



LIFE IN THE CRACKS:
People and Spaces of
Wekanda Neighbourhood

Pre-Project Research
LIVABLE CITIES, SRI LANKA
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PREFACE

Seeking to promote better understanding of poverty-related development issues, the Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), Sri Lanka, started a self-funded research project, 'Mapping Colombo,' in 2017 to influence poverty alleviation through inclusive policies and programmes. The project's overall goal was to develop knowledge about how ordinary people, socially and spatially, create their neighbourhoods to ensure the smooth functioning of everyday life and achieve their life goals. It aims to build knowledge on 'why development policy should take into consideration the role of ordinary citizens in urban development and how all outsiders who engage with communities should engage with the spaces inside the neighbourhoods' and the processes through which they are produced and re-produced (Perera, 2015).

The HealthBridge Foundation, Canada, became a partner for a phase of this research through their Livable Cities programme in late 2017. The collaboration brought together the goals and focus areas of the two institutions to generate transferable knowledge and evidence by focusing on specific aspects of the Wekanda neighbourhood of Kompannaweediya (a locality also known as Slave Island), Colombo. Using ethnographic and deep-mapping techniques, CEPA's Infrastructure and Poverty team mapped out the selected area, from its micro-scale spaces to the livelihoods that make those spaces useful to the community and the city. This knowledge is expected to help others, including NGOs, students, social workers and community artists and activists, to engage with the community more meaningfully. Furthermore, CEPA will use the methodological innovations and policy concerns emerging from the study to open up a dialogue with urban planning practitioners about how to shape a liveable and inclusive city.

The results of this study provide a basis for HealthBridge's future work in the neighbourhood and Colombo at large. They will also be shared with the Wekanda community.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

1.1.1 Why ‘Urban-Poor’?

When a city modernises and develops economically, the urban poor is often denied their ‘right to the city,’ in terms of where and how they live and work. They are living in the cracks’ in at least two ways; their houses are mostly located in the cracks of the authorised spatial layout and livelihoods are based on the gaps of the formalized economic structure of the city. Their houses and neighbourhoods are identified as slums and shanties while their work is largely labelled as informal. However, this liminal existence does not mean that their contribution to the city is insufficient or marginal; rather, the urban poor are the lubricant behind the smooth functioning of the major cities of the global south, which would otherwise be dysfunctional due to an unbearable cost of living.

However, only a few studies of Asian cities² look at the reasons behind the growing urban poor communities; how they manage to remain economically and socially relevant in a fast-changing city; how they resourcefully address the minimum required to exist in the city, such as housing and livelihoods, without waiting for state assistance; or, how they organise themselves to face emergencies. This research gap has led to politicisation of the issues of the urban poor. Despite state-sponsored resettlement and redevelopment programmes targeting this demographic, many Asian cities contend with a burgeoning population of urban poor. In fact, such measures may rupture people from their livelihoods and communities, posing a threat to the liveability of cities. Compounding the situation, housing solutions provided by the state, despite solving some issues like disaster vulnerability (for instance, by moving communities from canal reservations to high-rise apartment buildings), may result in a host of other problems, such as loss of livelihood and social capital, gentrification, an escalating cost of living, crime, drug addiction, etc.

Looking at the Sri Lankan version of the phenomenon, the research team focused on understanding the ways in which an urban neighbourhood is created and maintained physically socially and economically, as well as how individual and community needs are met through creativity and resourcefulness.

1.1.2 What’s Happening in Colombo?

According to the Urban Development Authority (UDA) of Sri Lanka, “Over 50 per cent of the Colombo city population lives in shanties, slums or dilapidated old housing schemes, which

¹ For more on this concept see Perera, N. (2015) *People’s Spaces*, Routledge.

² For more see Perera, N. (2013) *Transforming Asian Cities*, Routledge.

occupies (sic) 9 per cent of the total land extent of the city”³. In advancing the ambitious Western Region Megapolis Development Plan, the administration suggests that this occupancy of 9% land is what obstructs the economic corridors of the city. In other words, even though half the city population occupies a mere tenth of its land, even that is too much for these communities which should be further densified.

With the vision of creating a slum-free Colombo, the UDA’s Urban Regeneration Project has started building high-rise complexes for the working class poor of the city. Unfortunately, almost all the housing complexes are located in north Colombo, effectively concentrating poverty and gentrifying the city. Upon completion, more than 75,000 families⁴ forcibly and voluntarily evicted from more than 1,500+ small urban poor neighbourhoods will live in these high-rise complexes. They will be disconnected and marginalised from the rest of the city. Some may be compelled to move into new cracks of the Megapolis’s spatial layout in search of livelihood opportunities.

1.1.3 Why Wekanda?

Wekanda (in Slave Island, otherwise known as Kompannaweediya) is a multi-ethnic neighbourhood spread across approximately 52 acres of land. It consists of 2,143 built residential structures⁵. The community is highly vulnerable to coerced eviction, as it lies just outside the Central Business District of Colombo and the upcoming Colombo International Financial City (the Port City). The neighbourhood is surrounded by a large number of large-scale investment projects by multinational companies, such as Altair, Colombo City Centre, Shangrila hotel, ITC, Lotus Tower, Cinnamon Life, Destiny Mall, and Tata Housing Development Company. In fact, a larger group of houses of the same community who lived in Java lane, Malay Street and Mews Street areas of Wekanda were forcibly removed by previous regime⁶ to make way for the Defence school, Destiny Mall and Tata Housing projects are yet to receive houses. The remaining parts of the community traumatized by what they witnessed has been living in ambiguity and stress for a period closer to a decade now.

Thus, the CEPA team picked Wekanda for this investigation for several reasons: the imminent threat of eviction created by investment imperatives; the existence of development masterplans which seem to dismiss the concerns of the urban poor; and, the importance of preserving an inclusive urban neighbourhood of major historical and cultural significance.

³ For more see the URP page of UDA website at <http://www.uda.gov.lk/key-projects/urban-regeneration-programme.php>

⁴ For more see <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/180204/business-times/behind-the-scenes-creating-a-slum-free-colombo-279218.html>

⁵ For more see Resource Profile, 2016 prepared by Divisional Secretariat of Colombo DS division.

⁶ For more see, <http://www.sundaytimes.lk/150524/business-times/evicted-under-the-world-banks-watch-149983.html>

CHAPTER 2

2.1 METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study was to glean new knowledge about the lives of urban poor communities in terms of ‘social production of space’⁷ using Wekanda community as the sample, focusing on: the spaces community members use and build outside their houses within the neighbourhood; their economic activities; their contribution to the city; and, the characteristics of the neighbourhood that make it liveable and inclusive. The space and place making by the community in particular would help to understand the city as a process built by day-to-day human activity and innovation, rather than by the state and market forces.

Consequently, the research team looked at:

- the use of space within the Wekanda neighbourhood (land use);
- private, semi-private, and public spaces in the neighbourhood;
- specific uses of open spaces / places and their role in social wellbeing;
- everyday place-making processes through which the Wekanda neighbourhood is shaped and re-shaped as a spatial entity and an actor in the city;
- social and economic spaces the residents have created for themselves in a fast-changing city (actors and activities that have an impact on the identity of the place);
- The role of everyday space-making in creating an inclusive neighbourhood.

The team employed methods and tools such as deep mapping (a narrative based investigation), neighbourhood mapping via GIS, brief on-site interviews, random group discussions, life-history maps, and visual surveys. The methodology attempted to go beyond traditional tools used by urban planners, practitioners, and urban development agencies (like land use mapping founded on predetermined categories and household surveys). Instead, the methodology aimed at achieving an understanding of the makeup of the neighbourhood and the community that is close to the community’s own understanding of their space and place, spatially and socially. Thus, the methods used were generally ethnographic, narrative, and visual, as opposed to statistical. The methodology and work plan is summarized below in Table 1.

Table 1: Methodology and Workplan

Stage	Ethnographic component	Visual / Mapping Component
01	Basic observations; identification of places for further exploration / secondary data collection	Mapping the layout of the neighbourhood

⁷ See Lefebvre, H. (1974) *Production of Space* (Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith)

02	Interviewing identified actors on livelihood and place making	Detailed observation and recording of activities happening in places within the neighbourhood; verification of layout
03	Interview identified community members on the history of the neighbourhood and current status	Visual survey of everyday activities and use of open spaces / places; activity mapping
04	Random sample survey on livelihood based connectivity	Enhancing the verified layout with more layers (greenery, mobile vendors, paths of street vending, connectivity)
05	Documentation and analysis of narratives	GIS mapping; making posters

2.1.1 Conceptual Framework

All the stages mentioned above aimed at creating a knowledge bank about the actors, structures, and processes (drawing on theories of structuration and agency)⁸ that overcome the duality of structure (provided by the state) and agency (expressed in everyday space making by communities), to understand the value of incorporating what communities build and how they build into the discourse of urban development and city making. Examples for what is captured under each section are illustrated below on Figure 1.

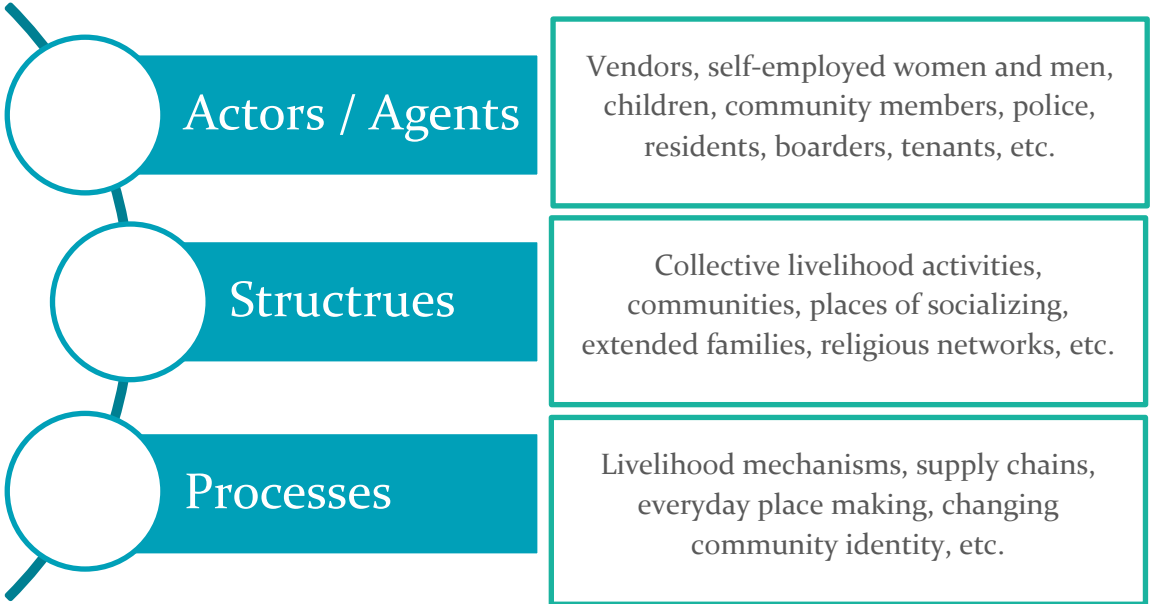


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

⁸ See Giddens in Tucker, K. (1999) *Anthony Giddens and Modern Social Theory*, Sage.

