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Place Attachment and MacArthur Park: A Case Study of the Importance of
Public Space in an Immigrant Neighborhood and
the Implications for Local Planning Practice

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy
in Urban Planning

by

Kelly Diane Main

2007

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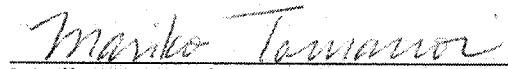
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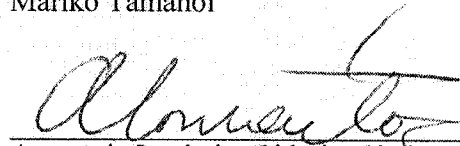
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DEDICATION

For Jay

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Figures	xi
List of Tables	xviii
Acknowledgments	xxii
Vita	xxiii
Abstract of the Dissertation	xxiv
Chapter 1 – Introduction	1
Chapter 2 – Literature Review	5
I. Social Versus Physical Components of Place Attachment	7
A. Definitions of Place	8
B. Social and Cultural Approaches.....	9
B.1. Sociological Approaches	10
B.2. Cultural Approaches	15
C. Psychological Approaches (Place Meaning Through Place Identity)...	17
D. Urban Planning Approaches to Place Meaning	21
II. Social and Cultural Landscapes of an Immigrant Neighborhood	25
A. Rootedness and Displacement	25
A.1. Rootedness and Experience in Place	25
A.2. Displacement and Its Consequences for Attachment	27
A.3. Research Questions.....	29
B. Geographic Mobility and Transnational Ties	29
B.1. Mobility Versus Attachment?	30

B.2. The Physical Environment and Attachments in Transnational Landscapes	32
B.3. Research Questions	33
C. Identity and Attachment in Ethnic/Multi-Ethnic Landscapes.....	34
C.1. Ethnic and Multi-Ethnic Enclaves	35
C.2. The Physical Environment and Ethnic Identity	36
C.3. Research Questions	38
D. Attachment in Declining/Revitalizing Neighborhoods	38
D.1. Social Conditions and Attachment	38
D.2. Physical Environment and Attachment	39
D.3. Understanding the Contradictions	41
D.4. Research Questions.....	42
III. The Physical Landscape of Immigrant Neighborhoods	42
A. Urban Landscapes.....	43
A.1. Decline of Community/Decline of Urban Attachments?.....	43
A.2. Research Questions.....	44
B. Public Landscapes.....	45
B.1. Attachments to Public Places	45
B.2. Public Realm Relationships	46
B.3. Public Spaces	48
B.4. Research Questions.....	51
C. Park Landscapes.....	51
C.1. Cultural Differences in Park Use	51
C.2. Other Differences in Park Use	53
C.3. Parks as Natural Spaces	56
C.4. Research Questions	60

IV. Research Questions	60
A. Social and Physical Components of Attachment.....	61
B. Social and Cultural Landscapes	61
B.1. Rootedness and Displacement	61
B.2. Transnationalism.....	61
B.3. Ethnic Enclave	62
B.4. Revitalizing Neighborhood.....	62
C. Physical Landscapes	62
C.1. Urban.....	62
C.2. Public	62
C.3. Park	63
Chapter 3 – Methodology	64
I. Purpose of the Study	64
II. Selection of the Case Study Site and Participants	65
A. Study Site.....	65
B. Study Participants	68
III. Research Methods.....	69
A. Methodological Approach	69
A.1. The Single Case Study	69
A.2. Approaches to Understanding the Role of the Physical Environment	70
B. Specific Methods for Gathering Evidence	72
B.1. Surveys.....	72
B.2. Extended Interviews.....	73
B.3. Field/Behavior Observations	78
B.4. Site Design Analysis	79

B.5. Documents and Photographs.....	79
B.6. Background.....	80
IV. Assessment of Methodological Approach.....	80
A. Case Study Challenges	80
A.1. Construct Validity.....	80
A.2. External Validity.....	82
A.3. Reliability	84
B. Other Challenges.....	84
B.1. Language.....	84
B.2. Trust: Gender, Culture, Socioeconomic Status.....	86
Chapter 4 – Setting	88
I. Geographic Location and Neighborhood Boundaries.....	88
A. The Westlake Community Plan Area	88
B. The MacArthur Park Neighborhood	89
II. Park and Neighborhood History	91
III. Current Neighborhood Setting.....	96
A. Social Environment	96
A.1. Gender.....	96
A.2. Racial/Ethnic Makeup	97
A.3. Immigration	98
A.4. Population and Household Density	101
A.5. Housing Tenure	102
A.6. Employment and Education.....	102
B. Around the Park	105
IV. The Park Setting	111

A. The Southern Park	111
A.1. The Southeastern Entrance	111
A.2. Around the Lake	113
A.3. The Southwestern Corner	115
B. The Northern Park.....	116
B.1. Grassy Areas North and East of the Soccer Field.....	116
B.2. Red Sculpture Picnic Area	120
B.3. Soccer Fields.....	120
B.4. Children’s Play Area.....	124
B.5. Grassy Area West of the Amphitheatre	124
V. General Demographics of the Survey Sample.....	127
Chapter 5 – Emotional Responses and Attachments	137
I. Emotional Responses to Place.....	137
A. Positive Emotional Responses.....	138
B. Negative Emotional Responses.....	143
C. Conclusions Regarding Emotional Responses.....	151
II. Attachment.....	152
A. Gauging Attachment.....	153
A1. Missing MacArthur Park	156
A2. MacArthur Park as a Friend.....	159
A3. MacArthur Park as a Favorite Place	161
A4. An Attachment Index.....	164
B. Conclusions Regarding Attachment	167
Chapter 6 – Homeland Scape	173
I. Identity	174

A. Park Identities	174
B. Transnational Enclave.....	178
B.1. Cultural and Familial Ties to the Homeland.....	178
B.2. Current Contact With Homeland	180
B.3. Imagined Returns to Homeland	184
B.4. Transnational Ties and Attachment	191
C. Ethnic/Multi-Ethnic Enclave	193
C.1. Social Life and the Ethnic Enclave.....	197
C.2. Contested Activities and Identity	222
C.3. Park Design and Place Identity	228
II. Homeland Parks and MacArthur Park	232
A. Attachments to Parks	232
A.1. Park Preferences	235
A.2. Place-Congruent Continuity	238
A.3. Transnational Ties and Attachment to the Homeland Park.....	243
III. Conclusions	244
Chapter 7 – Urban Landscape	246
I. Reflections of Urban Conditions.....	247
A. Crime	247
B. Home Ownership and Residential Stability.....	251
C. Park Maintenance/Conditions.....	253
II. A Restorative Landscape	265
A. Relaxation	267
B. Diversion.....	271
C. Restorative Experiences and the Physical Design of the Park.....	273

Chapter 8 – Park Landscape	279
I. Areas of the Park	279
II. Major Themes in Park Use	284
A. Social Versus Natural Elements of the Park	284
B. Active Versus Stationary Activities in the Park	289
C. Children and the Park.....	292
III. Park Users’ Preferences and Attachment	295
Chapter 9 – Conclusions.....	297
I. Emotional Responses to MacArthur Park	298
A. The Complexity of Place Attachment.....	298
B. Continuity of Identity.....	301
C. The Restorative Role of MacArthur Park	308
D. Implications for Local Planning Practice	310
II. The Significance of the Study.....	313
III. Future Research Needs	315
Appendix	317
I. Survey	317
I. First Interview	324
I. Second Interview	328
References	329

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Location of Westlake Community Plan Area.....	89
2. Location of MacArthur Park in Westlake Community Plan Area	90
3. Location of MacArthur Park within the MacArthur Park Neighborhood Council Area.....	91
4. View of the northern half of MacArthur Park.....	93
5. Tunnel connecting northern and southern halves of MacArthur Park	93
6. View of the southern half of MacArthur Park.....	94
7. National/regional distribution of foreign-born residents of the park area.	99
8. Timetable of immigration from Mexico and Central America by residents of the park area.....	101
9. Educational experience of residents of the park area	104
10. The Westlake Theater.....	106
11. Single-story buildings on Seventh Street	106
12. Neighborhood-serving businesses on Seventh Street.....	107
13. Additional neighborhood-serving businesses on Seventh Street	107
14. American Cement Building.....	108
15. Park Plaza Hotel	109
16. The Ansonia	110
17. Additional apartments on Sixth Street.....	110
18. Map of MacArthur Park showing eight activity areas designated for purposes of the study.....	112
19. Southeast corner of the park.....	112
20. View of the southeast corner from inside the park.....	113

21.	View of the lake from the southeast corner of the park	115
22.	View from the northwestern side of the lake	116
23.	Southwestern corner of the park.....	117
24.	View of the soccer field from northern grassy area of the park	118
25.	View of the northern grassy area from the soccer field	118
26.	View north from Wilshire Boulevard toward the northeastern part of the park.....	119
27.	View from Wilshire Boulevard north to the red sculpture picnic area	120
28.	View from Wilshire Boulevard, looking north over the westernmost soccer field	121
29.	View of the community center from inside the park.....	123
30.	Fence separating the community center and its parking and equipment yard	123
31.	The children’s play area	125
32.	The amphitheater west of the soccer field.....	125
33.	The grassy area west of the amphitheater	126
34.	English proficiency self-ratings of survey participants and area population.....	131
35.	English proficiency self-ratings of survey participants and area population adjusted for proportions of children in the census and sample.....	132
36.	Ages of participants and the area population	134
37.	Survey participants’ assessment of missing MacArthur Park if they moved	156
38.	Survey participants’ assessment of MacArthur Park as “a friend”	159
39.	Survey participants’ assessment of MacArthur Park as a favorite place.....	161
40.	Respondents’ reported levels of attachment to MacArthur Park	169

41.	Number of years respondents had visited MacArthur Park	170
42.	Distribution of ethnicity in the Westlake Community Plan Area (WCPA).....	175
43.	Ethnicity of the population of the Westlake Community Plan Area from Latin America	176
44.	Distribution of survey participants' country of origin.....	176
45.	Survey participants' reported frequency of contact with their homeland	180
46.	A television reporter for an international cable station films a report on the local El Salvadoran Day celebration in MacArthur Park	182
47.	A bus carrying local television station personalities negotiates the parade route to MacArthur Park for Central American Independence Day	182
48.	A local broadcaster interviews one of the soccer players in MacArthur Park.....	183
49.	Booth at Central American Independence Day celebration showing emergency vehicle purchased with money sent home	183
50.	Survey participants' reported plans for future residence.....	185
51.	Survey participants' frequency of contact with homeland by years in the United States.....	189
52.	Survey participants' plans for future residence by years in the United States.....	191
53.	Survey participants' attachment to MacArthur Park by measure of transnational ties.....	192
54.	Many local businesses prepare or carry products from home	195
55.	A business adjacent to the park includes vivid images of home	196
56.	A familiar site in Mexico and Central America, a woman shades herself from the hot sun with an umbrella. Her daughter is dressed in her Sunday best, while her sons are dressed for a soccer game	200
57.	Park users, a majority of whom are male, observe the lake and other park users passing by. Some of the men are in groups of two or three, while others are alone	202

58.	Family and friends watch soccer	204
59.	League members play a weekend game	205
60.	A seasonal tournament draws a significant weekend crowd	205
61.	Young men play a pick-up game near the soccer fields	206
62.	A street vendor sells ice cream and other frozen products	209
63.	A vendor sells roasted corn out of a drum, along with prepackaged foods	209
64.	A vendor shaves ice before covering it with a syrup of the client's choice	210
65.	A woman prepares a mixture of hot dogs, hot peppers, and onions	211
66.	Balloon and toy vendors are very popular on weekends	212
67.	Feria de Salvadorenos on Wilshire Boulevard, 2006.	214
68.	Packs of photos of El Salvador are available at Feria Agostina	216
69.	Food stands provide a mix of food from El Salvador and the United States	216
70.	Cooks make pupusas, a traditional El Salvadoran dish	217
71.	Feria de Salvadorenos include folk dances	217
72.	Food booth at the carnival for Central American Independence Day on Wilshire Boulevard	218
73.	People line the parade route, adjacent to MacArthur Park, on Alvarado Boulevard	219
74.	A float in the Central American Independence Day parade, 2006, depicting traditional Spanish architectural elements	219
75.	A young man along the parade route displays a Guatemalan flag	220
76.	A family displays their support as the El Salvadoran floats pass	220
77.	A float displays Central American flags and iconic figures from pre-Columbia ruins	221
78.	Marchers in the parade wear indigenous clothing	221

79.	A parade participant in ritual costume	222
80.	The approved vendor carts line the sidewalk on Alvarado Boulevard, adjacent to MacArthur Park	223
81.	The main tent at Soccerfest, 2006	225
82.	A championship team poses for a picture after collecting their trophy.....	225
83.	More soccer at Soccerfest, 2006.....	226
84.	Marchers fill Wilshire Boulevard and the pathways in MacArthur Park, March 2006.....	227
85.	Graffiti in the MacArthur Park tunnel under Wilshire Boulevard, appearing after the May 1, 2007, police activity in the park.....	228
86.	Relationship of level of attachment to MacArthur Park to park preference	236
87.	Level of attachment to homeland parks in relation to park preference	237
88.	Degree to which MacArthur Park reminded participant of home in relation to whether participant had visited homeland parks.....	240
89.	Survey participants' attachment to homeland park by measure of transnational ties.....	243
90.	Survey participants' preferences for Macarthur Park versus homeland parks by plans for future residence.....	244
91.	Attachment to MacArthur Park in relation to assessment of the park's safety	248
92.	Length of residence at current address for study participants	252
93.	A picture of the soccer fields taken by Rogelio, a participant in the extended interviews.....	256
94.	Graffiti covers a mural in one of the MacArthur Park tunnels.....	257
95.	The boathouse in MacArthur Park.	259
96.	The bathrooms located in the northeast corner of MacArthur Park	260
97.	Litter near the soccer field.....	263
98.	Graffiti in one of the MacArthur Park tunnels	263

99.	A picture provided by Jacobo to illustrate problems with maintenance of MacArthur Park	264
100.	A picture taken by Jacobo to illustrate unsanitary conditions in MacArthur Park.....	264
101.	Unshaded park benches across from the boathouse in MacArthur Park.....	265
102.	Bright sun in the children’s play area.....	266
103.	Veronica’s favorite section of MacArthur Park	269
104.	A picture of the lake taken by Gilberto to illustrate one of his favorite elements of the park	269
105.	A picture of pigeons taken by Jacobo to illustrate one of his favorite things about the park.....	270
106.	A picture of the lake and birds taken by Jacobo to illustrate his favorite aspects of the park	270
107.	Two women watch activity at the southeastern corner of the park, people entering and leaving the park, the bus stop, and commercial businesses across Alvarado Boulevard and Seventh Street	273
108.	A local pet shop employee brings one of the shop’s more interesting inhabitants for a walk through the park.....	273
109.	A clown entertains at the southeastern corner of the park	274
110.	A musical group entertains the weekend crowd at the southeastern corner of the park	274
111.	A young boy watches the activities on Wilshire Boulevard while others watch activities on the soccer field.....	277
112.	A squirrel rests on the fence around the amphitheater	277
113.	Paddleboats circle the lake	278
114.	A family watches activities on the lake from its western side	278
115.	A couple relaxing watches a couple strolling along the lake	291
116.	A family with a stroller walks along one of the park pathways	291

117.	Young soccer players fill the northern park on weekends and on weekday afternoons	294
118.	A young boy feeds the birds near the lake	294
119.	MacArthur Park during a quiet late afternoon.....	301
120.	View from the central plaza to adjacent businesses, City of Oaxaca, Mexico	302
121.	Miss Belize, Central American Independence Day Parade, 2006.....	303
122.	Honduras's representatives, Central American Independence Day Parade, 2006	304
123.	Nicaragua's representatives, Central American Independence Day Parade, 2006	304
124.	Representatives of the Comunidades Maya's, Central American Independence Day Parade, 2006	305
125.	Flags from El Salvador, Guatemala, and other Central American countries are waved during a speech at the Central American Independence Day celebration in MacArthur Park, 2006	306

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Correspondence of Survey Questions to Research Questions.....	74
2. Age and Gender Distribution of the Westlake Community Plan Area (WCPA) Population.....	97
3. Racial/Ethnic Distribution of the Westlake Community Plan Area (WCPA) Population.....	98
4. National/Regional Distribution of Foreign-Born Residents of the Park Area.....	99
5. Native Countries of Foreign-Born Central American Residents in the Park Area.....	100
6. Timetable of Immigration from Mexico and Central America by Residents of the Park Area.....	100
7. Household Distribution of Residents of the Park Area.....	102
8. Distribution of Employment Categories of Residents of the Park Area Over Age 16 by Gender.....	103
9. Educational Experience of Residents of the Park Area.....	104
10. Demographics of the Study Sample.....	128
11. Country of Origin of the Survey Sample and Park Area Population.....	128
12. Employment Status of the Survey Sample and Park Area Population.....	130
13. English Proficiency Self-Ratings of Survey Participants and Area Population.....	131
14. Length of Residence in the United States by Participants and the Area Population.....	133
15. Ages of Participants and the Area Population.....	134
16. Home Ownership/Renting Status of Participants and the Area Population.....	135
17. Survey Participants' Reasons for Visiting MacArthur Park.....	140

18.	Survey Participants' Reported Favorite Qualities of MacArthur Park.....	142
19.	Survey Participants' Assessment of Safety/Danger of MacArthur Park by Gender	148
20.	Survey Participants' Reported Experience of Loneliness in MacArthur Park by Gender	149
21.	Relationship of Survey Participants' Exposure to MacArthur Park Per Month to Missing MacArthur Park	157
22.	Survey Participants' Responses Regarding Missing MacArthur Park by Gender	158
23.	Relationship of Survey Participants' Exposure to MacArthur Park Per Month to Rating MacArthur Park as "A Friend"	160
24.	Relationship of Survey Participants' Exposure to MacArthur Park Per Month to Rating MacArthur Park as a Favorite Place	162
25.	Relationship of Survey Participants' Gender to Rating MacArthur Park as a Favorite Place.....	163
26.	Relationship of Survey Participants' Age to Rating MacArthur Park as a Favorite Place.....	164
27.	Statistical Significance of Measures of Attachment to MacArthur Park.....	165
28.	Summary Statistics, MacArthur Park Attachment Index (Percentages).....	168
29.	Respondents' Reported Levels of Attachment to MacArthur Park.....	169
30.	Number of Years Respondents Had Visited MacArthur Park.....	170
31.	Survey Participants' Familial Ties: Country of Origin	179
32.	Survey Participants' Familial Ties: Location of Majority of Family	179
33.	Survey Participants' Reported Planned Frequency of Trips to Homeland.....	184
34.	Number/Percentage of Survey Participants Who Reported Being Reminded of Home by MacArthur Park.....	197
35.	Level of Attachment to MacArthur Park by Degree to Which MacArthur Park Reminded One of Home.....	197

36.	Visitors Arriving at MacArthur Park Alone Versus With Others by Gender	201
37.	Park Users by Gender	201
38.	Frequency of Visits to MacArthur Park Per Month	203
39.	Park Elements That Reminded Survey Participants of Home	229
40.	Degree to Which Survey Participants Were Reminded of Home by Reasons for Visiting MacArthur Park, Social Versus Outdoors/Rest/ Relaxation.....	230
41.	Degree to Which Survey Participants Were Reminded of Home by Reasons for Visiting MacArthur Park, Children Versus Outdoors	230
42.	Comparison of Degrees of Attachment to Homeland Park and MacArthur Park	233
43.	Relationship of Attachment to MacArthur Park to Homeland Parks	234
44.	Participants' Preferences for Homeland Parks Versus MacArthur Park.....	235
45.	Relationship of Attachment to MacArthur Park to Park Preferences.....	236
46.	Relationship of Attachment to Homeland Parks to Park Preferences	237
47.	Explanation of Attachment to Homeland Parks by Park Preference.....	239
48.	Degree to Which MacArthur Park Reminded Participants of Home in Relation to Whether Participants Had Visited Homeland Parks	240
49.	Responses Related to MacArthur Park Reminding/Not Reminding Participants of Home	242
50.	Park Use: Northern Park.....	280
51.	Park Use: Southern Park.....	281
52.	Park Use: MacArthur Park	282
53.	Visitors Arriving at MacArthur Park Alone Versus With Others: Comparison of Two Studies	286
54.	Favorite Park Qualities: Comparison of Two Studies	287
55.	Favorite Quality of MacArthur Park Named First by Gender.....	288

56.	First Reason Given for Visiting MacArthur Park, Active Versus Stationary Activities: Comparison of Two Studies	290
57.	Reasons Given for Visiting MacArthur Park	292

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PRESENTATIONS

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Place Attachment and MacArthur Park: A Case Study of the Importance of
Public Space in an Immigrant Neighborhood and
the Implications for Local Planning Practice

by

Kelly Diane Main

Doctor of Philosophy in Urban Planning

University of California, Los Angeles, 2007

Professor Anastasia Loukaitou-Sideris, Chair

Many U.S. metropolitan areas are characterized by rapid changes in the physical form of cities and their populations. Rapid population and immigration flows have produced ethnic landscapes in the city made up of transnational and culturally diverse populations. These landscapes can pose significant urban design and land use challenges for policy makers, local government officials, practicing city planners, and community members responsible for public spaces, including public parks. How can the cultural needs of the various groups that may be using public parks be address? Underlying this

question are concerns for the meaningfulness of public places to the populations who use them. What kind of emotional attachment, if any, do new immigrants feel for public parks in their adopted neighborhoods? How might public parks be designed and managed to retain and enhance their emotional and cultural significance to changing populations? This study sought to answer these questions via a case study of Latino immigrant groups, primarily from Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador, in the MacArthur Park neighborhood of Los Angeles, a culturally diverse environment. The study explores (a) emotional responses to the park by the Latino immigrants who use it, and (b) how the physical design and regulation of the park affect attachment. The study found high levels of attachment among survey participants, despite strong negative emotional responses to the park. The role the park plays in continuity of identity, as well as the park's restorative qualities, were found to contribute to attachment. Activities in the park and the temporary elements they foster, such as food, aroma, sound, and people, were also found to be important to attachment, suggesting that planning practitioners must consider the influence of activities, and the social environment they encourage or prohibit, on the success of public spaces.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Many large metropolitan areas in the United States are characterized by rapid changes in the physical form of cities and their populations. Rapid population/ immigration flows have produced ethnic landscapes in the city made up of transmigrant¹ and culturally diverse populations. These landscapes can pose significant urban design/land use challenges for practicing city planners, particularly those engaged in the regulation and design of public spaces. For whom (what culture, what ethnicity, what population) are public spaces being designed? Is it possible to address the cultural needs of the multitude of ethnicities that may be using the spaces? Is it possible to be sensitive to the needs of current populations and, at the same time, plan functionally useful spaces for future populations? What values should guide the design and land use regulations that govern these spaces? How quickly should these regulations evolve? These questions are not new. They are the questions that planners concerned with diverse populations have been asking for several years. However, these questions are made more difficult to answer by the rapid changes in global cities.

