The Role of Monuments in Place Identity: A Comparative Analysis between Quezon Memorial Circle, Quezon City and Azadi Square of Tehran, Iran

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ABSTRACT

Throughout history, monuments have been created as a living reminder of an important event, person or action. They are the tangible forms of history which are made to constantly remind people the importance of a person or an event that has taken place in a particular time and place. The purpose of this paper was to determine the role of monuments in place identity and determine if the monument contributes to local patriotism and national pride. The research compared two monuments: the shrine of President Manuel Quezon in Quezon Memorial Circle, Quezon City completed in 1978 and the Azadi tower of Azadi Square in Tehran completed in 1971. The respondents of this study were the residents of Quezon City for the Quezon Memorial Shrine and Tehran for the Azadi Tower. Using quantitative and qualitative analysis, the result showed that both monuments play a vital role in place identity for their perspective cities. However, the social impact of Azadi Square was significantly high due to its location as the prime area for rallies in Tehran. The study also yielded that both monuments contribute a strong sense of pride and patriotism to their respective cities. However, the percentage of respondents from Tehran presented that the grandness and design of the monument is more important than the historical significance which has taken place in the square. Contrary to the Quezon Memorial Shrine, the results of the survey showed that historical significance is more important than the design of the monument. Both monuments also showed that they are highly accepted as landmarks of their cities. However, the revolution in Tehran, Iran which took place on February 11, 1979 around the square, had a higher impact on its people. The study shows that monuments are vital to the place identity of their locale. Thus, preserving them is vital for they contribute to the memory and identity of its local citizens.

KEYWORDS *historical significance, patriotism, social impact, social significance*

INTRODUCTION

Monuments are structures which have existed throughout history as a way to communicate from one generation to the other important events and people who have played significant roles in the history of a particular place, and time. They also serve as a constant reminder of these people and events (Sturken, 1998).

The birth of a monument's design started from the ancient Egpytians, Greeks, and Romans while in Asia, it was through the Chinese and the Mongolian structures. Monuments were built as a tomb, triumphal arch, war memorial and victory monument (Sturken, 1998).

As national landmarks, monuments give meaning to the place where they are built because they give a unique identity to their location. Proshansky (1978) emphasizes that the place identity is the way people relate themselves to their environment. Place identity then is a part of a person's self identity.

The built environment plays an important role as humans try to create a specific identity and memory. It can be said that it is not only existence and construction which create identity, but also destruction, missing buildings and rebuilding of lost ones shape identity for humans. Buildings are not important by themselves, but they are important to social meanings (Dowell, 2008).

Lynch (1960) also stresses that monuments are landmarks to a certain place and functions as a way finder to the people. These structures create a sense of belongingness to the citizens, and in some cases become the identity to the area they serve.

The built environment creates spaces for people, as an individual or as a social group, to create a memory. The unique feature that the place has to evoke the emotions of an individual or as a social group makes the structure distinctive. Thus, the unique quality of these places becomes its identity.

In the Philippines, the National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP) is the government agency assigned to protect monuments which are considered to be cultural treasures. Under its guidelines, monuments are defined as structures designed to remind the nation of significant people, historic events, or places, and the deeds of heroes of the country (NHCP, 2012).

Quezon City was the urban vision of former President Manuel L. Quezon. He wanted to develop a city where there would be homes with playground and basic needs and that these would be provided at a very low rate by the government (Quezonian Newsletter: A Saga of Continuing Progress, n.d.).

The idea of creating a memorial to commemorate the late President Manuel L. Quezon was created on December 17, 1945 under the Executive Order No. 79 by former President Sergio Osmena (Osmeňa, 1945).