Theoretically, it is the processes that bring the agents and structures together to create meaningful spaces and places, social and physical alike. In Wekanda, we documented how these processes have marked the presence of the community within the city and created an inclusive and liveable neighbourhood. On the other hand, structures and processes outside the community (mega plans and urban development agendas), led by actors like the state and foreign investors, challenge the stability and sustainability of the community-driven processes. While this research focused largely on actors / agents, structures, and processes that are organic to the community, our initial analysis documented how processes beyond the community challenge its existence, balance, and sustainability. Some of these findings are presented in the next chapter (see section on current status of Wekanda).

To evaluate the results concerning the liveability and inclusiveness of the neighbourhood, we turned to some celebrated scholarly work in the field of urban design and planning: *Life Between Buildings* (Gehl, 1971); *Responsive Environments* (Bentley et al., 1985); *People's Spaces* (Perera, 2015); *Small Change* (Hamdi, 2004); and, *Death and Life of Great American Cities* (Jacobs, 1961).

In evaluating the liveability and inclusiveness of a neighbourhood, the responsiveness of its environments to the needs of its inhabitants are key. For this purpose, the qualities of a responsive environments introduced by Bentley et al. is captured in following diagram. The authors of *Responsive Environments* have developed a set of guidelines, which they claim make an environment responsive to its users' needs, based on the following concepts: permeability, variety, robustness, visual appropriateness, richness, personalisation, and legibility.

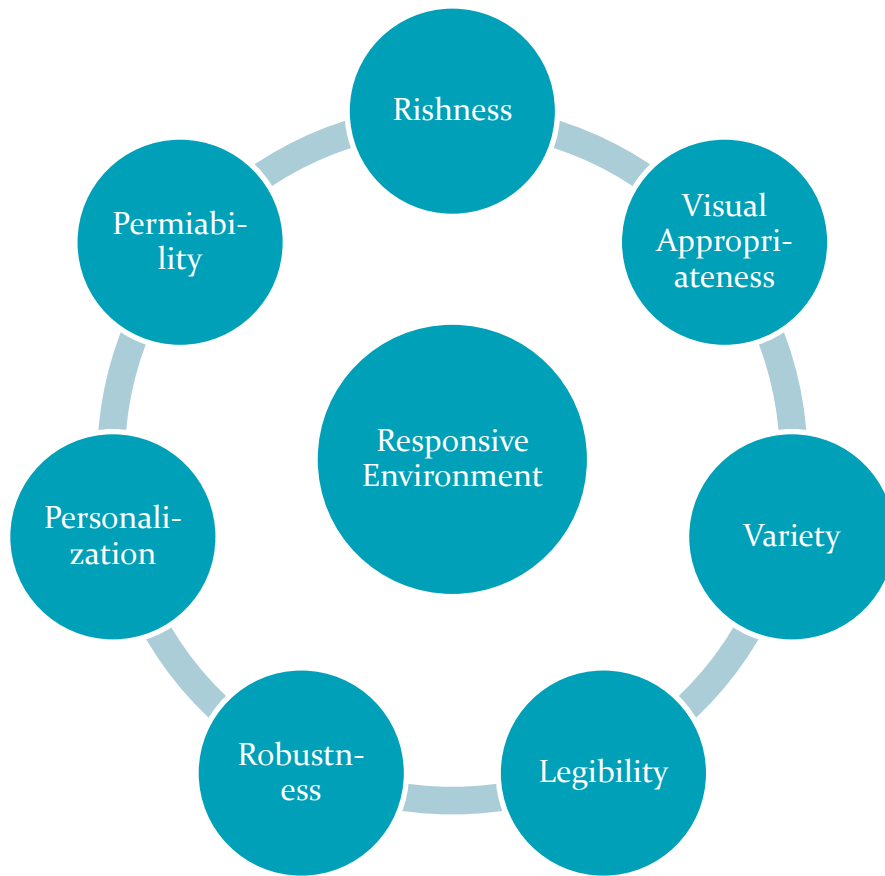


Figure 2: Qualities of a Responsive Environment

2.1.2 Space and Place

Environmental psychology and urban design scholars understand ‘place’ as people’s experience of locations (‘spaces’) in which they live or visit. The core aspects of a space that convert it to a place have been explored in multiple contexts. For instance, according to Tuan, the difference between ‘space’ and ‘place’ may be described as the extent to which human beings have given meaning to a specific area.⁹ Meaning can be ascribed to or derived from a space in two ways: in a direct and intimate way (for example, through the sense perception); or in an indirect and conceptual way, mediated by symbols, arts, etc.

‘Space’ can be described as a location which has no social connections for a human being: no value has been added to it. Such an open space may be marked off and defended against intruders. But it does not invite or encourage people to fill the space by being creative: no meaning has been ascribed to it. This space is more or less abstract.¹⁰

⁹ Tuan, Y. (1977). *Space and Place: The perspective of experience*. University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.

¹⁰ See footnote 9

In basic terms, space is the physical manifestation of a location (a room, its walls, and furniture, etc.). A place contains higher-level aspects like the activities people undertake and any meanings they attach to it, in addition to the physical properties¹¹.

This research defines space as the ‘spatial and socio-economic position’ the community creates for itself within the larger socio-economic and spatial framework of the city and the place(s) as smaller units of space within the neighbourhood that is produced through everyday place-making acts of everyone in the community that makes the neighbourhood inclusive and liveable.

2.1.2.1 Implicit processes of place making: Christopher Alexander’s 1979 work, *The Timeless Way of Building*, about qualities inherent in vernacular architecture, is also implicitly about place making:

It is not essential that each person design or shape the place where he is going to live or work ... Obviously people move, are happy in old houses... It is essential only that the people of a society, together, all the millions of them, not just professional architects, design all the millions of places¹².

He suggests this can be achieved through the development of “a pattern language,” a design approach he explicated in several subsequent books (Alexander, 1979)

¹¹ Relph, E. (1976). *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion Books

¹² Alexander, C. (1977) *The Timeless Way of Building*, Oxford University Press

2.1.3 People's Spaces:

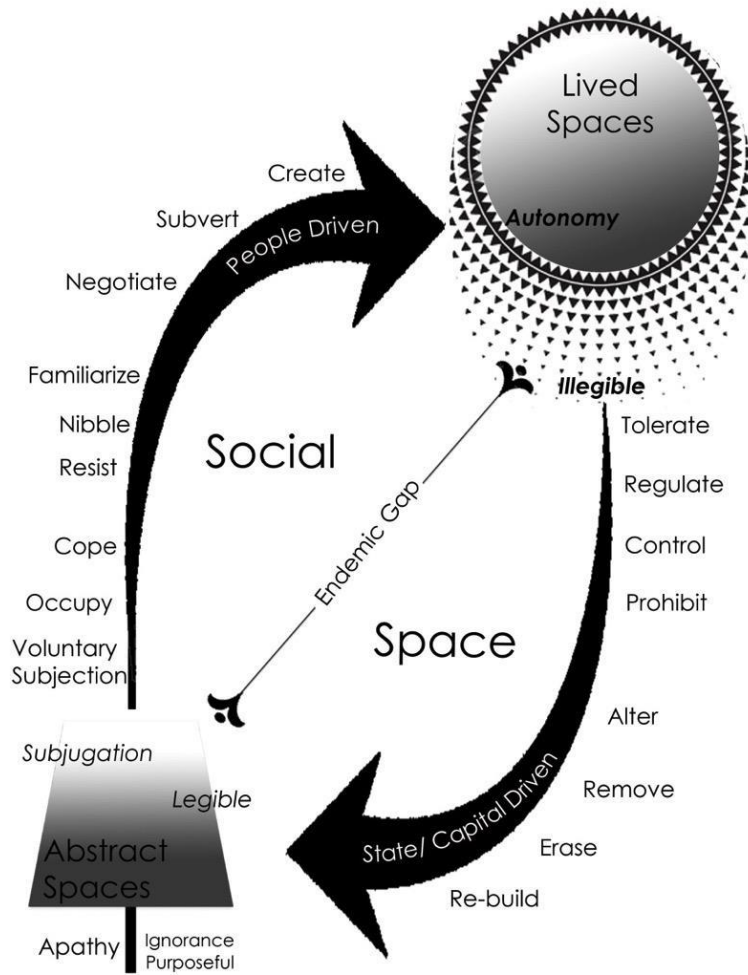


Figure 3: Transformation of abstract spaces into lived spaces

change his/her surroundings and life conditions as individuals or groups. Taking one more step he explains how state in return uses its agency to oppose people's processes by imposing rules and eventually by forcing eviction represented as erase and re-build in the Figure 3. Wekanda community has already experienced first stages of state's agency through regulations and controls on building in Wekanda and signals on potential eviction. They have also witnessed the use of ultimate power of state's agency (i.e.: eviction at gunpoint) as explained elsewhere. Our attempt through this research is to capture the process described on left side of the diagram before the stages of remove, erase and re-build.

In *People's Spaces*, Perera highlights the dynamics of everyday space making by ordinary people that were otherwise invisible in theories about the social production of space. Figure 3¹³ below explains the endemic gap between abstract and lived spaces, as well as the forces driven by people and the state / capital to transform the abstract space in to lived places. This research attempts to bridge this gap by shifting the practice of mapping of urban neighbourhoods closer to people in order to capture the lived spaces as created by people. In relation to policy and practice, the techniques used in this research can better inform development programmes, if coupled with fair interpretation.

The 'implicit processes of place making' identified by Alexander, is further explored by Perera, but as a conscious process driven by agency the human beings possess to

¹³ Perera, N. (2015). *People's Spaces*. Routledge.

2.1.4 The Critique

It is presumed that the physical development of an area will spur economic growth to the benefit of the residents, which then becomes backbone of human development of the area and surrounding areas. This is conceptualized by economists as trickledown effect. The justification, provided by experts in economic growth and urban development in Colombo for land grab followed by implementation of large scale commercial projects is the same. But the large-scale evictions (mentioned earlier, in ‘why Wekanda’ section and further explained in next chapter) from Slave Island / Kompannaweediya that paved the path for those projects resemble nothing but a land grab from the local community for further development of already privileged because the acquired lands were handed over (on 99-year lease) by the state to private property developers to construct exclusive luxurious apartment complexes, hotels, and leisure parks. There is no direct positive impact (i.e.: jobs, livelihood opportunities, compensation that match the market value of the land lost) on the communities who lived in the lands that were absorbed by the projects. Hence, the critique of this kind of development is that, while it causes concentration of wealth into the hands of a few it negatively impacts on the human development of the victims who were already marginalized.¹⁴

2.14.1 A potential way out

The cities that administrators administer, planners plan, and scholars examine are perceptions that represent the ideal city that is “out there.”¹⁵ The only way to collaboratively build the city is to bring together the understanding of the city held by different parties around the same table. This initiative to map an urban community from the *community’s* perspective is an experimental step beginning that process in Colombo. Similarly, elsewhere in the world, researchers in urban planning and geography are realizing the value of bringing informal cities / neighbourhoods to the mainstream city maps.