For many planners and other professionals concerned with public spaces in global cities, the above questions address something broader than whether the immediate recreational needs of diverse populations are being addressed by public spaces. Underlying many of the above questions is a concern for the meaningfulness of public places to the people who use them. Urban planners most often refer to the meaningfulness of

¹This term connotes immigrant populations that “sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement . . . [thereby] build[ing] social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders” (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton Blanc, 1994, p. 8, as cited in Yeoh, Willis, & Abdul Khader Fakhri, 2003, p. 208), with the implication that they may not expect to remain for an extended period in their current location.

places in terms of a “sense of place,” or the subjective perceptions and conscious feelings that one has about an environment. Unfortunately, practicing planners too often take an environmentally deterministic approach toward the “sense of place,” equating the “meaning” of places with their physical design and contending that it is only a matter of finding or maintaining the “right design” to “create” or “maintain” meaningful places. This approach can and has led to insensitivity on the part of planners to deeper and more complex meanings of place and has made easier undesirable alterations and/or obliterations of these meanings through urban redevelopment and revitalization efforts. Because the rapid transformations and cultural heterogeneity of new ethnic landscapes operate in direct contradiction to culturally homogeneous and easy readings of the physical landscape, the meaning of these landscapes would prove particularly difficult to interpret through their design.

While urban planners have attempted to create meaningful places through urban design, other disciplines have set about to understand the meaningfulness of place by exploring a variety of responses to both the social and physical components of place. “Place attachment” research explores the “emotional” meanings of place by looking at the strength and type of emotional responses that people develop toward places. Thus far, this research has not provided an understanding of the potential emotional meanings of highly transient and culturally diverse landscapes to the populations within those landscapes. The bulk of place attachment research suggests that significant emotional responses to place are associated with long-term residence and culturally stable environments, implying that highly transient and culturally diverse populations are less likely to have strong emotional responses to their locales (i.e., that their locales are less environmentally meaningful to them).

While place attachment research has not focused on transient and diverse ethnic landscapes in global cities, this approach to understanding place meaning has a great deal to offer urban planners engaged with transient and culturally diverse populations. If planners are to be involved in the facilitation and/or design of public places that may be emotionally meaningful to these populations, they must first understand the ways in which these landscapes develop meanings for their users (partially the aim of place attachment research) and in what way their physical form affects and is affected by the development of these meanings. The purpose of this research, then, was to undertake a case study of one of these landscapes—a public space used by a transient and culturally diverse population—in order to explore (a) the emotional significance or meaningfulness of this landscape for some of its users, and (b) the way in which the physical environment affects and is affected by these developing meanings.

Because relatively little is known about the emotional significance of public spaces and urban planners are actively involved in the design and form of these spaces, this research focuses on emotional responses to a specific public place: MacArthur Park, a public park in a diverse, immigrant neighborhood. The study explores the emotional relationships to place experienced by the Latino residents and visitors who use the park and the symbolic and otherwise meaningful nature of the local physical environment.

This dissertation comprises nine chapters. The literature review for this study and the resulting research questions are presented in chapter 2. Chapter 3 describes the methodology for the study. Chapter 4 describes the setting of the study, including MacArthur Park and the surrounding neighborhood. Data analysis is presented in the next four chapters. Chapter 5 presents an analysis of attachment to MacArthur Park among the sample surveyed for this project, as well as other emotional responses to the park. In chapters 6 through 8 three symbolic and physical landscapes found in the park are

analyzed for their influences on attachment: a homeland “scape,” an urban landscape, and a park landscape. Chapter 9 reviews findings arising from this study that confirm or alter current knowledge regarding attachment to public spaces. The chapter concludes with a discussion of future research needs.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the past 30 years academics from various disciplines—anthropology, urban sociology, social psychology, geography, environmental psychology, architecture, and urban planning—have contributed to the study of the meaning of places to people. One of the primary objectives of this literature review is to extract ideas and empirical evidence produced by various disciplines that might help to understand how the social and physical environment of MacArthur Park contribute to its meaning, and more specifically its emotional meaning, for the Latino immigrants who use the space. Several approaches to attachment are useful for understanding the emotional meaning and attachment in MacArthur Park.

For urban planners, an understanding of the role that the physical environment plays in the construction of place meaning and attachment is vital. Place can be conceived of as having both social and physical components (Agnew & Duncan, 1989; Gustafson, 2002; Relph, 1976). It follows that attachment to specific places should include attachment to both the social and physical components of place that contribute to place meaning and place attachment.

To provide a context for the literature review, the first part of this chapter is devoted to the various approaches that anthropology, sociology, psychology, and urban planning take to the relative importance of the social and physical landscapes in the development of place meaning and attachment. The two subsequent parts of this chapter summarize and critique specific concepts and empirical evidence related to place meaning and attachment that are applicable to the particular social and physical landscapes of MacArthur Park. Agreeing with Gupta and Ferguson (1998), Appadurai (1988a, 1988b), and others who hold that the meaning of places is socially and culturally constructed, the

second part of this chapter is a review of the place meaning and attachment literature relevant to the social and cultural context of MacArthur Park and the surrounding neighborhood. A good deal of the place attachment literature argues from a theoretical standpoint and shows from an empirical standpoint that one of the best predictors of attachment is length of residence and experience with a place, what is sometimes called “rootedness.” Obviously, this literature has implications for understanding attachment experienced by immigrants who have arrived relatively recently, continue to have ties with their homeland, and may not anticipate putting down permanent roots in the neighborhood; this literature is relevant to the social context of the neighborhood and is addressed first. Second, a great deal of the place attachment literature draws a connection between place attachment and place identity, or the role that place plays in the formation, maintenance, and expression of identity. Place meaning literature that focuses upon attachment and identity associated with ethnic or multi-ethnic enclaves, relevant to the cultural context of the neighborhood, is addressed next. Third, literature related to place attachment in revitalizing/declining¹ urban communities—relevant to the economic context of the neighborhood—is addressed. As the focus is on ways in which the physical landscape may influence place meaning and attachment, a discussion of the physical landscapes associated with the social, cultural, and economic contexts covered and how place meaning and attachment might be influenced by these landscapes is included.

The third part of this chapter addresses place meanings and attachments associated more directly with the physical landscape itself and relevant to MacArthur Park by looking at literature on attachments to urban spaces, the public realm, and parks.

¹With higher crime rates, an older housing stock, dense living conditions, numerous physical incivilities (as defined by Brown et al., 2004) such as graffiti and litter, and the beginning signs of gentrification, including nearby luxury condominiums and restored historic buildings.

At the end of each of the three major parts of this chapter I introduce questions regarding place meaning and attachment that arise from the discussion. At the end of the chapter I present the research questions relevant to an urban planner concerned with the success of a social and physical landscape such as MacArthur Park.

I. Social Versus Physical Components of Place Attachment

One of the important questions considered in the study of the meaning of place and of *place attachment*, particularly for urban planners, is how important the physical site, particularly the built environment, is in the formation of meaning and attachment. Among anthropologists, sociologists, psychologists, and urban planners, there are considerable differences of concern and opinion regarding how much the physical environment matters in determining the meaning of places to people. Most concepts of place meaning and attachment rely on explanations of the meanings given to a space. Sociologists and anthropologists have primarily concentrated on the meaning given by humans to physical sites, without concentrating on the effect that physical sites may have on the meanings given. Anthropologists primarily concern themselves with the symbolic meaning given to a physical site, giving less attention to the site than its cultural meanings. Sociologists are primarily concerned with the physical environment as the spatial locus for social relationships and/or self/community identity, concentrating primarily on the relationships rather than on the physical site. Many psychologists, with the exception of environmental psychologists, attempt to understand the individual's association of individual and group experiences and/or identity with a physical site, paying little attention to the physical site itself in that relationship. Recently, however, sociological, cultural, and psychological approaches have begun to look more directly at the role physical sites play in the formation of meaning. This section reviews recent concepts and empirical evidence produced by other disciplines that address the importance of the

physical site and its elements to the meaning of and attachments to place. This is concluded by contrasting urban planning's approach to place meaning and attachment. Before discussing approaches to attachment, however, it is useful to define the concept of place itself.

A. Definitions of Place

Place is defined in this paper, as it is in many disciplines, as “space that has been given meaning through personal, group, or cultural processes” (Altman & Low, 1992, p. 5; Milligan, 1998, p. 5; Tuan, 1977, p. 6). Once abstract space attains meaning, through whatever process, it becomes a place. Places can be tangible physical sites (a plaza), large (a country), or small (a closet), or they may be intangible (heaven).

In recent years the possibility of singular “true” definitions of place has been questioned. It has been convincingly argued that, because places are, in some sense, social or cultural constructions with fluid boundaries, strict definitions of places are problematic (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997, pp. 37-39; Tuan, 1991, p. 68; Wallerstein, 1991, p. 1). The task of understanding and describing place has been problematized, as well, as claims to have captured the essence of something seem hegemonic and reductionist (Appadurai, 1988b, p. 46). Without going into great detail about these arguments here, this study attempts to heed the warnings of geographers Michael Keith and Steve Pile to guard against either of the two extreme positions on concepts and definitions of space and place: (a) spatial immanence—“the myth of a singular true reading of a specific landscape,” and (b) spatial relativism—the notion that “each and every reading of a specific landscape is either of equal value or equal validity, leading to an entirely relativist notion of spatiality” (Keith & Pile, 1993, p. 6).

The concept of place as a space that has been given meaning is close to two concepts that are important to this study: place identity and place attachment. *Place*

attachment can be defined as the emotional bonding that people have to places. *Place identity* is a concept less easily summarized than place attachment, and a more detailed description of place identity is provided later in this paper. As a starting point, place identity can be described as part of self-identity. If self-identity is related to the fundamental question “Who am I,” then place-related identity provides a perspective on this question from the standpoint of “Where am I?” and “Where do I belong?” (Altman & Low, 1992, p. 10). Research on place identity “explores the ways locales are imbued with personal and social meanings and how such symbolic locales can serve in turn as an important sign or locus of the self” (Hummon, 1992, p. 258).

B. Social and Cultural Approaches

Social and cultural approaches to understanding place meaning have heightened interest in the symbolic roles and meaning-laden nature of places (Altman & Low, 1992, p. 2). These approaches emphasize an actor/interaction-centered analysis, as illustrated by the following distinct cultural and/or social explanations/definitions of place attachment: The attachment to a place derives from “the meanings it holds, and those in turn are tied to how people act with one another within the space” (Pellow, 1992, p. 189). Place attachment is the “symbolic relationship formed by people giving culturally shared emotional/affective meanings to a particular space or piece of land that provides the basis for the individual’s and the group’s understanding of and relationship to the environment” (Low, 1992, p. 165). Place attachment is “the emotional link formed by an individual to a physical site that has been given meaning through interaction” (Milligan, 1998, p. 2).

Traditional social and cultural approaches have viewed the physical site as the neutral stage to which people, groups, and cultures become attached because of their experiences, memories, feelings, and interactions (Goffman, 1959); this work is briefly

summarized in the following sections. More recently, however, some sociologists and anthropologists have argued that the physical site neither determines nor plays a neutral role in the meaning of places and place attachment (Lofland, 1973; Milligan, 1998; Tuan, 1974); this work is the primary focus of the following two sections.

B.1. Sociological Approaches

Sociologists and social psychologists are among those responsible for making the meaning of physical places salient, through work on “personal spacing, territoriality, family and group use of space, crowding, environmental meaning, and other topics” (Altman & Low, 1992, p. 2). Some of the early Chicago School ethnographers provided significant detail about the spatial ordering of social life. Zorbaugh’s *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (1929) and Paul G. Cressey’s *Taxi-Dance Hall* (1932) are two examples of such work. Concern with spatial ordering has been carried on in more recent community studies by urban sociologists in works such as Elijah Anderson’s *A Place on the Corner* (1976) and Herbert Gans’s *The Urban Villagers* (1962) and *The Levittowners* (1967). A large number of ethnographic studies have contributed to knowledge about interaction in specific types of spaces, such as bars (Anderson, 1976; Byrne, 1978; Katovitch & Reese, 1987), restaurants (Duneier, 1992), coffeehouses, and cafes. Although a significant amount of detail has been provided about the social ordering of and interaction within specific places, until relatively recently sociologists have focused very little on how/whether physical sites influence the attachment to and meaning associated with them.

Sociologists have conducted community attachment research, which is primarily concerned with the emotional bonds formed between people in a particular spatial context. Research into community attachment seems to indicate that attachment is most strongly related to the local social relationships that an individual has within a physical site, rather than the physical attributes of the site. Local social involvements with friends,

kin, organizations, and business owners are the most consistent predictors of attachments to local sites (Gerson, Stueve, & Fisher, 1977; Goudy, 1982; Guest & Lee, 1983; Hunter, 1974; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; St. John, Austin, & Baba, 1986). Long-term residence has been found to be strongly associated with community/locale attachment because it is likely to allow for a long accumulation of memories of significant events within the community. The implications of this research for attachment in a neighborhood of recently arrived immigrants are discussed in detail in the section on attachment and dislocation. Community attachment is at least partially affected by the built environment and the individual's subject perceptions of environment. Housing quality and ownership are associated with greater attachment to particular locales, as are proximity to local landmarks (Gerson et al.; Guest & Lee). In addition, fear of crime and dissatisfaction with physical quality of neighborhood environment reduce attachment (St. John et al.). Empirical evidence suggests that, while certainly not determining peoples' behavior, the physical environment does have some influence on the meaning of place and place attachment.

Other sociological factors that contribute to place attachment include age and gender. Attachment appears to increase with age (Brown, B. B., & Perkins, 1992; Goudy, 1982; Sampson, 1988) and female gender is a predictor of greater place attachment (Brown, B. B., & Perkins, 1992). There is also initial evidence that ethnicity may be a factor predicting place attachment, as B. B. Brown, Perkins, and Brown (2003) found, in a study of a revitalizing neighborhood in Salt Lake City, that Hispanic residents experienced greater place attachment to their homes and neighborhoods than their Anglo neighbors, regardless of the condition of the neighborhood, fear of crime, and home ownership.

Attempting to address the dearth of sociological place attachment studies addressing the physical dimensions of place, Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001) examining attachment to the social and physical components of place within three spatial ranges (house, neighborhood, and city) by interviewing 177 people from various areas of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, Spain, which has socially and physically diverse neighborhoods. The study confirmed many of the findings from other sociological studies of place attachment: Women showed greater attachment than men in all cases, attachment increased with age, and social attachments were greater than physical attachments. The study found no differences in attachment with regard to range (house, neighborhood, city) or dimension (social or physical) related to social class. The study produced several particularly interesting findings regarding attachment to the physical aspects of place, both in terms of range and dimension. The study confirmed findings from previous attachment studies that social attachments were greater than physical attachments; Hidalgo and Hernandez verified this for all spatial ranges. However, the study confirmed that participants experienced attachments to the physical dimensions of places and that “without doubt, these two components of place attachment [social and physical] generally come together, and become a general affective feeling” (p. 279). While attachments to the neighborhood were found, they were less significant than attachments to the home and city. Moreover, attachments to the home and city were equal, contradicting popular assumptions and previous academic findings that attachment to the home is primary and most important. Hidalgo and Hernandez also found that attachments to different spatial ranges varied by age, with attachment to the city greater for the young (17-30), attachment to the house greater for intermediate ages (31-49), and no attachment differences in terms of spatial range for the older age group (50-83). The authors acknowledged that the findings regarding attachments to different spatial ranges may be

influenced by the type/characteristics of neighborhoods and cities being studied. Santa Cruz de Tenerife is a medium-sized city, which may provide an explanation for greater attachment to the city than the neighborhood; that is, the size and characteristics of the neighborhood might be insignificant enough that people did not identify strongly with it. In a larger city, where neighborhoods can be like small cities, relative attachments to city and neighborhood levels might be quite different.

Melinda J. Milligan (1998), a sociologist with a symbolic-interactionist orientation, offered a theory of place attachment that specifically concentrates on the built environment's influence upon place meaning and attachment. Symbolic interactionism is a theory that has much to offer to the study of the built environment. Several of the most important premises and implications of symbolic interaction theory and methods are easily transposed onto a study of physical sites and their meaning.

First, Milligan (1998) used symbolic interaction theory to argue that the meaning of places is produced through social interaction. Milligan argued that physical sites and the objects with them can be considered objects in the symbolic interactionist context. Blumer (1969) defined objects to be of three types: "(a) physical objects, such as chairs, trees, or bicycles; (b) social objects, such as students, priests a president, a mother, or a friend; and (c) abstract objects, such as moral principles, philosophical doctrines, or ideas such as justice, exploitation, or compassion" (p. 10). While many who study the physical environment might consider it a collection of objects, a physical site could be considered an object in itself. Blumer, and other symbolic interactionists, would likely not disagree with this premise in that he further defined objects as "anything that can be indicated, anything that is pointed to or referred to" (p. 10). According to Blumer, Milligan further argued that, like other objects, places have meanings that are the result of the social interaction that individuals have with each other within a physical locale. Meanings are

not intrinsic to the object (site) itself or the static product of psychological or social processes. Instead, the meanings of sites are the result of dynamic and interactive processes between the members of a given spatial and social environment. As Blumer stated, meanings are “handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters” (p. 2).

Next, Milligan (1998) argued that physical objects and sites affect place meaning through their influence on the social interactions that produce place meaning. Milligan provided a case study of a university food service organization, known as the “Coffee House,” that was moved from one site to another within the campus. By comparing three specific traits—physical layout, atmosphere, and positioning (relative location to other uses)—of the old Coffee House site with the new one, Milligan provided extremely useful examples of how the physical characteristics of a site have the ability to strongly influence social interaction within the site, the meaning of the site, and the resulting degree of place attachment. Milligan found that the design of the site conditions the types of social interaction that can occur at a site and, therefore, the degree of attachment that can occur. Milligan’s interactionist theory of place attachment suggests that it has two interwoven components: (a) the interactional past, or the past experiences or memories associated with a site; and (b) the interactional potential, or the future experiences imagined or anticipated to be possible in a site. Milligan suggested that the degree of attachment to a place is translated from the degree of meaningfulness of experiences that either occur at the site or are in some way linked to it. Thus, by influencing the social interaction—and the interactional past and potential of a place—the physical objects and site influence the degree of attachment.

Milligan’s arguments and findings add a significant level of complexity to the discussions that planners and designers have regarding the way in which physical sites

achieve meaning and the role that designers play, which they often attribute to a site's physical form, design, or layout. Utilizing Erving Goffman's (1959) well-known dramaturgical metaphor describing social interaction as a series of performances given by social "actors" in a "stage setting," Milligan (1998) extended the metaphor to include physical sites as "stages" for social interaction. Milligan acknowledged that stages are both socially and physically constructed. Commenting on the physical construction of the stage, Milligan wrote,

In general, the permanent (or relatively permanent) physical aspects of a site are constructed by individuals who may be thought of as the set designers of the stages for social interaction: the architects, facility managers, property owners, and others who make decisions regarding the physical form of a site. After the initial work of these set designers, the physical construction of the built environment is only under the control of the actors to the extent that they have the power and resources to manipulate physical aspects of the site and to the extent that they are able to choose the locations of their interactions. (p. 2)

While Milligan (1998) pointed out that the social construction of a place is much more under the control of the actors as the meanings associated with the physical environment emerge in the ongoing processes of interaction, she acknowledged the influence that physical objects and sites, and their designers, can have upon these ongoing processes. Physical and social construction are both separate from and linked to each other, each influencing the other in the sense that the physical construction of a site can constrain the social interaction possible within a given site and the social actors are sometimes involved in and influence the decisions made by the set designers.

B.2. Cultural Approaches

Like traditional sociological approaches, traditional anthropological approaches to place meaning ignored the influences of the physical components of place and concentrated on the socially and culturally produced meanings. Many theorists concerned with cultural influences on place meaning assume that meaning is layered over the physical or built environment (Lawrence, 1992). Once meaning is attached to a physical site, it

resonates with that meaning and acts as a mnemonic device. An example is Amos Rapoport's work on Australian aborigines, who he contended superimpose "the mythical landscape" over "the physical landscape" (1976, p. 44).

In a case study of the attachment associated with Las Fallas—a "carnavalesque rite" celebrated each year in the city of Valencia, Spain, wherein gigantic papier-mâché figures are installed in neighborhood plazas—Denise Lawrence (1992) explored how theories of ritual-spatial relations in anthropology offer insights into the ways in which physical objects/sites acquire meaning and people form meaningful relations with places. Lawrence (1992) contrasted theories that rely on the notion that physical objects are "passive recipients of signification" (Eliade, 1959; Prussin, 1989, Saile, 1985, all as cited in Lawrence) with those of Turner and Bordieu, who viewed physical objects/sites as having the potential to be active elements in the production of meaning. Turner (1969) suggested that the physical environment can play an active role in the efficacy of the ritual process in achieving transcendence. According to Lawrence, transcendence is achieved in the liminal state, which is in turn achieved when the

most potent symbols in their most powerful arrangement are brought together to create an intense ritual state in which participants collectively experience a heightened sense of communion Turner (1969) calls "communitas." Spatial elements contribute to the transcendent qualities of the ritual process and become charged themselves because their relations with other ritual symbols are activated during the rites. Spatial symbols need not dominate the ritual process, nor do they necessarily retain symbolic meaning after the event is completed, but they must interact with other symbols for significance. (pp. 213-214)

Bordieu provided a different view of ritual-spatial relations and, possibly, the way in which meanings, and therefore attachments, become associated with physical sites. For Bordieu, actions, not objects, are given meaning. Meanings are given to actions as a result of "mental constructs." These actions produce "the world of objects" that, in turn, allow one to reproduce the mental structures that created the actions in the first place. To Bordieu, places are not physical objects or sites to which meaning is attached; instead,

places are constructed through activities that reflect underlying mental structures. The world of objects—physical environment—then sets the conditions for reproducing the mental structures that produced the actions that, in turn, constructed the physical environment in the first place.