The monumental shrine was designed by Architect Federico Illustre who won the competition design contest in 1951. The construction was completed in 1978 after 26 years due to financial and importation problems of the Carrara marble (Lita, 2014). The Quezon Memorial Circle is an elliptical rotunda, designed to be the core of Quezon City with avenues radiating to the other main parts of the city (Cruz, 2014). Quezon City was a new city that was envisioned by former President Manuel Roxas to be the new capital of the Philippines (Quezonian Newsletter: A Saga of Continuing Progress, n.d.). The Quezon Memorial Circle is a 25-hectare national park with a monument honouring the memory of Manuel Quezon as a great leader of the country and president of the Commonwealth during the American Period (Amarra, Del Castillo, 1988). The monument is the main feature of the Quezon Memorial Circle and houses a museum and the remains of President Manuel L. Quezon with his wife Aurora Quezon (Layug, 2009).

Sharing similarities with the Quezon Memorial Circle is the Azadi Square in Tehran, Iran. Designed by Hussein Amanat who won in a design competition, the Azadi Square is built on a five hectare elliptical rotunda, which serves as the west entry point to the city.

The center of the square is the Azadi Tower which stands as the symbol of Tehran, Iran (Yardumian, 2010).The 45m high tower resembles the Elburz Mountains as it rises from the square. The architectural character is a combination of the Sassanid and Islamic architecture with 8,000 white marble blocks for the exterior finishing of the tower. The museum, which used to house the "Cylinder of Cyrus" known as the first charter of human rights, was located at the basement of the tower (Iran Review, 2010). The monument was designed to commemorate the 2,500th anniversary of the kings of Persia. It was originally named Shahyad Arya-Mehr, which means "The memorial of the kings, the light of the Iranians". It was built in 1971 by the order of Pahlavi in order to remind the new generation of Iran the achievements of the regime. However, in 1977, protest against the Shah of Iran started and the monument became the center of the Islamic revolution protest. In 1979, the shah was overthrown by the Islamic regime and the monument was renamed *Azadi Tower* "Freedom Tower" (Iran Review, 2010).

In order to understand the significance of monuments in creating a place identity, the following questions were asked among the local citizens of Tehran and Quezon City.

a. How can monuments play a vital role in place identity?
b. What is the significance of Quezon Memorial Shrine and Azadi Tower?
c. Why should these monuments be preserved?

This study attempted to analyze the impact Quezon Memorial in Quezon City and Azadi Square in Tehran, Iran to their local citizens. Specifically, it sought to identify the role of Quezon Memorial and Azadi Tower to its citizens as a place identity and to determine if the monument contributes to local patriotism and national pride.

Significance of the Study

The Quezon Memorial Shrine was built to honor the memory of President Manuel Luis Quezon and Azadi Square of Tehran was erected to commemorate 2,500 years of Persian monarchy in Iran. Today, both icons built on an oval form of landscaped area radiating to different parts of the cities have become symbolic historical landmarks of their respective cities. However, through history and particular events, their purpose and meaning can differ from one generation to other generations. The following are the reasons for the importance in uncovering the role of these monuments to its citizens as a place identity.

1. Place-identity is vital to an individual to relate himself to his environment. To identify the connection of monuments to a city, town or a country's identity in relation to self-identity is the key in understanding its purpose.
2. Comparing the two monuments from different countries would determine how time, culture and events can have an effect on the purpose for its establishment.
3. By determining the elements of a monument that led to the place-identity of its city, would help designers perceive important factors in designing monuments.

Monuments are architectural structures that can connect the past and the future. The significance of these structures may differ from one person to another. The Philippines lacks proper guidelines for conserving its built heritage. To date, the NCCA has not been able to protect some of the country's built heritage. Director Jeremy R. Barns of the National Museum wrote his concerns to the Senate over the Torre De Manila, which is being built behind Rizal Monument. He pointed out the Torre project would affect the line of sight of the monument (Sembrano, 2014).

