colonial edifice in Asia to receive a World Heritage designation (Silva 1992). As a town with colonial origins, Galle Fort has a unique place amongst Sri Lanka's heritage sites; therefore, it is useful to situate it in the island's heritage politics. Since 1977, following the opening of Sri Lanka's economy, many historic sites and religious spaces within the island became

constructed as marketable sites instrumental in drawing cultural tourism.⁶ Archeological programs and heritage discourses further played a significant role in shaping identity politics in postcolonial Sri Lanka. Both Seneviratne (2009) and Jeganathan (1995) have argued that Sri Lanka's heritage sites such as Anuradhapura of the north-central province have been appropriated by projects that legitimize Sinhalese and Buddhist histories while neglecting those of other ethnic and religious groups. While the Buddhist histories are undoubtedly important to recognize and study, Seneviratne (2009) contends that the state and professional archeologists rarely acknowledge the multicultural character and historical presence of several ethnic groups within the island's main heritage sites. UNESCO, through its designation of World Heritage Sites in Sri Lanka, has also unwittingly supported this bias (Seneviratne 2009). Presently, Sri Lanka has eight World Heritage Sites,⁷ and out of the six cultural heritage sites, five are known primarily for their Sinhalese history and four feature Buddhist religious spaces.⁸ Seneviratne (2009) points out that the UNESCO-Sri Lanka Cultural Triangle project, which linked the heritage cities of Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, and Kandy, was never extended north to include the historic sites of the predominantly Hindu and Tamil-speaking areas. Overall, both scholarly and popular discourses about Sri Lanka's UNESCO heritage cities tend to stress their pre-colonial origins and also underplay their diverse character.

⁶ For a vivid account of this process of commodifying Kandy, and its Temple of the Tooth, for international tourism in the 1980s, see Crick (1994).

⁷ These are: the sacred city of Anuradhapura (inscribed in 1982), the ancient city of Polonnaruwa (1982), the ancient city of Sigiriya (1982), the sacred city of Kandy (1988), the old town of Galle and its fortifications (1988), the Sinharaja forest reserve (1988), the Golden Temple of Dambulla (1991), and the Central Highlands of Sri Lanka (2010).

⁸ This bias is related to the way the nomination process is structured. UNESCO primarily accepts nominations for its list from national states, and therefore its listings reflect the priorities individual nations give to their local heritage sights (Seneviratne 2009).

Given this emphasis on pre-colonial histories and Sinhalese heritage, Galle Fort is an anomaly amongst Sri Lanka's World Heritage Sites as a former colonial city established by Europeans and inhabited by a multiethnic populous. In fact, it is Galle Fort's colonial origins and European histories that archeologists and heritage managers most recognize and highlight. Yet, while the Portuguese, Dutch and British designed and occupied the Fort, the European presence comprised only part of its many resident populations over time. Local life was always present in the Fort and even in the colonial period, Moors and Chettiars resided and worked there as laborers (Wijeratne 2005). Further, in the 20th century, there was a significant population of Dutch Burgers of mixed European and local descent, and since their migration out of the Fort and the country at large in the 1960s and 1970s, Muslim, Tamil and Sinhala residents have made homes there. Despite these local histories, few scholars have attempted to investigate local groups' experiences in the Fort or their social relations with its colonial rulers. Today both Sri Lankan and international accounts of the Fort tend to be overdetermined by narratives of European colonial histories and technological and architectural achievements. In a notable exception to this, Bandaranayake argues that to properly understand the Fort's past "it is inadequate to study it only from the point of view of colonial history and colonial records. We need to locate the Fort in its hinterland, i.e. the surrounding countryside and the Sri Lankan society of the period, and also view it in a wider-Asian perspective" (1992, p.12).

The Fort's contemporary local community is diverse and has multiple ethnic, religious, and linguistic affiliations. Ethnically its population presently comprises 59%

Muslim families, 39% Sinhala families and 1% others, including Tamil families.⁹ The class make-up of the Fort varies, and most of the property-owning families are from the middle class or lower middle class. While Fort residents draw attention to their differences along ethnic lines, they also note distinctions within ethnic groups, for instance, between Tamils who come from the north or the central highlands, and Muslims who claim Arab or Indian descent. In addition to these local residents, a number of non-resident expatriate investors, resident expatriates and hoteliers own property in the Fort. These expatriate property owners come from or reside in a range of countries including Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the US. The majority, however, are European, and many of them have British origins. Aside from local residents and expatriates, the other stakeholders of the Fort relevant to this study are city administrators, heritage practitioners and architects involved in conservation efforts and heritage management in the Fort. Many of the local heritage practitioners, especially those in high-ranking positions, are also affiliated with international conservation bodies such as ICOMOS (the International Council on Monuments and Sites). During the course of my research, none of these administrators or architects resided in the Fort. They either commuted daily from nearby areas of Galle or they resided in the capital Colombo and visited the Fort when necessary.

Focusing on the spatial activities and relations of the aforementioned groups, I study Galle Fort's postcolonial space in relation to three bodies of scholarship: politics of difference in urban Sri Lanka, the production and management of heritage, and

⁹ Given the lack of census data, I obtained these figures from the local *Gramaseveka*, the government officer in charge of overseeing the constituency of the Fort.

gentrification studies. Before I consider my study in relation to each of these areas, I outline the theoretical frameworks I use to study postcolonial space.

Frameworks for Studying Postcolonial Space

My project draws from studies of place and space, particularly the concepts “the social production and construction of space” (Low 1996) and “multilocality” (Rodman 1992). Scholars of urban studies draw a distinction between interrelated concepts of “place” and “space.” They often conceive of space as more abstract and place as more particular. Space connotes an undifferentiated entity (Tuan 2001, p. 6), a dynamic arena where vectors of time and movement intersect (Rodman 2001, p.212). Place, on the other hand, connotes a location where space is endowed with values and gains specific meanings and associations, such as the order and stability that comes from the distribution of houses and streets (Rodman 2001, p.212).

Setha Low has proposed a framework for studying place and space, which integrates material, economic and symbolic aspects, called the “social production of space and the social construction of space” (1996, p.861). The ‘social production of space’ is concerned with the physical creation of the material setting—including the social, economic, technological and ideological factors (Low 1996, p. 861). The ‘social construction of space’ encompasses the symbolic experiences of space and includes their transformations “through people's social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting” (Low 1996, p.862). Low (2000) used this framework to study how the Costa Rican plaza is socially, politically and historically constituted. She examined how Europeans and Indigenous peoples historically constructed the plaza in different

ways, and attended to the relations of power and resistance to colonialism that were expressed in its architectural production (Low 2000, p.86, 87, 102). She also looked at how Costa Ricans use and interpret Parque Central and Plaza de la Cultura as public spaces where they negotiate social differences and spatial boundaries (Low 2000, p.130, 131, 155). Low's study demonstrated how competing visions of history and negotiations of racial, gender and class differences intersect to construct public space in the Costa Rican plazas.

Another useful approach to studying space and place is Margeret Rodman's concept of "multilocality," which captures how "a single physical landscape shapes and expresses polysemic meanings of a place for different users" (Rodman 1992, p.647). Rodman used multilocality to study British administrative and residential spaces in the New Hebrides as part of an analysis of the British colonial project in the archipelago. Rodman's (2001) ethno-historical exploration of the houses, offices, courts and prisons showed the multiplicity of meanings these spaces had for different users, such as various groups of British administrators, settlers and missionaries. Rodman's study shows that racial boundaries, ideologies about social difference, and forms of colonial control became spatialized in both administrative and domestic arenas.

My project incorporates Low's (1996) and Rodman's (1992) frameworks and applies them to a similar context, for a different purpose. Like the spaces both anthropologists studied, the Galle Fort was produced in part by European colonists and continues to be marked by power hierarchies and social differences between and within European and local populations. While Low (2000) examined public space in her site, and Rodman (2001) administrative space in hers, I focus on postcolonial space in Galle. I

use Rodman's (1992) concept of multilocality to acknowledge that postcolonial space in the Galle Fort is inflected by multiple uses and interpretations: for instance, it is a place of home, a heritage site and a urban area undergoing tourism-related gentrification. I employ the social production and construction of space (Low 1992) to study these uses and interpretations and consider how different groups make them while negotiating social and political forces at local, national and international scales. I also use this framework to acknowledge that the city's spaces are historically constituted through a colonial past, which various social groups remember and draw upon differently. By applying Rodman's (1992) and Low's (1996) concepts to my research in the Fort, I work to uncover the relations of power and competing visions of history that shape the postcolonial space of the Galle Fort. To discuss the pertinence of studying postcolonial Galle Fort a place of home, a site of heritage, and a gentrifying town, I now turn to the literature on urban space in Sri Lanka, the scholarship on heritage, and studies of gentrification.

Postcolonial Space and Urban Relations of Difference in Sri Lanka

The study of postcolonial urban relations of difference in Sri Lanka is important because there is little scholarship available on how diverse communities occupy and relate to each other in its cities, which were primarily planned under colonial rule. Geographers and anthropologists have studied the impacts of colonial planning on the island (Wickremasinghe 2006), particularly on urban spaces (Perera 2008, Thiranagama 2011), plantations (Duncan 2000), transport networks (Munesinghe 2000), and agricultural lands. Yet, with the exception of Thiranagama's (2011), ethnographic account of Tamil Colombo, which weaves historical and contemporary urban realities,

these works do not substantively investigate how these spaces and cities have gained new uses or continued their prior usage in the postcolonial context. Questions remain about what kinds of postcolonial histories, community identities, and regional cultures have developed around colonial-built spaces such as railway networks, forts, or urban centers that housed migrant laborers and their families.

However, Perera's (2008) work on "indigenizing" urban Colombo under British rule provides a useful approach to study postcolonial adaptations of space. Perera uses the concept of "familiarization," to describe how migrant workers occupied abandoned elite dwellings or built shelters using "rural" ways of building that were familiar to them. Instead of transforming the colonial landscape, they redefined its meaning and function and "ruralized" parts of it (2008, p.68). Also, in the ethnically diverse migrant quarters of Colombo's Black Town, working class women undermined the colonial maps of gender control by engaging in public activities like vending side by side with men (ibid). Perera (2008) argues that by means of accommodation, redefinition and everyday negotiation of their assigned spaces, people were able to carve out local subjectivities within them. I draw on Perera's (2008) explorations of familiarization to study people's adaptations of postcolonial space in the Fort.

In terms of relations of difference, several works have focused on urban inter-ethnic relations in Sri Lanka (Jeganathan 1997, 2002; Bremner 2004; Silva 1994). Yet, most of these focus on the capital Colombo and are concerned with inter-ethnic violence.¹⁰ The focus on violence in Colombo is unsurprising given the way multiple forms of violence shaped life in the city's capital throughout its postcolonial history. To

¹⁰ See Chapter 2 for details of Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict.

begin with, Colombo was the site of repeated anti-Tamil riots (1958, 1977, 1983). The anti-Tamil riots carried out by Sinhalese mobs in 1983, which many scholars have researched, had distinct social and spatial patterns: Jeganathan (1997), Bremner (2004) and Silva (1994) all note that while they were primarily carried out by the Sinhalese urban poor dwelling in *wattas*¹¹ against Tamils elsewhere (particularly wealthier Tamils), the Tamils inside the *wattas* remained mostly unharmed. In other words the riots, which unraveled along ethnic lines had a class component.¹² Thiranagama (2011) notes that the riots ended when the war began. Urban life in Colombo then became shaped by militarization by the state and violence carried out by the LTTE. For close to three decades Colombo was also subjected to multiple LTTE suicide bombings targeting buses, markets, government buildings, and public spaces. In response to these bombings the city became heavily militarized, with checkpoints lining every major street and intersection. Because of this, urban life in the city has been ordered and disordered by what Jeganathan (2002) calls “flows of anticipatory violence.”

Yet, in Colombo, Galle, and other cities throughout the island, people of diverse ethnic, religious, linguistic, class, and caste affiliations continued to inhabit urban spaces, living, working, and traveling amidst each other everyday while the war was fought in the north and east. How did ordinary Sri Lankans deal with their differences as they encountered each other in urban spaces on a daily basis while these differences were increasingly polarized in national politics? How did place-based affinities and alliances shape people’s relations of difference in multiethnic, multireligious neighborhoods? In

¹¹ Urban areas with a concentration of low-income family homes.

¹² For more detail and analysis see Chapter 3

what contexts did linguistic, gastronomic, and ritual similarities and differences produce conflict between neighbors and under what situations did people accept, tolerate and even appreciate these differences? For answers to such questions, we need to focus on the everyday in ways that attend to peoples' connections and affiliations as well as fractures, divisions, and forms of inequality between them.

My study works to connect these two lines of inquiry—about postcolonial uses of colonial space and the politics of difference in urban Sri Lanka—by investigating how Galle Fort's local residents negotiate their relations of difference in the town's postcolonial urban space. I look first at how people give new meanings to the urban spaces and built forms of the walled city, and how the Fort's structure simultaneously shapes the way people inhabit space. I then focus on how these uses and meanings are inflected by Sri Lanka's postcolonial politics of difference. To probe residents' claims that their harmonious ethnic relations have been unaffected by national politics, I focus on both conviviality and conflict in everyday urban spaces and I examine how language, food, spatial identities and economic interdependencies shape residents' relations across differences. I also investigate how inter-ethnic relations are crosscut by class hierarchies in everyday social relations as well as in the residential patterns of the town's neighborhoods.

Postcolonial Space and Heritage Studies

As my second focus is how postcolonial space is constructed as heritage, I draw on several areas of scholarship within the growing field of heritage studies. As Galle Fort is a World Heritage Site, it is useful to briefly review UNESCO's practices of designating

sites as heritage. Since its 1972 convention on the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, UNESCO (United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization) has designated 911 heritage sites spread across 151 states parties as World Heritage Sites (UNESCO 2011). Out of these, 43 sites (4.7%) contain colonial built environments (UNESCO 2011). As UNESCO notes in its convention, it selects these sites based on the criteria that they are “unique and irreplaceable properties” with “outstanding universal value,” which make them part of the “heritage of mankind” (UNESCO 1972, Introduction).

UNESCO’s designation and management of World Heritage has received scholarly attention and critique from various standpoints. For example, Chiara De Cesari argues that World Heritage has origins in the 19th century European concept of heritage as a “fetishised object of knowledge and aesthetic pleasure” and “a thing to be conserved as found” rather than a place that continually changes with use (2010, pp.306, 307). She further charges that through the notion of “shared heritage,” UNESCO homogenizes the histories of its sites, glosses over conflicts and inequalities within them, and overlooks historical visions of marginalized groups in these sites (De Cesari 2010). De Cesari’s critique is particularly important to investigate in the colonial cities in UNESCO’s list, given that urban centers under colonial rule were often marked by imbalances of power and various negotiations of social differences.

While UNESCO uses the framework of heritage of humanity in relation to all its sites, heritage practitioners, national and international institutions for heritage management around the world have adopted the terms “shared heritage” or “mutual heritage” to describe colonial architecture as the common heritage of former colonizing

and colonized societies. Such frameworks have drawn critique from scholars of heritage. Johan Lagae argues that this concept misleadingly suggests “the values attached to the [colonial] legacy are shared between the former ‘colonizers’ and ‘colonized’” (2008, p.16). Further, John Collins (2008) working on the Pelourinho World Heritage Site in Salvador de Bahia argues that claiming the city’s buildings, comprise the shared heritage of colonial masters and slaves generates amnesia about the violent legacies of the city’s emergence (2008, p.5). Scholars’ concerns about ‘colonial heritage’ move beyond analyzing their designation as shared heritage, and extend to critically assessing how restored colonial buildings represent the past. For instance, the restored area of The Rocks neighborhood in Sydney, according to Tony Bennett (1993, p.225) represents an idealized and sanitized history of colonialism, and its “glittering façade. . . functions as an institutional mode of forgetting” (cited in Shaw 2005, p.63).

These arguments raise important concerns about how heritage practitioners and their institutions ascribe value to colonial architecture and use it to represent the past and manage present built environments. Yet as the study of postcolonial heritage still constitutes a small body of scholarship within heritage studies, there are further questions that are important to explore. When heritage authorities responsible for restoring colonial cities use the framework of “shared heritage” do they pay equal attention to sites of significance for, and material contributions of, the former colonizing and colonized societies? In their constructions of the past, do heritage practitioners attend to the relations of power or divergent urban experiences of colonizing and colonized societies? How do their representations of the colonial past as heritage shape the way they ascribe value to postcolonial material settings and engage with residents who inhabit these

spaces? Finally, if restored landscapes represent idealized visions of the colonial past, what social, historical, and economic implications does this have for the contemporary settings and inhabitants? By examining how heritage practitioners in Galle Fort construct postcolonial space as heritage, how their approaches to the past affect their practices of heritage management, and how residents of the site respond to conservation efforts, my study helps address the questions above.

Postcolonial Space and Gentrification at the Global Scale

Given the concerns scholars have raised about colonial cities being designated as heritage sites, what does it mean when such sites are subsequently caught up in processes of gentrification? To answer this question it is necessary to outline key concerns of gentrification studies and review specific works that have examined gentrification in postcolonial cities.

Scholars of urban studies originally described gentrification as a process whereby members of the middle and upper classes displace working-class households in a given neighborhood, transforming its material, cultural and aesthetic landscape (Glass 1964 as cited in Hamnett 2003, p.331). More recently, gentrification has been conceptualized at a scale beyond the neighborhood, with global economic forces acting on and catalyzing transformations in cities around the world (Brenner 2000, Atkinson & Bridge 2005, Smith 2002, Swyngedouw 2000). Gentrification takes many forms and has different impacts in different places. In Western metropolitan cities gentrification is often characterized by subsidized private-market restructuring of the urban built environment (Smith 2000, p.441). Gentrification in cities like New Orleans has been propelled by an

increase in tourism, which has raised property values and escalated rents, bringing about the replacement of residential neighborhoods with hotels and entertainment facilities (Gotham 2005, p.1100). While the causes and processes of gentrification vary, it often takes place as urban planners restructure their cities' built environments and emphasize their distinctiveness to compete for international capital (Harvey 1993). Historic neighborhoods in particular have been subjected to gentrification, as developers use historic preservation of sections of cities as a cultural strategy for place marketing and employ renovated old buildings and vernacular architecture as a platform for guided tours, hotels and restaurants that target a middle class with literacy, mobility and disposable income (Zukin 1995, p.80-81).

Bissell (2005) and Gandolfo (2008) have observed forms of gentrification in cities with historic colonial architecture, noting in their fieldsites that city planners and developers worked to renovate colonial buildings as part of urban renewal strategies. In the Stone Town of Zanzibar, Bissell found that private investors bought out poorer residents and converted their homes into hotels and luxury homes (2005, p.221). Many of these hotels and cafes displayed artifacts and objects from the colonial period, and evoked nostalgia for colonialism as a marketing strategy to attract tourists (Bissell 2005, p.232). In Lima, Peru, Mayor Andrade launched an urban renewal campaign to restore the city to the glory of its colonial period and, in an attempt to beautify the city, drove out lower class hawkers and vendors (Gandolfo 2008). Gandolfo argues that the mayor's attempts order the aesthetics of the city and control its population have historical precedents in the Spanish settlers' production of Lima and control of its indigenous inhabitants (Gandolfo 2008). These studies raise the question: when colonial-period

urban spaces become caught up in processes of gentrification and renovated, do other parts of their colonial pasts—such as historically marked racial and class relations or struggles over the ownership of space—reemerge? If so, through what processes does this happen?

Neighborhood change in the Galle Fort involved three forms of gentrification: gentrification of the urban scale through global forces (Atkinson & Bridge 2005), gentrification through tourism (Gotham 2005), and gentrification of historic colonial urban spaces (Shaw 2005). In analyzing my findings, I bring together these three strands of gentrification scholarship to theorize how the above processes work in tandem as they unfold in one site. Focusing on postcolonial space, I pursue the following questions that have not directly been addressed by the scholarship noted above. What processes, stakes, and motivations make individuals and companies from Europe, North America, and Australia invest in historic colonial cities of a postcolonial South Asian country such as Sri Lanka? As the expatriate-run boutique resort industry acquires, renovates, and converts colonial buildings into hotels in cities such as Galle, for what purposes do they use colonial-period structures and objects in their design? When and how do such hotels evoke the colonial past and how do tourists use and respond to these spaces? Do specific power relations and the construction of social difference mark spatial practices in them? By exploring these questions in the Galle Fort, my study will provide further insights into whether gentrification of postcolonial space recapitulates, in the present, race and class relations and hierarchies prevalent in urban space under colonial rule.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

I conducted my fieldwork in Galle Fort in two stages over a period of six months between August 2011 and February 2012. I resided in the Fort with two local families from August through October 2011 and January through February 2012. My research on postcolonial space in the Galle Fort focused on how it is socially produced and constructed in three ways, namely, as a place of home, a heritage site and a hub for boutique tourism. While I recognize the Fort has many meanings for many people,¹³ focusing on these three particular articulations of postcolonial space allowed me to study how it is shaped through socio-economic forces at intersecting local, national and international scales. My research focused on three social groups: local residents from a variety of ethnic, class, religious, and caste backgrounds;¹⁴ architects and administrators responsible for the Fort's restoration and heritage management, and expatriate residents and expatriate investors who run private villas and boutique hotels in the Fort. I examined how local residents relate to the Fort as their home, restorers as a heritage site, and expatriates as a space for luxury tourism. While these categories are not mutually exclusive, I suggest that each group of actors plays a primary role in producing them. As I researched how these three groups use and interpret the Fort, I paid attention to both differences across the groups and within them.

¹³ For instance, residents of the Galle municipality run small shops and businesses in the Fort, work as staff in the hotels and expat homes, and enter it to use the religious institutions, district courts, police station and Galle public library.

¹⁴ For more details of the Fort's demographics see page 24.

As my study was concerned with both the material and symbolic forms through which people create space in the Galle Fort, I used a range of methods in my fieldwork. Low employed observations, interviews and historical texts to document the social production and construction of space in two plazas in San Jose, Costa Rica (1996, p. 864). Drawing on her methods, I combined formal and informal interviews with participant observation, analysis of historical and contemporary documents, websites and online traveler reviews. Below I describe how I used each of these methods in my research.

Research Methods

Observation

John Zeisel describes observation as a natural skill we all have, which we can turn into a research strategy to systematically look at physical surroundings and reflect on how people arrange and use space (2006, p. 159). Drawing from Zeisel (2006), I developed an observation guide to document the way restorers, local residents and expatriates produce and construct space in the Galle Fort (Appendix 2). I conducted my observation in two or three physical settings where each group adapts and uses the spaces of the Fort. The Fort's houses were key spaces to observe for all these groups because they constitute built forms in which restorers, local residents and expatriates all have strong interests. I observed the exterior facades during daily walks and the interior spaces of the houses during interviews with local residents and expatriates. I also observed local residents as they used shared public spaces such as the streets, teashops, and religious sites such as the Sufi lodges and Buddhist temple. With the restorers and architects, I

broadly examined the material changes they had made to the Fort's colonial built environment, and I paid particular attention to their renovation of the houses, where their restoration activities were most contentious. I also drew on observations I had made in 2009 during a tour with two architects who had played a key role in nominating the town for UNESCO's World Heritage List. While I had taken this tour prior to beginning my MA studies, my observations from it provided important insights for the study. With the expatriates, in addition to their houses and private villas, I focused on the boutique hotels they own or manage. At various points during the fieldwork, I went to these hotels for tea and documented their spatial arrangements.

My study used three types of observation: observation of physical traces, observation of spatial relations, and participant observation. Physical traces include adaptive traces produced when people adjust physical environments for their use as well as traces that mark individual or collective selves (Zeisel 2006, pp.p. 173-175). Spatial relations encompass the actions that happen in a place, the people who make them and the relationships between actors (ibid., p.204). Participant observation is a process through which a researcher engages in activities in a place in order to understand them better (ibid., p.197-199).

As outlined in the observation guide (Appendix 2), I attended to different details with each group. In general I observed how each group adapts spaces for their uses. For this I examined the "look" of physical settings, noting spatial arrangements, and paying particular attention to *separations* that demarcate boundaries, *barriers* that keep people apart and *connectors* that allow the free flow of movement (Zeisel 2006, pp174, 212). In addition, I documented architectural features, significant objects and their placement in

these settings. Of particular interest were identity markers that residents placed in their homes that expressed their religious and class affiliations, and objects and architectural features that characterized the spaces of the private villas and hotels. To record these observations of physical space, I combined annotated diagrams with comments (Zeisel 2006, p.167), and I supplemented them with photographs I took, as well as photos that several participants took of their homes at my request.

My observations of spatial relations focused on activities, actors and relationships between them in the settings mentioned above. These are specific to each group and are outlined in the observation guide. I observed many of these spatial relations during participant observation in the Fort's homes, streets, teashops, religious sites and hotels, where I also engaged in informal conversations with the people around me. I participated in a variety of events including a *Kanduri* feast of the Muslim community, weekly gatherings at the women's Sufi lodge and the Buddhist temple, and a public meeting held by the Galle Heritage Foundation. In addition to these events, I walked around the Fort's streets three times a day and went for all my meals and for tea at the *kades* or teashops in the Fort. By being present in these spaces daily over a period of four months (in two stages) I was able to document everyday rhythms and routines, and observe spatial relations and exchanges between Fort residents. It was through participating in daily life in the Fort that I obtained some of my richest research material.