Place [the physical environment] and its meanings are produced through practice. The source of meaning exists outside the individual in collective historical knowledge; socialization connects the individual to this meaning. Place [the physical environment] can be seen as one component among several that interacts in producing meaning. (Lawrence, 1992, p. 214)

C. Psychological Approaches (Place Meaning Through Place Identity)

In the past 30 years psychologists have turned their attention to the emotional bonding that occurs to places, and indeed, psychological explanations “are the most frequently discussed sources and manifestations of place attachment . . . in the literature at large” (Altman & Low, 1992, p. 9). Environmental psychologists are among those who have most frequently engaged in place attachment studies. The final two parts of this chapter review the concepts and empirical studies that are relevant to an understanding of place meanings and attachments associated with MacArthur Park, including an extensive amount of work from environmental psychology. This section reviews one of the most frequently generalized explanations for place attachment provided in the psychological literature: the role of place in the development of self-identity (Chawla, 1992; Cooper Marcus, 1992; Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983), and specifically on the works of Cooper Marcus and Proshansky. (The role of place in the development and expression of group identities is discussed in the second part of this chapter.)

In traditional psychological literature the concept of self-identity is concerned primarily with the relatively conscious personally held beliefs, interpretations, and evaluations one has regarding oneself. One’s development of self-identity begins early in childhood. One of the first things that humans learn in childhood is to begin to distinguish

others from themselves and to understand the relationship of others to the self. These distinctions and relationships help to define who one is. Self-identity continues to develop through individual, interpersonal, and social processes that involve an “assimilation and acceptance of a commonly shared set of beliefs, rules, values, and expectancies, some of which we use to define and judge ourselves” (Proshansky et al., 1983, p. 58).

Clare Cooper (1974, 1992) expanded on traditional ideas about the development of self-identity by writing about the role that places play in the formation of self-identity and the resulting affective ties to place that develop. Cooper Marcus theorized a dynamic relationship between a person and the physical environment in which the person seeks and molds an environment that “reveals the nature of the self.” In turn, the environment gives “information” back to the person, thereby supporting self-identity and possibly altering the person in some way. This dynamic relationship results in a deep sense of attachment, particularly to the family home, where one first learns to manipulate places to satisfy needs and, thereby, discovers the nature of oneself. Cooper Marcus detailed how a child’s development is dependent on the experiences of role-playing, exploring, creating, controlling, and relating to physical and social worlds. She linked these activities to self-identity through three themes: control, manipulation, and continuity with the past.

Cooper (1974)/Cooper Marcus (1992) asserted that gaining control of space is an important facet in a positive sense of self-identity. There is a need to be private, to be in a place where one does not have to “put up any facades,” where one is protected. Our ego-self, separate from parents and other caregivers, begins to take shape. By gaining control over space, one can fantasize, dream, play roles, and nurture emerging self-identity (the expressive-requirement function noted by Proshansky et al.).

Along with controlling space, Cooper (1974)/Cooper Marcus (1992) argued that children must learn to manipulate, mold, and decorate space in order to create a setting of

psychological comfort, which interconnects with identity or personal well-being. The child's role in the creation of place—the molding or shaping of the physical environment into a setting that is an expression of one's emerging identity—is a significant mode of self-exploration. Examples of this in adult behavior include building one's own home, rearranging furniture, repainting a rented room, or pinning up posters in one's office (problem-solving function noted by Proshansky et al.).

Cooper (1974)/Cooper Marcus (1992) wrote about the importance of physical reminders of the past. These reminders allow one to maintain a sense of continuity with significant places of the past, so that sense of control and identity experienced at an earlier age is supported by reproducing the essence of a significant past-environment (the recognition function noted by Proshansky et al.).

Cooper (1974)/Cooper Marcus (1992) considered the physical settings of childhood to be extremely significant due to their association with significant emotional experiences that are critical to the process of growing up. These environments are richly connected with psychological processes that are part of human development in the early to middle years of childhood:

Memories serve to anchor us in time and space; they are one means by which we make sense of the continual becoming that is the essence of life. . . . Reflecting on who and where we once were helps us become clearer about who we may want to be. Significantly, with the loss of memory (for example, through amnesia or dementia), people do not know who they are. Self-identity is inextricably tied to the people and settings of our past, particularly those places where we make our "mark," where an expression of our unique identity was made manifest in the material world. Since identity is for most people a relatively abstract and ungraspable concept, some expression of it "out there" is essential to allow us—and others—to reflect on who we are. It is significant that in institutional settings, where the identity of the group is more important than that of the individual (for example, the military, some corporations), or where service and devotion to a higher good is deemed more important than exploration of self (for example, in some religious orders), there are strict rules against personal expression in the environment and/or in one's dress. (pp. 109-110)

In “Place-Identity: Physical World Socialization of the Self” (1983) Proshansky et al. expanded on traditional assumptions about self-identity to develop a concept of place identity. They asserted that the development of self-identity is not restricted to making distinctions between the self and significant others but also extends to objects and things and the places where they can be found.

If a child learns “who he is” by virtue of his relationship with those who satisfy his needs by taking care of him, then it follows that contributing to that same self-knowledge are the toys, clothes, rooms and whole array of physical things and settings that also satisfy and support his existence. . . . The room is different and distinct from what he is, but by belonging to him and satisfying him it serves to continually define his own bodily experiences and consciousness as a separate and distinct individual. In effect, the subjective sense of self is defined and expressed not simply by one’s relationship to other people, but also by one’s relationships to the various physical settings that define and structure day-to-day life. (p. 57)

Proshansky et al. (1983) criticized the psychological and sociological communities because they place almost exclusive emphasis on the role of social process in the formation of self-identity. Until relatively recently, the role of physical settings in the development of identity has been almost completely excluded, even though place is an inherent part of any socialization process.

Theories about place-related identity are associated with but not synonymous with place attachment. However, Proshansky et al. (1983) argued that the concept of place identity is much broader than the emotional attachment to particular places or settings and that “the physical world definitions of a person’s self-identity extend far beyond a conception of this identity in which the home and its surrounding are the necessary and sufficient component references” (p. 61).

Empirical studies of place and identity seem to indicate that identity is somewhat grounded in environmental experience. Duncan (1973) showed how two upper-income groups in Westchester County differentiated their local identities through differing forms of local landscaping. Rapoport (1982b) suggested that the built environment can be a

nonverbal method for communicating qualities of the self, such as social rank and moral reputation. It would appear from the current research noted above that, while the built environment contributes significantly to place-related identity and attachment, identity and attachment build most significantly on the meanings of life experiences that occur in places and the public images that get tied symbolically to places for an individual, group, or culture. Hummon (1990, 1992) suggested that place and identity research documents three ways in which the physical environment acts to link identity and attachment: (a) the transformation of the “local landscape into a symbolic extension of the self by imbuing it with the personal meanings of life experiences;” (b) the transformation of the local landscape into symbols of cultural identities by imbuing it with “public meaning”; and (c) the association and communication of group identities through the local environment, thereby, strengthening the bonds between people and places (1990, pp. 27-28). Group identity and its expression through the physical environment are discussed in the second part of this chapter.

D. Urban Planning Approaches to Place Meaning

Along with environmental psychologists, urban planners, environmental designers, and architects have concerned themselves most with the role that physical sites play in people’s lives. More recently, urban planning has been concerned with places and their loss of meaning (Appleyard, 1981; Jacobs, 1961; Kuntsler, 1996; Lynch, 1972). The increasing “placelessness” of places, or lack of a “sense of place,” has been attributed to everything from a proliferation of globalized and corporate design (Relph, 1976), the disorienting confluence of historical styles in postmodern architecture (Ellin, 1999; Sorkin, 1994), capitalism’s push to create entertainment spaces that encourage consumption (Boyer, 1994; Zukin, 1995;), sprawl (Kuntsler), and accommodation of the

automobile (Duany, 2000), to overzealous and control-obsessed planners and traffic engineers (Duany).

Planners and architects frequently analyze the physical environment, and particularly the built environment, in an attempt to determine why some sites have more of a “sense of place” than others (Milligan, 1998, p. 5). *Sense of place* is a term often used by urban planners, described as the subjective perceptions and conscious feelings that one has about an environment. Sense of place has both cognitive and emotional components. Hummon (1992) described it as “a personal orientation toward place, in which one’s understandings of place and one’s feelings about a place are fused in the context of environmental meaning” (p. 263).

As place refers to both the social and physical components of a given locale, sense of place and sense of community are often used interchangeably in the field of planning. Sometimes consciously, sometimes unconsciously, when planners talk about the relationships between urban design and a sense of place, they are speaking of the potential effects of urban design on both physical and social environments. As an example, New Urbanists frequently draw connections between traditionally designed communities, with their denser and pedestrian-oriented development, and the creation of a sense of community (Duany, 2000).

In urban planning the interest in urban design and sense of place and both its physical and social components has sometimes taken what seems to be the form of physical determinism—the notion that “environments create people-place relationships” (Altman & Low, 1992, p. 8). As Jean Hillier in “Presumptive Planning: From Urban Design to Community Creation in One Move?” (2002) wrote,

From Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier to the present day, there has been a belief that reforming the physical environment can revolutionize the total life of a society . . . an idea that physical facilities could by themselves create community. (p. 45)

While some planners and architects seem to draw a direct path between design and the meaning of places, many writers on urban planning have pursued a more complex understanding of place meaning. Appleyard (1979, 1981) researched the symbolic role of the environment in perceptions and attitudes toward place in an effort to inform the planning process. Jacobs (1961) encouraged planners to consider social dynamics when planning neighborhoods. However, while there are a few urban planners who acknowledge the relatively important role that social and cultural factors have in the meaning of places and the limited direct role of urban design, urban planners continue to view the meaning of places from an exclusively physical and design-based perspective (Hillier, 2002). Indeed, the meaning of places to people, particularly the emotional meaning, has received relatively little attention from planners, as have the effects of planning practice on place meaning or the ways place meaning might inform practice (Manzo, 2003).

The implications of cultural and sociological approaches for the role of the physical environment in the development of the meaning of place and in place attachment are significant. Urban planners must consider the role of social and cultural processes in the development of the meanings associated with the physical environment. However, physical sites need not be conceived of as passive recipients of meaning. Whereas once, urban designers and planners stood apart from anthropologists and sociologists—the first crediting the physical environment with meaning because of its physical form and the second conceiving it as merely the neutral stage setting in which social and cultural meanings are given—there now appears to be common ground on which the power of the physical environment is neither exalted nor ignored. This opens up a new and fertile space where a number of fields can bring together their accumulated knowledge and explore ideas about the impacts of physical sites on individual, groups, and culture. The literature reviewed in this section suggests that urban planning could benefit from a better

understanding of the role of both the social and the physical environment—its design and form—in the development of the meaning of places and attachment to the social and physical components of place.

II. Social and Cultural Landscapes of an Immigrant Neighborhood

The second part of the chapter addresses concepts and empirical findings in the place attachment literature that have major implications for meaning and attachment in, for lack of a better term, an *immigrant* neighborhood. Place attachment studies have addressed the concepts of rootedness—unconscious and lengthy embeddedness in a place, geographic mobility—particularly the movement of people between countries as the result of globalization, ethnic identity—particularly in the ethnic enclave, and residential/economic stability as predictors of attachment. What do the theories and findings from these studies imply for attachments among immigrants who have experienced significant displacement and are renegotiating their national and ethnic identities in a neighborhood that can alternatively be characterized as declining/revitalizing?

A. Rootedness and Displacement

A.1. Rootedness and Experience in Place

Under most conceptions and explanations of place attachment lies the belief that place attachment develops through personal experiences with places (Proshansky et al., 1983). Phenomenologists write of attachment that comes through a sense of “rootedness” or “belonging” to places. This sense of belonging is derived from daily experience in and association of meaningful experiences with places. For phenomenologists one of the primary functions of place is the sense of belonging and consequent attachment that it engenders. In exploring how one comes to feel “in place,” Tuan (1984) argued that humans need to be rooted, which he described as the development of an almost subconscious sense of security and stability about a place. Along these lines, Tuan

suggested that feeling “in place” comes with the development of unquestioning habits and routines, the smell of coffee each morning, the pathway to school, the familiar places where one shops,:

[experiences that], though insignificant in isolation, have a powerful cumulative effect: they penetrate and transmute deep levels of self. From such experiences come the strongest bonds between self and others, self and world. These are the household gods that, as Lamb [Charles Lamb, English essayist, 1776-1834] put it, “plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not rooted up without blood.” (1984, pp. 3-4)

The sense of “rootedness” was described to be an unselfconscious state, and once it has been reflected upon or interpreted, it is removed from direct experience and tainted. Tuan (1977) argued that the experience of an unselfconscious association with place is virtually impossible for people living in contemporary Western societies. He distinguished between rootedness and a “sense of place,” which he posited is developed through a conscious reflection and discussion regarding places that, ultimately, allow for their appropriation (p. 4).

Theorists have also connected rootedness to identity (Buttimer & Seamon, 1980; Proshansky et al., 1983; Tuan, 1977). Edward Relph in *Place and Placelessness* (1976) wrote,

The essence of place lies in the largely unselfconscious intentionality that defines places as centers of human existence. There is for virtually everyone a deep association with and consciousness of the places where we were born and grew up, where we live now, or where we have had particularly moving experiences. This association seems to constitute a vital source of both individual and cultural identity and security. (p. 43)

Proshansky et al. (1983) emphasized the use of rootedness to explain only one aspect of place identity. If rootedness, an unconscious state, were taken for place identity, theoretically, place identity in its full meaning could not be consciously experienced or communicated. Proshansky et al. argued that, as part of a conscious state, self-identity, place identity is also a conscious state.

Given these descriptions of the importance of personal experiences within places to the development of feeling “in place” and, in turn, developing bonds to place, it is not surprising that some of the predictors of attachment to place are local ancestry (Hay, 1998; Low, 1992), length of residence (Hay; Shumaker & Taylor, 1983), and expectations of remaining in the residence (Shumaker & Taylor). Long-term residence has been found to be strongly associated with community attachment because long-term residence is likely to allow for a long accumulation of memories of significant events within the community.

Research regarding place identity has produced similar findings regarding significant experience in a specific locale, memory, strength of attachment, and place identity. Studying individual identity, Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) demonstrated that, among other factors, continuity—the ability of place to provide a sense of continuity of the self—was strongly related to respondents’ local attachment. Studying group identity as reported in “Symbolic Ties That Bind: Place Attachment in the Plaza” (1992), Low explored the role that a public plaza in Costa Rica had for maintaining a sense of unique cultural identity. She identified several categories of “symbolic linkage of people and land,” almost all suggesting deeply rooted and long-term experiences with specific places, that contributed to people’s cultural identity and, ultimately, to an emotional attachment to the land:

Social aspects—genealogical linkage to the land through history or family lineage;

Material aspects—linkage through loss of land or destruction of community and economic linkage to land through ownership, inheritance, and politics;

Ideological aspects—cosmological linkage, linkage through religious and secular pilgrimages and celebratory events, and narrative linkage through storytelling and place naming. (p. 166)

A.2. Displacement and Its Consequences for Attachment

The majority of Latino users of MacArthur Park are first-generation immigrants. As such, they have experienced a profound “uprooting” or displacement from their homeland from places to which they likely experienced strong bonds and with which their identity was intimately connected. A significant amount of attention has been given to the physical and emotional consequences of displacement upon humans. Studies regarding the impacts of involuntary relocation due to urban renewal (Fried, 1963; Fullilove, 1996), migratory labor (Coles, 1967), and natural disasters (Erikson, 1976) have demonstrated negative consequences, ranging from confusion and disorientation (Lonner & Berry, 1986) to nostalgia and alienation (Fullilove, 1996) to profound grief, that can be experienced as a result of dislocation from place. Fullilove (1996, 2004) theorized that displacement “ruptures” the bonds of attachment so necessary to a sense of belonging. In *The Urban Villagers* (1962), a study of the West End of Boston, Gans revealed the considerable attachment that the working-class community of the West End experienced, particularly as they lost their community to the urban development that occurred in the 1950s and 1960s.

I wish the world would end tonight. . . . I wish they'd tear the whole damn town down, damn scab town. . . . I'm going to be lost without the West End. Where the hell can I go? (One young resident the day after the federal government gave the city the go-ahead for redevelopment). (p. 289)

The physical and psychosocial impacts of involuntary relocation can be severe, including post-traumatic stress disorder (De Girolamo & McFarlane, 1996) and depression and anxiety (Marsalla, Friedman, Gerrity, & Scurfield, 1996).

Affective ties to specific places have been shown to endure once people relocate (Hay, 1998; Rowles, 1980, 1983; Stokols & Shumaker, 1981; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996) and research has confirmed that loss of past environments deeply affects attachment to those places, often deepening them; however, research has rarely explored how

loss of past environments, especially involuntary loss, may affect relationships to new places (Fried, 2000; Manzo, 2003). What kinds of attachments to new places form among immigrants who have experienced significant and sometimes traumatic displacement?

Some place attachment research on relocated populations suggests that attachments to previous places may carry over to new places. Feldman (1990) and Hummon (1990) identified the development of bonds to generic types of settlements, such as urban, suburban, and small-town life; Feldman identified such attachments as a coping strategy for the relatively mobile residents of Denver. Generic place dependence, described by Stokols and Shumaker (1981), and place-congruent continuity (characteristics of places that are transferable from one place to another), described by Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996), are similar concepts.

How might the physical environment affect the ability to attach to new places? Various empirical studies have demonstrated that the condition and form of the physical environment, at various levels—from the home (Duhl, 1963; Michelson, 1977) to the neighborhood (Moghaddam, Taylor, & Lalonde, 1989) to the community and settlement (Aronowitz, 1985; Steinhausen, 1985)—can be “intervening variables” in addressing the culture shock that immigrants experience because of displacement and relocation. In a study of Russian students who had recently migrated to Israel (from 6 months to 3 years previously) Churchman and Mitrani (1997) found that varying levels of attachment to Russia and Israel partially depended on the differences between the physical environments of each country at different levels (the national, city, neighborhood, building and apartment level). Might these be ways the physical environment affects the attachments to places that new immigrants experience?

A.3. Research Questions

The Latino immigrants who have moved to the Westlake District have been uprooted from their homelands and, in some cases, have arrived here through involuntary relocation, either escaping civil strife (as in the case of Salvadorans and Guatemalans) or pursuing migratory labor as a result of what could almost be called a natural disaster (as in the case of the Oaxaqueños leaving Mexico because of a severe drought and trade agreements that decimated agriculture in their state). What kinds of attachments to new places form among immigrants who have experienced significant and sometimes traumatic displacement? Can one form attachments to new places that ever rival the sense of belonging or the attachments to the residences, neighborhoods, and countries where one was born and grew up? How quickly can these attachments develop? What role might the physical environment play in the formation of attachment to new places?

B. Geographic Mobility and Transnational Ties

Transnationalism, a concept relatively recently introduced by anthropologists (Glick Schiller, Basch, & Blanc-Szanton, 1992), focuses on “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement” (p. 7). While critics have argued that transnationalism as an experience—that is, the experience of ties to multiple nations as a result of global capitalism—is not unique enough to warrant its own conceptualizations and terminology, there is some consensus that the set of practices/processes to which it refers are unique to modern times (Viruell-Fuentes, 2006).

Some of the public transnational practices that appear uniquely modern include remittances to the home country to improve infrastructure, establishing businesses that include transfer of information, goods, or money across borders, and frequent contact with and travel to the country of origin. The private, affective or symbolic practices, some of which are much harder to document, include “imagined returns to the homeland

(through selective memory, cultural rediscovery, and sentimental longings)” (Espiritu & Tran, 2002, p. 369) and the maintenance of cross-border connections “at the level of emotions, ideologies, and cultural codes” (Wolf, 2002, p. 258). Obviously, regular and sustained contacts involving economic, political, social, and cultural activities are indicators of transnational ties; however, physical movement across borders is not necessary for transnational practices to exist (Levitt, 2001) and even infrequent contact can still signify important transnational ties (Itzigsohn, Cabral, Hernández Medina, & Vázquez, 1999). Studies indicate that, through transnational practices, immigrants “retain a sense of belonging” and “connection” with families and friends in their country of origin, often helping them to deal with “small local social networks and their continuing feelings of isolation” in their new locale (Viruell-Fuentes, 2006, p. 358). But what of place attachment and identity in Western society, where transmigrancy is often a by-product of economic development and globalization? How do continuing ties and attachments to the homeland affect the establishment of new ties and attachments?

B.1. Mobility Versus Attachment?

Some transnational scholars argue that belonging and identity are increasingly deterritorialized (Appadurai, 1996). Appadurai wrote about the link between modernity and the demotion of place. With modernity and colonialization, “Western” and “developed” nations began to view themselves as “mobile,” “enamored of the complexities of our history, the diversities of our societies, and the ambiguities of our collective conscience” (p. 37). Appadurai asserted that people defined themselves by defining “the other” as people who were “natives,” people who were “sedentary and rooted in their particular niches” (p. 80). Place became associated with a kind of confinement that people considered no longer applied to them in their modernized and metropolitan state:

Natives are in one place, a place to which explorers, administrators, missionaries, and eventually anthropologists, come. These outsiders, these observers, are regarded as quintessentially mobile; they are the movers, the seers, the knowers. The natives are immobilized by their belonging to a place. (p. 37)

Place attachment and mobility are often posed in academic literature as mutually exclusively phenomena (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Gustafson, 2001b). Gustafson (2001b) described the two predominant perspectives on place attachment and physical mobility as follows:

The first perspective values place attachment while often regarding mobility as a threat to a person's affective bonds with place, whereas the second perspective favors mobility and, sometimes, explicitly or implicitly devalues place attachment . . . individuals who are highly mobile are supposed to experience little or no place attachment and vice versa. In addition, each perspective is often based on empirical studies of groups in settings that conform to the ideal held by that perspective. The first perspective favors studies of bounded communities (see Fennel, 1997), whereas the second leans toward studies of very mobile groups and of places characterized by migration or other forms of human mobility. (p. 669)

Not all transactional scholars pose transnational and local ties as mutually exclusive notions, arguing for “conceptualizing migrants’ identities as constantly negotiated in relation to multiple societies and places,” and, thus, recognizing immigrants as “agents who are able to forge their belonging and multiple attachments” (Ehrkamp, 2005, p. 348).