The framework of the Burra charter (Australia ICOMOS Burra Charter, 1999) was used as a tool guide to assess the historical significance of the monuments. Three parameters were used to study place identity: Historical Significance, Visual Impact and Social significance. This led to understanding the role of monuments as to place identity and its importance to society. These parameters were used to create Policy Recommendation on the Preservation of monument.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A place can attain an identity through several factors. The people are the main contributors in giving an identity to their "space." Places were people gather in order to socialize or at times to unite as a community give people a sense of belonging to a particular space.

State of Quezon Memorial

The Quezon Memorial Shrine is home to the remains of the late President Manuel Quezon and his wife Aurora Aragon Quezon. It is surrounded by major government buildings such as the Department of Agriculture, NHA, Philippine Coconut Authority, DAR, Bureau of Agriculture Research and Bureau of Soils and Management. There are two newly renovated pedestrian underpass access to the circle with an elevator from the Quezon City Hall. One is from the Quezon City Hall and the other from Commonwealth Avenue.

The Quezon Memorial Shrine is located at the center of Quezon Memorial Circle. This monument is made of three pylons on top of a triangular base. Access to the top of the monument is through a staircase which is enclosed in one of the pylons. The base houses the mausoleum of Manuel Quezon with a viewing deck that has a circular two-meter diameter wide opening, which allows the sarcophagus to be viewed from above. A statue of Manuel Quezon made by Guillermo Tolentino is placed on one wall of the deck (Amarra, Del Castillo, 1988).

The basement houses the newly renovated museum that opened last 19 August 2015 in time



***Figure 1**:Quezon Memorial (Source: Ahmadzadeh, S.)*

for the commemoration of the 137th birthday of the late President Manuel Quezon (Bacani, 2015). The design of the shrine is filled with symbolic elements.

The design of the monument's base is patterned from the Philippine flags' triangle. The art deco design monument is made of concrete and finished with white Bianco Carrara marble (Amarra, Del Castillo).

The monument is composed of three pylons, each with three-winged lady figures on top. The height of the three pylons is sixty-six meters high, representing the age of Quezon when he passed away.

Dressed in traditional costumes of their respective regions, the three-winged women on each pylon represent Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao.

On top of the pylons, the three figures with their heads bowed down with flowers indicate their sorrow for the loss of a great leader (Amarra, Del Castillo, 1988). The winged women are in art deco style sculpted by an Italian sculptor named Franceso Riccardo Monti (NHCP, 2015).

The circle is now a national park with roads leading to different parts of the city. The park has been developed several times to enhance the experience of its users. Some amenities of the park are the picnic areas, amphitheater children's playground, zip line, and bicycles can be rented here. One can also shop at the tiangge area. This is also a haven for the foodies since there are variety of restaurants that cater different kinds of taste.

However, the development of the circle has blocked the view shed corridor to the monument. The height and density of the trees, the temporary "flee market" areas, and the pedestrian overpass along Commonwealth and Quezon Avenue are the major elements to the blockage of the visual impact of the Quezon Memorial Shrine.



Figure 2: *View of Manuel Quezon Shrine from Commonwealth Ave Gate (Source: Ahmadzadeh, S.)*



Figure 3: *View of Manuel Quezon Shrine from Quezon Ave. Gate (Source: Ahmadzadeh, S.)*

Under the "Guidelines on Monuments Honouring National Heroes, Illustrious Filipinos and other Personages" of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines letter B and C of the guidelines state the following:

b. Keep vista points and visual corridors to monuments in order to clear unobstructed viewing appreciation and photographic opportunities; and

c. Maintain a simple and environment-friendly landscape. Provide plants and trees wherever appropriate in order to enhance and soften the built areas.

State of Azadi Tower

The Azadi Tower has been strategically located to be the first monument visible, when a person exits the Mehrabad International airport. This has been the International Airport of Tehran until the new airport named Imam Khomeini Airport opened in 28 October 2007. A major intermodal bus terminal still exists at the northwest of the square. Government buildings such as the Tehran Municipality and Cultural Center of Tehran are situated along Azadi Street which leads to the square.

Fortunately, due to the location of the airport no structure can be built higher than 45 meters which is the same height restriction for the Azadi Tower.