Interviews

In addition to talking with people informally during participant observation, I conducted semi-structured interviews with members of the three groups, which I recorded using a digital recorder. The interviews lasted between half an hour to two hours, and

with some residents I returned for follow up interviews. I conducted semi-structured interviews with 17 residents from a mix of genders, ethnic, religious, and class backgrounds, in Sinhala or English, depending on which language the residents felt most comfortable with.¹⁵ I translated the Sinhala interviews myself. To recruit participants, I relied on networks I had established during prior fieldwork and asked people to refer me to residents who might provide useful insights on the project. In cases where I had limited prior relationships with particular ethnic or class groups, I focused on expanding these networks, for instance by asking Sinhalese residents I knew to refer me to other Sinhalese in the Fort. Also, while I focused largely on how residents construct the Fort as a space of home, participants included three families who engaged in tourism by running guesthouses in their homes.

The local restorers comprise a small number of architects and conservationists based in Colombo. I interviewed two architects who were the past and present directors of the Sri Lankan branch of ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), an international conservation organization involved in the Fort's heritage management. I also conducted two two-hour long interviews with a Project Planning Officer of the Galle Heritage Foundation who was responsible for many of the restoration projects underway during my fieldwork.

I found that there are very few expatriate residents and entrepreneurs who reside in the Fort. I interviewed five expatriate residents out of the seven to ten who live there. Three of these expatriates were British born; one was American, and one German. As I discuss in Chapter 5, many of them had lived away from their country of origin for long

¹⁵ Most of the residents whose first language is Tamil, also spoke either Sinhala or English.

periods and the Fort was one place among many they currently called home. The owners of the boutique hotels were not present in the Fort during my research. I attempted to interview the manager of the boutique hotel Amangalla, but she was unavailable to speak with me while I was there. Because of this my research on the hotels consisted mainly of documenting their spaces, people's spatial relations in them, and their advertizing and marketing strategies online.

While my observations focused primarily on understanding how people make and use physical settings, my interviews also attended to the meanings people associate with them, for it is these meanings that turn the Fort's spaces into places. I used an interview guide (Appendix 3) to probe people's links with particular places, focusing on different themes with each group and posing common questions to cover postcolonial constructions the Fort as a site of home, heritage and tourist destination. While I relied on this guide to cover specific areas I was studying, I also remained open to recording the images, associations and meanings that *emerged* as people narrated their activities, life experiences and relationships to other people in the Fort. Drawing on philosopher Edward Casey's work, anthropologist Ann Grodzins Gold says that such descriptions express a "thick autonomy" of memory, which reveals its relationship to body, sensuality and exterior locations and landscapes (Gold and Gujar 2002, p.84). She theorizes that researchers can come into contact with this thick autonomy by focusing on the performative nature of the narration that emerges in a creative, interactive two-way exchange with participants (Gold and Gujar, 2002, p. 80 -81). While Gold's (2002) framework is oriented towards gathering oral histories, her methods of exploring links between memory and place were particularly useful for my project.

Documentary Analysis

While this study is primarily a contemporary ethnography, it has a historical component that focuses on the colonial period Fort. To study multilocality in the colonial period, I compared Portuguese, Dutch and British colonial maps of the Fort. In these maps I analyzed the different ways each of the above colonial rulers used and ordered space in the Fort. Other relevant texts included UNESCO documents, including the 1972 World Heritage Convention, UNESCO's operational guidelines for implementing it, the ICOMOS document recommending the Galle Fort for inclusion in UNESCO's World Heritage List, and Architect Pali Wijeratne's appraisal of Galle Fort's Cultural Heritage management before and after the Tsunami. While the UNESCO documents do not feature significantly in my analysis, they helped me understand how local restorers' discourses on heritage fit within a global discussion of heritage protection and management.

The web materials I studied included the websites of Amangalla, Galle Fort Hotel, and Fort Printers, three boutique hotels in Galle Fort. I analyzed both the images and texts of these sites to find out how the hotels represented the Fort and its postcolonial space and how they marketed and advertized their hotels to tourists. I also drew on the traveler magazine reviews that the hotels had posted on their websites, as well as traveler reviews on the website tripadvisor.co.uk. These public reviews were posted by tourists who had stayed in these hotels and they appraised them for the quality of their services and atmosphere. I focused on how tourists described the aesthetic character of the hotels, how they referred to the Fort's colonial history, and the comments they made on the services provided by the local staff.

Ethical Considerations

I used a mix of written and oral consent for the participants of my study, depending on the group I interviewed and the context in which I obtained the information. During my semi-structured interviews, I used oral consent for the local residents and written consent for the restorers and expatriate participants. I decided to use oral consent for local residents because as I recognized that in the Fort's social and cultural context it is important to reduce the aura of officialdom as much as possible in order for people to feel comfortable to respond. Also, I wanted to distance myself from any associations with heritage managers and city officials, who often use documents that require signatures from residents (for script of oral consent process see Appendix 5). For the restorers and expatriate participants I prepared a consent form (Appendix 4), outlining the purpose of the study and eliciting their participation.

In order to maintain strict confidentiality, I have used pseudonyms for all interviewees except those who explicitly asked me to use their names. The only other instance that I use people's names is when analyzing the public meeting I attended regarding heritage management in the Fort. I obtained consent from the Galle Heritage Foundation to attend and observe this meeting. In describing the meeting, I use the names that participants openly declared and made part of the public record.

CHAPTER 4:

WALLS, THRESHOLDS, BOUNDARIES: COMMUNITY LIFE IN POSTCOLONIAL SPACE

Residents of Galle Fort describe themselves as Fort People. Whether they are Muslim jewelers, Sinhalese trishaw drivers, or Tamil housewives, local residents adopt this identity and pepper their everyday speech with claims about it: Fort People are united; Fort People love to gossip; Fort People like to marry other Fort People. Living within a walled town separated from the rest of Galle, these residents tend to see themselves as a distinct community. In the words of Fatima Nasar, “Fort People have a *kotuwe gathiya*, a ‘way of the Fort’ about them.” What does it mean to be a Fort Person? What is this ‘way of the Fort’ that Fatima described? Moreover, how has this diverse community of Muslims, Sinhalese and Tamils come to affiliate their collective identity with the physical form of a four hundred year old colonial fortress?

This chapter investigates how today’s local inhabitants have given new meanings to postcolonial space in Galle Fort. Specifically, it explores how the Fort’s urban built environment, with its distinct physical structure and spatial organization, has become incorporated into the social, cultural, and political life of its resident communities. The first section examines how residents have adapted specific urban forms and public spaces of the former colonial city for their everyday needs and festive events. Through an ethnographic analysis of local residents’ social exchanges on the thresholds of the townhouses, I investigate how they have developed specific forms of sociality by adapting and responding to the spatial arrangement of the colonial built environment. I then look at how ritual life unfolds in postcolonial space by analyzing the social and

spatial dynamics of a Muslim feast held in one of the Fort's Sufi lodges at the end of Ramadan.

After considering how today's residents adapt the colonial spatial layout of the town, I take a deeper look at how their uses of space are also grounded in postcolonial political realities in Sri Lanka. In a national context where both ethnic and class conflicts have produced great violence over the past four decades, the Fort's residents claim that such forms of communal enmity have not penetrated the Fort's walls. Given that people speak of their community, which is bounded by physical walls, as an exception to the world outside, I study the Fort's politics of difference by investigating its relationship to urban space. I work to understand how inter-ethnic, class, and gender relations function in the Fort by focusing on identity formation and the spatialization of social differences in three urban spaces—the ramparts, the street grid, and the teashops. I also look at practices of food sharing within the Fort to analyze the relationship between the community's self perception and the way difference is lived and negotiated in the urban neighborhoods. Through such analyses I attempt to explain how Fort residents have come to take pride in their multiethnic town, and why they insist that the bonds between neighbors have remained strong despite the differences in their ethnic backgrounds.

Adaptations of Postcolonial Space

A distinct Fort culture has emerged from local residents' interactions with the town's spaces. Both in mundane and ritual contexts, people make practical adaptations of the existing spatial layout and this layout also shapes the spatial character of their activities, rhythms, and routines, both in everyday and ritual time. In other words, residents have reinscribed the Fort's colonial spaces with new meanings and uses through

inhabiting it, and the space has inflected and particularized their social lives, identities, and ritual practices. Many adaptations, both of the urban environment and people's social behavior in it, originated as pragmatic solutions to circumvent constraints of space in the Fort, but over time have become part of Fort culture, or "the way of the Fort." Below I examine this socio spatial dialectic, and its role in shaping social-relations within the Fort.

Threshold Sociality

Georg Simmel wrote that it is essential for people to set boundaries, but with freedom to remove these boundaries when needed (1994, p.7). In his theoretical reflections on the bridge and the door, Simmel suggested that door constitutes the meeting point between the bounded house and the boundary-less outside (ibid.). By forming a link between the space of the human beings and everything else that remains outside it, the door transcends the separation between the inner and the outer (ibid). The verandas and porches of the Fort's houses work in similar ways to enable continuous interchange between the domestic world of the household and the public sphere of the street. These micro-spaces play a key role in shaping Fort People's relations with their neighbors and have produced a distinctive form of sociality in the Fort.

Built in a hybrid style characteristic of Dutch colonial architecture in Sri Lanka, the Fort's townhouses have large *stoeps* or verandas facing the street.¹⁶ Raised slightly above the street level, these verandas are either open spaces with sloping roofs held up by rounded columns or semi-enclosed porches rimmed by short parapet walls. Such walled, raised and terraced *stoeps* are commonly found in Dutch colonial settlements (Traganou

¹⁶ *Stoeps* are pronounced as and related to the English "stoop."

& Mitrašinović 2009,p.73). The Fort's *stoeps* may also have vernacular influences, as they bear close resemblance to the verandas of local elite manor houses in Galle's hinterland. As Bandaranayake (1992, p.12) suggests, the Fort's verandas represent a confluence of Sri Lankan, trans-Asian, and European building styles. They gain their Dutch-period colonial character primarily through their spatial arrangement on the streets: Placed in front of townhouses lined in neat rows on both sides of the road, the verandas contribute to a uniform street façade. This layout expresses Dutch planners' proclivity for regularity and symmetry and efforts to "to secure both visual and social integrity" in the neighborhoods of colonial towns (Traganou & Mitrašinović 2009,p.73). The Fort's colonial-period street layout remains largely unchanged today.

Fort residents rarely build gated boundary walls to enclose their houses, so their porch steps begin where the street ends. As transitional spaces between the houses and the street, the porches are sites of social exchange and intimacy and they enable remarkable porosity between domestic and public life. In the mornings, late afternoons, and evenings, older folk sit on their porches and watch the comings and goings of the street. In Church Street, 90-year-old Mr. Hussain stretches out on his reclining chair by the long French windows of his enclosed porch and chats with the passersby. A few doors away, Mr. Jamil places a plastic chair in front of his garage every evening and sits there in his sarong late into the night. On Lighthouse Street, guesthouse owner Mrs. Ratnatunga does all her administrative work while keeping an eye on the street, sitting on her sofa strategically positioned in direct line of sight from her door. By just sitting there, she can keep abreast of the latest happenings in the Fort because residents who walk past her house are socially obliged to stop to exchange a few words.

Porches, by their spatial design, encourage the movement of people between the street and the house. Sue Beckham describes American porches of the early twentieth century as liminal spaces, “neither sanctified as the hearth nor public as the road” (1988, p.72). Passersby “must be *invited* to sit on the porch,” yet they also have “the right to *expect* that invitation because the person sitting on the porch has declared herself to be accessible to visit, to chat and receive, to be public and on display” (ibid.). In the Fort, the constant presence of people on their porches would have produced a culture of stopping by and dropping in. Rafa Ismail, my host mother in the Fort, remembers how “visiting” was part of her family’s evening routine when she was a child thirty years ago:

After our mamas say their afternoon prayers they go out. They go from one house to another, visiting the neighbors, gossiping, gossiping. The older women always wore saris. So when we get together, we would wrap our mothers’ saris around us. Then we’d get into high heels and go visiting. Sometimes we moved between each other’s houses. At other times we gathered in one house and strung up sheets in a room to divide it into small, small houses, like the ones in the Fort. And we’d run from this house to that house and from that house to this house from the back doors, going visiting, in our high heels.

Just as Rafa’s older relatives moved from house to house through the front doors, the children moved between the houses through the back doors, mimicking them. Spatially, Rafa’s account is striking because it shows that despite the divisions between the houses down one street, there was a continuous flow of people through the front and back doors.

If the absence of boundary walls invites street life to enter the verandas, the restrictions of space inside the Fort’s narrow elongated houses pushes various domestic activities out onto the streets. In the afternoons, women set down trays of red chilies and mustard to dry in the sun outside their doors. In the houses without inner courtyards, residents hang their laundry out on the street. Women rock their babies to sleep sitting on

the porch steps or bring plates of food to the porches to feed their children as they play outside. This spillover of domestic life onto the street recalls forms of sociability that have developed in the *wattas*, the urban shanty communities in Sri Lanka. Given the sheer lack of space in these tenement settlements, people wash their bodies, brush their teeth, and clean their pots and pans at the public taps of the street. Late into the night people sit outside, drink, read papers, and feed their children on the street. Often in such contexts, public brawls enter people's homes and domestic conflicts are fought out on the roadside. Both Jeganathan (1997) and Bremner (2004) have observed how the interpenetration of private and public life distinguishes the urban poor from the upper and middle classes who separate themselves from the former by erecting high boundary walls. What is unusual about the Fort is that this kind of street life involves the middle classes too, and they are not shut up behind imposing walls as in other urban areas in Sri Lanka. In addition to lower-income urban areas, the Fort's houses also resemble homes in rural areas in their fluidity of inner and outer spaces. In many Sri Lankan rural villages, houses use small fences rather than walls to demarcate property lines. Also, where there are clusters of homesteads, there are similar social rhythms where neighbors regularly stop by each other's homes and take care of each other's children and older folk. Because of its porosity between public and private spheres, the Fort often functions like a village within a town.

If the absence of boundary walls around the houses encourages social intimacy on the porches, the presence of ramparts that encircle the city further enhances it. Because the Fort is enclosed and its residents know each other well, women and children feel safe to go about unaccompanied within the walled city. Therefore, unlike most urban areas in

Sri Lanka, women walk around after dark and people leave their doors open late into the night. The sense of safety in the streets ensures that the vibrant social life in the porches continues throughout the day. In the words of Nuzrath Jamal:

In my small days when you walked down Church Street at six in the morning, all the women would be on their verandas, gossiping. If you went at ten in the morning they would be still there, gossiping. At five in the evening they'd be wandering the streets gossiping. Even at ten in the night, you'd find them seated on their porch steps, talking, talking. I used to wonder if these women had nothing better to do!

Muslim women of Nuzrath's generation remember that in Church and Leyn Baan Street the men went inside after dark and women sat on the porches, sharing tea and sweets late into the night. Because of such activities, porches have become spaces of comfort and closeness, spaces where people can be at home and feel connected to the ebb and flow of the street's rhythms. Fatuma Fareed says she feels a sense of comfort in the Fort that she doesn't find anywhere else:

If we go to Colombo, we have to stay locked up inside a house. Here, I can leave my mother alone and go out, because everyone knows everyone else. The fisherman knows us, the vegetable man knows us, the man who brings the greens knows us. If you sit on this porch and call out to anyone, they will come.

As Nuzrath and Fatuma suggest, spatial activities on the thresholds have their own rhythms, which change throughout the day. Mornings are a particularly busy time. At the junction between Lighthouse Street and Peddler's Street, there are four homes that have children of school age. Every morning while the children get their things ready for school, their mothers drink their tea on the porch steps, bare-headed and still dressed in their nightclothes, keeping an eye out for the school vans and complaining to each other about their progeny. Not long after the mothers send their children to school, they return to their porches to buy groceries from vegetable seller who pushes his cart down the streets every morning. A host of other vendors come after him. The *malu karaya* or fish

vendor will drive by on a motorbike with fish. The *thambili karaya* will bring king coconuts tied to his bicycle. In the evenings, a man from a nearby village will push his *kadala* cart carrying chickpeas with fried onion and coconut flakes. At night he can be seen weaving his way through the Fort's streets from the light of the tall flares on the sides of his cart. These vendors draw people out on to their porches throughout the day, and as they move their goods around the Fort, they also circulate gossip, messages, complaints, and updates on the latest news in town.

If the verandas foster conviviality between neighbors on one hand, they enable social surveillance and moral policing on the other. The material arrangement of the verandas, with their half walls and latticed facades, facilitates this kind of policing, as it allows people to watch each other without being seen. While residents acknowledge and often laugh about the fact that togetherness and interference are two sides of the same coin of social life in the Fort, people experience this paradox in different ways. It is women who partake most in moral policing and also most acutely experience its social costs. Women's level of comfort in living cheek by jowl with neighbors often distinguishes long-term insiders from newcomers to the Fort. My host mother, Rafa, is a fourth-generation resident of the Fort, a mother of four, and comes from a family that is "well-respected" in the community. When she leaves her house, she walks with confidence in her step, and frequently stops to chat with her neighbors, shopkeepers, and itinerant vendors. She can enjoy the sociability without worrying too much about being watched and reported on. Fatima Nassar, on the other hand, moved into the Fort after marriage and was recently widowed. She told me that she stays indoors a lot and when she does leave the house she is courteous with everyone but doesn't waste time on the

streets to be seen talking to people. “It’s healthy for the body to keep to oneself,” she said during our interview. Similarly, Rizana Hakim, who married against her parents’ wishes, still feels socially ostracized twenty years later and hardly leaves her home except for her early morning errand of buying bread at a shop nearby. Her steps are often hurried and she rarely stops to talk when I meet her on the street, even though she spends hours chatting with me when I visit her in her home. These women’s different responses to everyday encounters on the streets shows that while neighborhood intimacy evokes comfort and security for those who fit the norm, it generates uneasiness and apprehension in those who don’t. Simmel suggests that an individual who is not fully integrated into the collective feels particularly sharply the boundary between the part of herself that belongs to the group and the part that remains outside (2007, p.55). For women like Rizana and Fatima, crossing the safety of their own thresholds and entering the public streets involves risks of restigmatization, as other residents closely watch them and “gossip” amongst each other.

Drawing on the social exchanges described above, I argue that Fort residents have developed their own social rhythms and spatial practices around the thresholds of the colonial townhouses. In some ways this sociality is a generic response to the spatial arrangement of the porch, which encourage porosity between the public street and the private home. Yet other aspects of sociality on the Fort’s thresholds are particular it, and have formed in relation to the spatial layout and boundedness of the walled city.

Ritual Life

The culture of social exchange on the thresholds has come about largely in response to the existing spatial layout of the Fort: Fort People arrange their spatial activities to adapt to the street grid. While everyday exchanges have produced a form of sociality distinct to the Fort, these uses of space work largely within the existing spatial logic. In their ritual activities, however, Fort residents use the colonial built environment in ways that depart dramatically from the spatial logic its European planners had in mind when they built it, and they reinscribe existing spaces with local meanings and functions. As Perera (2008) argues, “subjects from different cultural backgrounds are unable to fully occupy spaces in ways they have been configured by their creators” and they “employ their own culture and worldview as a crucial interpretive lens to relate to their environment” (p.52, 53). Given that colonial urban planners originally designed the Fort as a military garrison and planned its interior to suit the needs of European company servants, contemporary residents’ adaptations of space for their ritual needs constitute what Holston (1989) and Perera (2008) describe as acts of “familiarization.” Similarly observing postcolonial transformations in the Stone Town of Zanzibar, William Bissell writes:

The colonial social and spatial order was decisively overturned by the revolution of January 1964, which occupied and reworked the old city under the sign of Africanization and socialism. . . The old city space of the former elite was not demolished but simply allowed to languish as a relic of an outmoded social form. In the meantime, it was imaginatively reoccupied: the cooking fires of peasants and hanging laundry took over the balconies of the Sultan’s palace. (2005, p.218)

Unlike the Zanzabaris of Stone Town, Galle’s residents have not consciously engaged in efforts to subvert the colonial spatial order of the Fort. Instead they pragmatically adapt the colonial urban forms and spaces for their religious activities,

changing them to accommodate their needs, and infusing the town's spaces with their own sense of place. Yet, Bissell's idea that ordinary people can "imaginatively reoccupy" spaces built under colonialism aptly encapsulates Fort residents' religious activities in postcolonial space, and provides a constructive framework for understanding them. To further explore this theme, I turn to a religious feast Muslim residents hosted in the Fort. While I use this feast as an illustrative example, it is important to note that familiarization takes place with other religious groups in the Fort and is not restricted to the Muslims.

On a sweltering afternoon in mid September, the *Alawiya Takiya* (a Sufi lodge)¹⁷ held its annual *Kanduri* feast. It was the Fort's first public feast after a month of fasting and was held two weeks after *Eid*, which marked the end of Ramadan. It was a much-anticipated feast: None of the Muslim families of the Fort cooked that afternoon as they all expected to join the festivities. Many of their middle class relatives made the four-hour drive from Colombo, and Muslim families from villages an hour or two down the coastline arrived in buses and three-wheelers. By 1pm the sun had reached its peak. There wasn't a patch of shade in sight, yet, at this hour when Fort People usually retreat into their houses to sleep away the heat, Church Street was swelling with crowds and there was little room to move near the *Takiya*.

The *Alawiyia Takiya* is a pale green building at the corner of Church Street and Small Cross Street. Church Street is one of the main thoroughfares of the Fort; it divides the walled town lengthwise in half and has a network of small lanes branching off from it. As its name suggests, Church Street was once the Christian heart of the Fort and still

¹⁷ *Takiya* means "place of repose" in Arabic and refers to a lodge or prayer house for Sufi Muslims. The *Alawiyia Takiya*, is the lodge of the Sufis belonging to the *Alawiya* network. The Fort has four other lodges that belong to different Sufi networks.

contains the Dutch Reformed Church built in 1684, and the Anglican Church built by the British in 1871. These churches are sparsely attended today, as the Burghers who once comprised the town's majority Christian population collectively migrated out of the town and the island at large in the 1960s and 1970s. Today, Church Street is the main commercial street of the Fort and houses jewelry shops, designer stores, and boutique hotels in addition to the churches in its upper half. The houses in the lower half of the street are almost entirely owned by Muslims. These houses, built wall-to-wall, with verandas opening out onto the street, extend in two long rows towards the sea-facing ramparts. The Muslim presence is physically inscribed on the street by the green-colored Sufi lodges of the *Shazuliya* and *Alawiya* networks. On regular days, these buildings with their Islamicized colonial architecture blend inconspicuously into the streetscape. On September 18th, however, the *Alawiya Takiya* stood out as focal point of the street's activities.

At 1pm the prayers began at the *Takiya*. The two prayer halls of the *Takiya* had already filled an hour before and people jostled to find a spot to stand on the crowded street. Looking from where I stood, directly facing the *Takiya*, it seemed that this was an entirely male space. The front prayer hall was filled with men in white prayer caps. Crowding around a large area fanning out from the *Takiya* were men of all ages wearing shirts and trousers, tunics, shirts, and sarongs. Men not only filled the street, but also occupied the verandas of the jewelry shop next to the *Takiya* and all the Muslim houses immediately across from it. Further down the road, at the corner where Small Cross Street intersected Church Street, the gender composition of the crowd shifted. A long line of women dressed in shalwar kameez and headscarves stood by the wall that stretched

along Small Cross Street, facing the *Takiya* from its side. Dressed in reds, oranges, greens, and blues with gold bangles, earrings, and chains, the women contrasted sharply with the men who stood in whites and browns just around the corner. Like the men's prayer hall in front, the women's prayer hall at the side was full. Younger women—new brides—sat at the center surrounded by middle aged women and a ring of old ladies with their backs against the wall. The children and unmarried girls remained inside the living rooms of the adjacent houses, as I observed while passing by them. Just as the porches of the houses across from the *Takiya* were filled with men, the houses further down Church Street and all along this side street were filled with women.

As the *Kanduri* feast unfolded in space, the Fort's colonial street plan—with its geometrical grid and systematic ordering of space into thoroughfares and side streets—became overlaid with a new set of spatial demarcations. Residents needed to host all the attendees down one street block while adhering to the Islamic practice of spatially separating genders in the public sphere. Because the prayer halls had filled up, distinct blocs of men's spaces and women's spaces formed in Church Street and its side lanes. *Kanduri* feasts are held in Sufi communities all along Sri Lanka's coastline, but most Sufi lodges are built with ample space to host large crowds. If held in a *Takiya* outside the Fort, the feast's activities would have been circumscribed within the boundaries of the religious space. But as the Fort's *Takiya* is a refashioned colonial townhouse, and was never built to accommodate such crowds, people turned the streets into extensions of the prayer halls and the segregation of genders in the interior of the lodge became scaled up to encompass the public street. For that afternoon, people temporarily recoded Church

Street's existing spatial organization into a gendered spatial landscape segregated according to Islamic norms.

This temporary reorganization of the Fort's space into men's and women's spheres is not unique to the *Kanduri* feast. Ten days prior to the feast, when Muslim residents made visits to their neighbors and relatives to celebrate *Eid*, men, women, and children took to the streets at different times of the day. Soon after the morning prayers at the mosque, the Fort's streets were filled with men visiting each other's houses, and stopping to exchange *Salaams*. In the afternoons, children dressed in their best clothes and walked in groups, going from house to house to collect gifts and sweets from other Muslim families. It was only in the night when the men went inside that married women and their unmarried daughters walked down the streets to drop into their relatives' homes. While in most urban areas Muslim families leave together to visit family and friends for *Eid*, in the Fort women and children go on their own as they find it safe to walk unaccompanied by men within the walled city. Therefore, during course of the *Eid* celebrations, the Fort's streets were filled at alternating intervals with groups of men, women or children. While the separation of men and women was temporal during *Eid*, and spatial during the *Kanduri*, they both illustrate a Fort Muslim practice of temporarily inflecting the town's public spaces with their own codes of gender segregation.