Mike Singer, of the “*Putting the World’s Informal Cities on the Map*” initiative, writes that architects and planners know the least about the fastest growing (largely informal) cities and neighbourhoods. According to the United Nation’s fact sheet 2014 today, 54 per cent of the world’s population lives in urban areas, a proportion that is expected to increase to 66 per cent by 2050. Projections show that urbanization combined with the overall growth of the world’s population could add another 2.5 billion people to urban populations by 2050, with close to 90 percent of the increase concentrated in Asia and Africa. According to their recent publication *Slum Almanac, 2015-16*¹⁶, in our world, one in eight people live in slums. In total, around a billion people live in slum conditions today. This not only amounts to a rather unacceptable contemporary reality but to one whose

¹⁴ Read Sen, A. (1999) *Development as freedom* for capabilities approach, a human development and balanced growth focused alternative as opposed to the development approached critiqued here.

¹⁵ Perera, N. (2008). The Planners' City: The construction of a town planning perception of Colombo, *Environment and Planning A* 2008, 40, 57 ^ 73

¹⁶ For more, See <https://unhabitat.org/slum-almanac-2015-2016/>

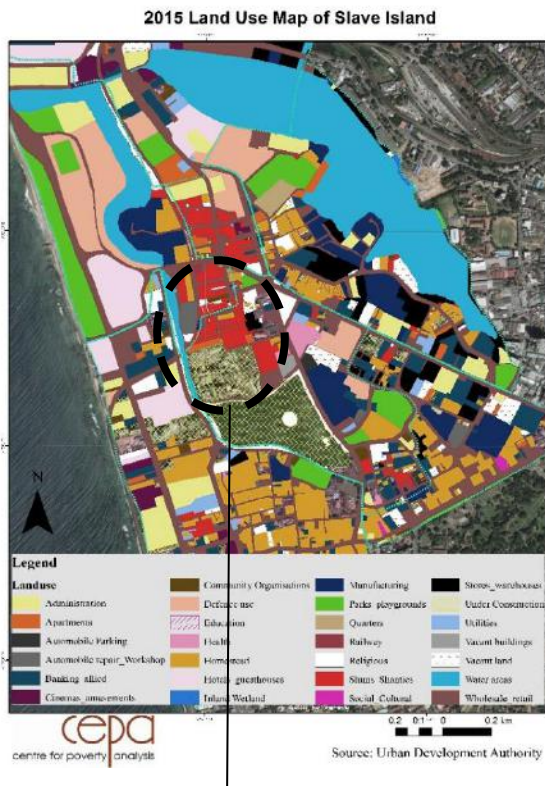
numbers are continuously swelling. In spite of great progress in improving slums and preventing their formation– represented by a decrease from 39 per cent to 30 per cent of urban population living in slums in developing countries between 2000 and 2014 – absolute numbers continue to grow and the slum challenge remains a critical factor for the persistence of poverty in the world, excluding fellow humans and citizens from the benefits of urbanisation and from fair and equal opportunities to attain individual and collective progress and prosperity. The question pertaining to us is, how many of these urban dwellers live in communities belonging to an urban geography that is literally off the map: undocumented, illegal, mobile, ephemeral, and generally beyond the reach of government services and infrastructure? Bringing them to official maps, based on evidence (not judgement) as the first step to acknowledge the existence of the urban poor communities who live in the cracks of these cities and to incorporate them into formal city making process is the need of the hour. It is also a potential way to build inclusive, sustainable and liveable human settlements that ‘leave no one behind’ as identified by SDG 11.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 CURRENT STATUS OF THE WEKANDA COMMUNITY

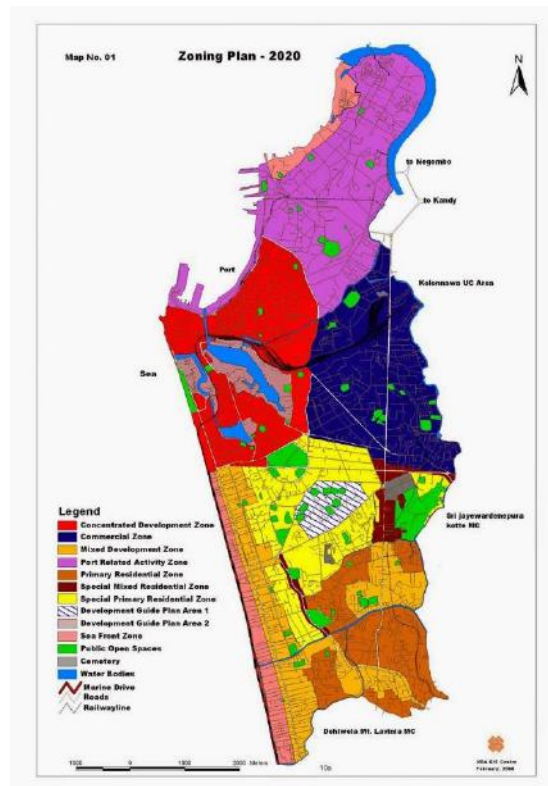
3.1.1 Slave Island / Kompannaweediya

Wekanda is located in Slave Island / Kompannaweediya, a place of historical importance in the city of Colombo. In addition to geographic centrality, Slave Island adds much colour to the city through a dynamic social mix of multiple ethnic groups



Community identified and recorded as 'slums and shanties' in official UDA database

Map 2: Land-Use Map of Slave Island- 2015



Map 1: Colombo MC Zoning Plan - 2020

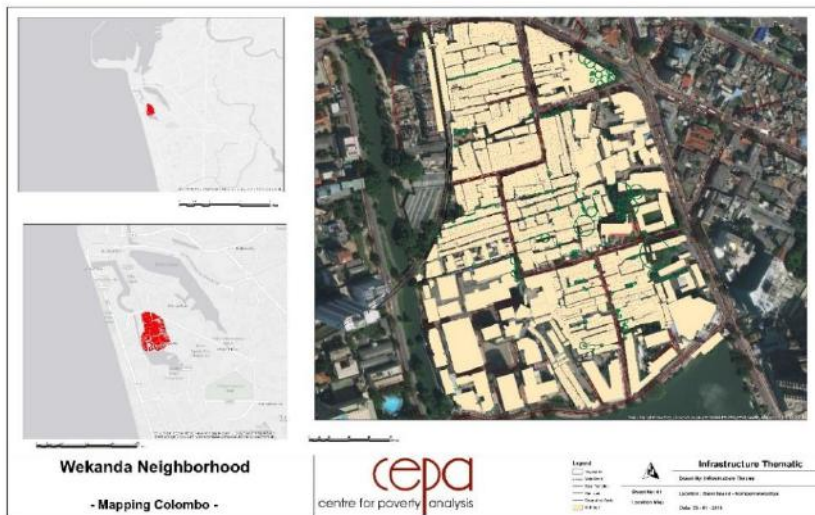
predominantly belonging to the lower middle and working classes. However, this vibrant community is now located within the “concentrated development zone as declared by the UDA” (see Map 1) and categorised as a ‘slum and shanty’ in the official UDA database (see Map 2). It is bordered by Colombo Fort, Colpetty / Kollupitiya, and Colombo 7, economically and socially well-established

neighbourhoods and localities with a very different character to Slave Island. The fate of Wekanda in terms of spatial and economic establishment was different from these surrounding neighbourhoods mainly due to lack of concentration of wealth and power (historically). Wekanda, and Kompannaweediya at large, have faced dramatic changes compared to surrounding localities, in terms of land use and character.

The history of Slave Island / Kompannaweediya is directly connected to the British colonial period because African slaves were housed in this area. The name “Slave Island” originates here; the Sinhala word, Kompannaweediya (literally, ‘company street’) arose with the establishment of the



Map 4: Administrative Boundaries of Slave Island



Map 3: Location Map of the Study Area

Ceylon Cold Company. Throughout the history of the area, the community has played different roles within the city of Colombo. Spread around the Beira Lake, (see Map 4 location and Map 3 for administrative boundaries of Slave Island)

Kompannaweediya was a central place through which millions of goods and people are transported between the fort and the port. Thus, Kompanna weediya/ Slave Island slowly became a crucial work-live area for a community that is engaged in informal facilitation of the economic operations took place in central Colombo. Given the stage of growth, Colombo is passing currently,

Slave Island mostly attracts foreign and local investors who seek land for high end investment mainly for luxury housing projects and state (mainly the UDA and Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development) attempts to facilitate the same through city beautification projects around Beira Lake,

Slave Island (Kompannaweediya) consists of three Grama Niladhari Divisions (GND, the smallest administrative unit of Sri Lanka): Slave Island / Kompannaweediya, Hunupitiya, and Wekanda. However, the study area does not fit within the GND boundaries; it has its own functional boundary based on actual land use. (See Map of 4 for location and administrative boundaries of Slave Island and Map 3 for the location of the site, Wekanda with a rough idea of its building footprint and density.)

3.1.2 Basic Demographic Profile

Slave Island / Kompannaweediya is historically famous for peaceful co-existence of multi-ethnic groups but is numerically characterized by its Muslim majority (Colombo DS, 2016). The high inter- and intra-level diversity of the neighborhood makes this site an exemplary case of reconciliation which is a national priority in Sri Lanka.