Access to the square is through an underpass tunnel along Azadi street. Its design feature is harmonious with the interior of the Azadi tower. A parking area is also provided at the northwest side of the square.

The design of the monument has been inspired from several ancient Persian architecture. The landscape is an inspiration from the dome of Sheikh lotfollah mosque, Esfahan, Iran.

The east and west gates of the tower was taken from arch of Tagh-e Kasra which used to be the capital of the Parthian and the Sassanid empires. The crown of the monument is inspired by the ancient Persian cooling technology, called wind catcher (Baad Gir). The crown of the Azadi monument is design with similar features of the wind catcher. The four sides of the crown were designed with horizontal grooves and a shaft similar to the wind catchers.

The top of the Azadi tower is a design inspired from the Zoroastian fire temple. The ceiling of the of the tower from the exterior of the monument is made of concrete mesh, inspired from ancient Persian ceilings used for mosques and public bath. The third floor of the structure is lited with an oculus while the second floor with light shafts. This type of geometrical pattern is called the Islamic Shamse.

The Azadi Tower has a museum, exhibition hall, library, concert hall, Iran acquaintance hall and a restaurant.

The Azadi Tower was built to commemorate 2,500 years of the monarchy ruling in Iran and to be a gateway to the west entry of the city. However, because of its strategic location a series of important events which was held in Azadi square changed the purpose of this magnificent tower. The square has mainly become the center of political rallies in Tehran, Iran. These events and rallies have changed the political structure of Iran from monarchy ruling to an Islamic republic.



Figure 4: *Azadi Square (Source: Ahmadzadeh, S.)*

Place identification or the identity of a place could be somehow a coincidence from the way a person remember a certain place which then connects the person to the place. In a research on the parameters of place identity, it has been concluded that the main components of place identity the physical features of the place, the "activities and concepts" which depend on the person's point of view. In general, activities and the significance of the place to an individual has

more important effect in creation of place identity (Heidari & Mirzaii, 2013).

The two monuments were analayzed through mixed method research. The tool was used to identify factors contributing to place identity.

In order to define the role of monuments in place identity, a series of qualitative and quantitative survey question was answered by the local citizens of Quezon City with a total of 154 respondents and 101 residents for Tehran.

How can monuments play vital roles in place identity of Quezon City and Tehran?

Results from the survey showed that the monuments are the most important feature of the square/ circle for the people in both cities. This was followed by the open spaces. However, in Quezon City Circle, the percentage of respondent who sees the open space almost as important to the Shrine was also high. This indicates the difference of activities that is being promoted for the benefit of the public users. On the other hand, the clear visual impact of the tower to Tehran has given it more importance to its people. Unlike the Quezon Memorial, were trees, pedestrian bridges and temporary structures are obstructing the view to the monument.

The historical significance, grandness and design are other aspects which are important to the people. The results showed the importance of history to landmarks and monuments. The events that happened at the location of the monuments make them more significant. The Azadi tower was built and strategically located to be the gateway of Tehran, however a new meaning and purpose was given by the people when the anti-shah rallies started until they won the 1357 Revolution. The Quezon City memorial may not have significant rallies after world war two. However, the history that President Manuel Quezon carries with him to his shrine reminds the people of his great efforts for the democracy from the Americans. The main analysis shows that squares become an important social gathering for people. The memories created in these spaces are the link of personal identity or social identity to place identity. To understand why these monuments should be preserved? The results of the survey showed that, the local residents of Q.C. and Tehran view the Quezon Memorial Shrine and Azadi Tower as monuments symbolically representing their respective cities. Both data have also shown that Tehrani's and Quezonians agree that their respective monuments contribute to local patriotism. These monuments give them a sense of pride and sense of belonging to a particular place through this monumental symbol. These results were verified through archival research, interviews, site observation and personal experience.