As the prayers for the *Kanduri* ended, the food distribution began. The feasts' food was stored down Small Cross Street in the men's *Zawiya*¹⁸ of the *Shazuliya* Sufi network. Its prayer hall was filled with *sawans*, metal basins of food covered in banana leaves, and as I stopped by my friend Hamad told me, "There are 500 *sawans* here, and

¹⁸ A *Zawiya* is also a Sufi lodge or prayer hall. It serves the same function as the *Takiya*.

with six to a plate we could feed 3000.” As the prayers were coming to a close, a line of men—young children, old men, and teenagers with their slick haircuts concealed by prayer caps passed the basins of food from hand to hand between the two lodges. Once the prayers concluded, people who were sitting inside the *Takiya* and standing on the streets made their way towards the houses in the lower half of Church Street. Young boys wove through the crowd ferrying the *sawans* to the houses. Many Muslim residents told me earlier that it was a tradition of Muslim families down Church Street to contribute to the *Kanduri* by opening up their homes to the guests of the feast. They cleared out the furniture and laid mats down in their porches and living rooms for the participants to eat on. Some houses hosted men; some hosted women. In others, men sat in the porches and women remained in the living rooms. In the house where I ate with my host family, there were five *sawans*, with six people sitting around each. Larger homes had more. Walking around later, and chatting with friends about where they ate and whom they shared the food with, I realized that residents of this street block had collectively hosted every Muslim family in the Fort, which constituted more than half of town’s population, as well as all the people who came from Colombo and the villages outlying Galle.

During the feast, Church Street’s capacity to hold people increased by three or four fold as people temporarily blurred the boundaries separating ritual, public, commercial and domestic spaces. The *Takiya*’s ritual activities, carried out by bodies in prayer, spilled out onto the public street, filled the jewelry shop next door, and spread down the block along the front porches of the houses. Domestic space became remade into public or communal space for the duration of the feast as Church Street’s Muslim residents opened out their verandas and living rooms for visitors from other parts of the

Fort and from outside the town. As both Muslim residents in the Fort and those attending from outside told me, this way of hosting a *Kanduri* is particular to the Fort. The reasons for this are closely linked to the spatial arrangement of the townhouses and street: People extended the feast's activities from the *Taikya* into the street and surrounding houses primarily in response to a lack of available space inside the Sufi lodge. Also, residents were able to host the feast's crowd in the way that they did because the verandas, by their structure, already blur boundaries between the street and the home, and residents in their everyday lives treat the porch as an extension of the public sphere. Yet these creative strategies that residents had devised to overcome the town's particular limitations of space had, over time, become traditions that characterized *Kanduris* in the Fort and differentiated them from feasts elsewhere.

Space and Social Difference in the Fort

I have analyzed so far how local residents have reinscribed the built environment of the former colonial city with a variety of new uses and meanings. Through their everyday and ritual activities, Fort People have familiarized the colonial urban landscape to suit their own needs, showing that ordinary people in postcolonial contexts can reclaim such spaces. In this process of reclaiming colonial space, residents have established new spatial and temporal rhythms in the Fort. However, these new functions and associations are not bereft of power imbalances and they can facilitate hierarchical relations between inhabitants. They are often laden with tensions, conflicts and ambiguities related to Sri Lanka's postcolonial politics.

In this next section, I address the relationship between postcolonial space and the politics of difference in the Fort. Residents of Galle Fort are also citizens of a country whose postcolonial history has been marked by a series of violent class-based insurrections and ethnic riots, which culminated in a three-decade long civil war. When Fort People talk about the past, they recall these events that shook the whole country but insist that the Fort remained unaffected by them. In almost every interview, local residents said to me, “We don’t have ethnic conflicts here,” as these three statements from Muslim, Tamil, and Sinhalese women respectively illustrate:

In the Fort there are no religious or ethnic conflicts. That is very valuable. People don’t differentiate you as Muslim or Sinhala, they treat you the same. And all the religious groups are there in the Fort—Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian.

(Fatima Nassar)

I have no fear living here. People are good. You feel scared to live in some places because people treat you differently they find out you are a Tamil. There are no such issues here. We have no trouble at all from the Sinhala or Muslim people.

(Chemmani Rajendran)

Since those days, people mixed and depended on each other. If someone had a sick child and another person had a car they would take the child to the hospital. They won’t ask which religion, which ethnicity are you? When the head monk at our temple passed away, so many Muslims came to the funeral. People should never live in isolation. You should never have a Muslim village here, a Sinhala village there, a Tamil village there. If everywhere in Sri Lanka were like this, we wouldn’t have had a war.

(Kamala Wickrematunga)

Running through these women’s statements is the belief that Galle Fort is unique, that it is a place where ethnic harmony and amity reign between neighbors. Hearing this frequently, raised the question of how people spoke about social differences and interacted daily with others. As I observed and experienced social exchanges across various lines of difference, I pursued a number of queries: How do people deal with their

social differences while living in such close quarters? How do relations of difference play out in everyday spaces? What collective memories and events do they draw on to come to the consensus that there ethnic harmony in the Fort? How do Fort people imagine themselves as a community? In the following pages I focus on three different spaces in the Fort—walls, the internal layout, and teashops—to unpack how residents of this small southern town define their community identity in relation to national politics and imagine, inscribe, and negotiate their differences in postcolonial space.

Walls and Streets: Social Boundaries through Spatial Demarcations

Simmel (1909/1994) said that just as the bridge physically links two sides of a landscape, it also gives the eye a way of connecting two separate banks. I suggest that in the Fort it is the reverse that happens—the ramparts that physically separate space also help residents mark social boundaries between inside and outside. As the name ‘Fort People’ suggests, local residents’ sense of collective identity is closely linked to the fact that they live within a walled city. The walls also have strong connections to residents’ claims that there is ethnic harmony within the Fort. Residents bring them up, for instance, when they mention a Sinhala-Muslim riot during the 1980s, which they hold up as proof that the Fort is a safe haven from ethnic violence. According to residents, the riot took place because a Muslim man in nearby Thalapitiya demolished a Sinhala-owned shop and the surrounding Sinhalese retaliated violently against Thalapitiya’s Muslims. Fort People, both Muslims and Sinhalese, say that the rioting mobs spread through Galle, but were not allowed in through the gates of the Fort, and the Sinhalese inside did not turn against their Muslim neighbors. A Sinhalese man said to me:

Outside the Fort, people were setting fire to things, cutting, chopping, burning shops, burning houses. Inside the Fort, there was nothing. To tell you the truth, a

lot of Sinhala people from outside shouted at us saying we were not real men. When I step outside my house, in front is Ahmed, a friend. He addresses me as elder brother Sumanasiri. Ahmed can't hurt me. I can't hurt him.

What is striking about Sumanasiri's account is that he spatially marked the boundaries of inter-ethnic violence: The Fort's walls separated the clashes outside from the solidarity inside. In his description, the walls constituted a physical barrier that demarcated the limits of such violence. Amarasena, a Sinhalese three-wheeler driver who grew up in the Fort, made a similar association when we talked about the riot.

From those days, Fort people lived in unity: In 71, during the JVP problems [a youth insurrection led by a revolutionary Marxist party], there was no curfew in the Fort. Even in the 80s there were no problems. There was curfew all over Sri Lanka, but we didn't have curfew. We didn't go to pick fights with the Tamil people or the Muslim people. We lived in peace. There was a big Sinhala-Muslim trouble in Galle and it was in the Sarantu Kade junction. It spread everywhere, but it didn't affect the Fort. In fact, people in the Fort, Sinhala people, Muslim people, went up to the ramparts and were watching it all happen outside. It was happening just outside, you see. They were breaking shops in the town, and Fort people were watching all this happen from the ramparts. None of that was inside Fort. . . But they came from outside! They came from all sides. But the Sinhala and Muslim people in the Fort got together, the head monk also joined us, and we managed to stop it. They tried to come inside from the gate. You see there are more Muslims who live in the Fort. So our people came from outside to attack the Muslims, and then the Muslim mobs also tried to come in.

Amarasena, like Sumanasiri, evoked the physical separation between inside and outside to contrast Fort People's unity with the communal violence outside. In describing the difference between inside and outside, Amarasena not only focused on this specific event, but also associated it with a string of other violent events where the Fort proved to be an exception to collective unrest at the national level, namely the first class-based youth insurrection, and the anti-Tamil pogrom of 1983. Like Amarasena, when other residents claim that the Fort is a safe place, they frequently bring up the image of people walking around freely in the Fort while the rest of Galle was under curfew. Space and

time are crucial elements in each of these accounts, and the men's words show how the spatial structure of the walled city is linked to Fort People's identity as a community with a strong sense of solidarity. The town was once a fortified structure, with embrasures built into the walls to house weaponry. We see a shift in meanings today, as its residents refer to these walls as a physical marker for the absence of violence.

What can we make of these accounts? What does it mean for a multiethnic community to define its identity based on the absence of communal violence in the context of Sri Lanka? What is the relationship between people's perceptions and lived realities? Are there other forms of hierarchy that shape the social dynamics of the Fort? When Fort People told me that they were tolerant of ethnic differences, I asked them what had brought this communal harmony about. I had varied responses. Many said it was because the neighborhoods were mixed so people had to interact. Some mentioned that ties between neighbors had formed over multiple generations. Others said they grew up playing together as children. These explanations were mainly arguments about spatial proximity. Another set of explanations came up with slight variations: Good people live in the Fort. Educated people live in the Fort. People of stature live in the Fort. Such statements imply that ethnic relations are inflected by class dynamics, and they both contribute to Fort identity.

To unpack the relationship between ethnic and class relations, I move from the walls to the interior, for a closer look at the residential pattern shows that the neighborhoods are ethnically diverse but segregated sharply along class lines. The layout of the streets and neighborhoods plays a key role in spatializing these social boundaries.

As noted in Chapter 2, Dutch planners arranged space in the Fort in a geometric grid typical of colonial towns.



Figure 2: Map of Galle Fort (Sri Lanka Survey Department 2006)

Main streets such as Lighthouse, Church and Leyn Baan run north to south on the grid and Rampart Street follows the Fort's perimeter, forming a ring around the town. Pedlar Street runs east to west and bisects all the north-south streets. An ethnically diverse middle class lives in the townhouses of these main streets. Low-income families

live in small one-roomed tenements clustered closely together in the network of side lanes. Residents who live in these settlements refer to them as *wattas* or gardens. Middle class families refer to these lanes as *mudukku parawal* or shanty roads. The two *wattas* branching off Pedlar Street and Chando Street house Sinhalese families, and the small cross streets have a mixture of Sinhalese and Muslims. There are only four Tamil families in the Fort today and they all reside in houses down the main streets. While there are several mansions on Rampart Street, they lie vacant and there is a marked absence of wealthy, upper-class families in the Fort.

The processes through which the Fort's present residential pattern formed provide some keys to understanding how ideas about ethnic harmony became central to Fort identity. Throughout three different colonial periods, the Fort was the administrative, legal, and commercial nerve center of the island's south, and in the early twentieth century it was mostly populated by the British and Burghers of mixed descent who worked as civil servants, bankers, or employees of companies such as Walkers and Hayleys, which were based in the Fort. Based on the family histories I collected, I gather that there have been multiple waves of migration of Muslims, Sinhalese and Tamils to the Fort. The oldest of these families arrived in the late nineteenth century, while Sri Lanka was still under British rule. These were either wealthy land-owning Sinhalese or Muslim businessmen who had longstanding ties to Galle because of its port. It was these Sinhalese and Muslim families who purchased land for the Buddhist temple, the Mosque, and the Sufi centers and became their primary patrons.

In the early years of independence, this demographic sharply changed. The British companies gradually pulled out and the Burghers began selling their houses and leaving

Sri Lanka after the state passed the 1956 Sinhala-only language act. Middle-class Muslims from Galle bought properties moved in, as did Sinhala and Tamil doctors, lawyers, and civil servants. The professionals were from nearby areas and those working in the civil service came from different parts of the island, seeking work in the administrative offices inside the Fort. This multiethnic middle-class settled on the main streets running north to south on the grid. Working-class Sinhalese and Muslims, on the other hand, clustered into the *wattas* in the side lanes. These tenements on the side streets were connected to the houses in the main streets through strong lines of patronage, and even today, it is the people in the *wattas* who drive the three-wheelers, cook the food in the teashops and work for the middle-class families. Therefore, over time, the colonial street-grid became overlaid with a postcolonial map of class segregation at the micro-scale.

Based on the residential pattern and its process of formation, I suggest that it is class more than ethnicity that constitutes the main hierarchical division between the Fort's families. The inter-ethnic ties in which Fort residents take pride are also class-based alliances, as it is likely that the Sinhalese, Muslims, and Tamils in each strata of society share more interests, aspirations and lifestyles with each other than with those of their own ethnic group at a different class level. Furthermore, older residents' recollections suggest that a multiethnic elite made up of landowners, professionals, civil servants, and employers comprised the power holders of the Fort for much of the twentieth century. Today's residents' claims about ethnic harmony include the class-based argument that educated people and people of stature live in the Fort; it is particularly surprising when laborers and three-wheeler drivers who are at the foot of

such a hierarchy say this. Such claims suggest that the Fort's local inhabitants still draw their collective identity in part from this multiethnic elite, even though the wealthiest families have left the Fort. Since colonial times, the Fort has been a place with a concentration of wealth and power, and it is likely that its residents continue to hold a sense that the walled city is distinct, separated from the outlying areas of Galle. In a national context of fractious ethnic relations, it is possible that through claims about civility towards ethnic others, Fort residents reinforce their belief that they are a unique community.

Relations of Difference in Everyday Spaces

I began the discussion of the politics of difference in the Fort by focusing on the walls, showing how residents use them to imagine themselves as a distinct community. Moving into the interior, I then analyzed how these collective imaginaries of ethnic harmony are crosscut by divisions along class lines. I turn next to lived relations of difference in everyday spaces. I begin by examining how forms of conviviality and distancing operate across social and religious differences in the Fort through food sharing. I then analyze everyday interactions in the Fort's teashops to show what happens when people of different class, caste, gender and ethnic backgrounds meet and interact in mundane situations.

Sociality Through Food

Social exchanges across ethnic and religious differences can sometimes spark curiosity and humor and at other times generate distress, revulsion, and moral outrage. In the Fort, food is a source of conviviality as well as division, a conduit through which

ethnic others are made known and familiar or kept at a distance. By looking at Fort residents' gastronomic relations below, I examine how social intimacy in this multiethnic city is characterized by an intermingling of strangeness and familiarity.

During fieldwork I noted at least two key ways in which food plays a role in relations across difference in the Fort. One is that Fort People accommodate each other's food habits, and the other is that sharing food across ethnic groups produces closeness as well as discomfort. Fort Muslims, in particular, expressed consideration for their Sinhalese and Tamil neighbors by taking account of their different food preferences on both everyday and festive occasions. This spirit of accommodation is evident in Fatuma Fareed's description of her wedding feast thirty years ago:

I married in this house. But there's no room for everyone to eat here, no? So the house next door kept the men, the front house kept the Muslim women, the house next to them had the Sinhala guests. We have Sinhalese neighbors to invite. But they don't like to put all their hands into the same plate and eat like us, so we put separate plates for them in one house. The groom's men had one house. The women had another. This way one house after the other kept the guests. All the houses are close to each other, no? So who needs a hotel then?

As she spoke of her wedding feast, Fatuma Fareed acknowledged that Muslims and Sinhalese have different ways of eating at festivals. In the numerous Muslim feasts held in the Fort, people eat collectively, often with six people sitting together on the floor sharing food from a *sawan*, a large basin filled with rice, meat and vegetable curries. Fatuma spoke in a matter-of-fact tone when she mentioned that her Sinhalese neighbors would feel squeamish eating out of one plate. Her family recognized this and served food for them in a way they would feel comfortable eating. I have since found that it is a common practice for Fort Muslims to allocate tables with individual plates in their wedding feasts for their Buddhist, Christian, and Hindu neighbors.

As part of good neighborly relations, Muslims send their non-Muslim neighbors *kanjee* or rice porridge during the month of Ramadan and a large plate of rice during *Eid*. In turn, the Buddhists send sweetmeats during the Sinhala and Tamil New Year. There are few Christians left in the Fort now, but Fort People remember that Christmas was celebrated grandly in the Fort a few decades ago and Burgher residents distributed food to their neighbors in a similar way. Sumanasiri described this reciprocal circulation of food between Sinhalese and Muslims:

For the Sinhala New Year I have 30-40 houses to send food to. The Muslims like to eat our *kavum*, *kokis* and *mung kavum* because they don't make those things in their houses. Similarly, we got *watalappam* yesterday and plates of food from Muslim neighbors for *Eid*. The four of us in this house must have eaten two plates of food each! My son didn't eat at home yesterday. One friend called him for lunch. Another called him for dinner. Also, for the month of Ramadan, they send *kanjee*. This is something people have been doing for a long time, even during my father's time. My father did this when he was alive, and I follow the same way.

Such exchanges of food can bring about a sense of camaraderie between neighbors. Sudesh, a Sinhalese and a Buddhist, says that the Muslims make the best meat in the Fort and enjoys *Eid* because he can dig into the smoked-oil rice and meat curries he gets from his Muslim neighbors. Sumanasiri looks forward to the feasts held by the two big Muslim families because they prepare a special sweetmeat for it. The Tamil sisters Lakshi and Sumathi call me over for dinner or tea when they make a sweet or curry that is a Jaffna specialty. For the giver such exchanges can invoke pride in one's identity and for the receiver it is a moment when the unfamiliar can be experienced as pleasurable.

But just as food can be a source of connection across difference, it can also be a source of division. A Hindu woman, Chemani Rajendran, mentioned that her daughter's friends send food but she doesn't eat it because she abstains from beef, which she knows the Muslims cook in their homes. Although she seemed appreciative of the gesture, she

grimaced when she mentioned the meat and said she can't bring herself to touch it. A similar quandary about eating food sent by the neighbors came up one day in a Sinhala home during the *Kanduri* feast. As I was walking down the street during the feast, Asoka de Silva, a Sinhalese woman in a house near the *Takiya*, caught sight of me and hurriedly drew me into her house. I had just met her that morning, but in this brief conversation she had worked out that I, like her, was a Sinhalese and a Buddhist, and took me into her confidence. As soon as I sat down, she began lamenting,

They were cutting goats throughout the night. I can't tell you how awful it was. I couldn't sleep, listening to the animals screaming. It's sinful. Such things must be outlawed. Now in a little while we'll get a huge plate of food. What are we to do? How can we eat it, when they slaughtered the goats right behind our house?

Asoka was disturbed and morally outraged. Her comments revealed a more complicated picture of coexistence than Fort people indicate when they claim they live like brothers and sisters, despite ethnic differences. Asoka grew up in a Sinhala Buddhist neighborhood in Colombo and only came to the Fort about 15 years ago, after marriage. It is possible that she was particularly repulsed by her neighbors' act of killing goats because she was less accustomed to this practice than the other Buddhists in the Fort. An older man, Saman Abeyratne, a Sinhalese Buddhist who had lived in the Fort for over three decades, had a more tempered account of how he dealt with these differences and the discomforts they bring. When I asked him in an interview how he felt about living in an ethnically mixed street in the Fort, he responded:

We don't have any communal ideas here. Not at all. The only thing is that we are Buddhists and they are Muslims. When we see that they bring... Most of them bring... According to their religion, they bring cattle that they kill inside their houses. That type of thing, we don't like. But we don't say anything. That is according to their religion, no?

Saman Abeyratne started by affirming the sentiment that the Fort had no communal problems, and then in cautious words, acknowledged that there were differences that were discomfoting. His response differed from Asoka's because he acknowledged that Muslims had religious practices he disagreed with, but was willing to respect their right to carry them out. Unlike her, he didn't draw me into a conversation that separated the Sinhala "us" from the Muslim "them."

These tensions around food show a more complicated picture of what it means for residents of different ethnicities and religions to live amongst each other in close quarters than residents' claims about the lack of ethnic conflict suggests. Chemmani and Asoka's resistance to their Muslim neighbors' killing of animals and consumption of meat suggests that food is shared amongst all groups in the Fort, and is even expected, but is not always consumed by those who receive it. Food functions as a source of conviviality at times and conflict at others, and residents' gastronomic relations show how the Fort's inter-ethnic and inter-religious exchanges are characterized by alternating gestures of accommodation and estrangement, proximity and distancing.

Kade Ethnography

To conclude my discussion of the Fort's politics of difference I turn to its teashops, which are sites of intense social exchange that bring residents from different ethnic, religious and class groups into close contact inside a small space. I refer to these spaces as teashops, although the Sinhala term *kade* and the Tamil term *kadai* more accurately capture the spectrum of activities that take place in them. A *kadai* or *kade* is a small shop that functions as a tea stall, bakery, eatery, and convenience store. Found in the streets of every village and town in the island, they can range in size and scale from a

small shack that sells a few dry rations to a 'hotel' where you can buy a full meal for less than a hundred rupees (\$1). As mundane spaces frequented by all local residents, teashops are extremely useful for unpacking the workings of everyday relations of difference in the Fort.

Galle Fort has thirteen *kades*. Most of them are set up at different junctions along Pedlar Street, the long road bisecting the walled city. As people walk down the street, they stop by the *kades* to buy a snack, purchase some cigarettes, or drink tea. Inside, they form temporary congregations and move along carrying with them the latest news and gossip of the Fort. The Fort's *kades* are similar to each other in many ways, yet each one sells slightly different things: Shaffik's shop and Amaratunga's shop sells only convenience goods and Fort people go there to buy anything from biscuits to light bulbs. Karuna Aiyya's shop and Ameen's shop sell tea, pastries, rice packets (servings of rice and curry wrapped in newspaper) and a number of other food items depending on the time of day. Most of these shops are set up in the shopkeeper's home, in a room facing the street, and family members take turns in running them.

A distinct layout and arrangement of space characterize the interiors of the *kades*. To begin with, space is often tight, and the walls are packed floor to ceiling with goods. If the *kade* serves tea or food it will have a wooden bench or one or two plastic tables with four or five chairs. These tables have colorful plastic bowls and jugs filled with water, so that people can wash their hands over the bowls before and after eating. Strips of old newspaper are often stacked on a table or pinned onto a wall for people to dry their hands after washing them. Each *kade* has its own variation of this system as well as its own tacit norms about how people occupy space and interact with each other.

When women come to the *kade*, they stand at the threshold and call out to the people working inside to bring them their bread, eggs, sugar or whatever household item they came to buy. Middle class men similarly stand outside and wait to be served. But working class men—laborers, security guards, and three-wheeler drivers—go inside, open the cupboards, ruffle through the boxes, help themselves, and pay when they leave. If the *kade* owner is of a similar status to the person waiting to be served, he or she will address the buyer using a kin-based system of naming, calling the person “elder brother,” “younger sister” or “daughter.” If the man or woman at the threshold is of a higher status, the owner or worker will call him “*Mahattaya*” (sir) and her “*Nona*” (Madam) and prioritize his or her orders over the other people waiting.

The interiors of the *kades* are almost exclusively working-class male spaces. Men sit around, talk politics, tell ribald jokes, and freely use expletives. The interiors are just as gritty in their conversations as they are in their appearance. They are dark, dingy, and cramped, and for the middle classes, crossing the threshold and sitting and drinking tea together amongst working-class men is taboo. In the *kade* I went to most often, the only women I knew other than myself to cross this threshold were a middle-aged sweeper and an old woman who sells betel leaves. Unmarried women never entered. In the mornings there was usually a crowd of older men. During afternoon teatime, the space was even more resistant to women—young men, construction workers, road builders, and other itinerant laborers flock to the *kade* to take a break from work. An uncomfortable silence descended in the shop whenever I entered in the afternoon. For working-class men, the interior of the *kade* functions as a space of social intimacy in the same way as the thresholds of the houses for middle-class matrons and older folk.

While *kade* goers maintain sharp social boundaries across class lines, people of different ethnic groups mix and interact with each other. In fact, the *kades* are sites that make visible the intricate economic linkages and interdependencies, which connect Fort residents across religious and ethnic lines, as I found during the month of Ramadan. During this month, I went to the same *kade* to have tea every morning around 6.30am. A Sinhalese Buddhist man and his son own and run this *kade*, and residents from across the Fort come there to buy bread and other breakfast items. In these early mornings amidst the clatter of cups and the bustle of people coming in and leaving, I got a sense of what *Eid* meant in the Sinhalese teashop. Even though Kapila and his father were Buddhists, the *kade's* finances as well as its daily rhythms were affected by the Muslim religious calendar. In the mornings of the month of Ramadan, when its Muslim customers had eaten breakfast before dawn and gone back to bed as the sun rose, the *kade* was quiet and its tea drinkers complained that it felt lonely. Kapila felt the drop in customers keenly, and he admitted to me one afternoon that Ramadan was always a financially difficult month. Kapila's shop is popular amongst many Muslims families who have known his father for over fifty years. Kapila also owns a three-wheeler and has a multiethnic network of riders who frequently call on him because he is reliable and trustworthy. During Ramadan, when many of his customers fasted and didn't come in the mornings as usual to buy bread, buns, and other food items, he mentioned that he could barely break even. As *Eid* approached, he grew optimistic and quietly stocked up on goods he expected would be in high demand. He also hoped he could earn some money through giving people rides as they visited relatives outside the Fort. On the day of *Eid* the *kade* had a large stack of coconuts, seven crates of eggs, and more buns, *vadais*, and *thosais*

than usual. His Muslim customers had called and ordered in advance so he made special arrangements to meet the demand for breakfast packets with string hoppers, lentil curry, and a spicy coconut *sambol*.