Commonly used conceptualizations of place attachment rule out the likelihood of finding attachments to new places or multiple attachments to past and current locales among transnational populations. A significant number of studies on community attachment and neighborhood attachment have focused on strength of affiliation by measuring people's desire to remain in a specific locale (Goudy, 1982; Hummon, 1992; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Shumaker & Taylor, 1983). Coming out of the discipline of environmental and/or social psychology, many of these studies have utilized quantitative methods—statistical analyses of surveys—to better understand place attachment and its predictors. Sometimes implicit or explicit measurements of attachment have been operationalized into the definition of place attachment, such as a “positive affective bond

between an individual and a specific place, the main characteristic of which is the tendency of the individual to maintain closeness to such a place” (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, p. 274) or that decreases “the perceived substitutability of other sites for the one in question” (Milligan, 1998, p. 6). This conceptualization of place attachment implies that it results in bonds to a specific place that rule out equally significant bonds to another place. Thus, the strength of place attachment can be measured by the resistance to relocate from the site with which bonds have formed. This definition of place attachment suggests that one would not find a measurable sense of attachment to the new places among transnational populations.

A few studies looking at attachments among transnational populations have appeared more recently. In an ethnographic study of Turkish immigrants in Germany, Ehrkamp (2005),

Transnational ties and multiple attachments enable local attachment rather than preventing it. Beyond the material changes in the neighbourhood it is important to note how immigrants narrate Marxloh [their village] as the place where they belong, where they felt safe and comfortable. But creating a home in the city is neither limited to alterations of the material landscape, nor to communal places. Turkish immigrants narrate Marxloh as home, and enact the neighbourhood as ‘Turkish’ by placing their identities both in the public and private spaces of the neighborhood. Rather than creating binary oppositions or contradictory attachments, Turkish immigrants negotiate different scales of belonging. (p. 361)

B.2. The Physical Environment and Attachments in Transnational Landscapes

More recent conceptualizations of transnational migration have become concerned with the production of new places (translocalities), recognizing the importance of considering the local context in which identity and belonging are renegotiated (Ehrkamp, 2005; Glick Schiller & Basch, 1995; Guarnizo & Smith, 1998; Smith, 2001). The “local context” that is considered is typically social, cultural, political, and/or economic. Places/localities are often assumed to be passive “containers for subject formation and the construction of identities,” rather than given consideration for the context, as spaces that

have been given meaning by the migrants and their translocal practices, that they provide (Ehrkamp, p. 348). Similarly, the social, cultural, political and economic institutions, organizations, and activities of migrants are considered, while the physical components of places produced by migrants and their transnational practices are rarely considered.

Ehrkamp's (2005) study of Turkish immigrants in Germany confirms that the physical components of place play an important role in the establishment of new attachments and the negotiation of new identities. Over time, the immigrants produced physical spaces—in their homes, in Turkish businesses, and in communal spaces such as teahouses—that resembled those in Turkey. Ehrkamp found that these spaces contributed to a sense of belonging in their adopted village, Marxloh. Ehrkamp concluded,

It is not enough to symbolically create the neighborhood as a place of belonging, as a home place that is narrated. The built environment needs to reflect immigrants' identities, as well. . . . Placing their identities enables Marxloh's Turkish immigrants to create a new place of belonging. Placing identities, therefore, leads Turkish immigrants to construct a (new) place-based identity” (pp. 360-362)

The role of ethnic identity in the experience of attachment to adopted places is discussed in the next section.

B.3. Research Questions

Relatively few place attachment studies have focused on attachment in “transnational social spaces,”²² probably because it is assumed that strong attachments have not yet had the opportunity to develop owing to a lack of experience with new environments.

²²“The living spheres and projects of transmigrants which span a number of residential and geographical spaces and argues for their emergence tandem with the growth of transnational migration criss-crossing the globe” (Yeoh, 2003, p. 208). Transnationalism has been defined as a description of “the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain simultaneous multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and settlement . . . [thereby] build[ing] social fields that cross geographic, cultural, and political borders” (Basch, Glick Schiller, & Szanton Blanc, 1994, p. 8, as cited in Yeoh, 2003, p. 208).

The dearth of research studying potential local ties in transnational communities only contributes to the view of place attachment and migration as mutually exclusive phenomena.

What kind of emotional responses to place—rootedness, belonging, positive attachments, negative feelings—exist among immigrants with continuing ties to their homeland? How do these attachments compare to those experienced by immigrants who have been here for a longer period of time? In what ways does the physical environment affect the formation of new attachments.

C. Identity and Attachment in Ethnic/Multi-Ethnic Landscapes

In “Community Attachment: Local Sentiment and Sense of Place” Hummon (1992) suggested that current place and identity research offers two important linkages between cultural identity and attachment to local places. First, this research has documented how community identity research has shown that places have been “imbued with public meaning,” and as such perform the role of symbolic with distinct cultural identities (Hummon, 1990, p. 259).³ Second, research indicates that group identities are associated with and communicated through the local environment and that this strengthens the bonds between people and places. As described previously, Low (1992) explored the role that attachment to a public plaza in Costa Rica had for maintaining a sense of unique cultural identity. Lawrence (1992) showed how the acting out of an annual cultural ritual helps to strengthen Valencian identity and develop and maintain community bonds. This section further explores the links between ethnic and multi-ethnic identity and attachment and the

³As an example, George Suttles’s (1984) work has shown how New York, San Francisco, and Los Angeles has a body of traditions and rituals that define them as a distinct place and provide a language for local identification and sentiment.

role of the physical environment in symbolizing these identities and cementing attachments.

C.1. Ethnic and Multi-Ethnic Enclaves

Research has shown that attachments to traditional ethnic enclaves “run deep” (Abrahamson, 1996; Ehrkamp, 2005; Fried, 1963; Gans, 1962; Mazumdar, Mazumdar, Docuayan, & McLaughlin, 2000; Rivlin, 1987). Early studies of specific enclaves such as Chinatowns (Yuan, 1963), Polish enclaves (Lopata, 1964), Lebanese enclaves, Germantowns, and Little Havanas (Abrahamson) have contributed to the understanding that “enclaves are places where members of a group strive to ‘retrieve,’ ‘engrave,’ and ‘enclose’ segments from their collective memory and their collective past” (Mazumdar et al., p. 320). In this way immigrants achieve not only place-congruent continuity (continuity via characteristics of place that are generic and transferable from one place to another) but also place referent continuity (continuity via places that have emotional significance for a person; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996, p. 208). Thus, ethnic enclaves can be seen as constituting “an important aspect of an immigrant’s place identity enabling him/her to simultaneously remain connected to the places left behind and yet appropriating and forging significant new place ties” (Mazumdar et al., p. 320).

Generally speaking, studies of immigrant communities have been in ethnic enclaves, specifically bounded spaces with relatively longstanding and homogeneous cultural norms and ethnic identities (Abrahamson, 1996; Featherstone, 1996; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2002a, 2002b). Because of this, little is known about attachment in relatively culturally diverse immigrant communities—communities with multiple ethnicities and/or cultures—or ethnic communities for which it would be difficult to trace definite spatial boundaries. How does the cultural diversity within these communities affect the ability of individual cultures within the community to “retrieve,” “engrave,” and “enclose”

segments of their past? How do continuing connections with past environments of relatively homogeneous cultural meaning affect current attachments?

C.2. The Physical Environment and Ethnic Identity

Because most place attachment research has concentrated on attachment to the social rather than the physical components of ethnic enclaves, even less is known about how the form and design of the physical environment affect the emotional significance of these landscapes. Research into place and identity indicates that identity is somewhat grounded in environmental experience. Studies have indicated that the physical environment plays a symbolic role in representing group identity (Hummon, 1990, 1992; Low, 1992, 2000; Lawrence, 1992; Mazumdar et al., 2000) and personal identity (Hummon, 1990; Manzo, 2003). Initial studies have indicated that in ethnic enclaves such as Little Saigon in Orange County, California, where the architectural styles of past places of emotional importance have been recreated and/or modified, the physical environment affects place attachment and place identity (Abrahamson, 1996; Mazumdar et al.). A study by Duncan (1973) showed how two upper-income groups in Westchester County differentiated their local identities through differing forms of local landscaping. Relph (1976) and Rapoport (1982b) suggested that the built environment can be a nonverbal method for communicating qualities of the self, such as social rank and moral reputation. Studies have shown that the physical world—buildings, artifacts, and other material objects—preserves “social memories” (Zerubavel, 1996), “signifies history, relationships, current practices and goals” (Rochberg-Halton, 1986, p. 191), and helps to differentiate self and group and provide a tangible link to common social past and social identity and a way to organize past interactions (Milligan, 1998).

Studies of the symbolic role of the physical environment in representing identity have emphasized permanent fixtures: landmarks, architectural style, statues, and other

permanent markers of identity. Given that immigrants in new ethnic landscapes may have little opportunity to permanently affect the landscape, what is the role of the physical environment in new ethnic landscapes in marking, either permanently or temporarily, group identity? Other studies show that, along with architecture, aspects of the physical environment can act as symbols of identity, such as types of businesses, ritual events, people, music, and spatial relationships (Lawrence, 1992; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2002b; Low, 2000; Low et al., 2005; Rapoport, 1982a, 1982b).

Tuan (1984) commented on activities and sensual experiences that help to establish a subconscious security about place: the stabilization of experience of seasonal cycles through the development of astronomical criteria to define the beginning and end of seasons. Predictable and precisely timed rituals, feasts, and festivities to publicly note the change of seasons, regardless of actual weather conditions, are examples of the attempt to secure place. Along with helping to give a sense of spatiality, the senses help bind to a place. Smell, touch, and hearing can powerfully stir the emotions. Odors affect people on an intimate level; they stimulate interest in food and sex. They can relay a sense of well-being or dislike, through pleasantly or unpleasantly familiar associations, such as the smell of a childhood blanket or badly prepared and disliked vegetables. Touch is essential to survival. The baby's first sensual experience is that of intimacy and love. Sounds envelop them, and through their dynamic nature, fill them with a sense of life going on around them. Sounds, such as the rhythm of the waves or the beats of music, are able to imitate the basic pulses of life: heartbeat and breathing. While hearing, smell, taste, and touch are the most proximate senses—with the world known through them being relatively cozy and affecting, Tuan argued that seeing is the most cognitive sense. Seen objects, no matter how close, are still at some distance. They are in some sense apart and other from the seer, in both physical and psychological senses. To merge with

an object, Tuan argued, one must shut the eyes, as a child does when “he wishes to re-enter a secure and undifferentiated world of bliss” (p. 8).

C.3. Research Questions

Research is needed regarding the subtleties of place attachment and identity among culturally diverse transnational communities in new landscapes. Studies of the symbolic role of the physical environment in representing identity have emphasized permanent fixtures: landmarks, architectural style, statues, and other permanent markers of identity. Given that immigrants in new ethnic landscapes may have little opportunity to permanently affect the landscape, what is the role of the physical environment in new ethnic landscapes in marking (either permanently or temporarily) group identity?

D. Attachment in Declining/Revitalizing Neighborhoods

A significant amount of contradictory evidence exists regarding the relevance of home ownership, crime, and neighborhood condition as determinants of attachment. Numerous quantitative studies have found direct and positive correlations among home ownership, neighborhood condition, and attachment and a direct and negative correlation between crime and attachment. On the other hand, numerous qualitative studies have documented strong attachments in working-class neighborhoods with high crime rates and low home ownership rates. This section reviews the concepts and studies that have significant implications for place meaning and attachment in the Westlake District.

D.1. Social Conditions and Attachment

Empirical studies show that the socioeconomic characteristics of a community can influence place attachment. In one of the few quantitative studies looking at place attachment in a neighborhood that had experienced economic and physical decline for at least 20 years (measured in decline of real income, poverty rates of almost 30%, decreasing home ownership, and relatively high reports of crime), B. B. Brown et al. (2003)

measured place attachment on individual and block levels and to the home and to the block/neighborhood. B. B. Brown et al. found home ownership and lower fear of crime to be associated with greater levels of place attachment. These results were true for predicting place attachments among individuals, as well as predicting attachments from block to block. (That is, on an individual level, home ownership was associated with higher levels of attachment and on the block level the higher the proportion of residents who were home owners, the greater the attachment. Similarly, on an individual level relatively less fear of crime was associated with greater attachment and on the block level the higher the proportion of residents who experienced less fear of crime, the higher the levels of attachment experienced by the block.)

Their study (Brown, B. B., et al., 2003) confirmed numerous earlier quantitative studies that had found home ownership to be a predictor of relatively higher levels of attachment (Riger & Lavrakas, 1981; Taylor, 1996) and linking the perception of “too many” neighborhood delinquents (Mesch & Manor, 1998) and fear of crime (Sampson, 1988; Taylor, Goddfredson, & Brower, 1985) to lower levels of attachment. Brown et al. cited home owners’ tendency to stay longer in a neighborhood, invest more money in housing, and have greater familiarity with neighbors and participation in community groups as possible reasons for the association of home ownership and attachment. They speculated that “fear of crime may keep residents away from neighborhood places and events, shrinking the boundaries of place attachment, perhaps eroding attachments to neighborhood more than to homes” (p. 261).

D.2. Physical Environment and Attachment

The study also has implications for the role that the physical environment plays in place attachment, in terms of both the condition of the physical environment and the spatial range (home, block/neighborhood) of attachments. Related to the physical

condition of the environment, Brown et al. (2003) looked at the relationship between perceived (by participants in the study) and observed (by researchers) physical incivilities and signs of decay (graffiti, litter, poor roofs and crumbling sidewalks, broken windows, unkempt lawns) and levels of attachment. On an individual level they found that residents who perceived more incivilities on their block had lower place attachment, while those who had more objectively observed physical incivilities and decay on their property had lower place attachment. On the block level, fewer perceived and observed incivilities were associated with higher place attachments.

In summary, related to the spatial range of attachment, this section has discussed the focus on attachment to home environments and the resulting dearth of information regarding attachment to spaces outside the home. Hidalgo and Hernandez reported findings related to the spatial range of attachments in a mid-sized town in Spain. Findings by Brown et al. (2003) shed interesting light on differences in the factors contributing to attachment to the home versus the neighborhood. While residents who perceived more incivilities on their block experience less overall attachment and block attachment, they did not experience lower attachment to their homes. While home ownership and low levels of observed incivilities in the home were associated with greater levels of attachments to the home and overall attachment, they were unrelated to attachment to the block and neighborhood. This confirms earlier empirical research verifying that satisfaction with community is not the same as attachment to community or the physical environment. Sociological research has shown that people “may evaluate a place in relatively unfavorable terms and feel considerable attachment to the locale” (Hummon, 1990, p. 26).

D.3. Understanding the Contradictions

The study by B. B. Brown et al. (2003) on a revitalizing neighborhood contributes to understanding some of the contradictory findings regarding place attachment in lower-income and working-class neighborhoods. While some studies have shown that lower levels of home ownership and higher levels of crime and physical incivilities (qualities often associated with lower-income urban neighborhoods) are related to lower levels of place attachment (Brown, B. B., et al.; LaGrange, Ferraro, & Supanicic, 1992; McGuire, 1997), other studies have contradicted these findings. Particularly strong bonds to a neighborhood were discussed by Saegert and Winkel (1998) in a study of severely distressed, landlord-abandoned housing in Harlem. Tenant activists, usually older women, revealed strong place attachments via in-depth interviews, despite the poor physical condition of their housing and neighborhood. Fried's (1963) and Gans's (1962) studies of urban renewal in Boston's West End and other studies of the consequences of urban renewal (Fullilove, 2004) document strong rootedness and place attachments despite the poor condition of housing and community. In two studies of areas in Baltimore with relatively greater police-reported crime and researcher-observed incivilities, neighborhood attachments were actually higher (Taylor, 1996) or unrelated (Taylor, Shumaker, & Gottfredson, 1985) to these conditions.

Fried (2000) has speculated that lower-income or ethnic neighborhoods may experience particularly strong and resilient place attachments because of relative isolation from larger society, limited alternative resources of its residents, and the social support that residents provide to each other. B. B. Brown et al. (2003) reported that those who felt a greater sense of social control and cohesion with neighbors, on both individual and block levels, experienced higher levels of attachment to the home, block/neighborhood, and overall. However, Fried's explanation that attachments in lower-income areas are primarily related to residents' limited resources and strong social networks is only part of

the explanation for attachments to those communities. Instead, place attachments experienced in a specific locale are the result of a complex set of factors associated with that particular locale.

D.4. Research Questions

Significant contradictory evidence exists related to the effects of socioeconomic conditions and their physical manifestations on attachment to place. What type of attachments to neighborhood places exist in neighborhoods with very little home ownership? How will fear of crime affect attachments, particularly to public places where residents may be particularly vulnerable to crime? How do litter and graffiti and other physical conditions of the neighborhood and the park affect attachment?

III. The Physical Landscape of Immigrant Neighborhoods

A significant number of place attachment studies have focused upon attachment to the home (Cuba & Hummon, 1993; Manzo, 2003) or local neighborhood (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001), as opposed to specific places outside the home, such as parks, or larger-scale, mixed-use environments such as urban centers. Initial studies indicate strong attachments to social aspects of specific nonresidential environments (Lawrence, 1992; Low, 1992, 2000; Manzo; Mazumdar et al., 2000) and to places of different scales, such as residence, local community or neighborhood, city, region, and country (Canter, 1977; Hidalgo & Hernandez; Tuan, 1974). Still, little is known about the emotional relationships to primarily nonresidential spaces in transnational urban neighborhoods, where places outside the home may be particularly important for several reasons, including the quality of housing and density of occupation (Becker, 2003). This section reviews the place attachment literature pertinent to MacArthur Park as a specific type of physical landscape—a public site and a park—in a specific spatial range: the urban center. Attachments to both the social and physical components of this landscape are.

A. Urban Landscapes

A.1. Decline of Community/Decline of Urban Attachments?

For a good part of the early 20th century the “decline of community” thesis dominated much sociological thought about attachment to both geographical locations and the social relations associated with these locations. For classical theorists from Marx to Weber to Durkheim, the transformation to an urban, capitalist order meant the decline of the quality of local community life. For Marx, the traditional relations of people were transformed by capitalism into market relations, substituting cash nexus for social bonds that tied people to their land. For Durkheim and Weber, the division of labor and the modern bureaucracy reduced ties to the land and local community relationships. For these theorists as well as many others, the emergence of modern society “inevitably meant a decline in the significance of local forms of social organization and a concomitant erosion of both social and sentimental ties to place” (Hummon, 1990, p. 24). This thesis had its strongest formulation in the work of Louis Wirth, particularly in his seminal piece “Urbanism as a Way of Life” (1938), in which he argued that the increasing “numbers of population, density of settlement, and heterogeneity of inhabitants” result in an individual whose “bonds of solidarity” are replaced by “competition and formal control mechanisms” (p. 191). Discussions of urban alienation and “loss of community” continued in the 1960s and 1970s with the work of Lyn Lofland (1973), Gerald Suttles (1968, 1972), and David Riesman (1961).

Contrary to Wirth’s conclusions, ethnographic studies of urban neighborhoods have revealed the existence of significant bonds to local people and physical sites (Gans, 1962; Rivlin, 1982; Young & Wilmott, 1957). Systematic surveys of larger populations indicate that community attachment is significantly more complex than the “decline-of-community” thesis provides for, and that it is not related to community size, density, or

type (Brown, S. R., 1989; Gerson et al., 1977; Goudy, 1982; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; Sampson, 1988.) Indeed, research indicates that sentimental attachment to urban environments remains, and that these attachments form in complex ways (Fried, 1963, 2000; Gans, 1962). While community satisfaction seems to be linked to form of community—urban, suburban, and rural—as indicated above, sentimental attachment to community/locale has not proven linked to physical forms of community. In rural-urban (Kasarda & Janowitz) and central city-suburban (Gerson et al.) comparisons, differences in attachment among different forms of community were quite weak.

Agnew (1989) traced links between “decline-of-community” theories to more recent demotions of place, describing two stages: (a) the confusion of a geographical concept of place with the sociological concept of community; and (b) the inference of the decline of place from the “decline-of-community” theory. Agnew described two versions of community: (a) a morally valued way of life, and (b) the social relations in a discrete geographical setting. The former version of community was inextricably linked to the “traditional” or “peasant” societies that late 19th century modernist thinking dismissed as “coercive, limiting or idiotic. In its [traditional society’s] place they saw the possibility of human equality and economic affluence as society overcame the limits and constraints intrinsic” to the former definition of community (p. 14). Since the latter definition was conflated with the former definition, the importance of “discrete geographical settings” was undermined along with the study of community.

A.2. Research Questions

Both quantitative and qualitative studies shed doubt on the idea that attachments to both the physical and social components of place are somehow lessened by the urban experience. According to Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001), attachments to the city were as strong as attachments to the home in the mid-sized Spanish town that they studied. Still,

as previously noted, empirical studies have found attachments to generic types of development: the village, the town, the city (Feldman, 1990; Hummon, 1990). In fact, many of the immigrants from Oaxaca, Mexico, moved to Los Angeles from tiny villages in mountains and in the countryside. How might attachments to MacArthur Park be influenced by the physical elements of settlements from which park users have migrated? Are there physical attributes of the park that support or hinder attachments based on previous physical environments with which park users are familiar?

B. Public Landscapes

Community attachment studies are most often centered on social environments where participants are known to each other, not the public realm of strangers that one might find in a large urban park. Local social involvements with friends, kin, organizations, and business owners are the most consistent predictors of attachments to local sites (Gerson et al., 1977; Goudy, 1982; Guest & Lee, 1983; Hunter, 1974; Kasarda & Janowitz, 1974; St. John et al., 1986). What might be the attachments to the social and physical environments of public places? This section reviews the literature on attachments to public places, on the importance of relationships unique to public places in large urban centers (relationships between strangers), and the role that the sites themselves play in these relationships.

B.1. Attachments to Public Places

While very few studies have reviewed attachments to public places in urban centers, Low's (1992) extensive qualitative study of attachment to a Costa Rican plaza in the urban center of San Jose documented significant attachments related to the shared cultural meanings of the plaza to urban residents. In her case study of Las Fallas, Lawrence (1992) assessed the role that *la placeta*—the neighborhood or community square in which each *falla* is placed—played in the efficacy of this ritual for Valencians.

The event's primary attractions are the 350 *fallas* erected in neighborhood streets and plazas throughout the city. *Fallas* are "garishly painted, sculpted, papier-mâché figures of massive scale and proportion that give expression to popular themes of satirical dissent" (p. 211). Each *falla* is identified with a *placeta* in the city. Indeed, when a neighborhood's *falla* needed to be moved to another location/*placeta*, Lawrence witnessed a great deal of anguish among neighborhood members. Low's and Lawrence's studies illustrate the way in which urban dwellers may appropriate public places to achieve "a sense of unity of their contemporary selves with their collective past" (Lawrence, p. 212).