Recommendations

Azadi Tower

The issues and concerns of the Azadi Tower differ greatly from the Quezon City Memorial. The nearby airport protects any structure that could be built higher than the Azadi Tower. The city planning incorporated the sightline to the tower, in order to impose its great importance to the city. The architecture of the tower incorporated Persian architecture and this brings pride to the people. The Islamic elements create a sense of familiarity through the arches which can be seen in the community's mosque. These two important factors in the design combined with modern architecture created a very high level of pride for the Tehrani's to have such a magnificent tower. However, the views and needs of the new generation have changed. The development of the tower is not in tune with the new generation. One main reason is the location. They view the area as downtown and a "cheap area". Taking pictures with the Tower as a background has become "cheap". Another concern that they have are the drug addicts and the men who come from the province who would harass the women. The underpass has been developed as a small shopping center. However, this has not contributed to the foot traffic. Most of the shops are planning to close because of lack of sales. The items which are being sold here are mainly cultural. This is not sufficient to attract more foot traffic to the square.

Access to the square is also very dangerous. The signage to the underground passageway is not known to its visitors. These main issues have caused the foot traffic of the square to decline.

Quezon City Memorial

It is a monument built to remind the Filipino people of a great president. Today it has turned into the icon of Quezon City. It has a high volume of foot traffic 8000 on weekdays and 12000 on weekends (Quezon City Memorial Circle Management, n.d.).

Unfortunately, due to poor urban design and landscape, one can hardly notice its grandeur. Its greatness can only be seen when passing through Quezon Avenue and Commonwealth Avenue. The monument can also be slightly seen from North Avenue and East Avenue. Human beings' curiosity starts from the eyesight. Therefore, in order to emphasize on the importance of the structure the viewshed corridor should be clear from any obstruction to create a visual impact to the monument. This would then lead to emphasize on the regulation of the guidelines and laws to preserve the monument.

The park does not have a proper direction in its development. This has been the source of chaotic infrastructure development of the park.

It has been stated on the guideline on monuments honoring national heroes, illustrious Filipinos and other personages of the NHCP, that the sight line to a national monument should be unobstructed (National Historic Commission of the Philippines, 2012). A buffer zone should be mandated by the local government to prevent the rise of buildings which could destroy the vista to the monument.

In order to sustain the importance of these monuments for future generations the development shall be done in phases. Phase 1 would be 1-3 years, followed by phase 2 within 3-5 years and lastly phase 3 which should be done within 5 to 10 years.

Recommendations

Azadi Square

Phase 1

1. Directional signages to the underpass
2. Direct access to the square from the Subway. Same as the MRT7 at QCMC.
3. Additional underpass access through Saadi Expressway, Lakhsari expressway and Jenah Expressway should be made for the safety of the visitors.
4. A pick up and drop off point from the Imam Khomeini International Airport can be through the bus terminal located at the northeast of the square, to bring back the intention of the monument as the gateway to Tehran.
5. Additional security personnel to ensure that the square would be free of drug pushers, drug users and those who would like to harass the women.
6. CCTV cameras should be placed for added security.

   However, for future development, the following should be considered.

Phase 2

1. Tehran is home to 750 parks (Tehran Municipality, 2006). The new generation of Tehran nowadays are looking for shopping malls where one can buy everything in asingle place. The development of the underpass should be stretched around the square and turned into an underground shopping center.