But the festival came and went and despite the large breakfast orders, Kapila didn't make as many sales as he had expected, nor did he secure many rides. As I sat in the *kade* in the morning after *Eid*, the Sinhalese workers and tea drinkers discussed the changing economy and its impact on the Muslim kitchens. Kapila's father complained, "It's not like those days. At that time, as soon as you stepped out onto the street, people would ask for hires. Now things have really gone down." When I asked why this was, the woman who works as a sweeper replied that the economic situation was getting worse. Her husband added, "Now people don't cook as much at home. For Rs.2000 or 5000 you can order a *palangama* (large container filled with several portions of rice and curry). They order one of those large plates and eat it at home. They don't make that much *watalappam* (sweet pudding) either." Kapila agreed and pointed out that his crates of eggs sitting in the display cabinet were still full. Despite the financial disappointments Kapila and his father experienced, I did not detect an edge to their comments about the Muslim households, just a shared sense of economic decline.

While the *kade* hadn't sold as many items as expected, the neighboring Muslim families had shared with Kapila and his workers generous helpings of food during *Eid*. On the morning of *Eid*, Sinhalese men who worked in the *kade* were ragging each other as usual, this time trying to outbid each other about the plates of food their Muslim neighbors sent them. Amidst the joking and laughter they made comparisons between *Eid* and the Sinhala and Tamil New Year. They noted how Muslim children dress up on this

day, just like Sinhalese children, and go from house to house collecting gifts. One Sinhalese man joked that the Muslims were smarter than the Sinhalese because they opened their shops the day after their New Year, while the Sinhalese dragged their holiday on and closed their shops for two weeks afterwards. These conversations about food and comparisons made in good humor show that the residents who gathered in the *kade* accepted their ethnic and religious differences as part of normal life in the Fort. While it is hard to tell whether residents extend this acceptance towards ethnic and religious others outside the Fort, they don't appear to demonize each other because of their differences. Moreover, the changes in *kade's* daily rhythms and finances during Ramadan suggest that economic interdependencies and social connections that had built over time connect Fort people to each other across ethnic lines.

Conclusion

I conclude this chapter returning to the connection between postcolonial space and Fort resident's social relations. The Fort's colonial built environment has shown remarkable resilience and the town has retained much of its structure and layout from the colonial period. Yet the meanings Fort People associate with these spaces are postcolonial, and based on the social and religious practices, temporal rhythms and memories they have developed while inhabiting it. Drawing on the discussion of thresholds, I argue that the Fort's spatial arrangement, particularly its spatial density and enclosure, continues to shape the way residents interact with, depend on, and intervene in each other's lives every day. The feast further shows that the colonial spatial layout, originally designed for a European population of a different time period, changes and

particularizes the way local residents carry out their religious activities. Because of this, Fort People have devised creative strategies to circumvent the limitations of space in their daily lives and their festive events. These strategies have produced forms of sociality, spatial dynamics, daily rhythms, and ritual traditions that are now distinctly associated with the local community of the Fort and have become in Fatima Nassar's words, 'the way of the Fort.' In other words, by creating their own sense of place within the colonial built environment, postcolonial residents have 'imaginatively reoccupied' the Fort. While this does not prevent the re-emergence of colonial power dynamics in contemporary urban planning in the Fort, as we will see in later chapters, local residents' reclaiming of the town's spaces does reflect their postcolonial agency in relation to the colonial past.

Local meanings and uses cannot be romanticized, however, for they have their own hierarchies and power-relations connected to Sri Lanka's contemporary politics of difference. While residents rarely discuss class hierarchies overtly, these hierarchies play a key role in producing a segregated residential pattern in the neighborhoods and they shape the way residents relate to each other in mundane spaces such as the *kades*. An analysis of class relations complicates residents' claims that Fort People are united and treat each other as equals. Residents of different class backgrounds rarely live next to each other or sit together and share food and tea in common spaces such as the *kades*, but they are linked to each other through long-standing ties of patronage, where lower-income families provide a range of services to the middle-class families. Relations between families of unequal status are congenial so long as people maintain class-based social boundaries, and capital and services flow up and down the class hierarchy. Yet, as I will show in Chapter 5, conflicts emerge when a rising entrepreneurial class threatens

the privileged position of the old upper-middle class. Class distinctions also contribute significantly to identity politics in the Fort, as residents across class lines use the one-time presence of a multi-ethnic elite to assert that they are collectively more educated and of higher status than people in the surrounding areas of Galle.

Just as Fort identity marks class distinctions between those inside and outside, residents have developed a strong collective belief that their community constitutes an exception to fractious ethnic politics at the national scale. As seen in the centrality of the walls in people's descriptions of the Sinhala-Muslim riot, the spatial boundaries created by the Fort's ramparts contribute to and reinforce residents' constructions of uniqueness. While it is unlikely that ethnic tensions, which have produced such violence in Sri Lanka have not penetrated the Fort's walls, my ethnography of everyday social relations shows that Muslims, Sinhalese and Tamils of the Fort are familiar with each other's religious practices, accommodate each other's differences, put up with the differences that generate discomfort, and take pleasure and pride in practices of sharing food and social space within the Fort. Many of their everyday interactions contain an interplay of familiarity and strangeness, yet their collective identity has a strong emphasis on inter-ethnic conviviality. My findings suggest that the Fort's exceptionality lies not so much in the absence of inter-ethnic tension, but in the fact that in the contemporary Sri Lankan context, where majority identities prevail over minority ones, Fort residents make space for ethnic and religious differences in the way they imagine themselves as a community.

CHAPTER 5:

HERITAGE AS GOLD, HERITAGE AS CURSE: THE POLITICS OF PRESERVING AND MANAGING GALLE FORT

Since Galle Fort gained World Heritage status in 1988, its residents and city officials have been embroiled in numerous struggles over restoring and preserving the town's colonial buildings. These conflicts about restoration are furthermore about the divergent aesthetic, cultural, historical, and economic values that different actors ascribe to the Fort's built environment. In surveying the Fort, an architect's eye picks out the clean geometric lines of the streets and the colonnaded verandas characterizing the streetscape. Archeologists find in the built environment a place to excavate the colonial past. For the town's bureaucrats, the tourists who arrive in busloads indicate the Fort's potential to draw revenue into Galle's coffers. Residents, on the other hand, have a deeply ambivalent relationship to the colonial buildings. Speaking of Fort residents' houses, an administrator of the Galle Heritage Foundation told me, "These people woke up one day and realized they were sitting on gold." An angry resident addressing the city officials at a public meeting put it differently: "This *urumaya*, this heritage," he exclaimed, "has become a *karumaya*, a curse."

The different sentiments expressed above are not mutually exclusive; while residents bitterly complain that the town's heritage has become a curse when they are tired of running in circles to get their building plans approved, they also acknowledge that their livelihoods depend on the tourists who flock to the Fort to see their "historic" houses. Similarly, the bureaucrats who manage the Fort's heritage recognize that the

buildings they oversee are also people's homes. Every urban planner and administrator I interviewed said that the hardest part of his job was to preserve the historic architecture while ensuring that the town is still livable for its current residents. Even with such concessions, conflicts continue between those who conserve the buildings and those who live in them, enacting what anthropologist and scholar of heritage Michael Herzfeld calls "a battle over the future of the past" (1991, p. 5).

This chapter focuses on the interplay between heritage as gold and heritage as curse within contestations over the social production and physical reconstruction of Galle Fort's colonial buildings. It unpacks the battles over the material remains of the Fort's colonial past in three ways. First, I examine how heritage managers and architects ascribe value to the town's buildings. I focus particularly on how processes of restoration privilege European architectural elements and overlook local and postcolonial features and adaptations. Second, I tease out key ideologies, agendas, and practices employed by city administrators when planning, monitoring, and conserving the Fort's heritage. Drawing on an interview with an administrator for the Galle Heritage Foundation, I analyze how the organization has extended its mandate from preserving the buildings to reordering residents' social and economic activities to make them suit the changing environment of the heritage city. Finally, I focus on a meeting between city officials and residents to analyze the limits of institutional power and consider the forms of resistance and tactics of circumvention Fort People use to counter the institutions' attempts to intervene in their homes and their lives.

Ideologies of Preservation: Whose Past is Heritage?

Architects' and administrators' premises about the value of historic buildings provide keys to understanding how particular built environments become ideologically constructed and materially produced as heritage. These premises are encoded in documents that serve as blueprints for conservation. Yet such carefully worded texts give little inkling of the messiness and contradictions that emerge when restorers translate these ideologies into practices of heritage management. Focusing on heritage practices instead of written texts, I analyze a heritage tour and an interview with an administrator to examine the premises that underpin the Fort's heritage authorities' approaches to heritage management. At the heart of these approaches are several ideological slippages and silences that show the selective ways in which they ascribe value to the Fort's built environment.

In 2009, before beginning my graduate studies, I joined a group tour of the Galle Fort led by two architects who spearheaded the efforts to win the town its World Heritage status. As the tour bus made its way from Colombo to Galle, the architects described another long journey of attending conferences, drafting letters, and arguing in transnational forums that architectural vestiges from the colonial past should not be destroyed but protected. They maintained that colonial cities such as Galle Fort were not simply the heritage of European colonists but belonged just as much to the colonized societies, because although European planners designed these cities, it was local laborers who built them. The built environments of these cities, they argued, not only carry a reminder of colonial rule but also contain "imprints" of the colonized people who constructed them, their labor, their skills, and their vernacular architectural sensibilities.

These architects suggested that colonial cities should be seen as the mutual heritage of colonizing and colonized societies because they were “co-produced” by both groups.

When we arrived in Galle, the architects began showing us around the Fort. First they brought us to the old harbor gate with the British Coat of Arms and the emblem of the VOC, the Dutch East India Company. They then took us into the warehouse where the Dutch Company stored cinnamon and other spices. We moved on to the Black Fort where the Portuguese held prisoners, and our guides showed us the eighteenth century Dutch Reformed Church. In each of these sites they went into detail about the engineering feats, the military prowess, and the economic bounty of the different colonial administrations. As the tour wore on, my uneasiness grew. Hearing them speak so passionately about shared heritage, I had expected to hear more about the local builders and anticipated seeing signs of their vernacular embellishments on the Fort’s houses. Yet the architects made no mention of them. Nor did they critique the colonial project that brought forth the architecture we were admiring, or acknowledge the fact that these structures were built for the purposes of storing, guarding, and trading various resources extracted exploitatively by the European trading companies. Though in theory they recognized local contributions to the Fort, in practice they only described and focused on European-designed elements as heritage.

It was not only the local narratives of the colonial past they failed to acknowledge that day. Although we walked around the Fort’s walls, noting the architectural additions of the Portuguese, Dutch, and British, we did not go into the Fort’s streets. As we gathered around the lighthouse, admiring the ramparts, I remember watching a group of men leave the mosque on Leyn Baan Street and wondering what lay inside the network of

lanes. I suspected then that the architects had left out something important while skirting the Fort's interior. I know now that inscribed in those streets, materially and culturally, are vibrant postcolonial narratives of adaptation, change, and reinvention of space. What we had overlooked in the tour were not only the local perspectives from the colonial period, but also the entire postcolonial history of the Fort.

That preservation efforts privileged colonial histories became even more apparent to me during an interview I conducted two years later with Tharanga Liyanarachchi, a Project Planning Officer at the Galle Heritage Foundation. This Foundation is the primary state institution responsible for protecting the Fort's buildings, and while Liyanarachchi is not a senior high-ranking official, he is a mid-level bureaucrat currently overseeing and planning most of the Fort's heritage management activities. In my first interview with Liyanarachchi, I asked him to tell me what his organization was attempting to conserve in the Fort. Was there a particular period that they were attempting to preserve? What did conservation mean? He responded by saying:

It is the colonial period that we are trying to conserve. There are three traces here: The Portuguese base, the Dutch trace, the British trace, and the modern. There can be original Portuguese buildings, original Dutch buildings, Dutch-British buildings, original British, then Dutch-British-Modern buildings. When it comes to conservation, we must go back to the most recent colonial period. The closest colonial period is the British period. So we must conserve things up to that stage, and remove all the traces after that. One day this modern aspect will also become a part of our history, but until then we have to stick to the British period.

Liyanarachchi informed me that this was his particular approach to conservation, while other architects and administrators had different preservation priorities. As an example, he noted how the architects who restored the Fort's warehouse building "took out all the British traces and made it Dutch." He recounted that the building was a warehouse under the Dutch, and the British subsequently modified it in the 1840s and

1850s to house the Fort's courts and police station. According to Liyanarachchi, the architects who restored it reversed the British modifications to return the building to its form under the Dutch. "To me this is not conservation," he stated. "There is an evolution of the building," he further explained, emphasizing that restoration efforts should not inhibit our capacity to distinguish how different parts belonged to different colonial periods.

Liyanarachchi wrote his master's thesis for the Postgraduate Institute of Archeology on the architectural changes in the Fort between the Dutch and British periods. When describing this recently finished project to me, he articulated a nuanced understanding and appreciation of how the Fort's buildings gained new layers of usage and meaning through the colonial periods, and he suggested the town needed an approach to conservation that was not static but dynamic. Yet, as he described this approach, his appreciation for change over time did not seem to extend into the postcolonial period. Since he had claimed earlier that contemporary traces of inhabitation needed to be removed from the Fort, I asked him to clarify whether these postcolonial elements did not also incorporate a new layer of social meaning. He claimed that the Fort's original social usage and style had become lost, and that there was nothing significant to note about the way people inhabited the town now. Speaking of the postcolonial changes, he said:

That messes up the outstanding universal value! We can't add it as a layer. If such a layer develops how can we give it a value? We have to look at it from an archeological perspective. From a sociological perspective, perhaps you can look at it. But we can't ascribe an archeological or architectural value to that. The Fort is a World Heritage Site! It is an archeological monument! It is the *buildings* that are archeological monuments. You know that a World Heritage Site must have outstanding universal value. That outstanding value lies in the architectural character, its original character. By original character I mean the colonial character.

Liyanarachchi attributed value to the buildings of the past over the uses of the present. Writing of similar approaches to conservation in the Greek town of Rethemnos, Herzfeld suggests that between the official and popular understandings of history lies a discursive chasm between social and monumental time (1991, p. 10). “Social time is the grist of everyday experience,” Herzfeld writes. “Monumental time by contrast is reductive and generic. . . Its main focus is on the past—a past constituted by categories and stereotypes” (1991, p. 10). Building on Herzfeld’s concepts, I suggest that these conflicts between monumental and social time also play out in terms of “monumental space” and “social space.” In other words, the monumental space that archeologists and urban planners try to conserve and keep from changing is also the social space that residents inhabit and modify to move forward with their lives. In Galle, this distinction between monumental and social space mirrors the distinction between colonial and postcolonial space. In both the tour and the interview with the Project Planning Officer, it became apparent that for the Fort’s heritage authorities, monumental space took precedence over social space, colonial space over postcolonial space.

At the inception of the tour, the architects argued that the local contributions to the Fort were just as important as the European ones, but when we entered the Fort they overlooked the former and highlighted the latter. Similarly, during the interview, Liyanarachchi criticized his predecessors for taking the British elements out of the originally Dutch warehouse, but insisted that in the present colonial space should be preserved and postcolonial social traces removed from the built environment. The drawback to such approaches of conservation is that they freeze a place in time. Herzfeld cautions against this static vision of the past when he writes that “historic conservation,

especially in an inhabited town, risks the suspension of real time: wear and tear gives way to a pretension of indestructible physical presence” (2009, p. 11). By inhibiting the addition of contemporary layers of history and willfully dismantling signs of the continuity of everyday life in public spaces in Galle Fort, heritage managers set in motion a process that Nelle calls “musealization” that transforms an inhabited city into a living museum (2009, p. 153). In our conversation, Liyanarachchi did not recognize the act of removing modern traces as a loss of contemporary reality, but rather he saw it as a way of protecting the “outstanding universal value” of the Fort from people’s alterations. Yet he too was altering the colonial built environment by bestowing on it new functions of representing history.

When heritage authorities freeze in time buildings that were meant to be used, and give them the function of representing the past, they eventually undermine conservation goals of retaining authenticity. In Galle, buildings that ten years ago carried the marks of time and were in various stages of dereliction are now spruced up and freshly painted. While the conservation of historic sites is not problematic in and of itself, a concern does arise with what one resident described as “modifying the buildings to look old.” In 2005, the Galle Heritage Foundation carried out a program to restore 55 houses using funds from the Dutch government. Homeowners were invited to participate and told that the Foundation would cover the cost of restoration if they agreed to let its architects redesign their homes. When the project began, heritage authorities removed the walls of the houses with enclosed porches and “brought back” the colonnaded verandas. They gave residents the option of having columns or wooden pillars and fenced-in porches. When they restored roofs, they removed asbestos sheeting and put in half-round clay tiles. They

repainted the buildings in ash, white, or a shade of ochre called *samara*. Beginning with this housing restoration program, a new aesthetic order began to emerge in the Fort's urban landscape. Today, every family who wants to make the slightest modification to their house has to have their building plans approved by a planning approval subcommittee working with the Urban Development Authority. As each renovated house is remade in accordance with this "historic style," the heritage managers' effort to retain the integrity of the colonial street façade produces a homogenous urban landscape that is historic only in appearance. Postcolonial space is not conserved as it is but instead reconstructed as heritage. As a result, as Herzfeld says of manufactured heritage landscapes, "the new authenticity is experienced as fakery of both fabric and motives" (2009, p. 11).

These material changes to the urban environment also have a homogenizing effect on the meanings and values associated with the buildings. As I found in the tour, and in interviews with several architects, restorers responsible for conserving the Fort foreground European inputs and overlook vernacular contributions. They also fail to critique the colonial project that the Fort was built to facilitate. This approach valorizes, whitewashes, and provides a Eurocentric vision of the Fort's colonial past. It also selectively emphasizes the heritage of the colonizing countries over the colonized. Further, heritage managers tend to value the aesthetic of colonial urban forms more than their postcolonial uses and appearances, as evidenced by Liyanarachchi's argument that colonial buildings have value, but not the residents' adaptations of them. Conservation of colonial period architecture not only privileges monumental space over social space, it depicts colonial history as the only history of the Fort, thereby erasing postcolonial

histories in the making. Overall, while Galle Fort's "colonial heritage" could be used as a conduit for critically reflecting on what the colonial past meant for different groups, and how today's inhabitants are developing their own postcolonial social histories, the colonial built environment is instead being reconstructed to provide visitors with a seemingly conflict-free historic landscape to experience.

The implications of enshrining the colonial past this way are not limited to creating biases around history, but have significant consequences for the present. Because they valorize the colonial past and overlook colonialism's extractive history, the officials responsible for managing Galle Fort's material remains do not recognize significance of acknowledging local postcolonial uses of space. As I have showed in the previous chapter, Fort People remake the town's urban spaces and its colonial architecture into something of their own. The Fort now has a postcolonial history with its own spatial dynamics, collective imaginaries, and hierarchical relations. Valuing the colonial past in such limited ways while erasing the social life of the present overwrites this dynamic postcolonial history with a myopic view of colonialism. I examine the costs of this in Chapter 5.

From Preserving the Past to Monitoring the Present: The Galle Heritage Foundation's Approach to Heritage Management

While it may appear that my argument above rejects heritage management, the complexities of the situation indeed call for a degree of oversight. The task of conserving and managing a 400-year-old walled town, one that is a residential and administrative center, school district, and now tourist hub, is no doubt formidable. To begin with, the town's buildings are in various stages of decline and disrepair and require vast sums of money to repair and maintain. Its narrow streets—built for pedestrians, bullock carts, carriages, and rickshaw—now must accommodate cars, vans, trucks, and large tour buses. Drains and sewerage outlets clog frequently. Various forms of modern infrastructure—electrical wiring, sewage pipes, telephone cables—have to be maintained within the constraints of the sixteenth century town plan. Further, the Fort's grounds require constant upkeep and cleaning due to the crowds of tourists, pilgrims, and visitors who walk on the ramparts, stop for picnic lunches, and stroll through the streets. In addition, tourism brings its own informal economies involving hawkers, self-appointed tour guides, and drug dealers. Given this, the Fort undoubtedly needs urban planning and some form of institutional oversight and regulation. Nonetheless, the current management ideologies and practices raise many questions.

Recognizing the need for planning, I asked Tharanga Liyanarachchi, in my second interview with him, to describe the Foundation's plans and goals for conservation and heritage management in the walled city. According to Liyanarachchi, even twenty years after UNESCO declared the Fort a World Heritage Site, it still lacks a master plan

that systematically lays out the steps needed for its conservation. Given this shortcoming, he claimed his organization is “doing the work of the unwritten plan,” relying on a small set of frameworks and guidelines that a few architects drafted for the Fort at various times. He listed several aspects of city planning that need further development: a conservation plan for documenting the Fort’s houses; a homeowners’ manual, outlining the steps required to preserve buildings; and a traffic plan to limit heavy vehicles from entering the Fort, designate parking areas, and establish a small shuttle service for tourists. A town plan would also designate the optimal percentages of residential and commercial properties. Further, a plan to develop tourism would help residents generate income and ensure that they remained in the Fort without selling their homes and leaving.

In Liyanarachchi’s view, even though a master plan hasn’t been drafted yet, the institutional base for successfully managing the town’s heritage is already in place. Describing this institutional structure, he explained that the Galle Heritage Foundation has a board of directors made up of representatives from twenty-six institutions concerned with the Fort’s restoration and upkeep. The Foundation is the coordinating body between these institutions and works to ensure that each carries out its duties. Further, because these institutions are part of the Foundation, they can enlist each other’s assistance in solving a variety of municipal problems that emerge. “This body is completely equipped to deal with everything,” Liyanarachchi asserted. “We just haven’t fully deployed its machetes, batons, and firepower yet,” he said.

While Liyanarachchi described the Galle Heritage Foundation and associated institutions in terms of duties and responsibilities to oversee and carry out specific tasks, these administrative tasks are also linked to forms of control, as his figurative language

about deploying the organization's weaponry suggests. Residents often complain that they cannot make any modifications to their houses, that they find it difficult to get their building plans passed, and that the Foundation now tells them what they can and cannot do with the homes in which they have been living for generations. Bringing up these complaints, I asked Liyanarachchi if it is fair for city planners to restrict residents' efforts to make basic modifications that they need for their homes. He responded that it is only unfair if residents use the houses solely as residences and do not gain any financial advantage from them. Referring to the fact that most families in town now run a guesthouse, shop or café at home, Liyanarachchi argued this is possible only because a "value is added" to the buildings through the Fort's World Heritage status. To protect that value and that status, he said, heritage managers have to impose regulations and cannot allow residents to reconstruct their homes in any way they please.

Because the Foundation's conservations aims extend beyond preserving the past to generating income for the community through tourism, Liyanarachchi suggested that the institution was ultimately protecting residents' interests by preserving the colonial buildings. This sentiment is widely shared by architects, city planners, administrators, and the public at large, and it is the promise of tourism-related revenue that has helped the town's administration to gain even the begrudging support of residents for the conservation activities.

Yet the Galle Heritage Foundation does not limit its regulations to the built environment. It also applies them to the people who inhabit and work in the Fort. Two days before my interview with Liyanarachchi, I sat in a teashop listening to a vegetable vendor in the Fort bitterly complain that the Foundation had asked him to wear a uniform

while he pushes his cart around the streets. Liyanarachchi told me the Foundation planned to extend this uniform policy to Fort's three-wheeler drivers as well, and mentioned it was part of a larger plan to regulate their activities. In our conversation, he said,

We recently registered the three-wheeler drivers. We took all of their biodatas and registered 65 drivers. Then we gave them identity cards. When we give them IDs, we can monitor them. Then if someone does something wrong, we have their information from the police, and we can take action against them. Once we give them an ID card, we have an authority to control them. Why do we control them? To make sure they provide a proper service to the customer. The first objective is to prevent a three-wheel mafia from forming. . . .The next step is to educate them, teach them about the history of the Fort, to assign one color to their three-wheelers, and to give them three-wheel uniforms. Once he becomes a knowledgeable three-wheel driver who knows some English and even another language, he becomes a tuk-tuk driver of the heritage city!

The Fort's three-wheel drivers are mostly male residents of the *wattas*, and, like drivers all over Sri Lanka, they operate mostly on an informal basis. Unlike air-conditioned cabs, which work through companies and cater to a higher paying clientele, three-wheelers park in "stands" at busy junctions, and drivers organize themselves through social networks, negotiating fares by bargaining with riders. Similarly, the vendors who bring fresh produce, bread, fish, and snacks to the Fort operate individually, relying on the relationships they have built with residents over years or even decades. Both drivers and vendors are integrated into the social world of the Fort. Because they operate through their social networks and work through informal agreements, they can be territorial about the places they work in; residents mention that relations between drivers of some stands become volatile when there are conflicts over securing hires. Part of Liyanarachchi's plan to systematize the drivers is to curb such conflicts. Yet, by formalizing and monitoring workers in the informal economy of the Fort, the Galle

Heritage Foundation is attempting to control their labor process, including the way they carry out their work, and even how they dress. By mandating that informal workers wear uniforms, the Foundation is also creating what urban scholars describe as “disneyfication” of a city, a process that filters out its blemishes, chaos, and unsavory elements (Rowe & Koetter 1978, as quoted in Bandarin & Van Oers 2012, p. 96). As Malpas (2008, p. 23) argues, through its homogenizing effects, such disneyfication erases spatial differentiation, and brings about a loss of “a sense of place.” Such official interventions in people’s everyday lives further embody a “hubristic desire for perfection that runs counter to human sociability” (Herzfeld 1991, p. 10).