B.2. Public Realm Relationships

In *The Public Realm* Lofland (1998) devoted significant attention to the importance of the "public realm" relationships—relationships between persons who are strangers to one another or who "know" each other only in terms of occupational or other nonpersonal identity categories (for example, bus driver or customer—that one can find in the public spaces of large urban centers. She argued that the importance of these relationships to emotional well-being has been underestimated because of a bias toward primary relationships. A conventional wisdom exists, even among many sociologists, that behavior in the public realm is essentially asocial and, thus, "from the point of view of social scientists, thoroughly irrelevant and uninteresting" (p. xvi).

Lofland (1998) cited the work of Gregory Stone (1954) in "City Shoppers and Urban Identification: Observations on the Social Psychology of City Life" as evidence of both a moral bias toward primary relationships and a verification of the importance of "public realm" relationships. Stone discovered that customers found meaning and feeling in customer-clerk interactions. In the language of sociology, the relationships between customers and clerks had elements of primary group relationships in whatever were "supposed" to be purely secondary relationships (Lofland, p. 3). But then Stone quickly

dismissed these relationships by indicating that the quasi-primary relationships found between customer and clerk formed only because of the loss of “larger” truly primary relationships (Lofland, p. 61). The bias toward the relative unimportance of “public realm” relationships is somewhat self-fulfilling. With relatively less research being focused on these types of relationships, it is difficult to determine their relative importance to well-being and their role in the formation of self-identity and group identity.

Proshansky et al. (1983) identified a place bias among psychologists that parallels the primary relationship bias held by sociologists identified by Lofland. Proshansky et al. made the case, rather convincingly, that psychologists focus “almost exclusively on the home” when studying the individual’s identification with place. While they acknowledged that “individuals do indeed define who and what they are in terms of such strong affective ties to ‘house and home’ and/or neighborhood and community,” they argued that

the physical world definitions of a person’s self-identity extend far beyond a conception of this identity in which the home and its surrounding are the necessary and sufficient component referents . . . place identity is influenced by a wide range of person/physical setting experiences and relationships based on a variety of physical contexts that from the moment of birth until death define peoples’ day-to-day existence. (pp. 61-62)

Proshansky et al. attributed this place bias to psychology’s emphasis on the importance of constancy in self-identity. In many traditional theories regarding self-identity, identity is assumed to be formed in childhood and to be relatively stable throughout life. The relative importance of childhood places, where the stable identity is established, is therefore assumed to be much greater than the places of adult life (p. 59). Proshansky et al. argued for a definition of self-identity that is more flexible through time and thus influenced by the places that people encounter throughout their lives.

Taken together, these relationship and place biases may have profound affects on the way attachments to public places are regarded, to both the social environment of the public realm and the physical sites in which these relationships take place. Lofland (1998) argued that the bias against public realm relationships makes their preservation and the preservation of the places (sites) in which they occur “highly vulnerable “ to extinction (p. 72). It is also arguable that the bias against public spaces adds to the vulnerability of these spaces. Indeed, because they may be an essential ingredient in place identity, their diminution may be detrimental to well-being.

B.3. Public Spaces

Lofland’s (1998) public realm is not synonymous with the concept of public spaces, which she defined as places that are relatively more accessible (physically and visually), whatever their ownership, than private spaces.⁴ The public realm is social territory, whereas public space is a particular type of physical territory. Lofland contrasted public space from the public realm by providing two examples: (a) the small village, in which public space exists but no public realm exists; and (b) the large city, in which both the public realm and public space exists:

[In the small village], when one leaves one’s immediate personal or private space (home), one moves into a world of acquaintances, kin, friends, enemies, and so forth, with whom one shares a culture and a history. All relationships are primary [even in public space, because everyone knows everyone] and what is defined as appropriate behavior among various categories of primary group members is as appropriate in private as in public space. . . . In contrast . . . as the city emerges, so does the separate and quite discrete public realm. In the city, when one leaves

⁴Public space can be meant in its most literal sense as space that is owned by public or government entities, such as property that the State of California owns (e.g., state parks and beaches) or property that a city owns (e.g., the land on which City Hall stands or some parks within city boundaries). Lofland used the term *public space* to mean spaces that are relatively more accessible, regardless of ownership. The *Random House Webster Unabridged Dictionary* (1993) defines public space as space “open to all persons . . . open to the view of all” and private space as being “not open or accessible to the general public” (pp. 8-9).

private space, one moves into a world of many unknown or only categorically known others (biographical strangers), many of whom may not share one's values, history, or perspective (cultural strangers). (p. 9)

Writing of the opportunities for public realm relationships in public and community spaces in large, densely and heterogeneously populated settlements, Lofland argued that the social networks possible because of the form of and types of spaces found in large cities, particularly the public spaces, are more diverse, including private, parochial, and public realm relationships.

Lofland (1998) made a compelling argument regarding the increased availability of public realm relationships in city centers, or what Milligan might call increased "sociability." The public spaces in large cities encourage "interactional potential" among a greater diversity of people. Obviously, the opportunity for a broader range of human relationships has implications for the place-based group identities, and therefore, the meanings and attachments possible.

Lofland (1998) cited the work of Jane Jacobs, Erving Goffman, William F. Whyte, and Richard Sennett, among others, in the identification of the importance of public realm relationships. Lofland indicated that in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961) Jane Jacobs reviewed the public realm that can be found in the city's streets and parks. Jacobs found a complex variety of meaningful social interactions, rather than the social vacuum that one might expect from discussions biased toward primary relationships (pp. 29-111). Erving Goffman, in *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959) and *Behavior in Public Places* (1969), observed public realm interactions, arguing that the concerns for what he termed the "fragility of selves" are operating in the public realm between strangers just as they are operating between intimate family members in the private realm. William F. Whyte, explicitly interested in the public spaces of cities in *The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces* (1980) and *City: Rediscovering the Center* (1988), confirmed Jacobs's observations about the complexities

and meaning of social interaction in public spaces. In *City: Rediscovering the Center*, referring to the public spaces located in the city's center, Whyte wrote,

The center is the place for news and gossip, for the creation of ideas, for marketing them and swiping them, for hatching deals, for starting parades. This is the stuff of the public life of the city—by no means wholly admirable, often abrasive, noisy, contentious, without apparent purpose. But this human congress is the genius of the place, its reason for being, its great marginal edge. This is the engine, the city's true export. Whatever makes this congress easier, more spontaneous, more enjoyable is not at all a frill. It is the heart of the center of the city. (p. 341)

The significance of the sites themselves in the attachment formed to the social and physical elements of public places is ideologically contested and virtually unexplored, empirically speaking. Lawrence's (1992) discussion of the role that the *placetas* themselves play in the attachments that Valencians experience to the celebration Las Fallas and the grief felt when one of the *fallas* was forced to be moved from its original plaza, a *placeta* named "Na Jordana," serves as an excellent example. Lawrence reported that the last year that the specific *falla* was constructed in its original location, a poem was published in which the *placeta* "speaks" as if a person:

I am an old mother, destroyed but thoroughly Valencian. I desire to live, but my time has come in spite of your esteem for my fame. I cannot doubt the love of the *falleros*, I honor your spirit and great labor which manifests itself all year long. In spite of your love for me, they want to take my name away and baptize another with it. If my time comes soon, then I beg you to let me die under the name of Na Jordana. (p. 225)

Eventually, the neighborhood *falla* was moved to another location; the name "Na Jordana" was conferred on the new location. Lawrence concluded that, because the name "Na Jordana" was transferred to a new site, Na Jordana the geographical site was less important than "Na Jordana" the symbolic location of the *fallas*. Lawrence concluded that the public squares and streets that contain the *fallas* are a significant element in the celebration, not because they become particularly meaningful physical sites but because they are a component in the affirmation of cultural identity and are an essential ingredient

in achieving transcendence. However, in contrast to Lawrence, it could be argued that the poem illustrates that, for some, the *falla* was inextricably linked to a geographical site. Whether Na Jordana eventually becomes inextricably linked to the new geographical site, for some, remains in question.

B.4. Research Questions

The lack of attention given to the importance of the public realm relationships, a major element in the social environments of public sites, leads to questions about the role that these relationships may play in the attachments that form to public places. Similarly, there has been very little focus on the role of the physical environment and its design and form in the sociability of public places and the resulting social attachments that might form. While sociologists and anthropologists have begun to assess the physical environment's role in affecting social and cultural attachments in public places, they still focus much less on attachments to the physical environment and the way in which its design and form might affect people's responses to the physical components of public places. How might these three themes play out in a place such as MacArthur Park? What kind of public realm relationships exist there and how do they affect attachment to the park? How does the physical environment of the park affect the public realm relationships that occur there?

C. Park Landscapes

Thus far, the literature review has addressed the broad social, cultural, economic and physical (urban and public) landscapes in which the meaning of MacArthur Park is being constructed. This section reviews literature regarding the social and physical elements of park landscapes that are particularly relevant to an understanding of the meaning of MacArthur Park and the potential attachments that might form among the Latino users studied for the current research. First, the section discusses cultural

differences in park use and meaning, primarily framed in terms of park preferences. Second, literature on other socioeconomic factors that influence park preferences is presented. Third, the discussion focuses on parks as natural settings and restorative environments.

C.1. Cultural Differences in Park Use

A growing body of evidence reports ethnic differences in use patterns and preferences of parks (Floyd & Shinew, 1999; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995). The majority of leisure and recreation studies have focused on non-Hispanic White populations (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995). Very few studies have looked at the use and preference patterns of Hispanic/Latino park users. While early research seemed to indicate no differences between Anglos and Hispanic/Latino populations (Mexican Americans, specifically; McMillen, 1983), later studies (Hutchison, 1988; Hutchison & Fidel, 1984; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995) found substantial differences between the two groups.

In an extensive study of park uses and meanings among four ethnic groups—Anglos, Hispanics, African Americans, and Asians—in four parks in Los Angeles, each in a different neighborhood, Loukaitou-Sideris (1995) found that Hispanics were the most frequent users of parks (both in terms of percentage of population and frequency of visits). In addition, Hispanics, more than the other groups, preferred the social assets of the park, as opposed to aesthetic, perceptual/psychological, relaxational, educational, and physiological assets. Hispanics visited the park with family more frequently than other groups (77.6% of park visits were with family, as opposed to 42% among Anglos, 29.4% among African Americans, and 36.7% among Asians). Hispanics were also the least likely to visit the parks alone (8.8% of visits were alone, as opposed to 9.8% for African Americans, 26.6% for Asians, and 30.4% for Anglos). Hispanic users of the parks were frequently observed to be engaged in group activities, including parties, celebrations of

birthdays and wedding anniversaries, and picnics. In terms of interactions/alterations with the physical design and form of the parks, Hispanics were observed to more actively appropriate park space for their needs than the other groups, converting open space to soccer areas when no formal fields were available and bringing items from home to help “claim the turf, mark the territory, and in some way privatize public space” (p. 94). Balloons, streamers, colorful piñatas, blankets, and music were some of the ways in which Hispanic users appropriated space and marked territory. Food was often at the center of the gatherings. Loukaitou-Sideris observed that parks appeared to substitute for the plazas that are ubiquitous and cherished in Latin American countries, with many of the same activities that characterize plaza life: dancing, dating, celebrating with drinks and music, and buying from vendors.

C.2. Other Differences in Park Use

While there has not been a significant number of studies looking at relationships between social and cultural factors affecting park preferences, there is a limited amount of empirical evidence suggesting that socioeconomic factors (income, gender, age, stage of the life cycle, education, occupation, degree of assimilation) may be as significant as cultural differences in predicting leisure activity preferences. A brief summary of the extremely limited number of studies that have included these factors in an analysis of Latino park preferences follows.

In looking at preferences for outdoor recreation use between Mexican Americans and Anglos, Floyd, Gramman, and Saenz (1993) found that, when acculturation was factored in, socioeconomic differences were most predictive (more predictive than cultural differences) of the use of outdoor recreation areas. Floyd et al. found further support for a relationship between assimilation and preferences among Mexican Americans, finding that bicultural Hispanic and less-assimilated Hispanic respondents

rated family-related benefits as most important while more-assimilated Hispanic and Anglo respondents rated them as least important.

Economic class differences accounted for more of the variance in activity preferences than race or gender (gender generally did not account for preferences) in a study by Floyd, McGuire, Shinew, and Noe (1994). Similarly, in a study of the leisure behavior of South American immigrants, Juniu (2000) found that social class was a better indicator of behavioral changes in leisure behavior among South American immigrants during their period of adjustment to the United States than was ethnicity. Loukaitou-Sideris (1995) pointed out that one of the explanations for Hispanics' frequent use of parks might be related to income: "Lower income groups may be more dependent on their local park for recreation than are more affluent groups, who have higher mobility and could also utilize more private open space" (p. 94). (This possibility and its influences upon place attachment were also briefly covered in the discussion of the socioeconomic landscape around MacArthur Park.)

According to national studies, participation in leisure time physical activity remains low among minority women (Evenson, Sarmiento, Macon, Tawney, & Ammerman, 2002). These findings mirror other studies that have found an underrepresentation of women in public spaces (Cranz, 1980; Cooper Marcus & Francis, 1990) and at public parks (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995). In a qualitative study of factors related to physical activity among first-generation Latina immigrants with low acculturation, Evenson et al. found that sociocultural barriers to physical activity included language barriers and issues related to transportation, cost, and safety. Family support and interest in women's opportunities (both in terms of time and access) to get physical activity was a major factor, as well. Immigrant women typically face challenges associated with loneliness, social isolation, dependency on husbands for transportation, and lack of

nearby relatives (Viadro, 1997). The limitations to Latina immigrants' participation in physical activities resemble those generally cited for the underrepresentation of women in public spaces: fear of victimization (Wekerle, 1981), reduction in discretionary time (Franck & Paxson, 1989), and restraints on women's access to public spaces (Kanes Weisman, 1992).

Differentiation in park use by age and stage of life cycle would be expected both between and among ethnic groups, as parks are designed to provide recreational opportunities that appeal to different age groups. Loukaitou-Sideris (1995) found different frequencies of park use by age group, with the proportion of teenagers and young adults in two of the "poorer" parks high (65% and 52% of people surveyed were less than 30 years old). In all four parks studied, middle-aged people were a small percentage of users. In the park with a senior citizens center, the percentage of elderly users was relatively high (26.7%), while in the three parks without senior centers the percentage was quite low. In addition, preferences in activities varied with age. Sports and mobile activities declined and stationary activities increased with age. While young adults' reasons for visiting the park varied among aesthetic, social, relaxational, and physiological qualities, most middle-aged groups ranked relaxation the highest and most seniors ranked social qualities the highest.

The relationship between cultural factors and socioeconomic factors and park use and meaning is obviously a complicated one. While Floyd et al. (1993) found that socioeconomic factors were better predictors of preference, the study also verified cultural differences in preferences, finding that even when education, age, and number of children were statistically controlled for, family-related recreation benefits were of highest importance to Anglos. Despite finding gender-related barriers to Latina immigrants participation in physical activities, Evenson et al. (2002) also found that factors limiting

women's engagement in physical activities were similar across age groups. While earlier studies by Hutchison (1987) found that, in comparison to Anglos and African Americans, Hispanics engaged in more stationary activities, Loukaitou-Sideris (1995) found all ethnic groups included in the study to be mostly engaged in stationary activities. The varied evidence regarding the cultural and socioeconomic factors influencing park preferences suggest that the meaning and attachments associated with any particular park space should be approached with a relatively open lens, that is, a lens open to a wide variety of meanings and attachments and their potential causative factors.

C.3. Parks as Natural Spaces

There is ample and growing empirical evidence of the positive and restorative effects of natural settings, including community parks, on humans (Canin, 1991; Cimprich, 1993; Miles, Sullivan, & Kuo, 1998; Ulrich et al., 1991) and a relationship between these effects and park attachments. "Place identity, place attachment, and restorative experiences can be viewed as nested and reciprocally influential within self- and emotional regulation" (Korpela, Hartig, Kaiser, & Fuhrer, 2001, p. 573). Experience in places that play a part in restoring or maintaining a person's well-being contribute to the formation of place identity (Korpela, 1989). In fulfilling people's emotional needs related to identity, it is likely that attachments to such places would form. Until relatively recently, research on place attachment and identity was proceeding relatively independently from research on restorative environments (Korpela & Hartig, 1996). More recent discussions have attempted to integrate the theoretical and empirical work from these two streams of literature on the importance of place to people's emotional well-being (Korpela et al.).

Much of the work on people's relationships with the natural environment addresses the contributions that these environments make to a person's "self-regulatory"

processes. Self-regulation “refers to mental activity through which the psychological influences of external factors—be they social, physiological, or physical—are processed. Self- and emotion-regulation enable an individual to function adaptively in situations that are, for example, emotionally arousing” (Korpela et al., 2001, p. 574). Self-regulation proceeds with the application of mental, physical, social and environmental strategies (Korpela et al.). Korpela et al. provided the example of a physical strategy, such as jogging, as a means of controlling fitness in order to maintain a positive self-image. Research has demonstrated that people use places for the same purpose (Wolfing, 1996), as in the case of resettlers to Germany who used favorite places for self-regulation. Korpela et al. concluded that “it is not only social attachments but also place use and place attachment that are able to serve self-and emotion regulation” (p. 575).

Rachel and Stephen Kaplan have studied restorative experiences associated with natural environment that address certain types of mental fatigue.⁵ Mental fatigue has been linked with a variety of negative effects on emotional well-being, from a general inability to cope with the stressors of everyday life to a heightened propensity for aggressive behavior and even violence (Kaplan, 1987). In looking at the manner in which restoration occurs, Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) saw restoration unfolding in situations that involved the following:

Being away—experiencing a psychological distance from elements of one’s usual routine. Kaplan writes that being away “involves a conceptual rather than a physical transformation. A new or different environment, while potentially helpful, is

⁵Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) introduced attention restoration theory. This work is concerned with the fatigue that humans experience because of directed attention. Directed attention “requires effort, plays a central role in achieving focus, is under voluntary control (at least some of time), is susceptible to fatigue, and controls distraction through the use of inhibition” (Kaplan, 1995, p. 170). Directed attention fatigue can have all sorts of negative consequences (irritability, negative emotions, reduced capabilities in efforts that require focus), not the least of which is an inability to cope with difficult personal matters.

not essential. A change in the direction of one's gaze, or even an old environment viewed in a new way can provide the necessary conceptual shift.

Fascination—processes (bird watching, mountain climbing) or objects (birds, mountains) that result in involuntary or effortless attention.

Extent—an environmental coherence that gives one a sense of interrelatedness, of immersion in a coherent physical or conceptual environment that is rich or significant enough to engage the mind. An endless stream of stimuli both fascinating and different from the usual would not qualify as a restorative environment. (Kaplan, 1995, p. 173)

Compatibility—a match “between personal inclinations and purposes, environmental supports for intended activities, and environmental demands for action.” (Korpela et al., 2001, p. 576)

Studies of favorite places have provided empirical support for the idea that people use physical places for self- or emotional regulation through restoration, finding that subjects describe going to their favorite places to relax, to think about difficult problems, or to achieve clarity (Korpela, 1992). This research has documented that experiences of favorite places are high in the restorative qualities described by Kaplan and Kaplan, with extent and compatibility experienced at relatively higher levels in favorite places than being away or fascination (Korpela & Hartig, 1996). Favorite places identified were most frequently in two categories: (a) natural settings such as parks, forests and lakes; and (b) residential settings. Studies have also found that a home environment that does not fulfill emotional needs, thereby inhibiting the formation of positive attachments, may be a motivation for compensatory leisure activities (Fuhrer, Kaiser, & Hartig, 1993). In a study of restorative experiences and self-regulation in favorite places, Korpela et al. (2001) found that natural favorite places were most frequently associated with restorative outcomes, with feelings of “relaxation, calmness, and comfortableness” most frequently mentioned and “happiness, enjoyment and excitement” the next most frequently mentioned (pp. 585-586).

A couple of the most interesting outcomes of this research have implications for understanding the importance of the physical design and form to the experience of parks

as favorite and restorative places. Korpela et al. (2001) concluded that “experiencing a favorite place with reference to oneself and one’s inclinations [compatibility] appears to be more important than inherently engaging or interesting properties of the environment per se [fascination]” (p. 585). While natural elements may contribute significantly to the experience of a park as a favorite place, whether these elements are designed to be particularly engaging or interesting may be less important than whether they are compatible with one’s inclinations. Alternatively, Kuo and Sullivan (2001) found strong evidence that linked natural elements in the inner city, such as trees and grass, with a reduction in aggressive and potentially violent behavior and that “even a minimal density and extent of nature” were necessary to convey such benefits.

Limited research demonstrates a cultural difference in the preferences for natural landscape. In a study of cross-cultural preferences for favorite places among college students in Senegal, Ireland, and the United States for specific environmental forms, Newell (1997) found “remarkable concurrence” in the categories of favorite places (i.e., pastoral, home, oceans/beaches) generated by students from all the countries and significant differences between countries in a preference for specific categories. Pastoral environments were the most frequently chosen category (20.7%) of favorite places by Irish students, while home environments or surroundings were the most frequently chosen category (30.4%) of American students. A major emphasis on natural landscapes, as opposed to built or urban environments, was found among U.S. and Irish students, while Senegalese students were evenly split between natural (18.8% chose oceans/beaches) and urban/built environments (18.8% chose theaters, sports centers, and other built environments, primarily social in nature). In terms of the physical qualities/elements—aesthetics, ecological, peaceful, secluded, natural, wildlife—of place that respondents named as reasons for selecting favorite places, aesthetics ranked first among

Irish students, third among American students (behind ecological and peaceful), and tied for fifth/last (behind natural, peaceful, ecological and wildlife) among Senegalese students.

C.4. Research Questions

Empirical studies on the use of places for self- and emotional regulation, particularly the use of natural environments for restorative purposes, may have significant implications for the meanings and attachments associated with a relatively larger urban park such as MacArthur Park. Unlike the popular plazas of Latin America, MacArthur Park contains a significant number of elements that might be considered restorative: grassy areas, a large lake, and many mature trees. These elements have the potential to play a meaningful role in the development of attachments to a park. Yet, empirical studies regarding cultural differences in park preferences indicate that Latino park users, particularly less-assimilated Latino park users, may find the natural elements of MacArthur Park much less important than the social elements.