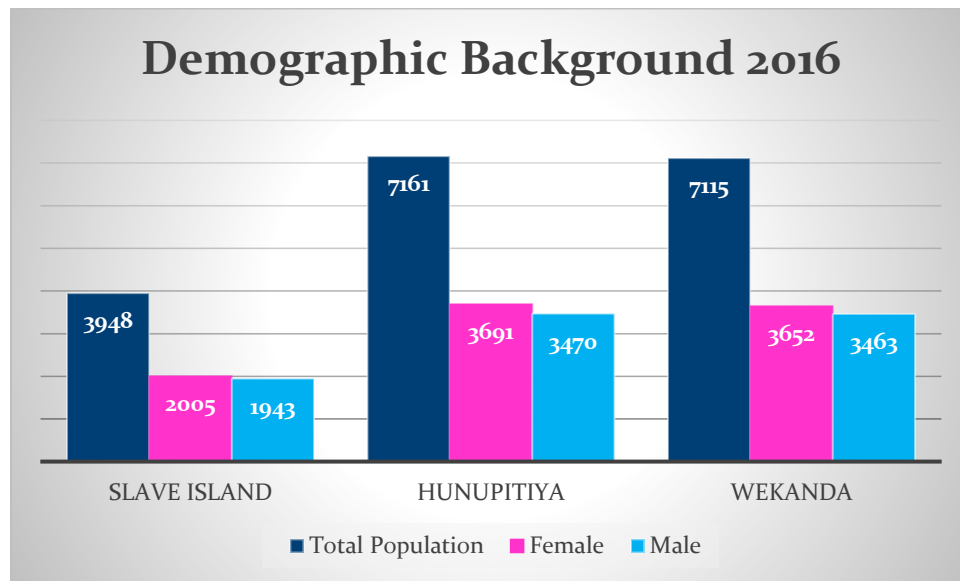


Figure 4: Demographic Composition of Slave Island, Hunupitiya, and Wekanda GNDs

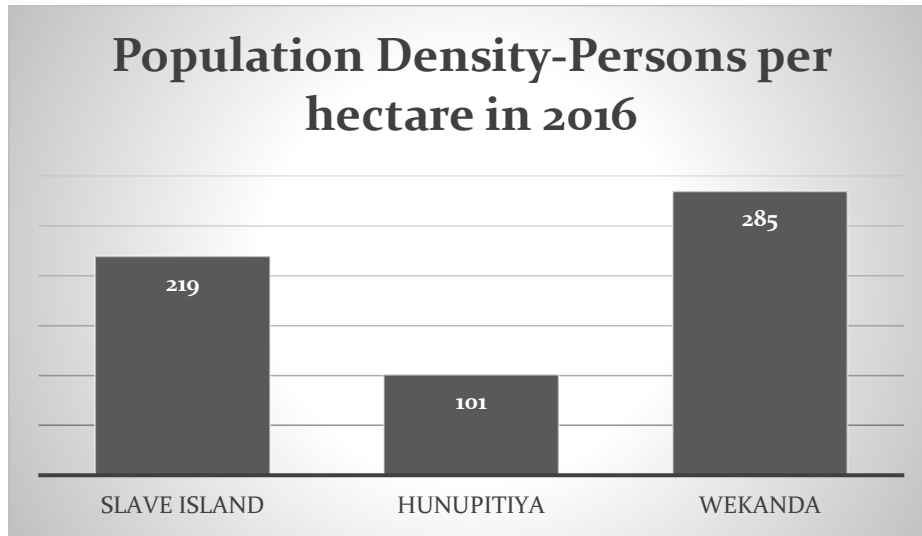


Figure 5: Population Density of Slave Island, Hunupitiya, and Wekanda GNDs

The Slave Island GND has the lowest population but a high density due to the smallest land extent that is 18 ha (Colombo DS, 2016). This high density, as explained in next chapter has resulted in extreme creativity in land management and space sharing. The lowest population density (Figure 5) is recorded from the Hunupitiya GND. Comparison of the land use map (Map 2) against the above statistics reveals the reason: Hunupitiya GND records the highest land extent, with half of it covered by the western part of the Beira Lake. Of the rest, most land plots are occupied by stores, warehouses, and manufacturing places, allowing a minimal area for residential purposes. All the Slave Islanders are living within 58 *wattas* (“*Watta*,” literally ‘tenement garden,’ is a Sinhala word used in this part of the country for the smallest neighbourhood areas). The *wattas* and other forms of neighbourhoods (walk-up condominiums generally known as flats) in the areas are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: List of *Wattas* and corresponding addresses

Name of the <i>Watta</i>	Address
93 <i>Watta</i>	Church Street, Colombo 2
35 <i>Watta</i>	Galani Pasej, Colombo 2
62 <i>Watta</i>	Mues Street, Colombo 2
23 <i>Watta</i>	Old Thotupala Road, Colombo 2
17 <i>Watta</i>	Galani Pasej, Colombo 2
122 <i>Watta</i> (<i>Wewal Watta</i>)	Kumararathnam Road, Colombo 2
40 <i>Watta</i>	Church Street, Colombo 2
12 <i>Watta</i>	Java Lane, Colombo 2
<i>Egale Watta</i>	Kumararathnam Road, Colombo 2
131 <i>Watta</i>	Masthudul Jamiya Road, Colombo 2

Name of the Watta	Address
117 Watta	Masthudul Jamiya Road, Colombo 2
132 Watta	Kumararathnam Road, Colombo 2
26 Watta	Lichman Lane, Colombo 2
Masthudul Jamiya Road	Java Lane, Colombo 2
20 Watta	Mues Street, Colombo 2
47b Watta	Station Road, Colombo 2
47a Watta	Station Road, Colombo 2
21 Watta	Henri De Mel Street, Colombo 2
29 Watta	Station Road, Colombo 2
27 Watta	Galani Pasej, Colombo 2
100 Watta	Masthudul Jamiya Road, Colombo 2
17 Watta	Station Road, Colombo 2
Dsi Watta	Kumararathnam Road, Colombo 2
90 Watta	Galani Pasej, Colombo 2
39 Watta	Station Road, Colombo 2
35 Watta	Station Road, Colombo 2
11 Watta	Station Road, Colombo 2
52 Watta	Church Street, Colombo 2
160 Watta	Church Street, Colombo 2
16 Watta	Velon Pasej, Colombo 2
125 Watta	Ingam Lane, Colombo 2
80 Watta	Ingam Lane, Colombo 2
Markert Place	Markert Place, Colombo 2
104 Watta	Malay Street, Colombo 2
5 Watta	Galani Pasej, Colombo 2
41 Watta	Station Road, Colombo 2
170 Watta	Church Street, Colombo 2
21 Watta	Java Lane, Colombo 2
62 Watta	Galani Pasej, Colombo 2
18 Watta	Church Street, Colombo 2
29 Watta	Chapel Lane, Colombo 2
45 Watta	Velon Pasej, Colombo 2
Gudlin Lane A	Gudlin Lane, Colombo 2
18 Watta	Markert Lane, Colombo 2
Cement Lane	Church Street, Colombo 2
7 Ahamed Watta	Ahamed Lane, Colombo 2
11 Watta	Java Lane, Colombo 2

Name of the Watta	Address
68 Watta	Justin Akbar Mawatha, Colombo 2
20 Watta	Java Lane, Colombo 2
23 Watta	Station Road, Colombo 2
10 Watta	Java Lane, Colombo 2
Gudvil Lane B	Gudlin Lane, Colombo 2
44 Soysa Flat	De Soysa Street, Colombo 2
Lichman Lane Watta	Lichman Lane, Colombo 2
21 Watta	Lichman Lane, Colombo 2
30 Watta	Church Street, Colombo 2
159 Watta	Malay Street, Colombo 2
45 Watta	Lichman Lane, Colombo 2

3.1.3 Pressures from Outside Forces

As mentioned in introduction chapter, the initial stage of the research was to identify outside actors and forces that have an impact on the future of community¹⁷. Some findings of this first stage can be listed as below.

3.1.3.1 State borne pressures:

- Growing ambiguity over future ownership of land and houses due to increasing number of development projects around the site
- Delaying delivery of promised on-site redevelopment for a group of community members (the families that were forcefully removed were promised houses within 2 years and 5 years have passed)
- Suspicion caused by ongoing relocation through Urban Regeneration Program of UDA (as a part of Beira East Lake development project)
- Loss of touch with the state and its plans due to centralizing of power and political instability along with lack of willingness by state to communicate with people directly.
- Pressures caused by multiple urban beautification plans that has not demanded community participation so far.
- Negative branding of the community with an indication that they are problem for the city's growth

¹⁷ This first stage of the larger study was done in collaboration with Search for Common Ground, Sri Lanka under their We Build Colombo Together (WBCT) project.

3.1.3.2 Civil Society borne pressures:

- Growing gap between Muslim and other ethnic groups
- Continuation of stigma
- Increased levels of romanticizing of poverty

3.1.3.3 Market/ Capital borne pressures:

- Increasing land prices
- Increasing access to illegal drug market/ networks
- Lack of recognition by formal financial institutions
- Growing opportunities to enter the informal service sector market
- Existing support programs through CSR

In addition to above, we also asked the community about their understanding on internal forces such as strengths and weaknesses of the community.

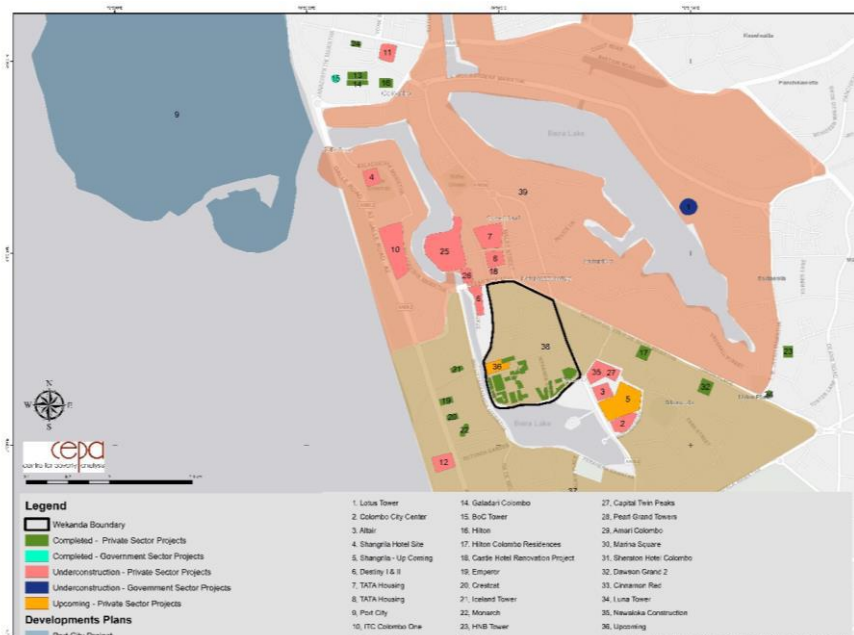
3.1.3.4 Strengths and weaknesses from within community/ neighbourhood

- Coexistence of multiple ethnicities for many decades with no tension
- Attention and support received from outsiders regarding land and human rights
- Resourcefulness and creativity at times of hardship
- Presence of potential torch bearers: professionals who were born and brought up in community who can inspire current generation of the neighborhood.
- Capacity to instantly organize around seeking solutions for common issues and threats
- Excessive circulation of illegal drugs in and around the community
- Mismatch between available education and available employment opportunities
- The tensions caused by rising trends of individualism and lack of the sense of community in certain parts of the neighborhood
- The situations caused by poor physical environment caused by lack of space and lack of support by state to organize the same (no centrally organized sewerage disposal system)

However, this stage of our research which is presented by this report and posters focuses more on positives of the spatial and socio-economic organization of the community and neighbourhood.