To further probe Liyanarachchi’s claims about regulating and controlling workers and residents of the Fort, I shifted from the open-ended style of questioning I had used thus far to adopt a more critical line of questioning because, as Thuesen (2011, p. 620) argues, an exclusively open ended and dialogic approach to interviewing often fails to address questions of power and dominance with public officials.¹⁹ Remaining careful to maintain a dialog that would question Liyanarachchi’s claims but not antagonize him, I asked him whether his plan for the three-wheeler drivers wasn’t an intervention that introduces artifice to the organic social character of the city. Liyanarachchi responded by elaborating how his actions would bring necessary developments to the Fort. He said:

What you are describing as the natural character of a city is its cultural character. For example, in Cheena Koratuwa outside the Fort there is an area called Gal Wala that is desperately poor. It is like a shanty. The ‘natural’ character of that is that people don’t use the toilets. They defecate on the street. They place a cloth on the ground and sleep. They cover their roofs with a gunny bag. That is the natural

¹⁹ Public officials, as Harvey (2011, p.433) notes, use their social capital and strategic positions in social structures to exert substantial control and authority over people and resources. A more direct line of questioning enables us to ask such officials to directly respond to critique and account for their actions and choices “so that these choices become intelligible to the general public” (Thuesen 2011, p.620).

character of *that* area. What is the character of *this* area? What is the cultural character that you say we are artificially changing? Where there was no plan, we made a plan. Are you saying the cultural character lies in the absence of order? A society must evolve!

Liyanarachchi continued, further maintaining that it is necessary to make a three-wheeler driver wear a uniform because the clientele inside the Fort (including the tourists) is different from the clientele outside it. When I suggested that residents inside are not very different to residents outside, he agreed this was the case a few decades ago but claimed something changed over time: “The potential inside the Fort became realized,” he said, “and its environment transformed.” He continued that the people who live and work within the Fort didn’t want to change with it because they “don’t understand the profile of the place.” “They live in a certain cultural world,” he explained further and asserted, “We have to make them suit the new environment forming in the Fort.” When I queried whether the Foundation has a right to do that, he referred to the legal authority the organization had over the heritage area:

Overall we have a right over this sphere, this area called the Fort. We have several mandates within that area: to the monument, to the World Heritage Site. When these two things are protected, the people become protected. More tourists come in here then. The people here don’t know about the tourists or why they come. They think that the tourists are all coming because the war is over. It is not that. People come because it is the Fort. Because we have protected it as a World Heritage Site. Because we have made the ramparts beautiful. Because we maintain it well. As they come, people’s standard of living rises, the children get a better education, they think in new ways, lots of things happen. Then the culture inside this develops in a different way. People are part of that culture—the three-wheel drivers, the hawkers. The environment has changed faster than the people. The people’s awareness hasn’t caught up. . . . If they don’t understand it on their own, we have to make them, even artificially. If we don’t make them like that, they become a hindrance to the development of the place.

Liyanarachchi had begun the interview by laying out a plan to preserve the Fort’s buildings and now moved to talking about how to “make” residents suit their surroundings, which had “evolved” from what it had been. How had the institution’s

stewardship over buildings extended to stewardship over the town's inhabitants? In my view, the Galle Heritage Foundation's proclivity to regulate, control, and manipulate the Fort's resident population is symptomatic of a global approach to heritage management that scholars have described as "heritage governmentality" (Smith 2004, Castañeda 2009, Silva & Santos 2012). Reading the bureaucratic practices of heritage through Foucault's concept of "governmentality," Silva and Santos argue that heritage management is a political act, and an act of governance (2012, p. 3). In other words, states use specific strategies and technologies to wield power over populations and territories, and state actors employ scientific rationales to justify these actions. State institutions involved with heritage management use various tools of governance, such as legalities, administrative protocols, and systems of surveillance, to monitor both the built environment and the people who live in it. Used in the name of protecting historic buildings, these strategies and technologies often function as mechanisms of control, coercion, and enforcement.

These strategies became further evident as my conversation with Liyanarachchi continued. Referring to how women who sell lace cloth to tourists follow them as they walk on the ramparts, asking them to buy their wares, Liyanarachchi claimed they were both bothering the tourists and hurting their own businesses. Because of this, he said, they have to be made to change their ways:

If you look at the crowd that lives here, tell me if they will learn from knowledge, experience, and what others tell them? No. They live under austere conditions. They are poor. And they will use any way they can to make a living, even chasing the tourist. They come here and tell me, "Tharanga Sir, we won't run after the tourists and bother them." But I have seen them afterwards jumping up at the windows, trying to sell their goods. Do they learn? No they don't. Because that is the culture they are in. If you want to change that culture, you have to fix them. How do you fix them? You have to do that by changing their mentality.

When I asked him how he would go about changing people's mentality, he said there were many ways of doing that:

When I, get into a long-sleeved shirt, put on a tie and wear a coat, the person who speaks is a different Tharanga, no? [Laughs] So that is one way. There are many ways to change the mentality. We can do that by giving them one place to sell their things without running around. Or you let that same person wear the same thing, and remain the same dark Somawathie, [referring to one of the vendors] and give her a nice reed basket from our own culture that tourists will be attracted to. She can carry it around like a briefcase! That is changing a mentality. But we must be strategic and astute to do that. If she wants to keep the shopping bag, we'll have to give her a shopping bag with a logo saying "Galle Heritage Foundation!" [Laughs] Ultimately, by changing the mentality, the contribution we make is to the Fort itself. So when it is to the Fort it comes back to the person like in the food chain. It's like the snake biting its tail.

Such strategies show that in Galle Fort, heritage management increasingly takes the form of governmentality. The Galle Heritage Foundation's agenda for heritage management far exceeds its institutional mandate to protect the town's historic buildings, and intervenes in numerous spheres of life unrelated to conservation of the built environment. The issues with heritage management in Galle Fort become even more problematic when considered in relation to the Fort's past. The monumental space that is now "heritage" was also once a colonial administrative and military space. The plans Liyanarachchi envisioned for the Fort raise the question of whether in the process of restoring the material remains of the colonial past, aspects of colonial urban planning and administration are also called back into being. Porter (2010) argues that modern urban planning has genealogical roots in urban planning under colonialism. The logic, presumptions, and strategies Liyanarachchi employed in his vision for the Fort's urban planning echo these genealogical roots. For instance, Liyanarachchi drew the boundaries of the Fort to delineate an area or territory within which his institution had authority to manage and monitor the material environment and the social lives of residents. As Porter

(2010) has argued, colonial urban planning used the demarcation of boundaries to mark out spheres of territorial control, enclosure, and hierachization of space. Colonial forts have a long history of spatially segregating populations from each other, and establishing separate rules for residents inside and outside their boundaries (Perera 2008). Galle Fort's ramparts, which once demarcated a territory of colonial rule, now mark out a protected zone of heritage, a new sphere of control and governance. According to Liyanarachchi, the inhabitants of this "colonial heritage city" need special regulations and laws.

Further, Liyanarachchi's ideas about the necessary "evolution" of the Fort's community beyond the lifestyles of the society outside suggests that his approach to planning relies on marking out social differences to reform. This directly recalls the benevolent paternalism of British colonial discourse on modernizing natives, and the colonial state's use of urban planning as an instrument to do so. As Rabinow (1989), Hosagrahar (2004), and Archer (2000) have shown, while intellectuals were theorizing evolutionary hierarchies in Europe, city planners and bureaucrats in the colonies were planning new 'hygienic' or 'sanitary' spaces to develop and advance what they considered as "primitive" societies. These planners often rationalized their interventions through calls for humanistic civilizing missions (Jacobs 1996). Building on Porter (2010), I argue that what we see in the Fort is a form of heritage management that is distinctly postcolonial in that it addresses contemporary concerns yet continues to be constituted by key aspects of colonial urban planning in a previously colonized space. In attempting to restructure the relationship between people and space using claims about reforming backward cultures, and taking up missions to modernize and civilize inhabitants, the city

authorities manage the postcolonial Fort using discourses and rationales remarkably similar to those characteristic of colonial urban planning.

Ground Realities: Institutional Mismanagement and Resistance

Under such circumstances, how have Fort People responded? How have they handled bureaucrats' interventions in their lives and living spaces? As I have argued above, the Fort's heritage managers have extended their activities beyond building preservation to reform the local population, using strategies of power and control, both "for their own good" and for the development of "the heritage city." Yet bureaucratic attempts to restructure space and residents' use of it reach their limits when put into practice. Such projects meet limited success partly due to broader structures of institutional mismanagement, and also because ordinary people come up with their own tactics to counter strategies of authoritative power, as De Certeau (1984) has argued. Caught up in broader national and sub-national institutional processes and fractious relations between residents and restorers, heritage conservation projects are embedded in fields of power that shape the way they operate. In the final section of this chapter, I focus on power relations between the city authorities who plan, run, and enforce the heritage regulations, and the local residents who inhabit the buildings designated as heritage. To analyze these relations, I use the discussions of a public meeting that took place between the Fort's residents and city authorities from several state institutions.

In September 2011, two years after the gazette (or bill) with the latest regulations for the Fort was passed in parliament, the Galle Heritage Foundation called a meeting with residents to educate them on the rules and regulations by which they have to abide. The newly elected Governor of the Galle district initiated the meeting because she was

concerned about the ongoing conflicts between people and the state institutions responsible for the Fort's administration. In addition to her, various other officials and dignitaries took seats on the stage in the meeting hall, including the head monk of the Buddhist temple, the priest of the Anglican Church, and representatives from the Galle Heritage Foundation, the Urban Development Authority (UDA), the Department of Archeology, and the Sri Lankan branch of ICOMOS. Close to 200 local residents attended, and two expatriate hoteliers also came in during the proceedings. Sitting next to my host mother Rafa Ismail, I took notes on both the "official talk" on stage and the residents' comments around me. As Liyanarachchi opened the meeting and the head of the Galle Heritage Foundation spoke, some residents listened, others dozed off, and many quietly caught up with their neighbors, looking up occasionally to pay attention to the speeches on stage. Initially it seemed like a regular state-sponsored meeting, and it is unlikely that either the city authorities or the residents anticipated how volatile it would become.

In the first hour, the Governor and the representatives of state institutions addressed the residents. The Governor made special mention of her wish to hear residents' concerns and find solutions to their problems in the Fort. In her speech, the UDA representative highlighted that while Sri Lanka has a number of World Heritage Sites, Galle Fort stands out amongst them because it is "a living city," saying it is not just its architectural features but also its resident community that makes the Fort a unique heritage site. Liyanarachchi, who spoke next, acknowledged that residents had faced difficulties because of the regulations and suggested that infractions are mostly caused by a lack of understanding of the laws. To better educate the public on these laws, he called

on a representative of the UDA. When she took the microphone, she prefaced her speech by claiming that the laws exist not to make it difficult for residents to live in the Fort, but to protect their heritage, add value to their homes, and boost their financial standing. After emphasizing that conservation efforts are ultimately for their benefit, she went on to describe the regulations step by step, outlining what residents can and cannot do to their homes. As she spoke, she showed photographs of buildings that were in accordance with the building laws and then showed examples of houses that broke the building codes. While her intentions may have been to visually represent the building infractions so that residents could understand the laws better, this was a particularly contentious approach because residents recognized every house that she said had an illegal construction. The muted chatter that had continued through the speeches became louder as audience members called out to each other to identify the houses in the slideshow. By the time she finished speaking, there was palpable anger in the room. At this point, Liyanarachchi opened the floor and informed residents that they had the chance to ask questions. He allocated fifteen minutes for question time. A man stood up, identified himself as Nazar Gaffar, and addressed the Governor:

I have a suggestion to make. Many people have come for this meeting. I was in Colombo, and I came all the way just for this meeting. People have taken leave from work to come, so it is not enough for you to give us fifteen minutes to speak. You must give us time. [Applause from the audience.] Now, the representatives here said that the Fort Printers hotel is sponsoring this event. Then when the UDA person was making her presentation about regulations, she showed the Fort Printers' nice looking building and said everything there was built according to the regulations. Is this lady unaware that the Urban Development Authority has brought a court order to break the pool in that building? [More applause.] What is she showing us? Have you brought us here to make fools of us?

I have more to say. You mentioned that there is this gazette passed on the Fort in 2009. This thing was drafted long before that. But before you put these regulations, why didn't you consult Fort residents? Now it is two years since then

that we have this meeting. I'm not complaining about the meeting—I'm glad it is there. But you didn't consult any Fort residents before you passed laws on the place we live in.

Nazar Gaffar's allegations drew loud applause from the residents in the audience.

In refusing to allow city administrators' claims about their concern for residents' interests to go unchallenged, Gaffar set the tone for the rest of the meeting. Reiterating Gaffar's charge that the city authorities were trying to beguile the audience, Mr. Chandrasekera, the next person to speak, said the following:

The officers here just said that the Galle Fort stands out amongst the heritage sites because it is a living Fort and because of its residents. But when you consider all the living World Heritage Sites, I think we must be the most unfortunate of residents who live such places. You come here and tell us we are lucky people to live in the Fort, we must be proud that we live in the Fort, that the fame should go to the people of the Fort, but don't come and hoodwink us with these stories. This heritage has become a curse! [Applause from audience.]

Speaking in Sinhala, Chandrasekera played on the word for heritage, *urumaya*, which the officials used repeatedly throughout their speeches, replacing it with *karumaya*, which sounded almost the same but connoted the opposite: bad karma, misfortune, curse. By asking the authorities not to hoodwink residents with their stories, he took apart the earlier speaker's careful framing of the heritage regulations as protective and non-punitive measures. As I have argued in the previous section, heritage practitioners justify certain hegemonic management strategies using the rationale that heritage regulations protect residents' interests. But Nazar Gaffar pointed out that the Galle Heritage Foundation had not given residents the opportunity to consent by consulting them when drafting the laws regarding their town and their homes. Gaffar's and Chandrasekera's comments showed that residents do not simply accept officials' claims about protective laws but interpret these laws as impositions of institutional power on their lives and homes.

In the course of the next hour and a half, many residents brought up issues they had with heritage management in the Fort. A number of problems came up repeatedly, and two in particular—gaining building approval and restorers’ selectivity in filing charges—show that heritage-related conflicts not only arise over how buildings should be conserved, but also how and by whom these conflicts should be managed. While Liyanarachchi said the institutional structure set up was fully equipped to deal with the needs of the Fort, it became apparent during the meeting that there was poor coordination between different institutions, and the system put in place to conserve the Fort had become too big to be efficient or to hold officials accountable for failing to follow procedures.

The first issue with institutional process came up in regard to getting buildings’ plans approved. The representative of the Urban Development Authority outlined the process: Residents must submit a completed approval form to the UDA, along with their buildings’ plans.²⁰ The UDA then sends these plans to the Galle Heritage planning approval sub-committee made up of representatives from at least eight state and non-state bodies.²¹ After the subcommittee provides preliminary planning clearance, residents have to submit the clearance form along with their plans to the Galle Municipality to obtain

²⁰ The document outlining the process for building approval, which the Galle Heritage Foundation provided residents with at the meeting, lists a number of additional documents that residents need to submit with their plans. These include: Information about the intended use of the building, initial fees, photographs of the buildings adjacent to the construction under review, and a survey plan. Further, it is important to note that this document and regulations list (UDA 2011) is written in Sinhala and uses complicated language and numerous technical terms that a resident with basic education in Sinhala would find difficult to understand. Further, while over half the residents at the meeting use Tamil as their first language, they were not provided with a Tamil translation.

²¹ These are: The Urban Development Authority; the Department of Archeology; the Galle Municipal Council; the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS); the Central Cultural Fund; the Central Environmental Authority, the Coast Conservation Department; and the Galle Heritage Foundation.

final approval. This process requires residents to negotiate with several state institutions. They complained this makes them “run around from office to office,” and the procedure is far from straightforward. A man named Yemeen Gaffar described it this way to the Governor:

Madam, to pass a plan in the Fort, you have to get plans drawn from someone who is privy with the Galle Heritage Foundation. If a chartered architect in the Foundation draws the plans, he gets them passed immediately. We don't have money to hire a chartered architect to design our houses. And we can't build our houses all at once. We construct a house bit by bit as the money comes. I have a suggestion. You hire a chartered architect. We will get a regular architect and send you the plans. If they have an issue with it, then they can work with our architect to make the changes. The white people can give 5-6 lakhs at once and get their plans passed. We don't have that kind of money.

When he sat down, Nazar Gaffar stood up and added:

The ICOMOS local director is an architect. If he is the local director of ICOMOS, he can't privately draw plans for the Fort's houses! [Gaffar is referring to a conflict of interests, as ICOMOS is one of the institutions in the planning approval subcommittee]. Also, you can see that the Fort people have become estranged and antagonistic with the Galle Heritage Foundation. I will tell you the primary solution for this. One of your main officers has to go. An official gets transferred every four years. Last year, when it was his time to go, he went around to the houses that he had got built, and got a petition signed from the residents, making a request to keep him here. He is the reason that there is a distance between the people and the department. I have no special friendship with this gentleman or any grudge against him. But I want to protect the Fort.

The requirement of having a chartered architect draw the plans for residents' houses has become a particularly contentious issue in Galle Fort. Chartered architects have qualified by passing the professional practice exam; they can sign off on the final plans and can charge higher fees (which usually involves a percentage of the building cost). Ordinary residents cannot afford to pay these fees and usually get their plans drawn from a regular architect. Yemeen Gaffar complained that the plans only get passed if chartered architects privy with the Foundation draws them. This is likely because Galle

Fort has its own specific regulations about building modifications, and for the plans to get approved, an architect with a specialized understanding of the laws needs to draw them. Nazar Gaffar drew attention to the conflict of interest that arises when architects affiliated with institutions that are part of the planning approval subcommittee also work through their private practices to design houses in the Fort. When these architects draw the plans, residents claim they get approved much more quickly. This may be because they have a specialized understanding of the laws, or because their positions on the subcommittee give them a strategic advantage. As seen in the exchange below, residents strongly believe that the building approval process funnels the architectural work to specific architects.

Chandrasekera: When we go to get the plans drawn, we have to spend a lot of money to get them approved. When I went to get my plan approved, an officer told me, “If you go to X person, your plan is unlikely to get approved. If you go to Y person, it will get approved. If the person I can afford to hire draws a plan, then I can’t go ahead with construction. I don’t have money to pay people off like this.

GHF Representative: This man came to our office and got advice about constructing his house. I never gave a name of an architect. I said to get whom he pleases. I don’t know any other official in the department who said any such thing.

Chandrasekera: She was not the one who said that, Madam. It was someone else.

Governor: Who is it? What is his name?

Chandrasekera: I don’t want to mention his name here. That is not proper.

Governor: No you must. You must be unafraid to speak up and name names.

Chandrasekera did not respond but Nazar Gaffar went ahead and named the official.²² Whether or not these allegations are true, it is clear that for a resident to get a plan passed, he or she has to negotiate with officials in various bureaucracies, where each blames the other for slowing the process. As a result, it takes an inordinate amount of

²² I have not included this person’s name, as it is not possible to verify the charges.

time to get anything done, and residents' applications for building approval regularly slip through the cracks. In such circumstances, a parallel culture develops, in which people to resort to other measures, such as using influence, patronage or bribery. During my research, while none of the residents admitted to bribing an official to get his or her plan approved, many residents accused administrators of taking bribes and complained that it is impossible to get anything done in the Fort without bribing an official.

It is important to recognize that the blame for the abuse of power, corruption, and inconsistencies that impaired the functioning of the institutions responsible for conserving Galle Fort's heritage cannot entirely be pinned on individual bureaucrats because such problems are widespread within national and sub-national administrative systems. As Herzfeld points out, most bureaucrats "are neither the heartless lackeys nor choiceless victims of some generic teleology—the state, post-modern hegemony, colonialism. They too are situated actors struggling to bend particularly recalcitrant boundaries" (1991, p. 13). Further, it is important to recognize that not all administrators subscribe to institutional corruption or succumb to pressures of influence. Some public officials recognize residents' frustrations with the system and work to rectify its problems. For instance, the Governor carried out her promise to hear residents' concerns and as the meeting progressed she even asked state representatives to hold off on their responses until residents had fully expressed themselves. Her insistence that residents speak the truth without fear suggests that she was concerned about the accountability of public administrators.

Yet, the meeting revealed clear instances where the use of influence resulted in an inconsistent enforcement of the law. Chandrasekera brought the Governor's attention to

them by comparing two cases, alleging that the institutions present have selectively applied penalties or filed cases against residents for breaking the heritage laws. He said:

There is a jeweler on Pedlar Street who is one of the oldest businessmen here. He has a small business. When he renovated his house and replaced his doorframes with some antique doors, he was fined Rs. 50,000. When the Ambassadors' place got a court case, it was swiftly cancelled. Ordinary people don't have contacts in high places. They can't afford to play this game.

The case of the Ambassador's house caused deep resentment in the local community. The Ambassador's house is an expatriate villa, and like most villas, it has a swimming pool where the courtyard used to be. When the Galle Heritage Foundation ordered the demolition of the pool, the demolition work came to an abrupt halt when a senior government official intervened. Such cases show that for the low-ranking officers working for the different departments responsible for enforcing the laws, questions of legality are overshadowed by pressure to follow the chain of command. Because the administrators' hands are tied when it comes to enforcing regulations on people with influence, they enforce them with the strictest authority on the people who have no such recourse—individual families, small businesses, shopkeepers. The outcome is that the law is applied mainly to those in relatively powerless situations: the small shop owners or working-class families with small properties.

Yet, during the meeting, residents like Nazar Gaffar and Chandrasekera insisted that the authorities be held accountable for such inconsistencies. The following exchange about court cases shows that in a small place where most residents know who has broken the laws and who has been punished or let off the hook, official excuses and attempts to pass the blame on others don't always hold ground.

Chandrasekera: I have a question for Mr. Dahanayake, the director of Galle Heritage. Can you tell me how many court cases have there been in the Fort, and how many of them have been against locals and how many against foreigners?

Parakrama Dahanayake: There's something we need to clear up about these court cases. There is a perception here that the Galle Heritage Foundation is filing cases against people. That is not part of our mandate. We can't file cases. When it comes to filing cases, there is a committee that makes a decision and this committee is headed by the Urban Development Authority. The UDA is mainly responsible, not us. There are multiple organizations here that file charges. That is part of the problem. I recognize your charges. I have made the same allegations and complaints to the UDA saying that the committee is flawed and something needs to be done. I have made a suggestion to the UDA that they form a committee to patrol the Fort once a week and monitor and remove the unauthorized buildings. But so far no such action has been taken. But there is no point blaming us. Blame the UDA. Also you can't blame the officials who work for the Galle Heritage Foundation and the Archeology Department. There are a few people who work here and they are overloaded with work. They can't possibly oversee everything that is happening every day.

Chandrasekera: You didn't answer my question. I didn't ask about the organizational problems in the Fort. I asked, "how many cases were against locals and how many were against foreigners?"

Parakrama Dahanayake: This is my point. I don't have the details because the Galle Heritage Foundation doesn't file the cases. You have to ask this from the UDA and the Archeology Department.

Governor: Can the people from the UDA answer?

UDA representative: From 2009 there have been ten cases. Nine for locals. One for foreigners.

Chandrasekera: Ten cases? You mean to say that there were only ten cases in this Fort between 2009 and 2011. From this audience itself I can point to more than ten people who have charges filed against them!

UDA Representative: I spoke only on behalf of the UDA. We have only ten cases. The others are from the Department of Archeology.

Governor: Archeology people, how many cases have you filed?

Archeology Representative: 15 cases. I don't have the records of how many local and how many foreign. Also, I'd like to respond to some of Mr. Nazar's allegations.

Governor: In a minute. I want to hear the rest of the concerns first.

Chandrasekera: This proves my point. Most of the people are Fort people. Not foreigners. You said just now that you were going to reconsider the law about

ponds and swimming pools. There isn't a single local family who has a swimming pool in their house. So this is an issue that applies only to the foreigners. This shows that you can reform the laws when it comes to the white people. It doesn't matter if you file cases when people break the law. Go ahead and do that. What I'm complaining about is that you have double standards.

There was silence from the stage as Chandrasekera spoke. According to the list of regulations the UDA representative read out, a swimming pool counts as an unlawful excavation. In the public audience of Fort residents, where almost everyone knows how many expatriates have pools in their houses, Chandrasekera argued that the number of expatriates charged with unlawful excavations didn't reflect the ground reality.

Nazar Gaffar reiterated these allegations about the swimming pools and took the argument about double standards further, saying that the state institutions themselves did not follow the heritage laws of the Fort.