IV. Research Questions

The literature review in this chapter suggests that the place attachments experienced in a specific locale are the result of a complex set of factors associated with that particular locale. The numerous and sometimes contradictory explanations for place attachment reviewed in this chapter demonstrate only beginning understanding of the way in which the social, cultural, economic, and physical contexts influence place meaning and attachment. The specificity of the experience of place attachment to locale, in both its social and physical sense, led to the broad and exploratory nature of the following research questions that guided this study of factors that contribute to the development and maintenance of place attachment.

A. Social and Physical Components of Attachment

1. What are the range (such as attachment, rootedness, indifference, dislike) and intensity of emotional responses that form in response to the social and physical elements of MacArthur Park among its Latino users? Primary concerns include the following: (a) How does the social and cultural landscape of the neighborhood influence attachment to the park? (b) How does the physical landscape influence attachment to the park? (c) What is the role of the design and form of the park itself in these attachments? and (d) How do these responses compare with the traditional findings of place attachment studies?

B. Social and Cultural Landscapes

How does the social and cultural landscape of MacArthur Park affect attachments to the social and physical environment of the park? More specifically:

B.1. Rootedness and Displacement

1. What kinds of attachments to new places form among immigrants who have experienced significant and, sometimes, traumatic displacement? (a) Can attachments form to new places that rival the sense of belonging or the attachments to the residences, neighborhoods, and countries where one was born and grew up? (b) How quickly can these attachments develop? (c) What role might the physical environment play in addressing rootedness and displacement?

B.2. Transnationalism

What kind of emotional responses to MacArthur Park—rootedness, belonging, positive attachments, negative feelings—exist among the Latino immigrants with continuing ties to their homeland? (a) How do these attachments compare to those experienced by immigrants who have been here for a longer period of time or have fewer contacts with their homeland? (b) In what ways does the physical environment express or address transnational ties?

B.3. Ethnic Enclave

Do the Latino users of MacArthur Park see their ethnic identity expressed in MacArthur Park, and how does this affect their attachments to the park? (a) How do the design and form of MacArthur Park signify, either permanently or temporarily, ethnic identity? (b) Along with architecture, how can other aspects of the physical environment (such as types of businesses, ritual events, people, music, spatial relationships) act as symbols of identity?

B.4. Revitalizing Neighborhood

How does the economic landscape of the neighborhood affect attachments to the park? (a) Are attachments affected by whether users are homeowners or renters in the neighborhood? (b) How does fear of crime affect attachments to the park? (c) How does the physical condition of the park (litter and graffiti and other physical conditions) affect attachment to the park?

C. Physical Landscapes

How does the physical landscape of MacArthur Park affect attachments to the social and physical environments of the park?

C.1. Urban

Are attachments to MacArthur Park affected by its urban location? (a) How might Latino immigrants' attachments to MacArthur Park be influenced by the physical environment for which they migrated? (b) Are there physical attributes of the Park that support or hinder attachments based on the previous physical environments with which park users are familiar?

C.2. Public

How are attachments to MacArthur Park affected by its role as a public place? (a) What kind of public realm relationships exist in the park and how do they affect

attachment to the park? (b) How does the physical environment of the park affect the public realm relationships that occur there?

C.3. Park

How do attachments to MacArthur Park relate to (a) the cultural park preferences of the Latino users of the park; (b) preferences related to age, gender, and measures of assimilation (length of residence in the United States and ability to speak English); and (c) the restorative elements of the park: grassy areas, a large lake, and many mature trees?

The research questions introduced in this chapter are addressed in chapters 5 through 8. First, the methodological approach used and the neighborhood and park setting chosen for this study are reviewed in chapters 3 and 4, respectively.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodological approach used for this research is the case study. After explaining the purpose of the study (Part I) and the reasons MacArthur Park was chosen as the site for this case study (Part II), the methodological approach (single case study) and specific sources of evidence (surveys, interviews, and observations) are identified (Part III). Part IV reviews the challenges and limitations of the study.

I. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is twofold. First, the study examines the attachments and other emotional meanings associated with MacArthur Park among Latinos/as who use the park. As discussed in chapter 2, very few studies have looked at the place attachment associated with public spaces. These studies have concentrated primarily on attachments to the social environment of these spaces, primarily in neighborhoods of significant residential stability and very little social or cultural change. The purpose of this study is to assess the broad spectrum of emotional meanings (not just positive attachments) of both the social and physical environments (not solely the social environment) of MacArthur Park, a park in a neighborhood with relatively low residential stability—that is, a largely immigrant population. The study is somewhat exploratory in nature because it looks beyond positive attachments for emotional meanings associated with both the social and physical environments of a park in an immigrant neighborhood.

The second purpose of this study is to assess the influence that MacArthur Park's design and form have on its emotional meaning for users. Given the debate regarding the meaning of place and how it develops, two assumptions should make explicit when writing about the relationship between design and the meaning of places. First, contrary to much of the thinking of practicing urban planners, meaning is not inherent in the

physical design of place; instead, the meaning of places is constructed by people within specific social and cultural contexts. Second, contrary to much of the thinking in sociology and anthropology, the specific qualities, characteristics, and design of the physical landscape influence the meanings that people construct for places. Part of the purpose of this study, then, is to analyze the ways in which the specific qualities, characteristics, and physical design of MacArthur Park affect attachments and other emotional meanings associated with both its social and physical environments.

II. Selection of the Case Study Site and Participants

A. Study Site

Chapter 4 provides a detailed discussion of MacArthur Park. This section describes why the social, cultural and physical landscape of this park makes it an ideal site to look at the emotional meanings associated with the social and physical elements of an urban park and the role that physical design plays in influencing these meanings.

From the point of view of a planner concerned with the importance and success of parks and other public spaces in large and culturally diverse cities, and particularly public spaces that serve poorer working-class communities, MacArthur Park seemed a natural choice. The park is located in downtown Los Angeles in the Westlake District, a neighborhood that has experienced serious problems with overcrowding, crime, noise, and congestion for at least 20 years. The 8 square miles surrounding the park are denser than any urban area west of New York City (*Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 2004) and twice as crowded as any other area of Los Angeles (*Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 1993).

The “decline” of the neighborhood and the park is reported to have begun just after World War II with the middle-class exodus to the suburbs. Currently, the neighborhood is experiencing the pressures of gentrification, with several historical buildings being converted into luxury apartments and condominiums. New luxury housing projects

are pushing their way westward and ever closer to the Westlake District, already “jumping” the 110 freeway that separates the giant entertainment/hotels/luxury condominiums redevelopment project (LA Live) from the Westlake District. In many ways, the social context of the neighborhood and the park are similar to those of many large metropolitan centers in the United States, with an older housing stock, dense living conditions, relatively higher crime rates, and an ethnically diverse and largely foreign-born population.

For someone interested in understanding the development and current condition of attachments and other emotional meanings of place in an increasingly globalized world among increasingly mobile/transnational populations, MacArthur Park is also a natural choice. Since World War II, the neighborhood has functioned as a first-stop for many immigrants coming to Los Angeles. Following World War II, Jewish immigrants moved to the neighborhood (hence the regionally famous Langer’s delicatessen located at the corner of the park) and, subsequently, refugees fleeing wars in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s also settled there. In the 1990s immigrants from the state of Oaxaca in Mexico, fleeing a devastated agricultural economy, began to move to Los Angeles and to Westlake District and nearby neighborhoods. Koreatown is east of MacArthur Park and a large Philippine population lives north of the park.

MacArthur Park is at the center of the rich cultural diversity that helps to define downtown Los Angeles. For the newest immigrants, attachments and other meanings related to MacArthur Park are only beginning to form. For existing populations, the newcomers are altering the social and cultural context of the neighborhood and the park and attachments and meanings are presumably being renegotiated. The park, then, is a perfect place to observe the development and renegotiation of place meanings, attachment, and identity among populations with multiple attachments and identities. The

diverse social and cultural context in which the meanings of MacArthur Park are constructed is also representative of the ethnic landscapes that can be found in many urban centers.

Social and cultural changes in the neighborhood are reflected in a struggle over the physical landscape of MacArthur Park, providing an opportunity to examine the ways in which the park's design is influencing its meanings. An unofficial soccer league, with 1,500 to 2,000 children enrolled, is operating in the park without the official permission of the City of Los Angeles.¹ In addition, an amphitheatre in the park has been restored by an outside group. The first music series was offered this summer (2007), with music programmed to reach a wide audience. While one night a week was programmed for music from "Latin America," several survey participants indicated that the amphitheatre had not been refurbished for them but for an "Anglo" audience that has been moving into the refurbished condominium projects in the neighborhood.

One of the city's first parks, MacArthur Park is a product of 19th century City Beautiful and Parks movements. As such, it was designed to be a relatively "natural" environment, with passive activities such as strolling through the grounds, sitting on the grass, and viewing the natural lake. In the past 20 years crime has become a serious problem in the park, which is located within the Los Angeles Rampart Division. From January through March 2003 there were 26 shootings, 234 robberies, and 600 major assault crimes in the park. Identified by the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) in 2002 as one of three particular "areas of concern," the park now has police officers

¹Also, an amphitheatre in the park has been restored by an outside group. The first music series was offered this summer, with music programmed to reach a wide audience. While one night a week was programmed for music from "Latin America," several survey participants indicated that the amphitheatre had not been refurbished for them but for an "Anglo" audience that has been moving into the refurbished condominium projects in the neighborhood.

patrolling it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, along with seven surveillance cameras (*Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 2004).

Crime statistics have improved. While some credit the LAPD for the improvements, others credit the soccer league that has unofficially installed itself in the park, converting one of the grassy areas into two soccer fields. The league brings hundreds, and on some weekends thousands, of parents and children to the park. Older non-Latino residents, newer gentrifying residents, historic preservationists, and some environmentalists have sparred with the organizers of the soccer league over whether soccer is an allowed use in this historic park. Questions over the appropriate use and design of the park and whom the park should serve are typical of conflicts over parks in other urban centers.

B. Study Participants

The study focuses on first-generation immigrants (recent and more established) from Mexico, Central, and South America who use the park. By looking at a group who share the characteristic of being new to this neighborhood and park but arriving at different times, I sought to trace the development of place meaning over time. Their immigrant status and varied length of residence also allowed a look at how transnational ties might affect place meanings.

While the participants shared many cultural values and beliefs, allowing a look in some depth at the relationship between culture, identity, and place meaning, their beliefs also varied based on their country and region of origin, allowing a look at the way in which variations in culture and identity might also affect meaning.

Finally, my experience and familiarity, from childhood forward, with the rich traditions of public life found in the plazas in Mexico and South America led me to wonder how immigrants with these traditions might feel about the plazas that they left

behind and the new parks that they have adopted in the United States. Did they miss the public places in their homeland, public places that appeared to function as the social center of their communities? Had they recaptured this world in public places here in the United States? How might the differences between public places in their homeland and here—both social and physical—affect them? These initial questions led to the specific research questions presented in chapter 2.

III. Research Methods

A. Methodological Approach

A.1. The Single Case Study

As described at the beginning of this chapter, the purpose of this study was somewhat exploratory in nature. Very few studies have examined the emotional importance of public places in a neighborhood of relatively newly arrived immigrants. However, as Yin (2003) wrote, the exploratory purpose of an empirical study does not automatically imply use of the case study method. The case study method allows one “to investigate a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13) and when “you deliberately want to cover contextual conditions—believing that they might be highly pertinent to your phenomenon of study” (p. 9).

Chapter 2 reviewed several theories about the meaning of places, particularly from the fields of sociology and anthropology, stipulating that (a) people construct place meanings, and (b) the social and cultural context of places influence the meanings that people give to them. In addition, physical context of places also influences the meanings that people give to them. Context, then, is integral to an exploration of the phenomenon of place meaning in MacArthur Park, and the case study is the logical methodological choice. A single case study, rather than a multiple or comparative case study approach,

was chosen for two reasons. First, this study is somewhat “revelatory” in nature, providing an opportunity to observe a phenomenon that has not previously been observed (Yin, 2003, p. 40), particularly in this specific context. Second, the factors involved in the development of place attachments and other emotional meanings in this specific locale are sufficiently complex to require full attention in a dissertation.

A.2. Approaches to Understanding the Role of the Physical Environment

As discussed in chapter 2, when place attachment studies have looked at attachments to the physical elements of place, they have concentrated on the symbolic role of permanent fixtures (landmarks, architectural style, statues) in representing individual or group identity. Nowhere has this been truer than in studies of ethnic enclaves (Abrahamson, 1996; Mazumdar et al., 2000). This approach to the symbolic role of the physical environment is problematic in a neighborhood like the Westlake District and for a public site such as MacArthur Park for several reasons. First, in a lower-income neighborhood residents may have fewer resources to make permanent or substantial physical changes to the environment (their homes or businesses) or to influence changes made by others (city planners, businesses from outside the community, absentee property owners) that reflect local identity. Second, in a transitional neighborhood that serves as a first stop for immigrants who may be on their way to other neighborhoods, residents may not have the time or desire to permanently affect the landscape. Third, in a neighborhood that is home to several waves of immigrants from various parts of the world, the homogeneous ethnic enclave and the symbolic role that it plays may not be possible.

To address these challenges, in line with other studies that show that fixed and non-fixed aspects of the environment can act as symbols of identity, such as types of businesses, ritual events, people, music, or spatial relationships (Lawrence 1992; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2002b; Low, 2000; Low et al., 2005; Rapoport, 1982a, 1982b), this

study utilizes data collection methods that cover both fixed and non-fixed aspects of the neighborhood that are symbolic and meaningful for local users, including the following:

1. Form: fixed and non-fixed aspects of the physical setting/design of each space, including layout, social atmosphere, circulation, design style, and connection to street (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995; Low, 2000; Low et al., 2005; Mazumdar et al., 2000; Milligan, 1998); and architecture, landscaping, signs, art, smells, sounds, colors, foods, and all other aspects of the physical environment that could be imbued with meaning or act as a symbolic marker;

2. Functions/activities: sanctioned and unsanctioned use of space, including those of businesses and during informal and formal events activities (e.g., strolling, standing, people watching, sitting, vending, waiting at the bus stop, playing, dancing, shopping; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2002b); and

3. Population/behavior: sanctioned and unsanctioned users of the space, their characteristics (e.g., age, sex, ethnicity, dress), and their behavior patterns (Loukaitou-Sideris, 2002b; Low, 2000; Low et al., 2005).

Outside of its restorative function and symbolic role in representing identity, very little attention has been given to other ways in which the physical environment might influence attachments and other emotional meanings of place. This is partially the result of the theoretical concerns specific to the disciplines that have addressed place attachment and identity. By taking an interdisciplinary approach to understanding attachment and other emotional meanings associated with place, it is my intention to remain open to the multiple roles that the physical environment plays in the development of place meaning.

B. Specific Methods for Gathering Evidence

Multiple sources of evidence/methods of gathering data were used in this case study. To a significant degree, the methods of data collection for this research took place concurrently. This study relied on five sources of data. The following is a brief description of each data collection method and the types of data gathered through the specific method.

B.1. Surveys

Brief interviews using a written survey form were completed with 182 park users. Surveys were conducted by one graduate student and two undergraduate students. I supervised the administration of the surveys, being onsite for the majority of time the students completed them with participants and moving randomly between students to observe them. Only in the initial stage of testing questions and in some of the initial surveys did I interfere to clarify questions for the students or to demonstrate ways to ask for elaborations of the answers from participants.

Surveys were randomly gathered in the park by approaching every third person encountered and asking that person to participate in a brief interview. The park was divided into eight activity areas. The southern half of the park has three functionally different activity areas: (a) the southeastern entrance, where park users congregate to talk and watch those entering and leaving the park; (b) around the lake, where park users have a broad view of the lake and its environs; and (c) the southwestern entrance, where people congregate around park benches and on benches that are surrounded by some of the most densely landscaped areas of the park. The northern half of the park was divided into five functional areas: (a) the children's play area, an enclosed playground with equipment and surrounding benches; (b) the soccer field, which includes two playing fields and surrounding areas for observing the games; (c) an area west of the soccer field and amphitheater, where park users can sit on grassy areas under a dense tree canopy;

(d) an area north and east of the soccer field, where park users can sit on grassy areas under trees; and (e) the red sculpture picnic area, where park users gather on park benches near a large red sculpture. Students remained in an activity area until they had moved through the entire population. Each activity area was covered from 8 a.m. to dusk at least once during the week and once on the weekend. Approximately 50% of the surveys were gathered on the weekend and 50% during weekdays. After the collection of approximately 182 surveys, about 80% of the interview/surveys had been conducted with men because the population of the park users was 4:1 in favor of men. After that, interview/surveys were delimited to every third woman until there was an even gender distribution of interviewees.

The survey provided basic demographic data; length and type of experience with the park and past homeland parks; emotional responses to homeland parks and MacArthur Park; and nature of mobility/transmigrant ties. Table 1 pairs the research questions with the corresponding survey questions.

B.2. Extended Interviews

In approaching park users to complete the brief interview/survey, the interviewers sought to identify participants for extended interviews who could provide the widest response possible on research topics. Six extended interviews were conducted with two women and four men. Interviewees were chosen to achieve as varied life experiences and experience with the park as possible. Interviews ranged in age from 30 to 65 years and varied in use of the park (children's playground, soccer field, southeastern entrance, entire park (vendor), around the lake), country of origin (Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador), and history with the park (currently using the park, previously using the park). In-depth, semistructured interviews containing additional open-ended questions allowed for a full exploration of the participants' relationships and experiences with salient places

Table 1

Correspondence of Survey Questions to Research Questions

Research questions	Survey questions
Social and cultural landscapes	
How does the social and cultural landscape of MacArthur Park (MP) affect attachments to the social and physical environment of the park?	
Rootedness and displacement	Rootedness and displacement
<p>What kinds of attachments to new places form among immigrants who have experienced significant and, sometimes, traumatic displacement?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can attachments form to new places that rival the sense of belonging or the attachments to similar places in homeland? • How quickly can these attachments develop? • What role might the physical environment play in addressing rootedness and displacement? 	<p>Participants were asked what they liked and disliked about MP and were also asked to rate emotional responses to MP</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants were asked to rate emotional responses to similar questions regarding homeland parks. They were also asked to compare MP with homeland parks; • Length of experience with MP was asked; • Questions about favorite things about park were asked, including physical elements
Transnationalism	Transnationalism
<p>What kind of emotional responses to MP—rootedness, belonging, positive attachments, negative feelings—exist among the Latino immigrants with continuing ties to their homeland?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do these attachments compare to those experienced by immigrant’s that have been here for a longer period of time or have fewer contacts with their homeland? • In what ways does the physical environment express or address transnational ties? 	<p>Participants were asked about frequency and length of return trips to homeland, frequency of contacts with homeland, where the majority of family members live, and where they would like to live in the future.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic questions included length of time spent in this country; • Questions about favorite things about park were asked, including physical objects.
Ethnic enclave	Ethnic enclave
<p>Do the Latino users of MP see their ethnic identity expressed in MP and how does this affect their attachments to the Park?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do the design and form of MP signify, either permanently or temporarily, ethnic identity? 	<p>Open-ended questions regarding favorite things about MP, what participants would change about MP, how MP compared to their homeland parks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions about favorite things about park, including physical objects.

Table 1 (continued)

Research questions	Survey questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Along with architecture, how do other aspects of the physical environment can act as symbols of identity, such as types of businesses, ritual events, people, music, spatial relationships? 	
Revitalizing neighborhood	Revitalizing neighborhood
How does the economic landscape of the neighborhood affect attachments to MP?	Open-ended questions regarding favorite and least favorite things and what participants would change about MP were asked
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are attachments affected by whether users are homeowners or renters in the neighborhood? • How does fear of crime affect attachments to the park? • How does the physical condition of the park—litter and graffiti and other physical conditions—affect attachment to the park? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participants were asked whether they rented or owned • Questions about crime • Questions about favorite things and least favorite things about park, including physical objects
Physical landscapes	
How does the physical landscape of MP affect attachments to the social and physical environments of the park?	
Urban	Urban
Are attachments to MP affected by its urban location?	Open-ended questions regarding favorite and least favorite things and what participants would change about MP were asked
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How might park users' attachments to MP be influenced by the physical environment from which they migrated? • Are there physical attributes of the park that support or hinder attachments based on the previous physical environments with which park users are familiar? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic questions determined the type of community of origin; • Questions about favorite things and least favorite things about park, including physical objects?

Table 1 (continued)

Research questions	Survey questions
<p>Public</p> <p>How are attachments to MacArthur Park affected by its role as a public place?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of public realm relationships exist in the park and how do they affect attachment to the park? • How does the physical environment of the park affect the public realm relationships that occur there? 	<p>Public</p> <p>Open-ended questions regarding favorite and least favorite things about MP, what participants would change about MP, including physical objects.</p>
<p>Park</p> <p>How do attachments to MP relate to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The cultural park preferences of the Latino users of the park? • Preferences related to age, gender, and measures of assimilation (length of residence in the U.S. and ability to speak English)? • The restorative elements of the park—grassy areas, a large lake, and many mature trees? 	<p>Park</p> <p>Open-ended questions regarding favorite and least favorite things about MP, what participants would change about MP, including physical objects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic questions

in their lives. These participants were interviewed twice: the first time for approximately 1-3 hours (depending on whether they had previously completed a brief interview/survey) and the second time for approximately one-half hour to 1 hour to go over photographs that the participants had taken at the interviewer's request (explained in detail below). Two of the students who completed the brief interview/survey with park users helped to conduct the interviews (acted as translators or interviewers).

The strategy for choosing participants was twofold: (a) "to obtain a wide range of variation in the responses through the strategic consideration of variables or factors expected to produce variation in the phenomenon being studied" (Gustafson, 2001a, p. 8),

and (b) “to allow sampling on the basis of issues that emerge during the data collection” (Manzo, 2003, p. 51).

In the first extended interview respondents were asked to tell about the communities they were from and what they liked to do, as well as what they liked about Los Angeles and the MacArthur Park neighborhood. In some cases the interviewees had already been through a brief interview/survey with the students, in which case they were asked to elaborate on their responses on the survey related to how much and why they use the park, their favorite and least favorite things about the park, what they would change about the park, similar questions for homeland parks and their comparison of MacArthur Park with homeland parks. In other cases, the interviewees had not been through a brief interview/survey and an extended interview form that included brief interview/survey questions was used.