3.1.3 The Development Plans and Projects of the Area

Slave Island / Kompannaweediya as a locality falls under the UDA’s list of declared urban areas, conferring the UDA a direct and strong hand to influence and interfere with land ownership and everyday life within the site. The Urban Regeneration Project, the Project Management Unit, and the Western Province Division located within the UDA have a direct connection with the site through projects, like the Metro-Colombo Development Project and the Colombo City Development Plan 2008-2020. (This plan was initiated around 1993 and an amendment has been done in 2008 (Map 1). According to the zoning plan of Colombo (Map 1) the site is dedicated to concentrated development and hence falls under other plans on city beautification and the Megapolis plan. Through such zoning guidelines and projects, the Urban Development Authority is explicitly carving-out the path for investors to build profit-oriented high end, mega projects on public and private land in the area. This tradition has been continued for at least 3 regimes of power so far. There is no evidence to any change of the belief in multi-billion-dollar foreign direct investment on public land that is leased for 99 years by the UDA as the formula for economic growth and development of the city (and country). Some projects that have already captured land that was previously occupied by poor residents of Colombo, with the blessings and facilitation of the state, in and around the site are TATA Housing, Destiny Mall, Cinnamon Life, One Galle-Face project, Colombo City Center, Altair, Shangri and the Shangri-La hotel and recreation project. (Also marketed as Waterfront recreation Project by Beiralake-west). The location of Wekanda site in this context is shown in the Map 5 below.

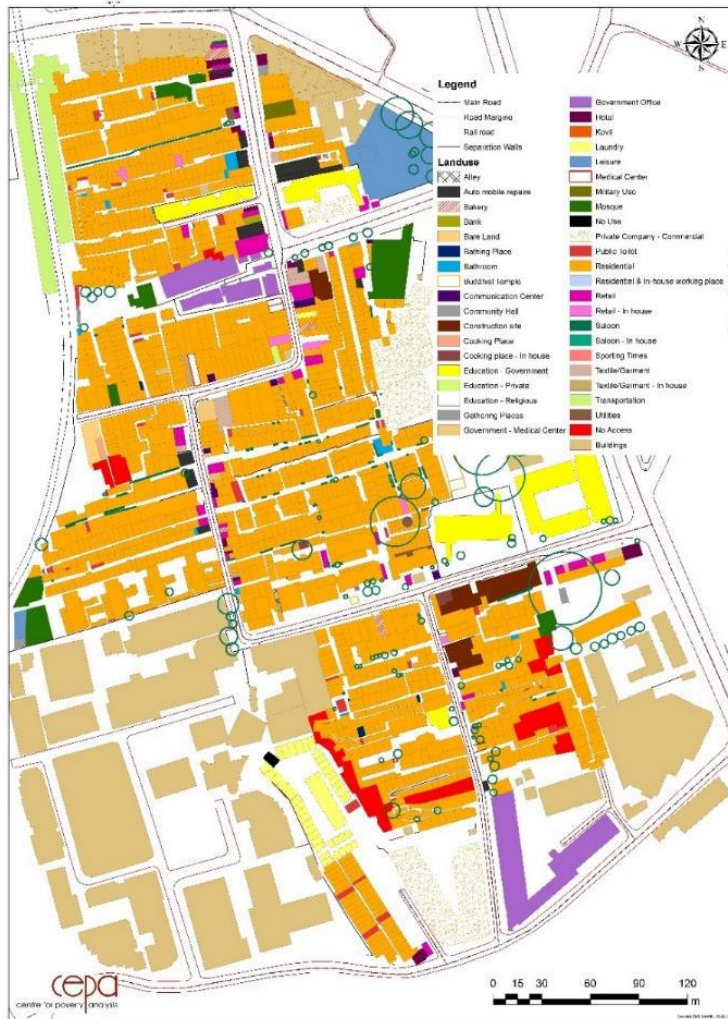


Map 5: Upcoming, Ongoing, Completed Development projects and Plans of Colombo

CHAPTER 4

4.1 FINDINGS

4.1.1 Land Use



Map 6: The Land-Use Map Prepared by the Research Team

Land use is often abstracted into pure categories that only exist in plans. The categories traditionally used by planners to map an urban area like Slave Island / Kompannawediya, are: residential; commercial; industrial; public uses; parks and recreation; agricultural; transportation; and, utilities. The research team looked at land use of the site as it is without excessive abstraction into pre-determined categories (see Map 6).

As planning educator, Nihal Perera, highlights in his article titled *Planner's city*, “land-use and zoning maps that planners prepare are also re-presentations of the city built through abstract categories of land uses and zones; while land-use maps are more of a

perception, zoning maps are a conception. Each of these models attempts to provide a representation as close as possible to the absolute city from its perspective”. It is to go beyond this limitation that we attempted to record land uses as they are in Slave Island / Kompannawediya.

The results revealed the richness and variety of land use and the inclusion of land uses in to actual spatial layout of the neighbourhood as demanded by the lifestyle of the residents which naturally go beyond mainstream categories abstracted by land-use planners. While residents of planned urban neighbourhoods in developed countries are given incentives to

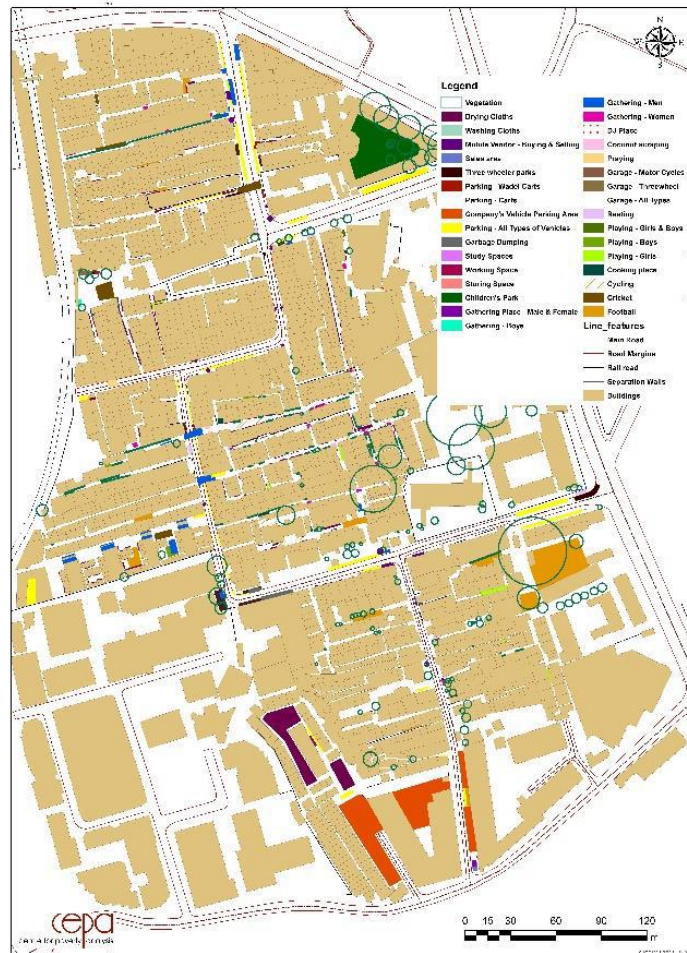
achieve a ‘mix-use’ profile, Wekanda already has a range of land uses that together makes the area vibrant and more liveable. The challenge before planners now is to acknowledge, enhance, and preserve what people have achieved on their own.

One justification commonly brought forward by decision makers for urban evictions is that the lack of space in urban poor neighbourhoods renders the suitability for human habitation. The actual physical fact remains that, regardless of the Slave Island / Kompannaweediya’s compactness or density, it caters to almost all the residents’ everyday needs.

The community’s creativity and resourcefulness have resulted in spaces allocated and customised to specific needs. For instance, we observed: three-wheeler parks; vehicle repair and maintenance centres; live-work places; common bathing and cleaning areas; common cooking areas; play areas; spaces for socializing; storage for unused goods / material and firewood; parking for carts and smaller vehicles; pray and worship areas; spaces for plants and pets; recreation spaces; vending spaces; spaces for washing and drying. It is this richness of land use that makes the neighbourhood unique, comfortable, inclusive, and liveable for all the members of this specific community. State initiatives to relocate the Slave Island / Kompannaweediya people to a more spacious locale should not be at the cost of this vibrancy and inclusiveness.

4.1.2 Open Spaces

Open spaces are the scarcest resource in Wekanda. Yet, a few intangible resources and qualities, undervalued by planners, urban designers, and politicians, have prevented the neighbourhood from becoming unliveable. We observed enormous creativity and resourcefulness, at both personal and community levels, in managing



Map 7: Use of Open Spaces in Wekanda

the limited open space. (See poster 1 submitted with this report for more visual explanation on the use of open space)



Map 8: Level of Access to Spaces in Wekanda

level of access to each land plot in Wekanda is shown in Map 8 above. It is striking how only the spaces owned by non-community actors remain the only group of inaccessible open spaces. This also indicated the quality of openness of the community and their attitude towards accepting visitors in their neighbourhood.

Creativity is most expressed in places where open spaces are shared between users and / or uses. For example, an alleyway between two rows of houses can become a play area for kids; a space for older people to relax; a gathering space for women during different times of the day; as well as a three-wheeler park and place for a drink and socialization for the men at night. It is this mutual understanding between the community members on the shared need for open spaces and the respect they have for each other's right for open space that has resulted in the preservation of limited and shared series of open spaces recorded in Map 7.

Levels of access to spaces in Wekanda is also a noteworthy character of which makes the neighbourhood permeable (explained in next section). The

4.1.3 A Responsive Environment: An Evaluation

A qualitative evaluation of a neighbourhood can be very subjective. In official evaluations (if any) carried out by professionals for the use of decision makers on urban development are often informed by mainstream planning standards and the middle class values of officials, in most cases judge the neighbourhoods created, re-shaped, and lived in by the urban poor, rather than evaluating.

The team qualitatively evaluated the information collected about the creation and use of space within Wekanda via the theoretical perspectives in *Responsive Environments* by Bentley et al. (1985); presented under conceptual framework.