Nazar Gaffar: Mr. Karl Steinberg is here. He bought a house in the Fort and built a pool in his hotel. In 1997, before the UDA Gazette was passed, the only place that had a swimming pool in the Fort was the Amangalla hotel. Ask any Fort person. But later, the Galle Fort Hotel hosted a function, and people from UNESCO came, the UDA director was there, the Archeological Director and prominent architects all came and they gave the hotel awards saying that it was restored beautifully. But according to the regulations here, swimming pools are not legal. Who are you trying to fool here? [Applause.]

Then there are regulations that we can't put anything to obscure the front area of the house. And they've especially mentioned the fact that we can't have large plants blocking it. But the Galle Fort Hotel has covered the whole area putting screens in front. Why do hotels get special regulations? Can we do this and get away with it? I am telling you, for the foreigner or the local you have to apply one law. I am not saying to chase the white man from the Fort. But don't have two types of laws for them and for us. The end result of this will be that the local people will leave the Fort and go. There won't be any Sri Lankans left in the Fort! [Applause.]

Then, you mentioned the colors we are allowed to have on our houses: white, *samara* and gray. Now you have a government building, the Registration of Motor Vehicles Office on Leyn Baan Street. What color is it? Pink. Then, look at the Archeology Department. Their Maritime Museum has timber edgings. These edgings are all painted black. Now in your list of colors here, black is not authorized. Yet your own building has black. How do you answer this?

Governor: Who is here from the Archeology Department? Is there such a regulation? Can you explain it?

Archeology Rep: That law about the facades was passed after the Museum was completed. We haven't painted it since. [Smiling rather sheepishly].

Nazar Gaffar: This is my point. Before the Galle season, the authorities went all around the Fort and took down all the boards of the shops including the teashops saying that they didn't meet the regulations. Those name boards were removed. But in front of the toilets you built in the ramparts' dungeons there is a big red and yellow board saying "toilets." Then the street signs placed by the Dutch government are blue. Where is the consistency here? Do the rules apply only to the people and not to the state? Please remove the unauthorized name boards sponsored by the government.

Governor: The law applies to everyone in the same. This is the reason I called this meeting to have a dialogue between the people, the UDA. . .

Nazar Gaffar: Madam, I have been attending meetings since 1999. Doing this is like pouring water off a duck's back. All we hear is "we will consider it, we will consider it." Until 2005, and even afterwards, there were no minutes sent to us from any of the meetings with the public. Then they tell us that we didn't attend, we didn't object.

When the state departments made their presentations at the beginning of the meeting, it seemed their foremost concern was to protect the Fort's buildings and the main obstacle was that people were knowingly or unknowingly breaking the laws. Yet, as the meeting continued, people turned the law back on itself. When bureaucrats of four different institutions "educated" residents about the conservation laws and listed the regulations they were flouting, residents argued against double standards and contradictions in the system in order to delegitimize its authority. Nazar Gaffar pointed out that the state agencies didn't follow the very regulations they enforced on the residents by bringing up the examples of the pink building of the Registration of Motor Vehicles and the black trimmings of the Maritime Museum whose restoration was overseen by the Galle Heritage Foundation. Chandrasekera complained that while foreign expatriates got away with illegally converting their courtyards into swimming pools,

residents were taken to court for the slightest modification of their homes. By pointing to these inconsistencies and insisting that the officials account for them, residents created a “rupture of the naturalized position of actor and social scientific pedagogue . . . drawing professionals out of their pedagogical roles and transforming them into actors within, and hence of, their own educational theater” (Collins 2008, p. 307).

Exposing the inconsistencies in the bureaucratic system is one tactic Fort residents use to respond to the “strategies” with which officials enforce their policies. De Certeau (1984) argues that while people in positions of authority use calculated strategies to manipulate power relationships so that they can govern and manage populations, ordinary people without recourse to such power resort to tactics—isolated actions, opportunities seized on the wing, cracks in the system—to counter authority. According to De Certeau, “the space of a tactic is the space of the other. Thus it must play on and with a terrain imposed on it and organized by the law of a foreign power” (1984, p.37). Playing on the terrain of the state’s heritage laws, residents responded to bureaucrats’ charges that they were violating regulations by hurling counter charges that bureaucrats themselves did not follow their own building regulations. Such tactics are a means of coping and a kind of resistance that Scott (1985) would describe as “weapons of the weak.”

On an everyday level, residents employ a range of other tactics to circumvent the building regulations and counter the state’s encroachment on their private properties. De Certeau further describes a tactic as a form of trickery, a guileful ruse that capitalizes on the ephemeral temporality of a possibility that offers itself at any given moment (1984, p. 37). Employing such trickery, Fort People rebuild and modify their houses in the cover of

the night and during public holidays, out of the sight of state officials. For instance, a resident who recently modernized his house showed me his ceramic tiled floors, new bathroom fittings, and additional floors and gleefully said, “I rebuilt the entire house in the night.” He then described how his friend brought bags of cement in his three-wheeler after dark and how contractors and masons arrived at the end of each weekday and worked until dawn until the house was finished. When we had finished touring the interior, he took me outside and pointed to his roof, saying, “I hid the rest of the floors from sight so that they can’t tell from the street.” Like this individual, many residents build new floors at the back of their properties away from the view of the street, as they are taken to courts for disrupting the unified street façade by constructing additional floors. The incentive to build out of sight is particularly high because the Foundation can only legally halt construction while it is underway and cannot ask residents to break down a building they have already completed. Tharanga Liyanarachchi referred to such practices in his wry observation that in the Fort, additional floors of houses appear from nowhere like castles in the sky. De Certeau (1984) describes such tactics as the art of poaching time and deploying the unexpected.

Resistance, however, also takes more overt forms. Two initiatives by the Galle Heritage Foundation were unable to proceed because residents mobilized and protested against them. The first was when the institution attempted to relocate the schools in the Fort, saying that they were not in keeping with the functions of the “heritage city.” The second was when they decided to issue tickets to foreign tourists at the gates of the Fort and charge them five hundred rupees to enter. Residents were opposed to these initiatives from their inception. The schools are key aspects of the “sense of place” in the Fort, and

residents who attended them over multiple generations have longstanding attachments to them. As for the tickets, small business owners felt threatened that they would deter tourists from coming in, and would divest tourists' money from their businesses. Residents insist that it is their marches and protests that prevented these initiatives from going ahead. While these incidents did not take place during my fieldwork, and therefore I cannot be sure if this was the case, they are clear indicators that when residents come out collectively against a project, they can indeed exert influence on the outcome of authorities' agendas.

Finally, resistance to authority also comes in the form of slander and this is seen in a range of social conflicts in which both residents and administrators are bound. As one of the administrators told me, "heritage is gold," and conflicts about the conservation of buildings are also conflicts related to money and value. Real estate in the Fort involves large amounts of capital. Several residents informed me after the meeting that one of the resident speakers who accused foreigners of getting away with illegal constructions, is a primary broker in selling properties to expatriates. They pointed out that he is also a businessman, and the Foundation had prevented him from constructing new buildings for his shops. Given this spate of conflicts, it is possible that this speaker's move to publicly indict the Foundation was a vindictive act.

UNESCO's World Heritage designation did indeed save the Fort's colonial buildings from being torn down and destroyed, but it also created the conditions for a sudden influx of capital into the Fort's economy. It brought in state agents to manage the value-added properties, and with them came all the power struggles and forms of mismanagement associated with a powerful bureaucracy. Today, both Sri Lanka and

foreign tourists walk around the Fort, admiring its historic buildings and preservation work. But just as the brightly painted structures contain no trace of the colonial struggles of space that produced this environment, the attractively restored streetscape tells nothing of the darker sides of heritage management in which the colonial buildings continue to be a site of conflict and struggle over space, power, and human agency.

CHAPTER 6:

FROM COLONIAL HERITAGE TO COLONIAL CHIC: TOURISM, GENTRIFICATION, AND FLOWS OF TRANSNATIONAL CAPITAL

Building upon the previous chapter on how restorers construct the Fort's postcolonial spaces as forms of heritage, this chapter investigates how its colonial buildings have become prime real estate, caught up in processes of gentrification driven by heritage-based tourism. I begin by considering how the Fort's neighborhoods started becoming gentrified, and trace the local, national, and transnational political and economic forces that contributed to the process. I then turn my attention to the materiality of this gentrification, and examine the marketing and consumption of space in the Fort's boutique hotels to analyze how colonial architectural forms become appropriated to create contemporary landscapes of elite consumption. Finally, I look at the Fort's 'real estate boom,' tourist influx, and gentrification from local residents' perspectives, attending to how they experience, participate in, benefit, and lose out in this process.

Galle Fort's Real Estate Boom: A Historically Situated Global Urban Process

In February 2003, TIME Magazine US ran an article on the Galle Fort, calling it "South Asia's latest boomtown." Its author, Bruce Palling (2003), claimed that the "colonial citadel," which "seems like something out of a time warp," was at the center of "Sri Lanka's tourist renaissance." After describing how "adventurous foreigners" bought four or five bedroom houses for less than \$50,000 and tripled the property prices within

two years, Palling (2003) wrote, “If you want your own slice of paradise in Sri Lanka, now’s the time to take out your wallet.”

Looking at the inception of gentrification in the Fort’s neighborhoods two decades ago, it becomes clear that a few enterprising expatriates initiated it, and a combination of national and transnational political and economic forces propelled its growth. The changes in Galle Fort support urbanists’ claim that gentrification is a product of a reinforced relationship between the urban and global scales (Smith 2002, Swyngedeouw 2000). In order to identify these urban-global links and to understand their implications, I trace the beginning of neighborhood change in the Fort, drawing on interviews with Charles Hulse and John Adams, the first two expatriates to buy property in the Fort.

Charles Hulse, an American from Arkansas, has lived in the Fort for over 25 years. Now in his 80s and recovering from a stroke, Hulse’s mobility is largely restricted to his house. Despite his physical difficulties, his sense of humor is still robust. Sitting in his courtyard, bare-chested and clad in a sarong, moving his shoulders to a mix of R & B and disco music resounding from the stereo near us, Hulse joked that he came to the Fort because he wanted to live in a place where he doesn’t have to wear socks or underwear. Hulse gave me a picture of the early beginning of expatriate interest in the Fort. John Adams, whom I interviewed the next morning at his real estate office in the Fort, confirmed Hulse’s account. Much younger than Hulse, Adams is aware of the Fort’s current property market and tourist economy and was able to situate Galle in a transnational real estate and tourist industry linking Hong Kong, Singapore, Dubai and

Europe. Hulse's and Adams's accounts are consistent with residents' recollections of the beginning of the expatriate influx to the Fort.

Charles Hulse first bought a house in the Fort in 1986, before it became a World Heritage Site, and he remained the only expatriate resident in the walled city for over a decade. He lived there with his partner, writing and working as an interior designer renovating and redesigning houses for other expatriates who had bought properties in nearby areas of Galle. Adams was the next expatriate to buy a house in the Fort and it was Charles who sold it to him and his wife in the late 1990s. John Adams, the grandson of a prominent British politician of the 1950s, was living and working as a banker in Hong Kong and moved to Sri Lanka in 1998, a year after the British government handed Hong Kong back to China. According to him, a number of national and international events took place in the next few years that spurred the influx of expatriates into the Fort.

In 2002, Sri Lanka's war came to a tenuous halt when the government signed a ceasefire agreement with the LTTE. The incumbent UNP government, headed by Ranil Wickremasinghe, aggressively promoted the tourist industry to boost the island's economy. In 2002, as an incentive to attract international investment, the government lifted the 100% property tax imposed on foreigners who purchase land in Sri Lanka. This tax had been put in place by the state through the Finance Act Number 11 of 1963, as a prohibitive measure to deter foreign procurement of land in the island.²³ The government's removal of this tax in 2002 encouraged foreign buyers to acquire land throughout Sri Lanka, particularly in the coastline. In addition to this, Adams remembers

²³ The 100% tax is a levy imposed on the transferee (non-citizen buyer) equivalent to the total value of the property (Finance Act No.11, 1963). The Finance Act No.11 of 2002 repealed Part IV of the 1963 Finance Act, which imposed the 100% Land Tax (Finance Act No.11, 2002).

that the ceasefire “precipitated a lot of articles about Sri Lanka” and major travel magazines such as Conde Nast Traveler began writing about the island, calling it “the new Bali.” This would have further publicized what TIME’s Bruce Palling described as Sri Lanka’s “tourist renaissance.” Hulse and Adams suggest that in addition to these articles, it was through their own networks that other expatriates in countries nearby began to hear about Galle Fort and think of it as an attractive site to buy holiday homes. Adams described how a number of his friends followed him to the Fort:

Facebook wasn’t around then but there were other means of networking. And Hong Kong was a very small place. So friends would talk saying ‘these mad people have gone to live in the funny little place called Galle, so why don’t we go and stay with them?’ Ninety nine percent of people who come to Sri Lanka fall in love with it and talk about it. So, through word of mouth news began to spread in Hong Kong and Singapore and amongst friends in the UK.

The period that Adams came to Sri Lanka immediately followed the British handover of Hong Kong to China. As Ley (2011) observes, the end of British rule in Hong Kong in 1997 spurred significant social and financial unrest there, and the flight of real estate capital from Hong Kong spurred property booms in cities such as London and Vancouver. Reading Eden’s and Hulse’s comments in light of Ley’s observations, it seems that this time, expats like Adams came on holiday to Sri Lanka, happened upon Galle and saw it as a potential place to invest in. In other words, a small trickle of the capital that left Hong Kong played a role in triggering Galle’s property boom.

Both Adams and Hulse insist that they moved to the Fort because they fell in love with it, but claim that those who followed were, in Adams’ words, business people from Southeast Asia who “came here and saw an opportunity to make money.” In 2004, two exclusive boutique hotels opened in the Fort. Through Hulse’s brokering, the Czech-

Indonesian businessman Adrian Zecha purchased the New Oriental Hotel from its Sri Lankan Burgher proprietor for his multinational boutique hotel chain, Aman Resorts, and reopened it as Amangalla. That same year, the Australian-Malaysian couple Karl Steinberg and Christopher Ong established the Galle Fort Hotel, another high-end boutique hotel down the road from Amangalla. At the height of the tourist season that year, on 26th December 2004, the Tsunami hit Sri Lanka's coastline. While it inundated the entire south coast of the island, the Fort remained unharmed. According to Hulse, the hotels opened their doors to stranded tourists as well as NGO workers and international journalists who coordinated their activities from the walled city. Hulse remembers that a number of foreigners who "came to the Fort on a crest of a wave" bought properties and stayed.

Soon after this, in 2005, Hong Kong based British expatriate Geoffrey Dobbs began the Galle Literary Festival. At this time Dobbs owned his own island, "Taprobane," in Weligama further down the coast, and ran the hotels Sun House and Dutch House in two colonial-period mansions just outside the Fort. This festival drew further international attention to Galle Fort, and fit well with Dobbs's plan to make the stretch from Galle to Tangalle "the best address in the Indian Ocean" (Palling 2003). By the end of 2005, through a combination of political changes in East Asia, the removal of the land tax in Sri Lanka, a natural disaster, and the astute investments of a few enterprising expatriates, gentrification in Galle was well under way.

The processes described above show that in Galle Fort, gentrification unfolded at both the neighborhood and global urban scales. At base, gentrification is a form of neighborhood change whereby a middle and upper class urban "gentry" invade working

class quarters of a city and displace the existing population over time (Glass 1964). While the gentrification that Glass (1964) observed in London involved the replacement of working classes by creative or professional classes from within their own country, in Galle Fort, local middle and upper class families have been bought out by a mobile group of expatriate professionals living and working in East and Southeast Asia, Europe, the US, and Australia. Galle Fort's gentrification, therefore, needs to be "seen in the context of globalization" (Atkinson and Bridge 2005, p.7).

The movement of capital from East and Southeast Asia to Galle illustrates Atkinson and Bridge's (2005) argument that global social and economic changes and forces are inciting "upward changes at the neighborhood scale" in "rapidly urbanizing cities of the (global) south" (p.7, 8). They further argue that we need to see the gentrified neighborhood as a "site of the reproduction of a wider set of power relations and contacts which operate at local, urban, regional, and international levels" (2005, p.7). This reproduction of power relations across various scales becomes clearer when we further situate Galle Fort in the lives and business interests of the expatriates who have bought and resold its properties. Galle Fort's expatriate residents such as Adams, who described himself as "part of a group of people who can live anywhere," constitute what Atkinson and Bridge call "a residential class who share an identity shaped by locational preferences, stage in the lifecycle, occupation and a social network that crosses national boundaries" (2005, p.10). For many of these expatriates, Galle Fort is one place in a series of destinations across the world that they have lived in, bought homes in, or are planning to move to. American-born Charles Hulse, for instance, came to Sri Lanka after living in Greece. Joe Smith, a European architect, first looked at places in India and

decided that Sri Lanka was an easier place to navigate. Judy Stewart, a British interior designer, mentioned her Fort residence was her third house in Sri Lanka. When I interviewed her, she had just sold this house to a Swiss couple so that she could move inland close to her other expatriate friends. Individuals such as John, Joe, and Charles, however, are a minority amongst the expat property owners because they actually reside in the Fort.

While over 80 expatriates have bought houses in the Fort, fewer than ten currently live in them. According to Adams and others, the absentee property owners are either European expats (mostly British) who work in Hong Kong, Dubai, and Singapore in sectors such as banking, finance and real estate, or professionals living in Australia, South Africa, the US, or Europe. Such expatriates, particularly those who work for transnational corporations, represent a “cosmopolitan managerial class” who have become super-mobile due to their transferable professional skills, their transnational social networks, kin and friendship ties (Atkinson and Bridge 2005, p.9). Floating from one residential niche to another, this highly mobile class tend to carry out a globalized form of gentrification that Atkinson and Bridge (2002, p.2) describe as “a new urban colonialism.” This new urban colonialism, according to Atkinson and Bridge (2002), asserts specific class-based preferences in urban living and drives “a white Anglo appropriation of urban space and urban history.”

But if these mobile expatriates don't live in Galle Fort, why do they spend upwards of \$250,000 on houses that have been barely renovated? The answer lies in the stage of gentrification that followed the first influx of expatriates in the early 2000s. At first, individuals such as Adams came, stayed, bought and sold properties informally

through their social networks. A few years later, the Fort's allure had shifted from an attractive place to have a holiday home to a site of investment that would bring high returns through tourism. Neighborhood change acquired a new profit-driven face of what Gotham (2005) calls "tourism-gentrification." With 80 Galle Fort houses already owned by expatriates, more are currently on the market. Expat-owned and run real estate companies have taken the forefront in buying and selling houses, and there is currently an established and systematized real estate industry interlinked with boutique tourism. British-run GalleFortProperty.com is one of the companies that have streamlined and made it easier to invest in, run, and market homes. Their website contains listings of properties for sale, a monthly property market report on the Fort, a guide to buying properties including ways to evade the 100% tax on foreign buyers (which was reinstated in 2004), a guide to renovating houses and renting villas out, and instructions on how to employ and manage local domestic staff from afar.

With the help of these companies, expatriate investors buy and renovate houses, run private villas and chic guesthouses for a period, and resell them to other expatriates at a higher price. In this way, as the ownership of the empty villas shifts from one absentee proprietor to another, the financial transactions take place between expatriates in Europe, Southeast Asia, North America or Australia. Galle Fort's gentrification actualizes, in a different context, Smith's (1979) argument that with gentrification it is capital and not people that moves.

The Production of Colonial Chic and Landscapes of Elite Consumption

The previous chapter showed how heritage managers designate the architectural remnants of the colonial past as heritage and interpret them in ways that valorize European contributions and facilitate amnesia about past inequalities. So far in this chapter I have analyzed tourism-driven gentrification in the Fort. The next section focuses on boutique hotels as a site where both colonial space and history are reconstructed to create pleasing sites that can be sold to and consumed by an up-market tourist clientele.

In their particular reconstructions of postcolonial space, hoteliers create an idyllic depiction of colonialism that tends to erase its exploitative elements, reproduce racial hierarchies, and enable further exploitative relations to be carried out in the present. While I argue that the Fort's boutique hotels and some private villas have become sites that foster forgetting and even "participate in the repetition of forgotten violences" (Shaw 2005), I do not mean to suggest that hoteliers and expatriates actively pursue projects to suppress historical truths. Their production of historical narratives in the hotels is closer to what Wallace (1996) observed in J.D. Rockefeller's project to restore Colonial Williamsburg, an eighteenth-century American plantation town. Wallace observes that Williamsburg commemorated the spaces, lifestyles, and opulence of the planter elite and yet made no mention of the town's black slaves whose enforced labor produced this wealth. He argues that sponsors of such restored landscapes are not Machiavellian plotters but they "simply embedded in their efforts versions of history that were commonplace of their class's culture" (p.4).

To explore how colonial architecture and colonial history are appropriated to produce contemporary landscapes of elite consumption, I focus on three boutique hotels-- Amangalla, the Galle Fort Hotel, and Fort Printers—all of which are owned by foreign hoteliers²⁴ and cater to an exclusive tourist clientele. These hotels charge between \$250 and \$1500 a night and offer a range of services, including a personal butler for guests of the most expensive rooms in Amangalla. I first examine hotel websites to analyze how they market themselves to tourists and then study tourists' reviews of the hotels to investigate how these spaces are consumed.

The hotels websites²⁵ recount in detail how they have restored their buildings and embellished their interiors with colonial period objects to recreate the atmosphere of a “bygone era.” Amangalla’s site highlights what it calls “a complex patina of its past:” its high ceilings, chandeliers and its dining room furnished with “period furniture, crisp white linen and antique silverware.” The Galle Fort Hotel boasts of its Grand Apartment, which has “original shuttered windows, twelve-inch teak floorboards, and fifteen-foot lime-washed ceilings.” The hoteliers use these material forms to construct an image of an opulent past. Amangalla’s website reminisces that “in the 19th century, horse drawn carriages delivered parasol-bearing gentry” to its doors. The Fort Printers promises to

²⁴ Amangalla is part of the multinational hotel chain Aman Resorts started by Indonesian-Czech hotelier Adrian Zecha. At the time of data collection for this research The Galle Fort Hotel was owned and run by Australian-Malaysian couple Karl Steinberg and Christopher Ong. In December 2011 Steinberg and Ong sold the hotel to Colombo Fort Hotels, a subsidiary of Lankem Ceylon PLC for US\$ 7 million. The Fort Printers advertises itself as “A Private Hotel.”

²⁵ Amangalla: Retrieved July 15, 2011 from <http://www.amanresorts.com/amangalla/home.aspx>

Galle Fort Hotel: Retrieved July 15, 2011 from <http://www.galleforthotel.com/HTML/TheHotel.html>

Fort Printers: Retrieved July 15, 2011 from <http://thefortprinters.com/index.php>

help their tourists revisit such pasts, as their “hardworking, English- speaking staff will happily take guests for a nostalgic spin in the hotel’s 1945 Morris Minor.”

Tourists’ reviews of the hotels in websites such as “trip advisor UK,” reveal much about how these spaces are consumed.²⁶ Most guests comment on the fine work of restoration in the hotels such as the tourist who claimed that the Galle Fort Hotel has a “gorgeous colonial feel.” A British guest of Amangalla wrote a glowing review claiming that the Edwardian traveler of the past would recognize the grandeur of the hotel’s magnificent Drawing Room and Dining Room where “meals are all silver service on starched linen with a humidor of finest Cigars at hand.” As hoteliers restore the colonial architecture and embellish the interiors with objects and artifacts from the past, the tourists who visit these spaces seem to be drawn to a kind of luxury they associate with a colonial lifestyle.

But such associations are based on a very selective rendering of the colonial past that emphasizes luxury and elides exploitative histories. The Fort was used for military and administrative purposes and its social dynamics were significantly shaped by hierarchical relations between European and local groups. In the process of creating a pleasing site for consumption the hotels have, in Shaw’s words, “(re)fabricated and cleansed (the past) of the marks that bear testimony to other, contradictory, aspects of the history of colonization” (2005, p. 63). Not only do these depictions of the past overlook the exploitative aspects of colonialism, they also filter out the uncomfortable realities that Europeans often faced in the colonies. Eighteenth and nineteenth century letters and

²⁶ See, for instance, reviews of Galle Fort Hotel in this website: http://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Hotel_Review-g297896-d556080-Reviews-Galle_Fort_Hotel-Galle_Galle_District_Southern_Province.html. Retrieved July 9th 2012.

administrative records from the colonies, which scholars such as Archer (2000) and Rodman (2001) have documented, are rife with narratives of settlers battling the stifling heat, the ever-looming threat of malaria, and the threats to their sensibilities of hygiene and health posed by local ways of inhabiting space. These accounts suggest that, for many colonial administrators and civil servants, the task of running and maintaining the imperial project was not a leisurely or particularly pleasurable enterprise. This “immaculately restored” colonial ambiance that the hotels advertize is not necessarily grounded in past realities but largely based on contemporary imaginings of colonial grandeur.

Yet the purpose of a hotel is not to provide tourists with an accurate history lesson. Also, the tourists who visit these hotels rarely travel to Sri Lanka simply to admire old British, Dutch or Portuguese architecture and objects. If the past is not consumed for the sake of the past, then what is it used for? Boutique hotels such as Amangalla are first and foremost sites of leisure and luxury. Tourists’ accounts and reviews in travel magazines suggest that these “antiques, old prints and crisp white linen” have allure not necessarily in their own right but more because they are placed in “terraces open to the tropical night” and are presented alongside an array of contemporary pleasures. A review in the *Australian Gourmet Traveler* posted on Galle Fort Hotel’s website illustrates how nostalgic visions of the colonial past are combined with forms of modern ‘South Asian design’ to create an atmosphere of decadence for high-end tourists to consume. The review describes the hotel as

The perfect colonial meets Ceylon chic bolt hole... The Galle Fort Hotel conjures up a lost era when Somerset Maugham and not Paris Hilton blazed the traveler’s trail... whirring fan and cocktails on the terrace, served by serene sarong clad staff, enormous guestrooms decorated sparsely with impressive antiques are

clustered around a shady courtyard where pink frangipani petals confetti the pool and the kitchen turns out sensational straits Chinese food.