At the end of the first extended interview, the interviewer provided a camera to each interviewee and asked the interviewee to take pictures of the park, including pictures of the following: (a) their favorite places in MacArthur Park, their favorite things in the park (trees, fountains, the lake, people, etc.), places they did not like in the park; (b) if they had children, their children’s favorite places in the park, their favorite things in the park (trees fountains, the lake, people, etc.), places that they did not like in the park, and places in the park that reminded them of their homeland; (c) if they had children, places in the park that reminded their children of their homeland, places in the park where they felt safe, places in the park where they felt unsafe; (d) if they had children, places in the park where their children felt safe, places in the park where their children felt unsafe, places in the park they would change, and places in the park they would not want to change.

The interviewees were asked to bring to the second interview any pictures they had of past places/people/things that addressed the above issues. I brought example pictures of parks from their homeland, as well. If I could find pictures of the parks that they had mentioned in the first interview, I brought them. If not, I brought pictures of parks from their homeland to trigger additional memories.

Initial interviews began with open-ended and general questions regarding what the participants thought about the neighborhood and where they lived (whether they resided inside or outside the neighborhood), what they thought about the places they had come from, and to compare the park and surrounding neighborhood to these places. By initiating the interview with questions regarding thoughts and memories, it was intended to begin the interview with less intrusive, nonthreatening questions and to allow room for any emotional meanings of and relationships to both current and past places to come out. This approach avoided asking leading questions directly regarding meanings and relationships to place. Once interviewees began to talk about their thoughts and memories, appropriate questions to ask regarding emotional meanings or relationships emerged.

The extended interviews allowed a focus in a more nuanced way than the brief interviews on how respondents talked about the park, how they attributed emotional meaning to the park, in what ways they considered the park to be important or unimportant. The extended interviews and discussion of photographs allowed more specific looks at aspects of the fixed and nonfixed environment that affect the development of meaning and relationships to place.

B.3. Field/Behavior Observations

Frequent observations of the park were made for the purpose of determining activity areas, population in activity areas during the weekends and weekdays, specific

(b) establishing a chain of evidence, and (c) having a draft report of the study reviewed by key informants.

Multiple sources of evidence were used in the present study to address the two key purposes of the study: (a) an exploration of attachments and other emotional meanings associated with MacArthur Park among Latinos/as who use the park, and (b) an assessment of the influence of the park's design and form on its emotional meaning for users. While a brief interview/survey provided the basis for much of the analysis, the results were triangulated with evidence from extended interviews, direct observation, site design and analysis, and document and photograph review. In addition, the brief interview/survey design made both qualitative and quantitative analysis possible.

Operationalizing measures of attachment and emotional meaning relied on two tactics. First, a significant number of place attachment studies were reviewed that explicitly discussed ways to measure attachment and the factors contributing to attachment and the problems associated with the measures. Some of the quantitative data produced in the current study is the result of questions incorporated into the survey from other surveys that measured attachment. Also questions regarding negative feelings experienced in and toward MacArthur Park (fear and loneliness, for example) were presented, allowing the study to expand beyond the solely positive emotional meanings of MacArthur Park. A review of qualitative studies on attachment and place meaning aided in developed operational measures for other emotional meanings.

Second, a significant number of open-ended questions were included in the survey. These open-ended questions provided triangulation for the quantitative findings and allowed exploration of emotional meanings beyond attachment and the factors in the social and physical environment that might contribute to those attachments.

As described in the section on specific methods, a “chain of evidence” was established from the research questions to the data, indicating the interview/survey questions used and other types of data gathered to address specific concepts and questions in the research. In the chapters on data analysis and conclusions, links between the data and the conclusions of the study are made explicit.

A.2. External Validity

A frequent concern regarding case studies, particularly single case studies, is related to their generalizability beyond the specific case being studied. Yin (2003) wrote that this concern arises from implicit contrasts of the case study with survey research, from which statistical generalization is possible. That is, if a sample for a survey is chosen properly, the results of the survey “readily generalizes to a larger universe” or population (p. 36). With statistical generalization, one generalizes from the sample to a larger population. The purpose of a case study is not statistical generalization but analytical generalization, wherein the researcher attempts to “generalize a particular set of results to a larger theory” (p. 36). The present case study tests theories regarding place attachment in the particular setting of an urban park among a particular population, first-generation Latino park users and regarding their relevance to emotional meanings beyond positive attachments.

The greatest challenge for this empirical study is that most place attachment studies have been quantitative, employing methods that allow statistical generalization. The current study was designed to use several methods of gathering evidence that are primarily qualitative. Qualitative methods are used to test theories about attachment that were developed using primarily quantitative methods. Because of the primarily qualitative approach, the findings are subject to concerns about subjectivity to which the findings from quantitative studies would not be subject. Two major tactics in this research design

are included to address concerns about subjectivity: (a) use of multiple sources of evidence, and (b) an extensive number of surveys of park users. To increase the validity of the results of the survey, the following concerns related to validity were addressed using the following methods:

1. To address concerns regarding whether the results are representative for MacArthur Park users, (a) data were gathered using a protocol to ensure randomness, and (b) an extensive number of surveys were gathered (more than 10% of the population of park users on weekdays and 8% of park users on weekends).

2. To address concerns regarding subjectivity, multiple researchers were employed for testing and completing the surveys.

3. To address concerns about the operationalization of concepts related to place attachment, (a) some close-ended questions used to measure attachment were taken from previous quantitative studies regarding attachment, and other close-ended questions were developed to address criticisms (by past researchers and the current researcher) of the operationalization of place attachment in quantitative studies; and (b) some open-ended questions were taken from the few previous qualitative studies regarding attachment and place meaning, and other open-ended questions were developed to address criticisms (by past researchers and the current researcher) of the operationalization of place attachment in quantitative studies.

While the survey was used to produce quantitative data, this instrument was not included in the research design for the purpose of generalizing the findings to populations beyond this particular case. Based on a random sample of 182 MacArthur Park users, the results of the survey are deemed to be reasonably representative of the first-generation Latinos who use MacArthur Park, but the results are not necessarily representative of

other urban park users (for instance, Latinos or non-Latinos who use urban parks elsewhere) or urban residents who do not use MacArthur Park or other urban parks.

A.3. Reliability

Concerns regarding the reliability of a case study relate to the ability of a later researcher to reproduce findings when using the same methods to study the same case. Yin (2003) suggested three steps to address this concern: (a) Make the protocol for a study as explicit as possible, (b) make as many steps in the study as operational as possible, and (c) conduct the study as though “someone were always looking over your shoulder” (p. 37). The chapters on methodology and data analysis and the appendix explicitly describe the operationalization of the concepts and steps of the present study. In addition, because one of the theories of this study is that the very specific social, cultural, and physical contexts of places affect the construction of their meanings, the chapter on the case setting is as descriptive as possible of the “landscape” of this study, MacArthur Park. If, as Gupta and Ferguson (1998) and others have argued, the meanings of places are constantly being renegotiated as the social, cultural, and physical landscapes change, then the “case” itself is in flux. Thus, its careful description is necessary for evaluating the potential of a replication of this study and its findings.

B. Other Challenges

B.1. Language

One of the most significant challenges for this study was that my first language is English, while Spanish is the first, and sometimes only, language of the majority of participants in the study. In addition, some of the park users were from small villages where primarily indigenous languages are spoken. These challenges were addressed in four ways.

First, while I am not a native Spanish speaker, I have achieved an intermediate level in Spanish, having had both high school and college-level Spanish courses and recently spending extensive periods for two summers in intense Spanish courses in Mexico. Both before and after the summer courses, I tested my language skills by striking up casual conversations with Spanish speakers in the study neighborhood and was able to communicate with them with only minor difficulties.

Second, the brief interview/survey form and extended interview form were translated into Spanish with the help of four native Spanish speakers (a dissertation committee member and three students). In addition, the brief interview/survey form was tested in the field for 2 months, first by me and subsequently by the three students who administered the brief interview/surveys and translated the extended interviews. In testing the questions, the students—from Mexico and El Salvador—and I learned quite a number of colloquialisms for terms describing both the physical and emotional landscape associated with the park, which were eventually incorporated into the questions.

Third, the students conducted the brief interview/surveys and assisted with the extended interviews.

Fourth, the extended interviews were audiotaped and the student researchers transcribed and translated them.

These efforts overcame the fact that some of the park users did not have familiarity with English. Almost all of the interviewed park users communicated in Spanish. Generally speaking, the people who declined to participate in the brief interview/survey declined using Spanish. Still, it is possible that some of the park users who declined to participate may have done so because they spoke primarily their indigenous language and did not feel able or comfortable enough to participate in

Spanish. If this occurred frequently, then non-Spanish-speaking indigenous users, most of who are from small villages, were underrepresented in this study.

B.2. Trust: Gender, Culture, Socioeconomic Status

It was anticipated that, particularly in the early stages of the research, significant issues of trust might arise as an impediment to the collection of data from the population being studied. My accent reveals that I am a non-native Spanish speaker. In addition, a significant number of park users could have been undocumented. Before the highly publicized and often hostile public debates regarding undocumented workers in spring of 2006², park users were relatively approachable and open to discussing themselves and the park. At that point I decided that I had spent enough time in the park to become a somewhat familiar figure and, therefore, trusted. I also identified myself as a student and dressed casually. In initial conversations with some of the people using the park, when they found out that I was a student, their guard dropped and they seemed much more at ease. By spring of 2006, park users had become reluctant to answer questions about their background or to speak with me at all. Indeed, in the summer of 2006, the concern and, sometimes, fear, that I sensed when I approached park users led me to temporarily stop approaching people in the park who did not know me.

Ultimately, I addressed this problem by hiring three students—a graduate student from Mexico studying temporarily in the United States, and two undergraduate students

²In 2003 President George W. Bush called for an overhaul of U.S. immigration laws, proposing to allow a guest worker program that would allow immigrants to enter the United States temporarily to work. In December 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill that rejected the guest worker program and called for the deportation of all undocumented immigrants, making it a felony to assist them. From late 2005 to spring 2006 there was an intense debate among U.S. Congress members and in the media regarding immigration issues. These debates resulted in large demonstrations supporting immigrants' rights in the spring of 2006 (*New York Times*, June 28, 2007). This issue is discussed further in chapter 6.

from University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) who had immigrated to the United States from Mexico and El Salvador. Almost instantly, the students found it easy to complete brief interviews/surveys and, ultimately, after several weeks of the group tramping through the park in UCLA T-shirts, people seemed mostly at ease with us.

One surprising issue that never was entirely resolved was the difficulty that all of us had, including the two women students, of getting women to agree to take the interview/survey. The problem was twofold: (a) Fewer women than men used the park (at a ratio of about 1:4), and (b) even when we approached women, they seemed hesitant to speak with us. While we did not keep records of the circumstances in which we were declined, it seemed anecdotally that the women who were accompanied by men were the most hesitant to speak with us. Ultimately, the way this was addressed was by limiting the brief/interview survey to women until an almost equal number of surveys had been completed by men and women.

CHAPTER 4

SETTING

This chapter provides an overview of the context and setting for this case study. The information in this chapter is meant to provide an understanding of the social and physical environment of the broader community in which MacArthur Park is located, as well as a description of the park and the survey participants. MacArthur Park is located in the Westlake community/district of downtown Los Angeles, California.

Part I of this chapter reviews the geographic location of MacArthur Park and various community/neighborhood boundaries that have been delineated around the park by the City of Los Angeles and others. Part II provides a brief history of the Westlake neighborhood and MacArthur Park. Part III includes a detailed review of the social and demographic characteristics of the community surrounding MacArthur Park. Part IV describes the physical setting of the park, including its spatial and social characteristics, and the management and operation of the park. To set the stage for the analysis found in the following four chapters, Part V of the chapter presents a comparison of the demographics of the survey sample and the Westlake Community Plan Area (WCPA) population.

I. Geographic Location and Neighborhood Boundaries

The MacArthur Park “neighborhood” has been delineated formally in several ways. MacArthur Park itself is included in the WCPA (City of Los Angeles, General Plan) and both the MacArthur Park and Westlake Neighborhood Council Areas (City of Los Angeles, Department of Neighborhood Empowerment).

A. The Westlake Community Plan Area

The WCPA is an area of approximately 3 square miles defined by the City of Los Angeles Planning Department for the purpose of land use planning (the land use plan is

included in Part II, B). The Plan Area is located directly west of the central downtown business district of Los Angeles. It is bounded on the north by the Hollywood Freeway (101), on the east by the Harbor Freeway (110), on the south by the Santa Monica Freeway (10), and on the west by Hoover Street. MacArthur Park is located in the midwestern part of the WCPA (Figures 1 and 2). While not in the exact geographic center of Westlake, the Westlake Community Plan describes MacArthur Park as “the commercial hub and heart of Westlake” (p. I-2).

The Westlake
Community Plan
Area (WCPA)

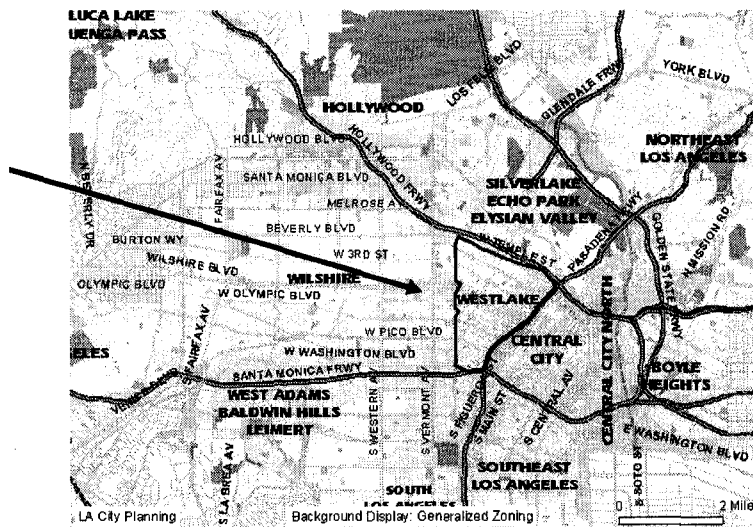


Figure 1. Location of Westlake Community Plan Area. Source: *Community Plan Areas*, by Department of City Planning, City of Los Angeles, 2006, retrieved July 5, 2007, from <http://www.cityplanning.lacity.org.html>.

B. The MacArthur Park Neighborhood

In 1999 Los Angeles voters approved a new City Charter that provided for the formalization of “neighborhoods” with independent neighborhood councils serving as advisory panels to the Mayor and City Council. The neighborhood council system was created to give neighborhood stakeholders a formal avenue to communicate local

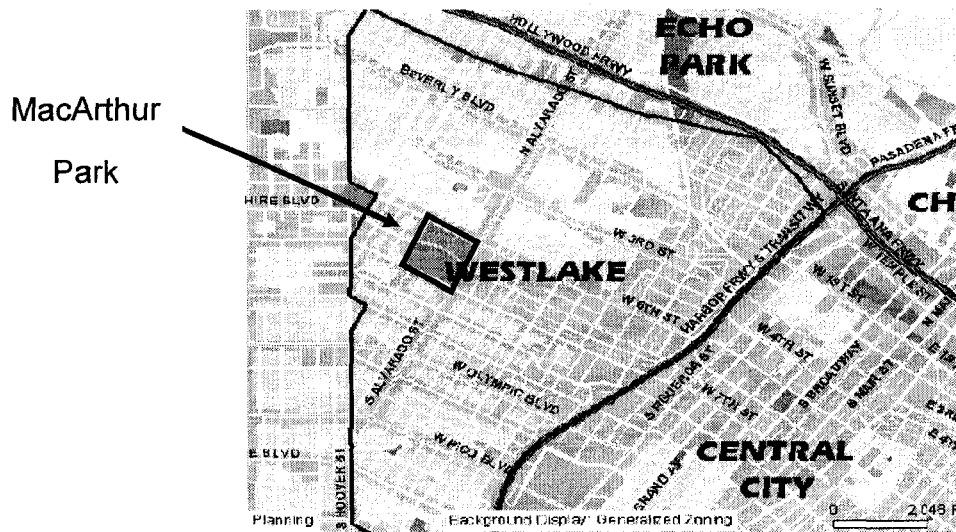


Figure 2. Location of MacArthur Park in Westlake Community Plan Area. Source: *Community Plan Areas*, by Department of City Planning, City of Los Angeles, 2006, retrieved July 5, 2007, from <http://www.cityplanning.lacity.org.html>.

concerns to City Hall. Each “neighborhood” had to go through a formal process of approval with the City, including the definition of its boundaries. The MacArthur Park Neighborhood Council (MPNC) Area (54), officially approved in 2003, includes the park at its eastern boundary (Figure 3).

The MPNC Area does not align in any logical manner with the WCPA, straddling its eastern boundary (Hoover Street). In a report evaluating the MPNC application for the city’s approval, the staff wrote,

The rationale given for the choice of boundaries is that the boundaries represent the distinct community of predominantly newly arrived immigrants and a high number of renters. The boundaries were also determined through collaboration efforts with adjacent neighborhood councils, and through a series of community meetings with stakeholders. (City of Los Angeles, 2003, Interdepartmental correspondence)

In this and the following chapters the social, cultural, and physical contexts of the “neighborhood” are described using data on the WCPA and adding data on the MPNC Area and the Westlake Neighborhood Council Areas where pertinent and available. In

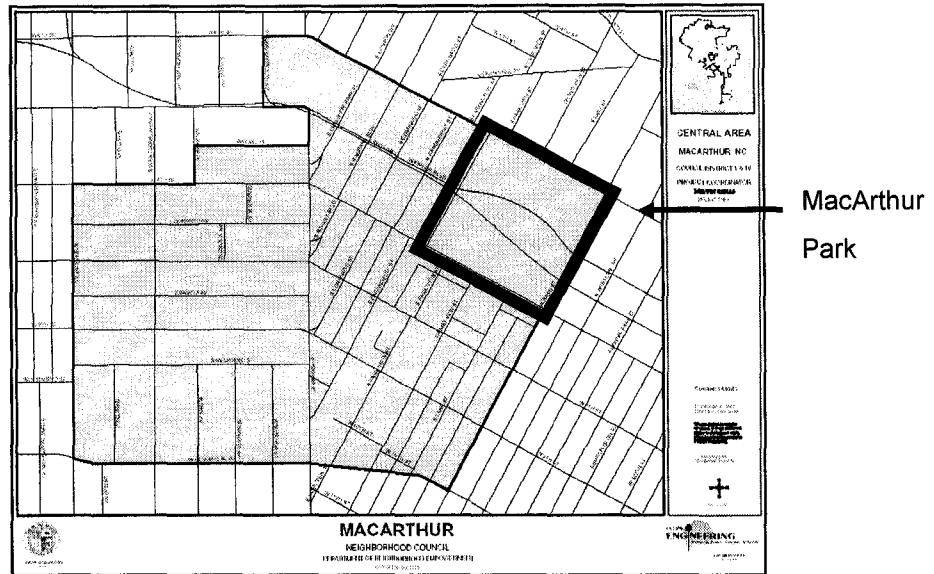


Figure 3. Location of MacArthur Park within the MacArthur Park Neighborhood Council Area. Source: *Neighborhood Council Areas*, by Department of City Planning, City of Los Angeles, retrieved July 5, 2007, from <http://www.cityplanning.lacity.org.html>.

addition, newspaper reports often cover “the Westlake neighborhood” or “the MacArthur Park neighborhood,” referring to some undefined area around the park. To achieve some level of clarity regarding the “neighborhood” that is the focus of the study, the terms will be used as described here.

II. Park and Neighborhood History

The Westlake neighborhood was one of the first suburbs of Los Angeles. Spurred by the Pacific Electric streetcar system, the area began to develop in the late 1800s, quickly becoming one of the wealthiest of the city’s neighborhoods. In 1863, when no one bid on the large 32-acre parcel that is now MacArthur Park, the city’s mayor, Henry Workman, combined \$500 from Los Angeles citizens with a donation from a local landowner to create Westlake Park (MacArthur Park’s original name) out of “debris-cluttered swampland which, for years, had functioned as the neighborhood dump” (Nodal, 1989, p. 46). The origins of the park have been alternatively described as a

natural spring from Ballona Creek watershed (park manager report to the City Council in 2006) to a “catch basin for the city’s drainage system, designed to handle the overflow from heavy seasonal rainfall” (Nodal, 1989, p. 48).

Albert H. Hardscastle, one of Los Angeles’ early prominent landscape architects, was hired to design Westlake Park. In the tradition of the “pleasure grounds” spurred by the development of Central Park by Frederick Law Olmsted, the park was designed to reflect a “naturalistic” and rustic sensibility. A curvilinear path surrounded the lake, which originally took up almost the entire park area.

In the 1880s streetcars spurred the growth of the surrounding neighborhood and made the park accessible from many parts of the city. Westlake Park’s popularity increased and, by the 1920s, the park became a magnet for luxury hotels and apartments, such as the park Plaza Hotel, still standing at the western edge of the park. Weekly concerts were featured in the park’s bandstand. A Victorian boathouse was built at the east end of the lake. Boating on the lake was a popular Los Angeles pastime (*Los Angeles Times*, April 25, 1954, p. A1). Up through the 1940s the park was considered a “genteel and welcome respite from the frenetically growing City of Angels (Nodal, 1989, p. 50).

MacArthur Park was not always bisected by Wilshire Boulevard, as it is now. Originally, Wilshire Boulevard extended from the west side of the park out through the west of Los Angeles to the developing commercial and residential districts along the so-called Miracle Mile of Wilshire Boulevard. Orange Street (now the east portion of Wilshire Boulevard) extended from the east side of the park to downtown. The growing importance of Miracle Mile and the possibility of Wilshire as the most direct and easiest route from downtown to the west side of the City ultimately led to Westlake Park’s bisection in 1935. Subsequently, the portion of the lake in the northern half of the park

was drained, and the basic physical layout of the park is much as it is today. See Figures 4, 5, and 6.



Figure 4. View of the northern half of MacArthur Park.



Figure 5. Tunnel connecting northern and southern halves of MacArthur Park.



Figure 6. View of the southern half of MacArthur Park.

During World War II the park was the headquarters for the Los Angeles civil defense system. After World War II the park was renamed for General Douglas MacArthur. The renaming was not a response to neighborhood requests; rather,

[it] emanated from the back rooms of City Hall and was rubber stamped by the parks Commission at the strong insistence of publisher William Randolph Hearst, who was actively supporting MacArthur in a bid for the post-war Presidency of the United States. The neighborhood protested the change, but their complaints were quickly dissuaded with a “Hearst-propagated surge of patriotism and gratitude for the General’s role in the war.” Nodal, 1989, p. 55)

Following World War II, with the movement outward of the city’s affluent population and the termination of the Pacific Electric streetcar line, the character of MacArthur Park and the surrounding neighborhood began to change. As affluent citizens moved out, the area’s mansions were subdivided into apartments and many of the expensive Beaux-Arts apartment buildings became residential hotels. The area became more affordable for the city’s less-affluent residents, such as the residents pushed out of Bunker Hill by urban renewal. Large and relatively dense poor-quality apartment buildings were constructed. As the area became increasingly poor, the neighborhood

began to suffer from the same ills as many inner-city areas. In the meantime, by the 1980s, MacArthur Park had become infamous for crime, narcotics dealers, heroin addicts, and prostitutes.