Permeability is a property of how easy it is to move through an environment and depends heavily on the paths and objects placed within the space. There are two types of permeability: physical properties (e.g. a path) and visual appearance. Also, permeability is influenced by the nature of spaces: for example, whether they permit private or public access. Space in Wekanda is not visually or physically permeable for outsiders visiting the area for the first time. But it is physically permeable for insiders. These qualities are not purely physical. It is social interactions that render the spaces within Wekanda permeable for outsiders willing to navigate the neighbourhood. The residents are welcoming and helpful, making this process smooth and fast. Unlike spaces owned by private companies or the state within Wekanda, those owned by the community are openly accessible to anyone, of course with the community's support and guidance, generated through mutual trust. (See Map 8 above for level of physical permeability in Wekanda)

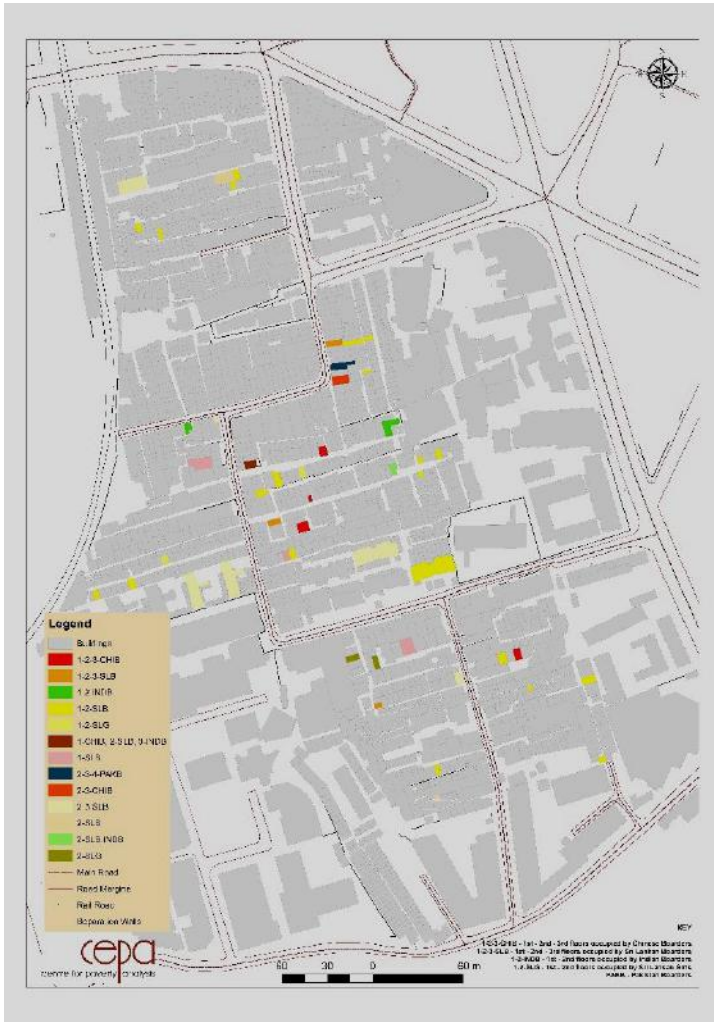
Variety refers to the range of activities, people, and forms found in a space. This creates a range of meanings which in turn may influence the variety of available optional activities for the users of the space. The Wekanda neighbourhood is rich with a broad spectrum of



Photo 1: Kids play within the vicinity of mothers



Photo 2: A path between a row of houses



Map 9: Boarding Places and Categories

gathering places after dark. Another is how play areas for the kids become parking lots after dark.

Sharing among users and uses is not only a spatial strategy. The Photo 3 shows a common path covered with a temporary tent for a function of one of the households. The Photo 4 shows how the pavements of permanent shops are used by mobile vendors. This cooperative and accommodating use of space shows how the community has banded together to use limited resources for a variety of needs.

activities and types of buildings to support that variety. Then the variety of people, local and foreign, whose lives are supported by the Wekanda neighbourhood, is particularly striking. The map (Map 9), for example, shows the variety of people accommodated by the neighbourhood boarding houses.

Robustness explores how a single space can be put to multiple uses. The residents / creators of space and place in Wekanda are masters of robustness. Most of the places we observed are used for more than one use, catering to different purposes and user groups. One example is how some vending spaces become



Photo 3: Temporary Hut for a DJ at a Private Party



Photo 4: Mobile Vendors Share Same Space

Sharing space for religious activities is another community trait. Thus, the path (Photo No 5) used for Islamic prayers on Fridays is decorated with lights for the Hindu Deepavali festival.

This community of diverse identities, adapting to space constraints through mutual understanding and dialogue, is the best example for a nation struggling to find a reconciliatory path after decades of bitter civil war. Eviction sacrifices such community spirit at the altar of economic growth.



Photo 5: Islamic Prayers and Deepavali Decorations

Visual appropriateness is how the provision of cues supports variety, robustness, and legibility. This quality is vital for people to correctly interpret how to use an environment. This is often where a community fails to fulfil the expectations of outsiders and even some insiders. The Slave Island / Kompannaweediya residents have a strong sense of visual appropriateness that is not necessarily in line with an outsider's expectations / perceptions. For an example, the Whereas in reality, the



Photo 7: Visual Appropriateness



Photo 6: A Common Garbage Collection Point and a Sorting Garbage before Heading over to the Garbage Collection Point

picture 6 shows a garbage whole community bring their domestic waste from the houses that are located in alleys that cannot be reached by garbage collection truck to one central location only on days the truck is supposed to come. When the Colombo Municipal Council (CMC) fails to come on time, the garbage collected starts to rot and makes the community visually inappropriate for both outsiders and insiders. Unfortunately, the root cause is not within the control of the community. These outsider interpretations are often held against the community by state authorities, such as the UDA, and used as a justification for eviction.

Richness relates to the range of sensory experiences available. It is also concerned with how the sensory experience affects the emotional state of those visiting a place. The streets

of Wekanda have a lot to offer in terms of sensory experience. Just a few meters behind busy roads jammed with traffic, most of the streets and lanes of Wekanda are full of life. Kids play on the streets. Vendors chat with customers and passers-by. Few evidence for richness of activities as noted by the research teams are women talking as they wash or dry clothes in front of their houses; Grandparents watching children play in the alleyways; Boys warming up before they leave for their daily football practices. Further, each *watta* within Wekanda presents a different sensory experience to visitors and residents. For example, the 29, 18, 40, and 42 *wattas* are famous for the prawn snacks made every day for sale on Galle Face (the only public seafront within the Colombo municipal area).



Photo 8: Character of Wekanda from Different Vantage Points

Personalisation is a community's/ user's ability to customise an environment on a large or small scale. Small-scale personalisation includes placing a chair in front of the house to observe activities on the street, while large-scale personalisation is the capacity to change the appearance or structure of a building. Personalisation of their limited space is a ubiquitous trait in the Wekanda community. We observed how families personalised the spaces in front of their houses: really small and initially unremarkable spaces had been



Photo 9: Narrow alleyways of Wekanda and how some are converted to Play Areas for Kids and Chatting Points for Mothers

converted to give character to the place. The picture 8 above can do some justice to the variety of personalisation we observed.

Legibility is how easy it is for a person to construct a mental map of their environment and this quality depends to a great extent to the form of the environment and the activities people undertake. Lynch (1970) discusses how features, such as paths, nodes, landmarks, districts, and edges makes a locality legible. The 52+ acres used by Wekanda community are legible for almost all of the informants we interviewed, regardless of their *watta* of residence. After a few days, we also managed to navigate the space with confidence and curiosity.

Role of actors, structure and processes in making a responsive environment in Wekanda

As introduced in conceptual framework, the study looks at identifying actors, structures and processes that makes Wekanda as a neighbourhood, a liveable and inclusive one. The evaluation of its responsiveness as described above gives ample explanation to how community members as actors, and their social relations, economic activities as structures and their everyday chores, individual life stories as processes play a major role in making the neighbourhood more responsive.

To elaborate on the example of richness of sensory experiences in the neighbourhood,

- the choice of livelihood mechanisms (structures)
- by members of the community (actors) and

-the everyday routines (processes) such as making *isso wadei* (prawn and lentil based snack) and preparation of rice packets or preparing and selling pickle on streets,

...are how a range of sensory experiences such as smell of prawn snacks from active alleys full of snack makers, active streets lined by busy sellers and buyers, shared cooking spaces which smells like Sri Lankan rice and curry on every morning is presented to the neighbourhood and the city.

It is the acknowledgement of this everyday processes as the base of creation of a unique, liveable and inclusive (of all actors, not just formal and privileged) city that leaves no one behind.

It is also important to examine how each of above described qualities contribute to liveability and inclusiveness of Wekanda neighbourhood. The impact of responsiveness on liveability, can be summarized as below.

Table 3: The summary of the impacts of responsiveness on livability

Aspect of Responsive	How Wekanda is made liveable through each aspect of Responsiveness
Permeability	A welcoming neighbourhood that accessible to all its members is created through permeability; Wekanda residents are challenged by lack of space, but do not block anyone else's access paths as a principle. As a result, there are no unused spaces in Wekanda, at least within areas owned by the community.
Variety	The variety of activities, people and building forms the community members are allowed to bring in to Wekanda are not controlled except when it significantly affects the right to space of other members. This diversity therefore makes the neighbourhood welcoming to a range of actors/agents who are diverse in ethnicity, age, class, caste or even nationality.
Robustness	By allowing a single space to be put into multiple uses, Wekanda neighbourhood has created the limited open spaces usable for anyone living in that specific place. Unspoken agreement among community members to empathize with the space limitations faced by all through encouraging robustness, has make it a place that accepts the maximum variety of actors it can serve hence inclusive.
Visual Appropriateness	Perceptions of visual appropriateness by members of Wekanda is as diverse as the vast range of colours, forms and finishes one can experience in Wekanda. This quality of allowing creativity of

	everyone had make the neighbourhood a visually and culturally rich experience for both insiders and outsiders.
Richness	The range of experience Wekanda can provide to its users is highly connected to variety and robustness explained above. Every street corner and every alley has some rich experience to offer. This makes it a unique and liveable place for a vast range of users and definitely present a rich cultural experience of authentic urban living that is unique to Wekanda, hence a neighbourhood with an identity.
Personalization	Capacity and freedom to personalize the living environment is the key characteristic that minimize the negative impact of high density experienced by all in Wekanda. The neighbourhood does support the social and economic aspirations of all by not controlling the changes they wish to make into their environment hence the room for personalization makes Wekanda an accommodating environment for many.
Legibility (of physical layout)	Legibility is more important for outsiders and not insiders. This quality however can be achieved whenever needed by outsiders with help of residents and the lack of legibility for just any outsider makes the community safe for insiders especially for kids and women.

Some qualities listed above such as legibility, visual appropriateness, richness and permeability are often misinterpreted by outsiders, especially decision makers. In addition to garbage collection point's example, the legibility controlled by 'eyes on the street'¹⁸ can lead to suspicion and rumours about anti-social behaviour of the residents, whereas in reality it is the inability of the outsider/observer to build trust with the community to enter into their space to witness life within neighbourhood. The richness and robustness is often misinterpreted as messiness or lack of order. But it is more often than not the inability of the observer to identify order that is developed by the community. For instance, we witnessed how certain places that look messy at first begin to unfold its order when visited again and again; there is perfect order in who sits where and when to perform what activity and also common agreement in how one's existence should or shouldn't impact on others. Hence, the research team wishes to highlight the importance of observing the neighbourhood for what it is by creatively and objectively using the frameworks (such as responsive environments) devised to evaluate environments outside urban poor communities and self-built settlements.

¹⁸ See Jacobs, J. (19xx) *Death and Life of Great American Cities*, 1961 for more.