Australian Gourmet Traveler (the text is reproduced as posted on the hotel's website)

This review encapsulates my argument that Galle Fort's boutique hotels and private villas remake postcolonial space into an aesthetic style best described as "colonial chic." Other reviews help flesh out what I mean by 'colonial chic.' One review in *The Independent* marvels that the Galle Fort Hotel has an air of exotic romanticism where "the scent of lilies lingers in the air as eccentric expats mingle over tea with young professionals." The comments below further suggest that many of these professionals who spend their days working in the high-rise buildings of Singapore, Hong Kong, and Dubai find a counterpoint to skyscraper modernity in the Fort's villas and hotels. Tourists repeatedly comment on several aspects of space in the hotels. One is the "tranquil atmosphere" the hotels provide with "the spacious rooms, the temple flowers, the serenity and the absolute privacy." Another is the aura of beauty and romance where "curries are served for dinner on the candlelit verandah." Yet another is the sense of exclusivity, isolation and privacy. I suggest that the hotels use the colonial architecture to stimulate a sense of being in a time out of time, combining this atmosphere with gourmet food, services, tropical flowers and foliage to create "colonial chic," a landscape of consumption that marries the exclusivity of the present with the opulence of an imagined past.

Other practices of the boutique hotel industry, however, come closer to connecting past and present realities of the Fort. Many tourists commented on the pleasure of having their every need attended to by people who were cheerful to serve and remained non-intrusive, almost invisible, while doing so. An Amangalla guest said that

the highlight of the hotel experience is the “personal butler whose role is to smoothly and silently accommodate the requirements of the most unreasonably demanding guest.” The Conde Nast Traveler drew vivid connections between the colonial past and boutique present in saying that the owners of the Galle Fort Hotel “have trained their young staff to abandon their oriental bows in favor of a genuinely great service.” In their descriptions of the staff’s cheer, these comments imagine a kind of reciprocal pleasure exchanged between those serving and being served while at the same time establishing a hierarchical distance between the mostly white tourists and the local staff.

Further systematizing such racial hierarchies, FortProperties.Com advises expatriate owners of private villas to provide their local staff with uniforms to wear, and insists that they refer to both owner and guests as ‘Sir’ and ‘Madam’ (FortProperties.com). The agency insists that owners be very strict with their Sri Lankan staff for “if they are shown kindness they will read it as a weakness and become complacent.” Recognizing that this approach has antecedents, the website notes, “This may sound like it has been taken out of a colonial era handbook on employee management but sadly you must adhere to these guidelines otherwise you will find yourself being walked over” (ibid.).

Here there is a striking confluence between restorers’ construction of the Fort’s colonial architecture as “World Heritage” and hoteliers’ remaking of it as “colonial chic.” The former, in their efforts to preserve the buildings, described the urban forms as “mutually produced heritage,” ignoring structural inequalities between the Europeans who conceptualized it and the local laborers who built it. In the latter, the tourists’ descriptions of the “gorgeous colonial feel” whitewash the exploitative colonial legacies

and their current depictions of a happy accommodating staff obscure the fact that their deferential demeanor has been carefully constructed by the hoteliers who train them. As shown in the previous chapter, heritage managers have been constructing the colonial architecture as heritage in ways that valorize European contributions and create amnesia about the inequalities of the past. This amnesia paves the way for hoteliers to reconstruct these spaces as sites of colonial nostalgia that can be marketed to and consumed by elite tourists in ways that produce similar inequalities in the present.

Flows of Transnational Capital into Local Communities

How do local residents fit into this process of gentrification? As a transnational professional class offers high prices to buy houses in the Fort, why do local middle and lower income families sell the homes they have lived in for generations? Are they simply “bought out,” or do they have their own interests, motivations and agendas in selling their properties? For the local residents who continue to live in the Fort, how has gentrification in its neighborhoods affected their social, cultural, and economic realities?

Porter and Shaw (2009) argue that the increasing global occurrence of gentrification requires us to attend to specific contexts undergoing gentrification (p.5). Further, Paton (2012) cautions that while the perspectives, class interests, and consumption practices of the gentrifying middle class have been widely studied, the agency, and perspectives of the working class whose neighborhoods are being gentrified have been overlooked. She argues that gentrifiers are not the “sole power in town” (2012, p. 253) and attends to how working class residents experience, capitalize on, benefit, or lose out on the social, economic, cultural and material changes sweeping through their

neighborhoods. In the final section of this chapter I build on the arguments of Paton (2012) and Porter and Shaw (2009) to investigate what gentrification has meant for the Fort's local residents.

To show how gentrification is not always a zero-sum process where only those gentrifying benefit and the departing communities completely lose out, I begin by mapping out how the Fort's high-end real estate industry became linked to, and inflected by, a much older property market based on the Muslim dowry system and practices of transmitting inheritance. Of significance is the fact that the residents who sell their homes to expatriates and leave the Fort mostly belong to the middle-class, which departs from the standard process of gentrification where working-class families become displaced by middle and upper-class newcomers. After looking at why local residents leave the Fort in pursuit of houses in Colombo, I turn my attention to how those who stay participate in the tourist economy. I then consider the impact local involvement in tourism has on social transformation and class mobility within the Fort's community.

Dowry Houses and the Flight of Middle Class Muslims

To help sketch a picture of how the Fort's gentrification intersected with a generational shift in the dowry practices of the local Muslim community, I turn to Rafa Ismail's explanation of why Fort Muslims sell their homes to expats and leave the Fort.

Dowry is also a reason people sell their houses in Galle Fort. Nowadays, so many of the men from Galle work in Colombo. In those days [when she was a child] men also worked in Colombo, but they used to come home on weekends... From the money they earned they could manage to get on with their lives. Now the money is not enough. Because of that, the boys want to get a house from Colombo . . . They are also from Galle, no? If they want to buy a house, they have no money. If they get a house from their wives, all they have to do is maintain it. If I give a house in Kollupitiya or Dehiwela in Colombo, it's very easy to give my

daughter in marriage. Then I can get a doctor or engineer. Even if the boy won't ask, his parents will ask. They ask all these things: How many properties do you have? How much is in the girl's fixed deposit? Money, money, money! Before you get a baby, you have to start collecting money for her!

Property plays a key role in Fort Muslims' marriage negotiations because of their domestic arrangements and inheritance patterns. In the Fort's Muslim community, houses are inherited through the maternal line because mothers gift their homes to their daughters as dowries upon marriage. Sons rarely inherit family homes, as they are expected to move into the houses of their wives, following uxorilocal residency rules.²⁷ As Rafa mentioned, the type of property a family gives a daughter has a bearing on the status of the husband she can attract. When a middle-class woman such as Rafa reached marriageable age over twenty years ago, a dowry house in the Fort would have afforded her substantial status, since the town has long been identified as the place of "well to do families."²⁸ Therefore, with a dowry house in the Fort, it wasn't hard for a woman such as Rafa to find a groom of a similar social background.

Yet, even a generation ago, Galle offered few job prospects for young men.

Because of this, they left their wives and children in the Fort during the week to work in Colombo and returned home to Galle during weekends and holidays. As Rafa mentioned,

²⁷ Fort Muslims share this practice of uxorilocal residence, where women inherit the family property and men move into their wives homes, with many other Muslim communities in Sri Lanka (see McGilvray 2010, and Ruwanpura 2006). One difference is that while in the East Coast, where these scholars did their research, parents kept their homes and built new houses for their daughters in the same compound, in the Fort when there were two or more girls in a family, the houses were gifted as sections to each. The daughters would then live with their partners and children in these multi family households or partition the houses as their families grew larger. Also, until recently (two to three decades ago) a number of Fort's Muslim families intermarried within their family groups based in the Fort, ensuring that their properties were retained over generations within the family group.

²⁸ Chapter 3 describes how the presence of a few elite Muslim business families inflected place identities with class-based status. These wealthy families such as the Markan Markers and Cassims had shifted to Colombo about two generations ago, but they continue to keep their bungalows in the Fort and still provide patronage to the Sufi lodges, Arabic College and mosque. Their presence in the Fort therefore remains strong.

at that time, many of these men who worked in Colombo could afford to sustain their families in Galle and live in Colombo with their salaries. With her children's generation, however, this option is no longer economically viable. With increasingly modernizing lifestyles, the rising cost of living and heavy competition in the job market, Colombo's appeal as a place to live has grown stronger in comparison to Galle where financial prospects, infrastructure, and educational institutions remain limited. The status and prestige once associated with the Fort has now shifted to Colombo, where greater economic opportunities lie. This shift is reflected in dowry negotiations: Whereas a generation ago, a dowry-house in the Galle Fort could attract a "good match" for a young Fort woman, now young middle-class men prefer to marry women who can provide them with dowry homes in the capital city.

This shift was already underway in the Fort when expatriates' interest in the town's homes began to grow, but until their offers raised the value of the Fort's homes, most Fort residents couldn't afford to buy homes in Colombo, which has the highest property prices in the island. As the real estate value of Fort homes became equivalent to, or even surpassed, certain neighbourhoods in Colombo, Fort Muslim residents began selling their homes in Galle to buy houses in Colombo's suburbs such as Dehiwela. It is primarily Galle Fort's middle class families who move to Colombo after selling their Fort houses, and it reflects their aspirations to maintain the status they once held in Galle. During visits to families who had moved this way, I found that many former Fort residents had settled close to each other in the capital's suburbs. As Rafa Ismail observed one day, a number of Dehiwela's neighbourhoods have now become "Fort neighbourhoods."

These intra-communal changes show that while the expatriate influx did transform the composition of the Fort's neighbourhoods, it was not simply a case of class-based displacement. Neighbourhood change has also been propelled by residents' desires to continue long-standing Fort Muslim marriage traditions, adapting them to suit their present economic needs and social aspirations. Having examined gentrification's links to middle class Muslim flight from the Fort, I now turn to its impacts on the changing class dynamics of the Fort.

Class Restructuring through Tourism

Working on tourism-driven gentrification in New Orleans, Gotham (2005) describes how real estate investors, multinational hotel firms, and large entertainment companies transformed the Vieux Carré (French Quarter) from a residential neighbourhood into an entertainment destination with high-class fashion outlets, expensive retail stores, designer bars, chain restaurants and a mall (p.1111). In the Fort, real estate investors, multinational hotel chains, and expatriate and Sri Lankan entrepreneurs are producing similar landscapes of elite consumption. Yet, as in Paton's (2012) gentrifying neighbourhood in Patrick, Glasgow, high-end gentrifiers in the Fort are "not the only power in town" and long-term local residents are also actors, subjects, and participants in the tourist economy. Within the past five years, Fort People from both middle-and lower-income families have been capitalizing on the influx of tourist revenue by opening up guesthouses, small shops, restaurants, and cafes. Today tourism-based gentrification in the Fort is driven by actors working in two parallel economies: the

boutique hotel industry targeting upmarket tourists and the family-owned businesses oriented towards “mid-range” tourists.

Fort People participate in this mid-range tourist economy in different ways. Some families have taken bank loans to add new floors or sections to their homes to run guesthouses, restaurants, or cafes. Anticipating that the “heritage look” will be good for tourism, many local owners of these guesthouses, restaurants, and cafes have gone through the building approval process and designed these spaces with white walls, columns, and wooden pillars. They also tend to name their establishments in ways that make allusions to the Fort’s Dutch past such as “Olanda” (the Sinhala name for the Netherlands) or “Dutch Café.” Many of these businesses are registered and licensed through the city municipality. Other residents, however, run informal businesses that are not licensed, and rent rooms out during the tourist seasons by relying on informal guides and three-wheelers to bring them guests, paying these guides a 15 - 20% commission.²⁹ Regardless of the type of business, residents still live in their homes, often occupying the ground floor while renting the top floors to guests. The small café owners run their businesses on their verandas, using their family kitchens to cook, in much the same way that the *kade* owners run their teashops. Even the *kades* have extended their existing spatialization of class hierarchies by placing plastic chairs *outside* their shops for tourists to sit and drink tea, ginger beer, or king coconut water. Overall, most of the families who have remained in the Fort participate in the tourist economy, as other job opportunities are scarce in Galle.

²⁹ Such informal guesthouses are commonly found in tourist areas all over Sri Lanka, and the informal guesthouse trend has been there since tourism took off in the late 1970s as Crick (1994) has documented in *Resplendent Sites, Discordant Voices: Sri Lankans and International Tourism*.

Fort residents' participation in this economy has prevented the town from entirely losing its residential character because people continue to live in their homes while running their businesses. Because this residential character has been retained to an extent, the Fort has not seen a complete "standardization and rationalization of consumption spaces as ruled by the dictates of tourism" (Gotham 2005, p.1114) as in other cities with tourism-related gentrification. Local ritual events, weekly routines, and rhythms continue in the Fort's houses and public spaces even though these sites are also used for tourist-related enterprises. For instance, Muslim-owned cafes, shops, and restaurants close for two hours every week as their owners attend Friday prayers in the Fort's mosque, even though it would be financially advantageous to keep their businesses open. Similarly, Sinhalese shops and restaurants close on Buddhist holidays such as Poya³⁰ and during the Sinhala and Tamil New Year. During Muslim feasts such as the *Kanduris*, the streets are occupied by hundreds of praying men, women and children who use the town's public spaces for their ritual needs. Further, while residents with tourist establishments freely make allusions to Dutch heritage when naming or designing their restaurants and cafes, these are strategic moves to attract business rather than expressions of colonial nostalgia. The lack of nostalgia became particularly evident to me on Sri Lanka's Independence Day, when many restaurants and cafes hoisted national flags, sometimes attaching them to the very signboards alluding to the Fort's Dutch past. The celebration of feasts, festivals, and public holidays show that while the postcolonial Fort is increasingly

³⁰ Poya occurs every full moon day and Buddhists observe it by visiting the temple and participating in ritual activities. As Poya is a public holiday, shops and businesses around the island close during it and the state has prohibited the sale of alcohol and meat.

subjected to tourism-driven gentrification, for now it also continues to be a site of home and community for the local residents who remain.

The participation of lower-income families in the tourist economy has also produced significant changes in the class dynamics of the Fort. In some of the *wattas* and the side streets, houses that five years ago used to be small one-bedroom tenements have now expanded into two-story guesthouses. By capitalizing on the tourist economy, a few entrepreneurial families have seen dramatic “rags to riches” upward mobility. One man who lived in a small wooden tenement and worked as a launderer in his youth now owns three guesthouses and a spa. Another woman, whose mother and grandmother worked as maids in the Fort’s middle-class homes, now owns a three-story five-bedroom guesthouse. The improved economic situation of such families is changing the class segregation of the streets (discussed in Chapter 3) and restructuring long-standing hierarchies between Fort residents. While some of the older middle-class homes have become worn down with time and lack of upkeep, formerly low-income homes have expanded sporting “heritage facades” and plush, modern interiors.

As the Fort’s communities are faced with renegotiating their social dynamics, which were shaped by longstanding disparities between them, old status markers such as caste come into friction with new markers of wealth.³¹ This became particularly apparent to me as several middle class residents in the Fort discouraged me from staying in the new guesthouses, insisting that I reside with “old Fort families.” With time I understood that “old Fort families” did not refer longstanding residents but the old upper-middle-class with higher caste affiliations. These class changes and tensions show that as local

³¹ These tensions around status are reminiscent of those Jayawardena (2002) traced in late nineteenth century southern Sri Lanka, when lower caste groups gained upward mobility through engaging in business and becoming wealthier than the existing upper caste elite.

residents participate in tourism-gentrification, they change their lifestyles and domestic spaces not only to meet the consumer needs of tourists, but also to express their own class-based aspirations and make a stance viz-a-viz other members of the Fort's community.

Conclusion

Gentrification in Galle Fort's neighborhoods took place through a combination of local, national, and global processes. It was spearheaded by expatriate investors who constitute a transnational professional class and further systematized by real estate companies based outside Sri Lanka. Gentrification in Galle Fort, therefore, has been a global urban process with international flows of capital inciting changes at the neighborhood scale. However, this imposition of global power on the urban scale is not a new phenomenon for Galle. In fact, gentrification today utilizes and appropriates the material remnants of colonialism, a much older movement of people, capital, and power. Under colonial rule, Galle's terrain was subjected to projects of spatial restructuring designed in the metropolitan centers of Lisbon, Amsterdam, and London, and managed and coordinated from colonial outposts in South and Southeast Asia. Extracted resources flowed out of Galle's ports along these colonial routes. Today, the architectural remnants of this old imposition of global power on local urban space have gained new forms of economic and symbolic value as heritage and real estate that can be commodified and consumed. Further, the flows of capital involved in this new economy are mapped over this older imperial network.

At the same time, upon examining this process from the neighborhood scale, considering the intentions and motivations of long-term local residents, I argue that gentrification in the Fort has not been a straightforward narrative of a transnational professional class entirely restructuring the town to suit their lifestyles and displacing the existing population. Many of the families that the expatriates ‘bought out’ participated in the process for their own needs, as they sold their homes to follow their class-based aspirations and continue their dowry and property inheritance practices. While in some ways the town has undergone dramatic changes, in other ways local social and spatial practices and daily rhythms persist, and the remaining local residents continue to familiarize the Fort while channeling some of the capital flows of gentrification into their communities.

CHAPTER 7:

CONCLUSION

Reflections on Postcolonial Space from the Walled City

Defining multilocality, Margaret Rodman wrote that a “single physical landscape can be multilocal in the sense that it shapes and expresses polysemic meanings of place for different users” (1992, p.647). In the preceding chapters, I have presented the multilocality of postcolonial space in Galle Fort, showing how the town’s local residents, restorers, and expatriates interpret and remake its colonial urban forms and spaces for different purposes: as a place of home and community, as the material heritage of the colonial past, and as landscapes of consumption that I call “colonial chic.” Chapters 3, 4 and 5 focused on local uses of space, heritage management, and gentrification, and analyzed their social and economic processes. The thesis as a whole, however, mapped out ways in which expressions of power, agency, social difference, and hierarchy shape postcolonial space in the Fort. In this final chapter, I briefly retrace my arguments and consider their contribution to the study of postcolonial space and the literature on heritage, gentrification and urban relations of difference in Sri Lanka. I conclude by sharing a view of the Fort from each of the groups I worked with.

I opened the discussion of my findings by describing local residents’ familiarization of the Fort. Chapter 3 showed how local communities adapt colonial buildings and spaces for their religious and social needs, and employ the Fort’s colonial built environment to imagine, spatialize, and negotiate their ethnic, religious, gender, and class differences. While on one hand, the Fort’s structure and spatial layout shapes the

nature of residents' everyday and ritual activities, on the other hand, residents reinscribe the colonial buildings and spaces with their own meanings. Religious events such as the *Kanduri* illustrate how Fort residents "imaginatively reoccupy" the former colonial city. Using the Fort's urban forms to manage their social differences, residents also refer to the ramparts as a boundary marker for inter-ethnic violence and spatialize their class-based hierarchies in the residential pattern of the street grid. This residential pattern, as well as everyday social relations and neighborhood histories suggest that class, more than ethnicity, shapes hierarchical divisions in the local community. Building on these findings, Chapter 3 argues that while local residents have reclaimed the Fort's formerly colonized spaces as their own, expressing their postcolonial agency viz-a-viz the colonial past, their relations with each other today are constituted through hierarchies reflective of Sri Lanka's troubled postcolonial politics of difference.

Chapter 4 sketched out and analyzed the Fort's heritage politics. Examining how architects and city administrators ascribe value to the Fort's buildings, I found that they tend to privilege European-designed facets of the colonial built environment over local contributions in both colonial and postcolonial periods. Further, today's conservation efforts erase any appearance of wear and tear, and building regulations promote a standardized "heritage look" in the Fort, producing a homogenized urban landscape. Also, while city administrators find it important to make the Fort livable for residents, in pursuing various projects for heritage management, the Galle Heritage Foundation uses numerous strategies to restructure residents' relationship with space, and reform their social lives, economic activities, and personal habits. I argue that in claiming stewardship of the Fort's inhabitants in addition to its buildings, the Foundation pursues a paternalistic

approach to planning that directly echoes the logics of colonial urban planning. However, the Foundation's strategies do not go unchallenged, as residents have their own tactics of circumventing the regulations and countering authorities' interventions in their homes and lives. Chapter 4 demonstrates that while the restored buildings carry little trace of colonialism's contentious aspects, the lived realities of preserving its material remnants are fraught with conflicts, expressing an interplay between heritage as gold and heritage as curse.

Chapter 5 investigated how the Fort's neighborhoods became gentrified through heritage-based tourism. It began by charting how the Fort's gentrification unfolded through a combination of local, national and transnational forces, driven by a globally mobile class of European expatriate professionals. I then turned to gentrification's material expressions in the Fort. Through spatial analyses of its boutique hotels, I demonstrated how hoteliers repackage the colonial architecture to create landscapes of elite consumption that marry the exclusivity of the present with an imagined grandeur of the colonial past. I argued that these colonial chic spaces not only evoke colonial nostalgia, but also reinforce social distinctions between international tourists and local staff members in ways that reassert colonial race and class hierarchies. Yet, gentrification in the Fort was not a zero-sum process where gentrifiers benefited and local residents lost out entirely. On the contrary, middle-class Muslims sold their Fort homes to provide their daughters with high-status dowry-houses and many families capitalized on the influx of tourists and opened new businesses in their homes. Because of their continued presence, gentrification has not completely erased the Fort's residential character or turned it into an expatriate enclave. Chapter 5 ends by foregrounding the fact that despite and alongside

the town's gentrification, the 'ways of the Fort' that local residents have established over generations continue, showing remarkable resilience.

Revisiting Concerns about Postcolonial Space

While investigating how residents, restorers, and expatriates are remaking Galle Fort's colonial urban landscape in multilocal ways, this thesis also pursued broader questions about studying postcolonial urban space. Specifically, it set out to widen the scholarly conversation about postcolonial reconstructions of urban space in former colonial cities, given the limited literature available on this subject. In Chapter 1, I raised the concern that while local, national, and international actors ascribe diverse meanings to built environments designed under colonial rule, we know little about these spatial formations, or their implications for questions regarding power, agency, and social difference. As the literature on colonial urbanisms show, cities under colonial rule were sites of struggle, often violent, over economic resources, social control, and the meanings and functions of space and place. Because of this, postcolonial uses of spaces do not take place on neutral ground, and they need to be understood in relation to the colonial past.

My research shows that as people work to reconstruct colonial-period urban forms for today's purposes, they wittingly or unwittingly engage with this past. As residents, restorers and expatriates use and interpret the Fort's former colonial built environment, they sometimes agree and express overlapping interests, but they often have contrasting views and pursue projects that bring them into conflict with one another. These groups' contemporary social, spatial and economic relations and conflicts, and their efforts to remake the colonial built environment, are shot through with power hierarchies and

resistance. When former colonial spaces, which are already overdetermined by histories of exploitative relations, are reconstituted through a new set of racial, ethnic, and class hierarchies, and projects of economic and social reform, we need to work out how they recapitulate the past or diverge from it. In other words, we need to articulate precisely how postcolonial struggles over space are constituted by what feminist political scientist Zillah Eisenstein (2007, p.14) describes as “new-old” hierarchies and systems of power, and I would add, forms of resistance.

I propose that we need a range of works that comparatively study many iterations of postcolonial space in many cities and contexts. Such studies could open up rich discussions about how former colonial built environments are inflected by a variety of contemporary urban processes and phenomena, and how postcolonial space, in turn, particularizes their expression in specific sites.

Urban Space and Relations of Difference in Sri Lanka

What do the Fort’s postcolonial spatial relations say about the politics of difference in urban Sri Lanka? As mentioned in Chapter 1, while there is an overwhelming amount of scholarship on ethnic conflict at the national level, and a few works on inter-ethnic violence at the urban scale, there is hardly any literature on how people in Sri Lanka’s diverse cities live amongst each other everyday, negotiating various lines of difference including ethnicity, class, religion, and caste. My findings on everyday relations of difference in Galle Fort parallel the observations Bremner (2004) and Jeganathan (1997) made in relation to violent events, specifically the 1983 anti-Tamil riots, that inter-ethnic relations in urban Sri Lanka are shaped and inflected by particular

class-based hierarchies. While the 26-year war, fought along ethnic lines, may suggest that ethnicity is the primary dividing factor between Sri Lankans, ethnographic material from the urban level shows that class affinities and hierarchies play a significant role in shaping the way inter-ethnic alliances and antagonisms are formed. In Galle Fort, while Muslims, Sinhalese, and Tamils at each class level interact closely with each other, substantial social and spatial distances and economic disparities separate people of different social classes. My research reaffirms that there is an ‘intersectionality’ of class and ethnicity in Sri Lanka’s urban relations of difference and highlights that the spatial dynamics of these relations provide useful keys to understanding them.