Quezon Memorial Circle

Phase 1

1. Clear the line of sight from the roads which leads to the monument. All pedestrian bridges that are obstructing the view shed corridor to the monument should at least be painted in off white to blend with the color of the monument.
2. The trees planted along the street island of Quezon Ave, Kalayaan and North Avenue should be trimmed or balled out. The island along Kalayaan road can be planted with shrubs. The roadside along the Circle can be planted with Ylang Ylang. The fragrance produced by the tree can also reduce the foul smell of pollution and help create a place identity through the sense of smell.
3. The main axis to the monument should be cleared from any obstruction. This includes the tiangge at the Commonwealth entrance and the trees from allowing the monument to be seen without any obstruction.
4. Proper signage's to the underpass should be placed for park goers to reach the park safely.
5. The MRT 7 would be passing under the Circle and this can bring in more foot traffic. However, the station should not add to the structures in the park
6. A fine should be imposed on those who would litter in the park. Trash bins should be added to avoid any reason for the park goers to litter.
7. Vehicles should not be allowed to drive along the interior roads. The road that passes along the restaurant allows private and public vehicles to pass through it. This compromises the safety of the park visitors and pollutes the park as well.
8. A 1-km radius to limit the BHL to 66m high should be created in order to see the monument clearly from a distance.

Phase 2

1. The landscape of the park did not take into consideration the type and location of the trees which were being planted. Today, out of 2,143 trees most of them are Narra and Molave (DENR, 2016). These trees grow up to 30 meters and since they were not properly planned they have become a major obstruction. The axis along Commonwealth and Kalayaan to the monument can be replaced by Ilang Ilang which only grows up to 12 meters. The fragrance of the flower can also reduce the odour from the pollution and create an experience, through the sense of smell.

Figure 4: Quezon Avenue Improvement on the visual corridor to the Quezon Memorial Shrine
(Source: Ahmadzadeh, S.)

2. All pedestrian footbridge blocking the sightline to the monument should be changed into an underpass.
3. The Circle of Fun which caters to the masses should be transferred to Ninoy Aquino Park.
4. A design guideline for the building facades should be created and implemented to compliment the monument. The existing buildings such as the restaurants can implement this on the façade of their structure. Other structures such as the waiting sheds, food stalls, kiosk and other establishments should have a proper design guideline.

Phase 3

Quezon Memorial

A total rezoning based on the types of activities and facilities would be suggested. The goal would be to create a more organized and respectable resting place for a great president.

The park can be divided into 3 areas; namely, Active, Passive and Silent. The active areas are the outdoor recreation facilities mainly for games, active sports and organized events. The passive areas are less developed and mainly for informal games, playground, jogging and fitness. The silent areas would be the landscape and the garden. This is the closest area to the shrine and should be developed with consideration of the respect which should be given to the monument.

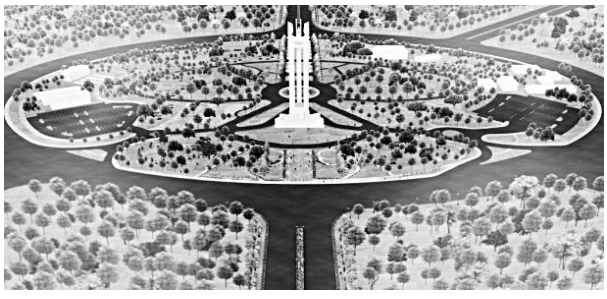


Figure 5: *Proposed Quezon Memorial*



Circle Design
(Source: Ahmadzadeh, S.)

Azadi Tower

The urban planning of Tehran has taken most of the developments towards the north of the city but leaving the middle and the south behind. The government should develop and market the south and the middle part of the city to attract investors. This will also help ease the traffic towards the north. The Azadi Street is the vein that runs through several universities such as Tehran University and the Sharif University. The College of Civil aviation is also along the square. These universities can attract a good market for investors.

Quezon City has already taken its steps in decentralizing its city by creating a CBD between North Avenue and East Avenue which can attract more people to the monument. Tehran can take this as an example to attract more people to the west part of its city.

For both monuments a holistic conservation plan must be done in order to protect the structures for future generations. Aside from clearing the sightline and other developments through urban design, the educational system must highlight the works of their great heroes and leaders. The futures of these countries are in the hands of the next generation. They would only value the existence of these monuments if they understand the reason for which they were built and their meaning to their respective cities. It is important for the future generations to create memories with these monuments in order for them to continue protecting it. Thus, these structures shall tell the histories of their respective cities from generation to generation.

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