4.2 PLACE AND SPACE MAKING WITHIN THE CITY

The definition of space and place are highly contested at multiple levels, ranging from scholars and policy makers to ordinary users of space. This research, as explained in the beginning, views space as the socio economic position the community is creating for them within the larger system of the city, while place(s) is small and tangible physical spaces created and re-shaped on everyday basis by individuals, families and groups within the neighbourhood to perform their everyday activities such as household chores, livelihood activities and socialization. This chapter explains both place making and space making processes within and related to Wekanda.

4.2.1 Place Making

Unlike for designers, place making is not a product-oriented task for communities; creating and re-shaping places is a continuous process for the communities. As communities, their needs and choices evolve, the spaces they require also change. Thus, they act and react on changing requirements, by changing their environment to better cater new choices. When every member uses her agency to create the place(s) that facilitate her aspirations at the time, place making automatically become a process without end. It cannot be halted by force or by imposing rules. Physical and design restrictions imposed on communities with no acknowledgement of these processes of everyday place-making, can only barricade the journeys of the individuals, families and communities. The following examples illustrate instances of a large process of place making in Wekanda.

4.2.1.1 Homework corners

There is limitless creativity when it comes to making places for children. The study spaces, in the picture 10, are close to where mothers usually are (closer to cooking and/or work spaces), hence safe but silent and shaded to cater to the purpose. Sometimes children turn these into shared 'home-schooling spaces' or play areas. When that happens, the host mother takes care of all the children, contributing enormously to their social development.



Photo 10: Playing and Homework corners in 15 watta and 40 watta

4.2.1.2 Play spaces

Boys play on the less-frequented roads and public parking areas on holidays; alleyways are usually claimed by girls and small children. As a child grows into a teenager, the boundary of space she is permitted to explore / use on her own also expands. While kids below 6 years are not allowed to leave mother's sight, children below 12/13 are allowed to play within and around their *watta* of residence. Beyond 13, boys are allowed to go out of the larger neighbourhood in groups. (In contrast, the girls' lives become more restricted as they grow up.)



Photo 11: Spaces used by young boys and the children to play

4.2.1.4 Spaces for Collective Livelihoods

The escalating cost of living and increasing competition over economic opportunities make it challenging for many city dwellers to survive with just one source of income. Facing the challenge as individuals but coping as groups, some families get together and share responsibilities of a



Photo 12: Making Lunch Packets in Shared Spaces

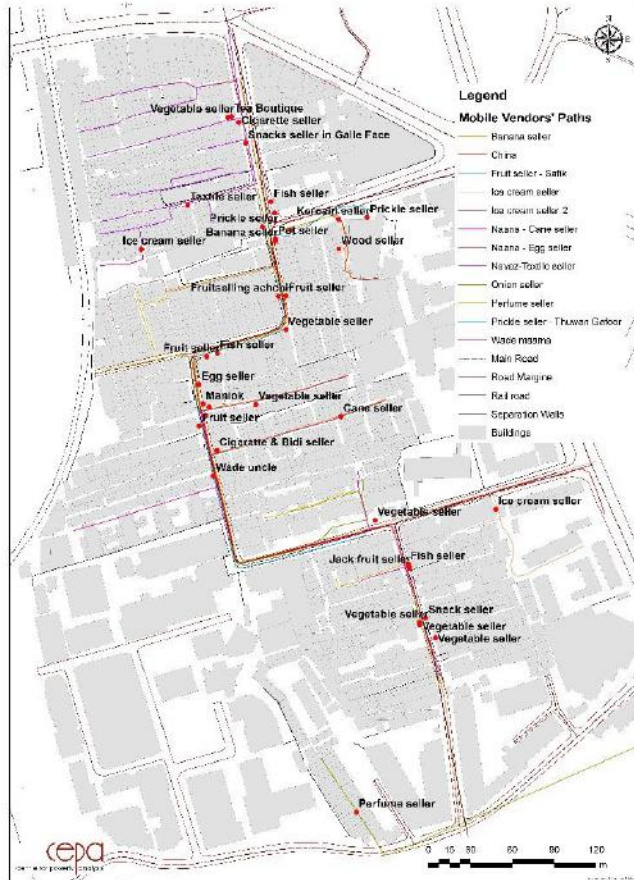
joint income. To facilitate their economic experiment, they adapt the available space. The picture 12 shows how a group cooperating in a homemade lunch packet business have transformed spaces between houses for their new livelihood.

4.2.1.5 Vending spaces:



Photo 13: Mobile Vending Spaces

Vithanage Mawatha, Stewart Street, and Church Street are the main streets that run across Wekanda. Apart from permanent shops, these streets also have a range of mobile vendors selling diverse items, ranging from snacks, vegetables, fruits, and fish to toys. Most vendors have their own carts which allow them to move from place to place during the day, capturing different customer groups and keeping to the shade. Others pick one or two habitual spots (during the morning hours and the evening session), set up their stalls, and remain until their goods are sold. The vendors' paths are presented in Map 10.



Map 10: Mobile Vendors' Paths

Here are a few other aspects of place making.

4.2.1.6 Time sharing of spaces:

Some vending spaces (like those shown below) turn into meeting spaces after dark. It is not rare to find the same building housing multiple businesses at different times of the day. Some street-side vending spaces have also become gathering places for men or women groups for a friendly chat.



Photo 14: Three-Wheeler is being used as a Napping Place

4.2.1.7 Vehicles as sleeping pods: As a family expands within a confined space, some (usually newly married couples of parents) are moving out to houses / rooms rented from the same community or from others. But those who cannot afford to rent new spaces, stay back and figure out creative ways to adjust. One is the use of vehicles parked in front of the house to sleep.

However, most creative practices related to sleeping spaces are found within houses which are beyond the



Photo 15: Men's Informal Gathering Place in Day vs Night Time

space we observed. While appreciating the creativity exercised in place making by people, we would also like to highlight that community members live in deep ambiguity over the future of their landownership in Wekanda. This has resulted in temporary responses in terms of place making, which has significantly affected their quality of life. For an instance, if a daughter/son gets married, the ideal solution as perceived by family is to build a new room by converting the single storied house to a two storied one. But, due to uncertainty and lack of information on state's decisions about the development of the area, it is financially not viable to invest in a construction of a new room to a house they might lose at any moment (Exactly what happened to Malay street, Java lane and Mews street communities in Slave Island) The family hence, decides to find rental housing for the newly married couple of for parents, which directly affects their social bonds, culture and the cost of living.

4.2.1.8 Creative use of vertical spaces:



Photo 16: Creative Use of Vertical Spaces

Although space is really limited, many Slave Island / Kompannaweediya residents creatively use spaces such as walls and narrow vertical spaces to hang useful or ornamental plants in pots. The walls are also used for mounted cupboards to store everyday goods and to place cloth lines for drying clothes. The common visual of how buckets attached to long strings are sent down from flats as shown in picture 16 is a clear example for this creativity.

4.2.1.9 Inclusion: A deeper meaning



Photo 17: Differently-Abled People and Their Use of Space

The socioeconomic landscape of Wekanda is highly inclusive: almost all older people and differently-abled people are given a productive daily role. This practice valuable insights about how to go beyond traditional modes of inclusion (pensions for the older and ramps for the disabled).

- Places build relationships between generations



Photo 18: Meeting Places for People

The places where stories from the times of grandparents and parents can be shared with younger generations is a key space that has to be protected in order to maintain community and human values in urban communities. Wekanda has, some spaces like this outside private homes and the role played by these cannot go unnoticed.

While research team did not have enough time to observe each and every collective act of the community, we observed posters that hint on collective place making.



Photo 19: Children and Parents Using Alleyways to Play

Graffiti and posters



Photo 20: Posters on Football Games and Christmas Carols

Above instances of everyday place-making gives enough evidence to how the role of community and the spatial and functional changes brought to the neighbourhood through their everyday activities to make a neighbourhood inclusive and liveable for a diverse range of community members. For an instance, if there was no freedom to create the cooking spaces (see Photo 21) designed and shared by women for their joint livelihood of making rice parcels for the commuters and boarders, they will simply have to give up on harnessing that specific economic opportunity the city has given to them. Unlike formal channels of employment, that caters to citizens with formal education and skillset, communities like Wekanda pursue opportunities that accidentally created through gaps/weaknesses of city's everyday operation (i.e.: the opportunity harvested by groups of cooking women is the gap of not having enough restaurant that are affordable for construction workers and commuters). This pursuit of opportunities in a competitive system requires the capacity and freedom to create an environment that enables the communities to adapt to those

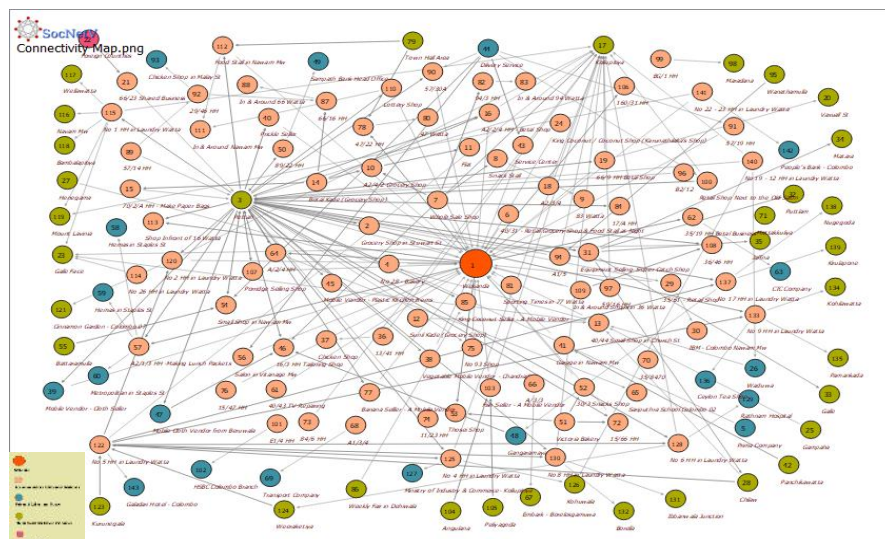
opportunities. If not these already marginalized groups fall into further trouble and that will not help us achieve inclusive and liveable cities that leaves no one behind.