Further, Fort People’s everyday linguistic and gastronomic exchanges reveal that communities living amongst each other for long periods can develop ways to accommodate other’s differences or put up with discomforts caused by these differences. Also, the social and economic dynamics of the *kades* during *Eid* showed that economic interdependencies across ethnic lines could, in some cases, bridge ethnic and religious divisions. This research suggests that at the level of the urban and the everyday, there are possibilities for convivial exchange. While many scholars have conceptualized ethnic relations in Sri Lanka through analyzing national policy-making, war, and extraordinary moments of violence, my research highlights the need for scholars to also study the island’s politics of difference through everyday interactions, connections, and interdependencies in mundane urban spaces.

Finally, drawing on my research, I highlight that we require more work on how specific colonial and postcolonial spatial layouts, such as the arrangement of streets and the residential patterns of neighborhoods, contribute to and shape urban relations of

difference in Sri Lanka. Chapter 3 notes how colonial spatial arrangements play a crucial role in shaping local sociality and spatial relations in the Fort. Further, neighborhood histories show that ethnic-and class-based migration patterns dating back to the late British colonial period continue to influence the way the town's local community constructs its identity, and defines markers of status and belonging. While Galle Fort has the most well preserved colonial architecture in Sri Lanka, it shares many colonial spatial forms and urban histories with other cities such as Colombo, Jaffna, Trincomalee, and Kandy. Like Galle, these cities were thriving centers of commerce and migration, both during the colonial period and well before it. Given the geography of Sri Lanka's war, these cities (particularly Jaffna, Trincomalee, and Colombo) experienced dramatic population change and social transformation over the past three decades. A further study comparing Galle with the aforementioned cities would help chart a postcolonial map of urban social and spatial relations in the island.

Gentrification and Heritage Management in Post Colonial Space: Issues of Power and Agency

While studies of gentrification are numerous for Western metropolitan cities, there has been less scholarly attention paid to contexts beyond Euro-America. Analyses and frameworks developed for European and North American contexts are indeed helpful in understanding the key processes of gentrification, but we cannot use them as blueprints to study gentrification in other parts of the world. As I noted in Chapter 1, drawing on Porter and Shaw (2009), it is vital that gentrification studies pay attention to the local cultural specificities of their sites. My research in Galle Fort confirms that to understand

gentrification's workings within local communities in South Asia, political-economic analyses need to be combined with attention to areas that anthropologists of the region have long been concerned with: issues of kinship, inheritance, dowry, caste, and the religious networks of local communities.

Further, today, many cities with colonial architecture have gained heritage designations and undergone restoration processes that make them economically valuable and vulnerable to heritage-related gentrification. Yet, there has been very little scholarly attention to the particular problems and power-dynamics that emerge through such processes (for a notable exceptions, see Bennett 1993, and Shaw 2005). Through Chapters 3 and 4, I have identified a number of issues that we need to account for in postcolonial contexts such as Galle Fort, including problematic recapitulations of colonial racial hierarchies in boutique hotels, and the re-emergence of colonial planning discourses in heritage management practices. Drawing from Galle Fort, I argue that we need to study heritage management and gentrification in postcolonial cities in conversation with scholarship on colonial and postcolonial urbanisms, and not exclusively in relation to heritage and gentrification literatures.

The literature on urban space under colonialism provides useful precedents for such studies for several reasons. Firstly, it investigates the efficacies, limitations, and power-relations of the imperial state's projects of spatial restructuring and social reform. Therefore, it provides useful approaches to interrogating the imposition of global economic power, and the nation state's interventions, in local urban spaces of postcolonial cities. Secondly, this literature alerts us to the importance of studying macro projects of social and spatial restructuring by investigating how ordinary people adapt to

them and reassert their cultural values, lifeways, religious beliefs, and needs. In other words, taken as a whole, the literature on cities under colonialism shows the way for a two-pronged approach to studying urban space, attending to both top-down and bottom-up perspectives.

Such an approach would augment the available scholarship on gentrification in useful ways. As Paton (2008) argues, the gentrification literature contains many incisive analyses of how gentrifiers assert their economic power and displace local communities, but says little about how local actors receive, participate in, and sometimes even benefit from these processes. My fieldwork shows that gentrification in Galle Fort has not been a straightforward narrative of global social and economic forces displacing its residents and transforming its neighborhoods to suit the tastes and of a globalized elite. My attention to local residents' motivations for selling their homes and analysis of their changing dowry practices was inspired by the literature on cities under colonialism, which illustrated how local people also found social mobility by riding the waves of social and economic change catalyzed by the European presence, and even used them to renegotiate their internal social stratifications (see Hosagrahar 2004 for class mobility in Delhi, and Jayawardena 2002 for caste and class restructuring in southern Sri Lanka). In Galle Fort, where a European-led transnational real estate industry gentrifying the neighborhoods through reconstructing the material remnants of the colonial past, it was particularly important to examine local residents' responses to this process.

The two-pronged approach employed by scholars of colonial urban planning is also useful for heritage studies in postcolonial cities. My findings in Chapter 4 show that heritage practitioners attempt to remake both people and space to meet the standards of

an idealized heritage landscape, and rationalize their interventions by asserting that they do so for residents' own good. By reading these heritage projects in relation to the literature on colonial urban planning, I found that bureaucrats' strategies of managing colonial heritage echo the paternalistic discourses of the civilizing missions that influenced urban planning under colonial rule. My findings support Porter's (2012) argument that modern urban planning in postcolonial contexts continues to be culturally constituted by colonial urban planning.

Similarly, as Archer (2000) and Hosagrahar (2004) observed in Delhi and Calcutta under British rule, I found in postcolonial Galle that local spatial practices are persisting, and people are finding their ways to circumvent planners' projects to change the way they live and inhabit space. I do not argue that residents' tactics to counter bureaucrats' strategies are morally superior or suggest that they avoid participating in the systems of influence, patronage and corruption that they accuse administrators of perpetuating. Yet, I recognize that such tactics are 'weapons of the weak' (Scott 1989), which constitute expressions of agency in the face of significant institutional power and force. Such responses to power and expressions of agency are by no means limited to colonial and postcolonial situations. Indeed they occur in many situations where urban planning oversteps its mandate. Yet, I argue that a postcolonial reading of ordinary people's responses to heritage governmentality is helpful for studying heritage management in postcolonial cities specifically, and could also be useful for heritage studies more generally.

Conclusion: A View From The Lighthouse

At the beginning of this thesis, I described the Fort's lighthouse as the first landmark of the walled town that can be seen across the bay. Standing at its base, one has a direct view of the Fort's mosque, the ramparts, and the Indian Ocean. During my fieldwork, I spent many evenings by this lighthouse with Sumathi, a Tamil resident who likes to sit across from the Mosque and listen to the evening call to prayer, even though she identifies herself as a Hindu. Sometimes, we walked further down the ramparts to another favorite spot of hers, where we could see the Buddhist temple with its vernacularized European arches, and directly behind it, the elaborately curved roof of the Dutch Reformed Church. As there is no Kovil in the Fort, Sumathi likes to catch a few quiet moments by the other religious spaces. These evenings with Sumathi, where I found that all the Fort's religious sites, including the Dutch Church that is now hardly in use, could hold spiritual significance for a Tamil Hindu woman, vividly brought home to me the idea of the Fort's familiarization and plurality.

Joe, a European expatriate resident, shared his view of the Fort while sitting by the ramparts to the east of the lighthouse. When I asked him what compelled him to buy a house there, he said it reminded him of Florence and Sienna, only an Asian version of it. Gesturing around, he said, "It is small in scale, and attached to a town. It has the beach in front, and the tea-country behind. What more could you want?" As an architect, Joe was attracted to the design of the Fort's houses. Pointing to a house in a state of disrepair, he said, "This one is not like the Disney architecture around here. It still has its old form." "See the intelligent Dutch lifestyle," he continued, "There is a sequence of public and

private spaces, light and dark, and a big sloping roof.” Wanting to get away from Europe, and its winter, Joe said he had found a home that was familiar in some ways and different in others, a place where he could sit anywhere and have people come by and chat. While Joe anticipated spending only half his year in the Fort, he said it is not a place he found easy to leave.

Further down the road from where Joe and I sat, there is a tall white building with colonnaded corridors. The *Kachcheri*, as residents still call it, has long been a site of administrative authority. Once the Government Agent’s office, this building is now home to the Galle Heritage Foundation. After an interview, Tharanga Liyanarachchi showed me how he had planned its grounds. From the second floor corridor, where we stood, we could see the ramparts, which the Foundation had restored and landscaped with grassy areas and benches. Groups of local tourists were sitting in clusters, sharing rice packets. Not too far from them, a photographer was taking pictures of a bridal couple. People were clearly enjoying the public space, and the opportunity to rest and take pictures in a scenic place. While its restoration of the Fort’s houses had generated much conflict, the Foundation’s project to conserve the ramparts had gained everyone’s appreciation. The latter shows that restoration efforts are important, and that heritage managers are most successful when they plan spaces that people can freely enjoy and make their own.

Sitting by the ramparts at sunset, amidst couples, families, children and tourists, watching the curly ocean waves break against the granite walls, I was often struck by the Fort’s vitality and vibrancy. Local residents, expatriate residents, and restorers may differ on many things, but they all agree that the Fort is special place, and a place of great beauty. They also express anxieties about what it may become as the property prices rise,

more local residents leave, and the town gets increasingly commercialized. While there are valid reasons for such concerns, for now, the walled city remains a place with many faces and voices, a place of multilocality and plurality. A view of the Fort's hybrid architecture from the lighthouse suggests that perhaps it always was.

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Appendix 1: Map of Sri Lanka

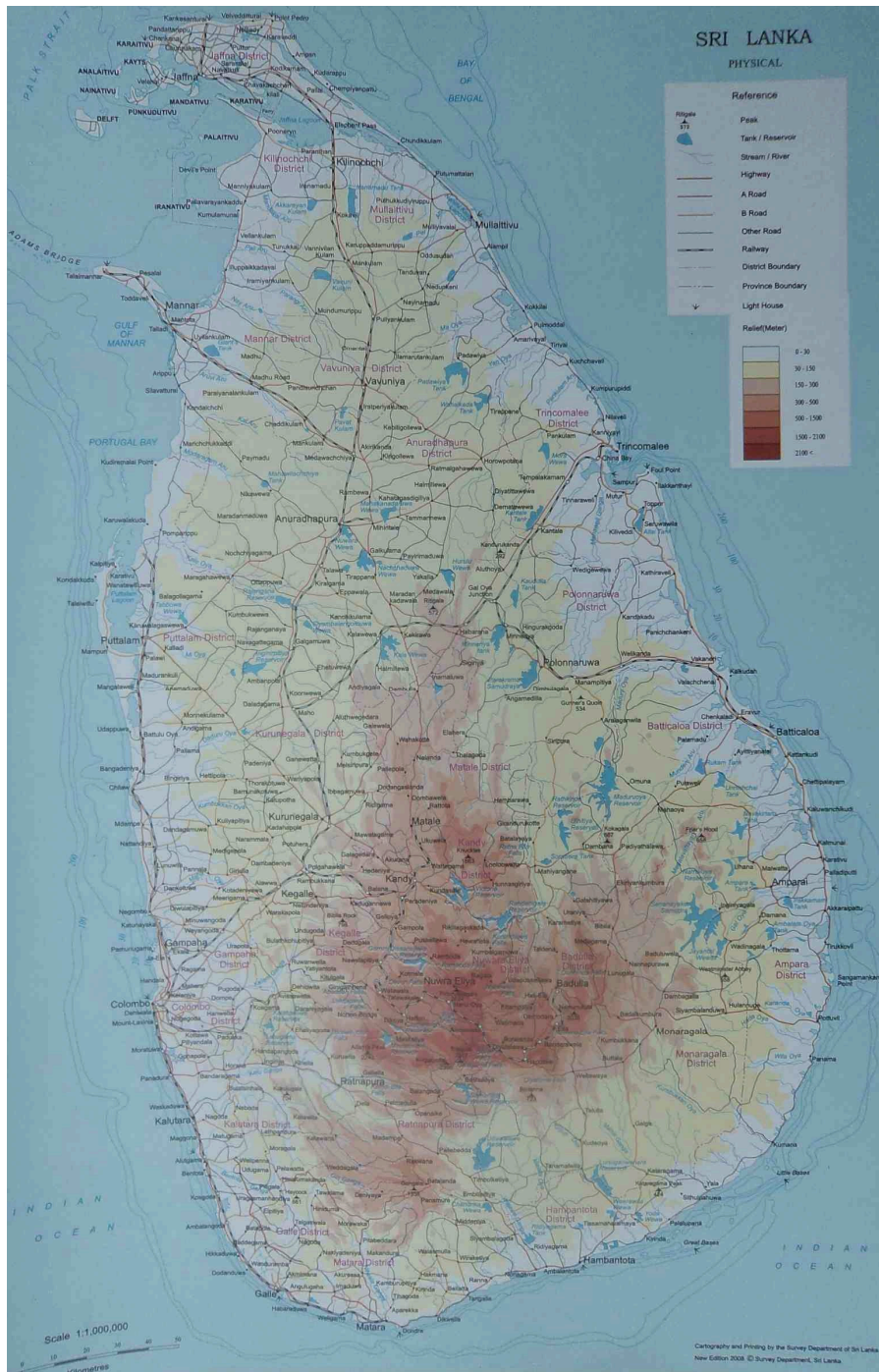


Figure 3: Sri Lanka Map (Sri Lanka Survey Department 2008)

Appendix 2: Observation Guide

Restorers	Adaptation of material setting	Houses What do houses restored by the heritage trust look like? What architectural elements, have prime focus? Facades? Interiors? Furniture and furnishings? What do plaques about restoration placed in homes say?	Setting 1 Which spaces in the Fort have been restored? What do they look like now? What is still in a state of disrepair? How do restorers represent the Fort's history in colonial built forms, plaques and signs? Have they highlighted local contributions to the Fort in restored spaces?	Setting 2
	Spatial Relations	When restorers give official tours of the Fort, where do they take people? What sites do they highlight? Do they interact with local residents and expats?		
Expatriates	Adaptation of material setting	Houses What do expat houses look like? Are there differences across places of origin? Spatial arrangements? Barriers and separations of space within and around the houses? Elements restored and adapted? Objects, decorations, displays of self and identity?	Hotels Look of hotels: elements restored? Barriers and separation internally and from street? Use and placement of colonial-period objects and artifacts? Kinds of furniture? Presence of "Sri Lankan" imagery and vernacular objects?	Setting 2 Other spaces important to expats? Cafes? Restaurants? Shops?
	Spatial Relations	Are doors left open? Where do people spend time inside and outside? Do expat children play outside? Do local residents visit expat homes? Relationships to street,	Who comes to stay? Who serves? What does staff wear? How do they greet guests? Interactions between managers and serving staff? How do guests	See above

		to neighbourhood.	address and interact with staff?	
Local Residents	Adaptation of material setting	Houses Arrangement of houses? Internal and external separations, barriers and connections? New elements or spaces or floors added? Displays of personal and collective identities? Religious symbols? Differences across ethnic, class religious affiliation? Changes to facades and interiors?	Streets Relationship between porches, facades and streets? Are cars, three-wheelers, bikes parked outside? Where are the shops and other commercial spaces? Where are locally owned guesthouses and what do they display in the streets?	Setting 2 What other spaces are important? Ramparts? Religious sites? Schools?
	Spatial Relations	Which members of the family spend time in which parts of the house? Where do they receive guests? Who uses the porches? Are doors kept open? Relationship to street?	Who spends time in the streets? How does this change during the day and different days of the week? What kind of vendors come by? When?	

Appendix 3: Interview Guide

This guide will not function as a survey. I state the questions below to note a series of topics I will discuss with respondents. As much as possible I will allow the conversations to flow freely.

Local Restorers

1. Where and when did you train as an architect/restorer?
2. What were the main concerns about conservation in SL at the time?
3. How did you become involved in the conservation of the Galle Fort?
4. How would you describe the Fort and its importance? Why conserve it?
5. The term “mutual heritage” is used to describe the Fort. What does this term mean to you?
6. What was it like when you first started conservation work? How was this received by the state? By the public? By people in the city of Galle and the Fort?
7. Whom did you approach for funding? How did UNESCO become involved? How did the Dutch government become involved?
8. How did you plan for conserving the Fort? What buildings/spaces had priority? How did you choose them?
9. The Fort dates back 400 years. The architecture has been constantly changing. What did you want to restore the Fort to? How it looked in the different colonial periods?
10. How did you deal with conserving a place where people lived? Were there conflicts when you asked people to change how their house looked, or when you legally mandated them to keep it in a specific style?
11. Was the Fort’s potential to attract tourism a part of your interest in conserving it?
12. What do you think of the expatriate presence in the Fort and the boutique hotels?
13. Both local residents and expats are changing their houses (adding floors/swimming pools/rooms). What do you think of this? Locals have been known to complain that expats get away with this more. What is your view on this?
14. If you could sum up Galle Fort in one single word, what would that word be? Why that word?

Expat Hotel owners (I will also speak with expat residents. In their interviews I will adapt the questions regarding the hotels to their houses)

1. When you began restoring the hotel what did you want it to look like? Can you tell me if there are particular features that are important to you?
2. Can you tell me about process of designing the hotel? How did you choose the objects and artifacts here? How did you bring in modern amenities? What did you do with old furniture? Did you bring in antiques?
3. Your website mentions that this is a heritage site. Can you tell me what you mean by heritage?
4. What drew you to the Galle Fort? Why did you choose it as the location for your hotel?

5. How would you describe the Galle Fort? Why would a tourist come here?
6. You also live in the Fort, can you tell me what that's like?
7. Is there a particular region your guests come from? How many guests do you have a year? What is the busiest time?
8. When guests want to see the Fort, where do you recommend that they go? Do you have particular merchants, vendors you take them to? How come they became the particular ones? Do you organize tours?
9. Can you tell me about the Fort's history? Do you know the history of this building? If its walls could talk, what would it say about the past?
10. When you think of the colonial period, what comes to mind?
11. You've carefully given every aspect of the hotel a "particular look." How did you design the uniforms of the managers and the staff?
12. What is your vision for the hotel? What is your vision for Galle Fort?
13. If you could sum up Galle Fort in one single word, what would that word be? Why that word?

Local Residents

1. How long has your family lived in the Fort? Which houses of the Fort have they lived in?
2. Can you tell me about this house? Has looked like this as far as you remember? How has it changed? What would you change if you could?
3. Can you describe a typical day for me? What do you do? Where do you go?
4. How do you meet your household needs? Where do you get your groceries? Medicine? Are there shops, eating-places, services (like trash collection) in the Fort? How has this changed over time?
5. Where do you work? Where do other family members work, go to school or university?
6. Are there religious spaces in the Fort you go to? How much time do you spend in them?
7. Are there religious or community festivals? How do people celebrate them? What are weddings and funerals like? – probe to get at how these unfold spatially, e.g. where are they, do they move from place to place
8. Do you have relatives in the Fort? Where do they live? How often do you see them? Do you know your neighbours? Do you spend time with them? Where?
9. Can you tell me about growing up/coming to live in the Fort?
10. Have you lived or spent time anywhere else? How was it different?
11. Do you know anything about Galle's history or the Fort past? Who built it? What do you think it was like a hundred years ago?
12. If you were to tell someone who has never seen the Fort about it, how would you describe it? What does it look like? What are its main features?
13. What is it like to live in a walled city? What if the walls were removed one day? Would that change things?
14. Who are "Fort People?" What does it mean to say you "come from the Fort?"
15. Lots of residents are leaving the Fort. What do you think of this? Why do they go? Why have you stayed?
16. Were there any troubles in the Fort? Any conflicts or catastrophes? Was the Fort affected by the tsunami? How did people respond?

17. Do you participate in any activities related to tourism? Do you know anyone who does? Can you tell me what this is like?
18. What do you think of the big hotels and the expat presence in the Fort? Do you interact with them?
19. If you could sum up Galle Fort in one single word, what would that word be? Why that word?

Appendix 4: Written Consent Form

Consent Form to Participate in Research for the study Social Production and Construction of Postcolonial Space in the Galle Fort

I am Nethra Samarawickrema, pursuing an MA in Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I invite you to participate in research for my MA thesis project as described below.

This project is an ethnographic study of the social construction and production of postcolonial space in the Galle Fort. I am interested in looking how different groups of people, particularly restorers, expatriate and local residents use and interpret the built environment (buildings, public and private spaces etc.) of the Galle Fort. By examining what the Galle Fort means for different people I attempt to understand how the former colonial city is used in the present day. The information gathered during this research will provide a means to work out of the similarities and differences in which various stakeholders of the Fort adapt its material setting and ascribe meaning to its spaces today.

I seek to interview approximately 30 participants who reside in the Fort or work on its restoration. I am approaching you for this study because you belong to one of these groups. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a 1 – 2 hour interview at a location you chose (this could be your home, place of work or a public space). If necessary I will request a follow up interview at a later date.

This is an entirely voluntary study and you have a right to withdraw from the interview or stop the interview process at any time. Any personal information you give me is strictly confidential and will be available only to my academic supervisor, Martha Radice, and myself. To ensure confidentiality, I will ask you to choose a pseudonym, which I will use to refer to you in final report. If you wish to see the transcripts of this interview please inform me and I will comply with your request. I do not foresee that you will encounter any risks by participating in this study other than those you would face in your everyday activities related to this research. This minimal risk could include emotions you may feel when reflecting on your experiences in the Fort or bringing up concerns about the city you live or work in. It is my hope that by engaging in the study you will benefit from the opportunity to reflect on your work, life and relationships to others in the Galle Fort. At the end of this study I will hold public lectures in Galle and Colombo where you can hear about its results. If in our interview, you disclose any information that could publicly identify you, I will not use this in my thesis or in my lectures. Once it is completed you can also access the full thesis through the National Public Library in Colombo and the Public Library in Galle. If you need to contact me you can reach me anywhere by email at nethra@dal.ca or by phone in Sri Lanka at 11-2555745 or 112582307 in Colombo at the address 12, Ascot Avenue, Colombo 05.

If you agree to participate in this study, please check the following boxes to indicate whether or not you give permission for the following and place your signature below.

yes No

- To audio record this interview
- To use your quotations under a pseudonym
- To contact you to seek permission to use this interview for future studies
- To use the pictures you take or any that I take of your home in the Fort for the final report

I,, have been informed about the study “The Social Production and Construction of Postcolonial Space in the Galle Fort” and agree to participate in the research (signature) (date)

I, Nethra Samarawickrema, have informed the participant about the study “The Social Production and Construction of Postcolonial Space in the Galle Fort” and obtained consent for the research (signature) (date)

Nethra Samarawickrema
 Department of Sociology and Social Anthropology
 Dalhousie University
 1459 Oxford Street
 Halifax, NS B3H 4R2
 Email: nethra@dal.ca
 Phone: 902-789-9034
 Thesis supervisor: Dr Martha Radice, martha.radice@dal.ca

This research study was approved by Dalhousie Social Sciences and Humanities Research Ethics Board on [date of approval.] If you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this study, you may contact Catherine Connors , Director of Dalhousie University’s Office of Human Research Ethics Administration, for assistance at (902) 494-1462 (you may call collect), Catherine.connors@dal.ca.

Appendix 5: Oral Consent Form

Oral Consent to Participate in Research for study

Social Production and Construction of Postcolonial Space in the Galle Fort

I am Nethra Samarawickrema, studying for an MA in Social Anthropology at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. I would like you to participate in the research for my MA thesis project.

My project studies what it means to live and work in the Galle Fort, which is a former colonial city. I wish to know how different groups of people particularly restorers, expatriate and local residents use and interpret the buildings, public and private spaces of the Galle Fort. Your thoughts on what the Galle Fort means for you and your community will help me understand how the former colonial city is used today.

I am interviewing around 30 participants who reside in the Fort or work on its restoration. I am approaching you for this study because you are a member of the local community. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to take part in a 1 – 2 hour interview at a location you chose. This could be your home, place of work or a public space. If necessary I will request a follow up interview at a later date.

This is an entirely voluntary study and you have a right to withdraw from the interview or stop the interview process at any time. Any personal information you give me is strictly confidential and will be available only to my academic supervisor, Martha Radice, and myself. To ensure confidentiality, I will ask you to choose a pseudonym, which I will use to refer to you in final report. I do not think you will encounter any risks by participating in this study other than those you would face in your everyday activities related to this research. I hope that by engaging in the study you will benefit from the opportunity to reflect on your work, life and relationships to others in the Galle Fort. At the end of this study I will hold public lectures in Galle and Colombo where you can hear about its results. Once it is completed you can also access the full thesis through the National Public Library in Colombo and the Public Library in Galle. If you need to contact me you can reach me by email at nethra@dal.ca or by phone at 11-255745 or 112582307 in Colombo at the address 12, Ascot Avenue, Colombo 05. Please let me know verbally whether you give your permission for me to interview you, take an audio recording of the interview, use the pictures you take and your quotations for my final report.

The participant has indicated whether or not she or he gives permission for the following.

	yes	no
To participate in the study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
To audio record this interview	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- To use his/her quotations under a pseudonym ○ ○

- To contact him/her to seek permission to use this interview for future studies ○ ○

- To use the pictures he/she takes or any that I take of the participant's home in the Fort for the final report ○ ○

I Nethra Samarawickrema have informed the participant about the study “The Social Production and Construction of Postcolonial Space in the Galle Fort” and obtained oral consent for the research (signature) (date)

If you have any difficulties with, or wish to voice concern about, any aspect of your participation in this study, you may contact Catherine Connors , Director of Dalhousie University's Office of Human Research Ethics Administration, for assistance at (902) 494-1462 (you may call collect), Catherine.connors@dal.ca.