Photo 21: Shared Cooking Places

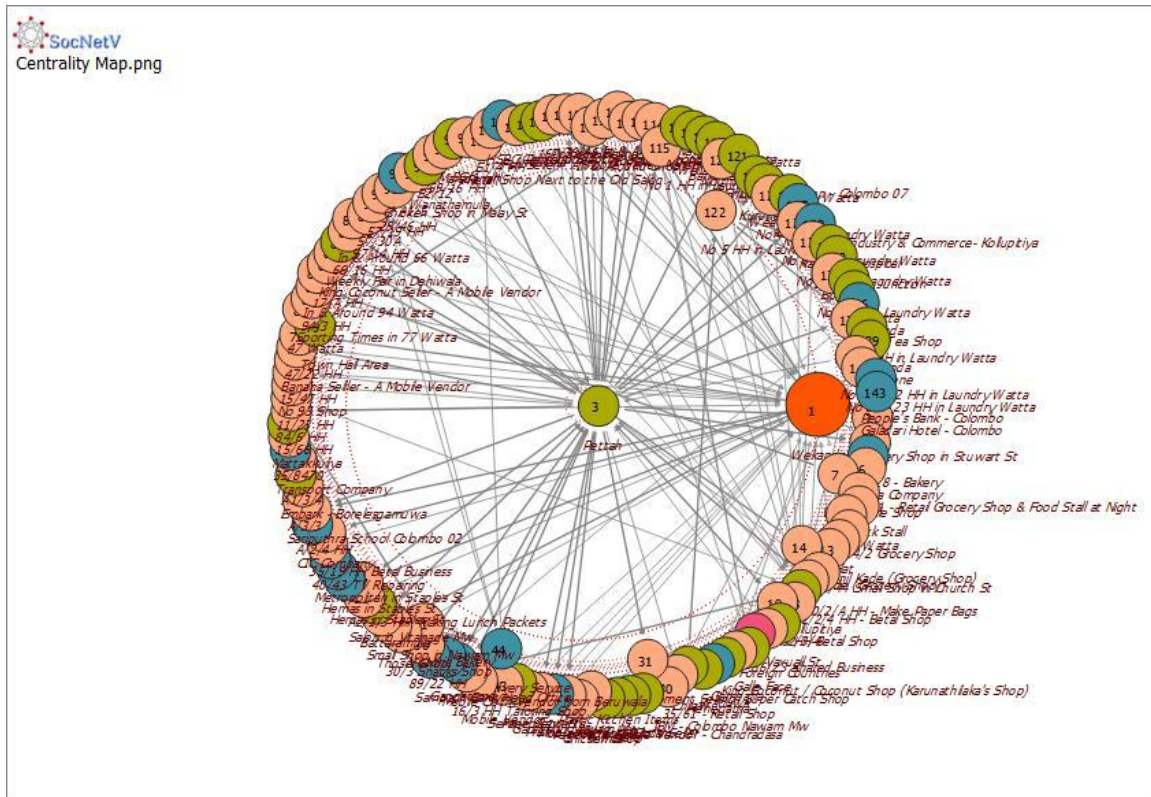
4.2.2 Space Making In the City

An exploration of the Slave Island / Kompannaweediya community’s economic activities (some are mentioned in place making section above) helped us understand the connectivity and economic sensitivity of the location for the community. The connectivity diagram (Map 12) shows the geographical extent of the community’s economic operations. The big red circle represents Wekanda as a location and the surrounding pink circles the actors we interviewed for information about their workplaces, supply chains, and product distribution networks. The blue represents the respondents’ workplaces and the green circles are the other locations connected to the community through these operations.



Map 11: Economic Connectivity Map

Map 13 shows the centrality or the importance of certain locations to the economic operations. It clearly illustrates Pettah's importance as a supplier and a market for the economic chains driven by the community.



Map 12: Degree of Centrality Map

Table 4: Nodes and Labels of Economic Connectivity Map

Node	Label	Node	Label
1	Wekanda	75	84/6 HH
2	Grocery Shop in Stewart St	76	11/23 HH
3	Pettah	77	No 93 Shop
4	No 28 - Bakery	78	15/47 HH
5	Prima Company	79	Banana SELLER - A Mobile Vendor
6	40/31 - Retail Grocery Shop & Food Stall at Night	80	47/22 HH
7	Whole Sale Shop	81	Town Hall Area
8	Snack Stall	82	47 Watta
9	83 Watta	83	Sporting Times in 77 Watta
10	A2/4/2 Grocery Shop	84	94/3 HH
11	Flat	85	In & Around 94 Watta

12	Sunil Kade (Grocery Shop)	86	17/A HH
13	40/44 Small Shop in Church St	87	King Coconut Seller - A Mobile Vendor
14	Botal Kade (Grocery Shop)	88	Weekly Fair in Dehiwala
15	70/2/A HH - Make Paper Bags	89	66/16 HH
16	A2/2/4 HH - Betal Shop	90	In & Around 66 Watta
17	Kollupitiy	91	57/14 HH
18	A2/3/4	92	57/30A
19	66/9 HH-Betal Shop	93	57/19 HH
20	Vaxuall St	94	29/46 HH
21	66/23 Shared Business	95	Chicken Shop in Malay St
22	Foreign Countries	96	A1/5 HH
23	Galle Face	97	Wanathamulla
24	King Coconut / Coconut Shop (Karunathilaka's Shop)	98	B2/12 HH
25	Gampaha	99	59/16 HH
26	Waduwa	100	Maradana
27	Henegama	101	BG/1 HH
28	Chilaw	102	Retail Shop Next to the Old Salon
29	35/61 - Retail Shop	103	E1/4 HH
30	IBM - Colombo Nawam Mw	104	HSBC Colombo Branch
31	Equipment Selling- Super Catch Shop	105	Fish Seller - A Mobile Vendor
32	Puttlam	106	Angulana
33	Galle	107	Peliyagoda
34	Matara	108	160/31 HH
35	Jaffna	109	Porridge Selling Shop
36	13/41 HH	110	36/46 HH
37	Chicken Shop	111	In & Around Shops in 36 Watta
38	Vegetable Mobile Vendor - Chandradasa	112	Lottery Shop
39	Mobile Vendor - Cloth Seller	113	In & Around Nawam Mw
40	Prickle Seller	114	Food Stall in Nawam Mw
41	Garage in Nawam Mw	115	Shop Infront of 16 Watta
42	Panchikawa	116	No 26 HH in Laundry Watta
43	Service Center	117	No 1 HH in Laundry Watta
44	Dilivery Service	118	Navam Mw
45	Mobile Vendor - Plastic Kitchen Items	119	Wellawatta
46	16/3 HH Tailoring Shop	120	Bambalapitiya
47	Mobile Cloth Vendor from Beruwala	121	Mount Lavinia

48	Gangaramaya	122	No 2 HH in Laundry Watta
49	Sampath Bank Head Office	123	Cinnamon Garden - Colombo 07
50	89/22 HH	124	No 5 HH in Laundry Watta
51	Victoria Bakery	125	Kurunegala
52	30/3 Snacks Shop	126	Weeraketiya
53	Thosei Shop	127	No 4 HH in Laundry Watta
54	Small Shop in Nawam Mw	128	Kohuwala
55	Battaramulla	129	Ministry of Industry & Commerce- Kollupitiya
56	Salon in Vitanage Mw	130	No 6 HH in Laundry Watta
57	A2/1/3 HH -Making Lunch Packets	131	Rathnam Hospital
58	Hemas in Staples St	132	No 8 HH in Laundry Watta
59	Hemas in Staples St	133	Ibbanwala Junction
60	Metropolitan in Staples St	134	Borella
61	40/43 TV Repairing	135	No 9 HH in Laundry Watta
62	35/19 HH Betal Business	136	Kohilawatta
63	CIC Company	137	Pamankada
64	A/2/4 HH	138	Ceylon Tea
65	Sariputhra School Colombo 02	139	No 17 HH in Laundry Watta
66	A/3/3	140	Nugegoda
67	Embark - Borelesgamuwa	141	Kirulapone
68	A1/3/4	142	No 19 - 12 HH in Laundry Watta
69	Transport Company	143	No 22 - 23 HH in Laundry Watta
70	35/84 HH	144	People's Bank - Colombo
73	Mattakkuliya	145	Galadari Hotel - Colombo
74	15/66 HH		

4.2.3 Changing the Economic Role of the Community in the Changing City

Wekanda has survived many phases of growth of the city of Colombo. The community's chief source of employment has changed from time to time. Among our respondents were

Individuals whose grandparents had worked as tea packers and parents as municipal cleaners, while their siblings now work as hotel staff and their children at call centres. The most recent addition to these economic trends is renting out houses and rooms to private companies (hospitals, construction agencies, etc.) for use as hostels for their workers. This new trend of boarding houses (see Map 9) and hostels is another way in which community members are adapting to the changing economics of the city without surrendering land ownership permanently.

The value of the location for economic sustenance of the community is illustrated by centrality diagram above which provides scientific reasoning to why Wekanda community should not be denied of this location that has always provided them with economic and social (i.e.: good education if one can afford to enter into best schools around the site) opportunities.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO PRESERVE INCLUSIVE NEIGHBOURHOODS IN COLOMBO

5.1.1 Understanding the Community

Looking at development context in which Wekanda is located, the influence of prevailing administrative practices in relation to urban poor communities in Colombo cannot be ignored. When centrally located lands that are appealing to foreign and local investors, that are occupied by local urban poor communities, the generally accepted practice before relocation is to carry out a numerical survey on houses and businesses of the area. The spaces in between house and social-economic relations with the city/locality and among community members are completely ignored. Furthermore, there is no socioeconomic impact analysis of the current trend to evict / transplant the urban poor to different neighbourhoods away from the city centre. Such an approach inevitably disrupts livelihoods and social relations / social capital. Unlike affluent neighbourhoods of individualistic families whose income does not rely on social capital, location, or proximity to the city centre, urban poor communities are highly fragile and vulnerable to change. Consequently, it is strongly recommended that the state or market group engage with urban poor communities for a more qualitative understanding of their lives and concerns before subjecting them to drastic upheavals for the sake of economic development, gentrification, etc.

5.1.2 Incorporating the Good Aspects of the Neighbourhood in Urban Settlement Planning

The Wekanda community shows multiple characteristics of a good urban neighbourhood in terms of inclusiveness and sustainability. Senior citizens and differently-abled people are integrated into socioeconomic structures. Spaces are shared equitably between uses and users to realise the highest and best use of any land. Furthermore, like other urban poor, many Wekanda residents are engaged in low-cost services which bring down the overall cost of living in Colombo and ensure the smooth functioning of the city. Finally, the community is notable for coexistence of different ethnicities and making places with character and uniqueness within the neighbourhood that contribute to the diversity and cultural richness of the city as whole. These qualities should be preserved when these communities are mainstreamed.

5.1.3 Human Development, Not Land Development

It is true that, over time, the land occupied by urban poor communities for many generations has become economically valuable. But the only reason why those lands did not fall to the private market is the occupancy by the communities. Thus, economic and social justice dictates that the increased economic value of the land should be invested first in the development of those communities. The current policy direction/ planning trend focuses more on land development rather than human development. It is this ideological confusion between economic growth and human development of the citizens that we must overcome to see the urban poor as deserving citizens -whose role in the city is as important as those of the private sector or the state- thrive as everyone else by enjoying the fruits of development. If the current derogatory perception of urban poor and their neighbourhoods as a problem to the city and the policy direction which is based on that middle-class perception changes the human development will walk hand in hand with economic growth.

Giving room for community's creativity to decide on and create their own living environments can magically improve their quality of life. They will be able to build a life on the skillset they already possess, instead of having to find livelihood activities they can do from the location and kind of houses they are provided with.