The economic “decline” of the park is reported to have begun just after World War II with the middle-class exodus to the suburbs. Jewish immigrants began to move in to the neighborhood (hence the regionally famous Langer’s delicatessen located at the corner of the park), followed by refugees fleeing wars in El Salvador and Guatemala in the 1980s. The 8 square miles surrounding the park are denser than any urban area west of New York (*Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 2004) and twice as crowded as any other area of Los Angeles (*Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 1993).

Crime has been a serious problem in the park. In 1994 there were 140 homicides in the Rampart Division (the police district that includes MacArthur Park). Identified by the LAPD in 2002 as one of three particular “areas of concern”, the park now has police officers patrolling the park 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and seven surveillance cameras have been installed (*Los Angeles Times*, March 11, 2004). By 2004 homicides in the Rampart District had dropped to 27 (*New York Times*, April 17, 2005, p. 11). Since 2004 violent crimes in the area have dropped by 50% (*Los Angeles Times*, June 17, 2007, p. E26).

The park is also getting attention from other agencies and groups in the city, with efforts to set up a business improvement district to fund extra security and park maintenance, an assertive approach to getting slumlords to address housing problems, and a nonprofit agency opening in the park to train Latino street vendors in preparing food safely and operating within the confines of Los Angeles vending regulations (*Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 2004).

III. Current Neighborhood Setting

This part of the chapter contains information on both the current social and physical setting of the MacArthur Park neighborhood. As the focus of this study is the park itself, this part is a broad overview of the surrounding neighborhood. Since age, gender, length of residence in neighborhood, ethnicity, status as renter/owner, and economic status of the neighborhood have been shown to affect attachment, demographic data related to all of these characteristics for the WCPA are included in the first section of this part. The second section of this part includes data and a brief description of the physical landscape surrounding the park.

A. Social Environment

This section on the social environment of the neighborhood contains data regarding gender, racial/ethnic makeup, immigration, population and housing density, employment and education, crime, and social needs and services. The demographic data come primarily from the 2000 census to describe the WCPA.¹ Data for the MPNC Area is provided where numbers are substantively divergent.

A.1. Gender

Males make up slightly more than half (53%) of the population in the WCPA, with the largest percentage of adult males being 20 to 35 years old (17.8% of the entire population and almost 50% of the adult male population over 19 years old). Similarly, the largest percentage of female adults range between 20 and 35 years old (13.16% of the entire population and almost 42% of the female population over 19 years old). The distribution of the population (resident and other) by age and gender is shown in Table 2.

¹The boundaries of the Westlake Community Plan Area do not exactly match those for census districts. The census districts used for this section extend a bit north and a bit southeast of the WCPA boundaries. However, a comparison of data included for the

Table 2

Age and Gender Distribution of the Westlake Community Plan Area (WCPA) Population

Age range	Males		Females	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
0-19 years	18,421	17.27	16,724	15.68
20-35 years	18,991	17.80	14,043	13.16
36-49 years	11,096	10.40	9,863	9.24
50-64 years	4,638	4.35	5,030	4.71
65+ years	3,318	3.11	4,567	4.28
Total	56,464	52.92	50,227	47.08

Source: Table P8 (Sex by Age: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

A.2. Racial/Ethnic Makeup

According to the 2000 U.S. census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001), the racial/ethnic makeup of the WCPA was as shown in Table 3. There is a large Latino population in the neighborhood (78%) and the second largest population in the area is Asian (13%), reflecting the existence of Koreatown to the east of the neighborhood and a large Filipino population to the north. There has been a significant amount of immigration to the neighborhood in the past 30 years, and 65% to 70% (depending on how neighborhood boundaries are drawn) of the area's population is foreign born and fewer than half (46%) are citizens.

WCPA in the City Planning Department's Area Plan and the census data produced using slightly different boundaries showed no substantial differences.

Table 3

Racial/Ethnic Distribution of the Westlake Community Plan Area (WCPA) Population

Race/ethnicity	<i>f</i>	%
Asian	13,679	12.82
Black, Non-Hispanic	4,291	4.02
Hispanic/Latino	82,678	77.56
White, Non-Hispanic	4,462	4.18
Other	1,507	1.41

Source: Table P6 (Race: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLESServlet>

Many of the foreign-born residents are from Latin America. This group makes up 54% of the total population and 82% of the foreign-born population. The majority of foreign-born Latin Americans came from Mexico and Central America, making up 52% of the area's total population and 80% of the foreign-born population. Table 4 and Figure 7 illustrate the role of the area as an immigrant enclave. El Salvadorans and Guatemalans make up the clear majority of immigrants from Central America to the area (Table 5).

A.3. Immigration

For the purposes of this study on transnational and immigrant community attachment, the story that the U.S. census figures tell about the timeline for the formation of this community is even more interesting than the story of the ethnic makeup of the WCPA. Approximately 85% of the foreign-born immigrants in the area from Mexico and Central America immigrated after 1980, with approximately 57% arriving here since 1990.

Table 4

National/Regional Distribution of Foreign-Born Residents of the Park Area

National/regional identification	<i>n</i>	%
Total population		
Native-born	38,126	34.41
Foreign-born	72,671	65.59
Foreign-born		
Non Latin America (17.90%)	13,005	11.74
Latin America (82.10%)	59,666	53.85

Source: Table P21 (Place of Birth by Citizenship Status: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

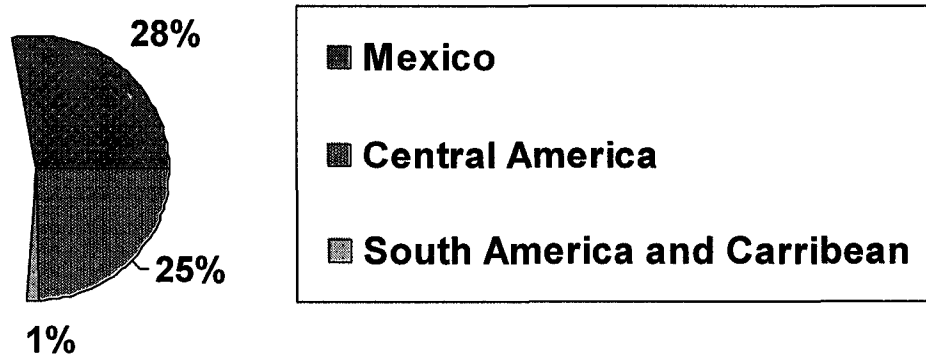


Figure 7. National/regional distribution of foreign-born residents of the park area. Source: Table P21 (Place of Birth by Citizenship Status: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

Table 6 and Figure 8 illustrate how relatively quickly the Mexican and Central American immigrant community formed in the MacArthur Park neighborhood/WCPA.

Table 5

Native Countries of Foreign-Born Central American Residents in the Park Area

Country	<i>n</i>	% of total population	% of Central American population
El Salvador	12,554	11.33	45.95
Guatemala	11,667	10.53	42.70
Honduras	1,817	1.64	6.65
Other	1,282	1.16	4.69
Total	27,320	24.66	100.00

Source: Table PCT 63H (Place of Birth by Citizenship Status [Hispanic]: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

Table 6

Timetable of Immigration from Mexico and Central America by Residents of the Park Area

Period of immigration	Mexico		Central America		Combined	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Pre 1980	4,759	15.43	3,490	12.77	8,249	14.18
1980 to 1989	8,457	27.42	10,402	38.07	18,859	32.43
1990 to 2000	17,625	57.15	13,428	49.15	31,053	53.39
Total	30,841	100.00	27,320	100.00	58,161	100.00

Source: Table PCT 20 (Place of Birth by Year of Entry for Foreign-Born Population: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

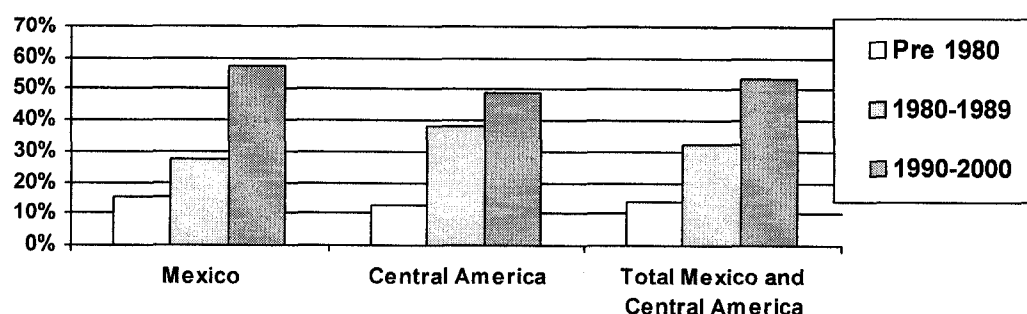


Figure 8. Timetable of immigration from Mexico and Central America by residents of the park area. Source: Table PCT 20 (Place of Birth by Year of Entry for Foreign-Born Population: 2000), from 2000 Census Summary File 3, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLESServlet>

A.4. Population and Household Density

As noted in chapter 3, the neighborhood around MacArthur Park is one of the densest areas west of Manhattan. Approximately 103,515 residents live within the 3-square-mile boundaries of the WCPA, with a resulting density of 32,698 residents per square mile (U.S. Census, 2000). In comparison, the population density of the City of Los Angeles is 7,861 residents per square mile.

Average household size in the WCPA is 3.11 persons (per occupied household), and almost 25% of the population lives in households with five or more people. In the City of Los Angeles the average household size is 2.9 persons (per occupied household). Slightly more than 25% of the population in the area lives in single-person households, compared to 10% for the City of Los Angeles. This might be explained by the type of housing stock in the area and/or the significant number of men who migrate alone to the United States (and to this neighborhood) for work. Average family size in the WCPA is 3.73, being only slightly larger for Hispanic or Latino families (3.89).

A.5. Housing Tenure

Approximately 94% of the population rents rather than owns their residential dwelling. This contrasts sharply with Los Angeles County, where 52% of units are renter occupied, and the City of Los Angeles, where 61% of residential units are renter occupied (Table 7).

Table 7

Household Distribution of Residents of the Park Area

Type of household	Housing stock		Average households		
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	Average
Owner occupied	1,819	5.10	6,339	6.12	3.48
Renter occupied	31,404	87.94	97,175	93.88	3.09
Total occupied units	33,224	93.04	103,514	100.00	3.11
Vacant	2,485	6.96			
Total units	35,710	100.00			

Source: Table H7 (Housing Tenure: 2000), Table H8 (Vacancy Status: 2000), and Table H15 (Total Population in Occupied Housing Units by Tenure: 2000) from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

A.6. Employment and Education

Forty-three percent of households in the WCPA are below the poverty level, and 25% of households make less than \$10,000 per year (in 1999 dollars). According to the 2000 census, approximately 50% of the population 16 or over is employed. Per capita income for the WCPA is approximately \$9,500 (in 1999 dollars). More women (26.17%) and more men (32.67%) are employed in manufacturing than any other category of

employment. Table 8 presents the top five categories of employment for women and men in the area.

Table 8

Distribution of Employment Categories of Residents of the Park Area Over Age 16 by Gender

Employment category	Females (<i>n</i> = 14,286)		Males (<i>n</i> = 25,487)	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Manufacturing	3,738	26.17	8,327	32.67
Education, health, and social services	2,709	18.96		
Construction			2,481	9.73
Health care and social assistance	2,094	14.66		
Accommodation and food services	1,325	9.27	2,407	9.44
Retail	1,325	9.27	2,174	8.53
Administrative, support, and waste management services			1,890	7.42

Source: Sample Data, Table PCT85 (Sex by Industry for the Employed Civilian Population 16+ Years: 2000) from *2000 Census Summary File 4*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

Less than 25% of the population has greater than a high school education, with almost 45% of women and 41% of men having an 8th grade education or less (Table 9 and Figure 9).

Table 9

Educational Experience of Residents of the Park Area

Educational level	Females		Males		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
No formal education	4,507	14.82	4,329	13.31	8,836	14.04
K-8	9,300	30.58	8,916	27.42	18,216	28.94
9-12	9,887	32.50	11,700	35.98	21,587	34.30
Some college	5,984	19.67	6,667	20.50	12,651	20.10
Graduate/professional	739	2.43	905	2.78	1,644	2.61

Source: Table P37 (Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25+ Years: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

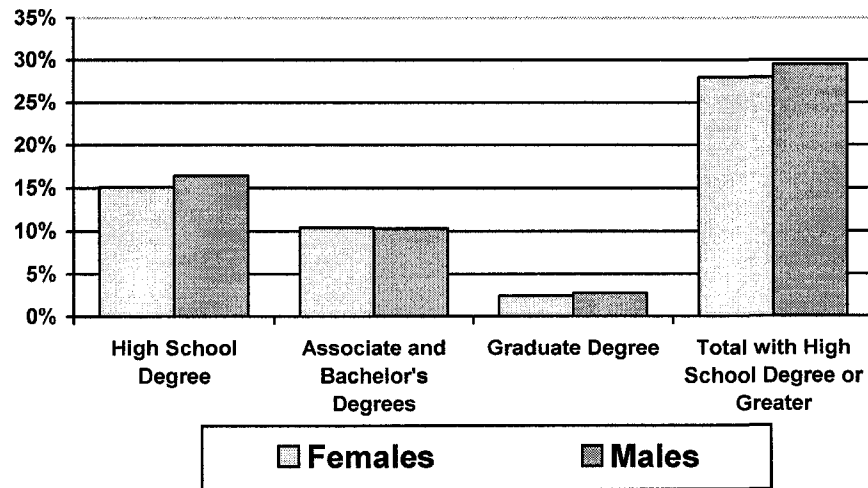


Figure 9. Educational experience of residents of the park area. Source: Table P37 (Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25+ Years: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

B. Around the Park

MacArthur Park is bounded on the north by 6th Street, on the east by Alvarado Boulevard, to the south by 7th Street, and to the west by Park View Street. The eastern side of the park is bordered (along 6th Street, Alvarado Boulevard, and 7th Street) by one- to three-story commercial structures made up of a mix of architectural styles from various time periods ranging from the early 20th century. Businesses range from those associated with large interests, such as McDonald's and a 99-Cent Store, to local and neighborhood serving uses such as medical clinics, bakeries, a shipping establishment, a coffee house, and a fabric store. There is also a large swap meet held in the historic Westlake Theatre, constructed in 1926 in Spanish Colonial Revival style with Churrigueresque detailing. A metro station for the city's Red Line subway is located on the eastern border of the park across Alvarado Boulevard. See Figures 10 through 13.

To the south and west of the park, across 7th Street, are a public elementary school and more commercial uses and offices, again occupying buildings that vary in style and time period. The elementary school is surrounded by a tall chain-link fence.

The western half of the park is bordered by some of the largest and grandest buildings adjacent to the park, including a multi-story Beaux-Arts apartment building near the corner of Park View Street and 7th and a large modern residential structure of luxury lofts, the American Cement Building, built in 1961 (Figure 14). At the north-western corner, across Park View Street, is the impressive Park Plaza Hotel (Figure 15). It is another reminder of the park's past, built in 1925 as a location for up-scale tourism and as part of the city's most luxurious neighborhood. Currently, the hotel is vacant and used by the film industry as a filming location. The hotel is currently undergoing renovations and is expected to be used for lodging once the renovations are completed.



Figure 10. The Westlake Theater.



Figure 11. Single-story buildings on Seventh Street.

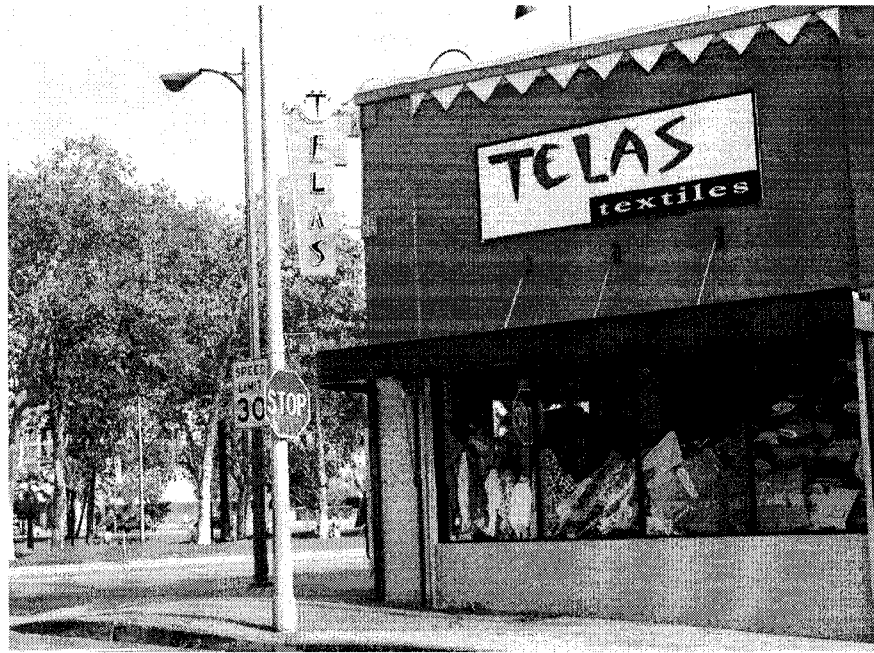


Figure 12. Neighborhood-serving businesses on Seventh Street.

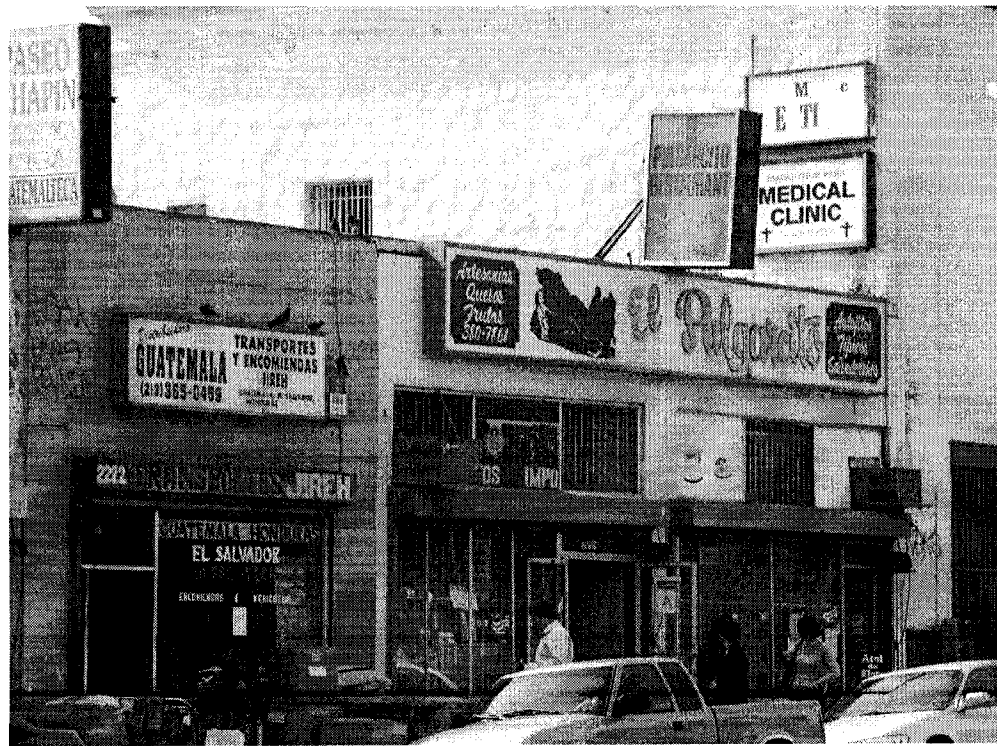


Figure 13. Additional neighborhood-serving businesses on Seventh Street.



Figure 14. American Cement Building.

Several institutional uses are located adjacent from the western half of the park. The University of California, Los Angeles, Center for Labor Research and Education, a center for research and labor organizing, is located adjacent to the southwest part of the park. The former home of Otis Parsons Arts College, another modern structure that now houses the Charles White Elementary School, a public elementary school, is located across Park as well. Across 6th Street and the northwest corner of the park is the Mexican Consulate.

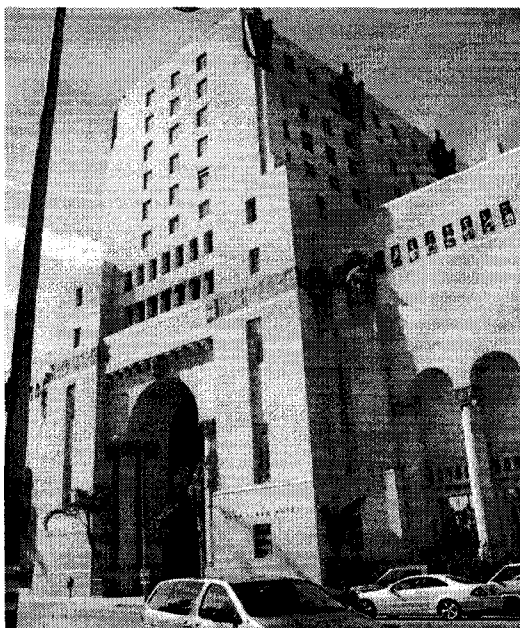


Figure 15. Park Plaza Hotel.

Several two-story apartment buildings, along with another restored historic apartment building, the Ansonia, provide additional housing across 6th Street and adjacent to and overlooking the park (Figures 16 and 17).

Thus, the park sits in the middle of the densest neighborhood in Los Angeles among commercial, residential, and institutional uses. Because of this, on weekends the pathways of the park are often populated with people who have completed their shopping adjacent to the park. Having observed many park users moving through or sitting in the park with shopping bags from local businesses, it can reasonably be concluded that the park is part of the weekend routine of local residents.

The physical condition of the neighborhood around the park can be characterized as alternatively run-down: needing paint, repairs to building materials, and removal of graffiti, and currently being refurbished. Many buildings are of a nondescript style, but these are intermixed with both historical and modern structures that are stylish and in

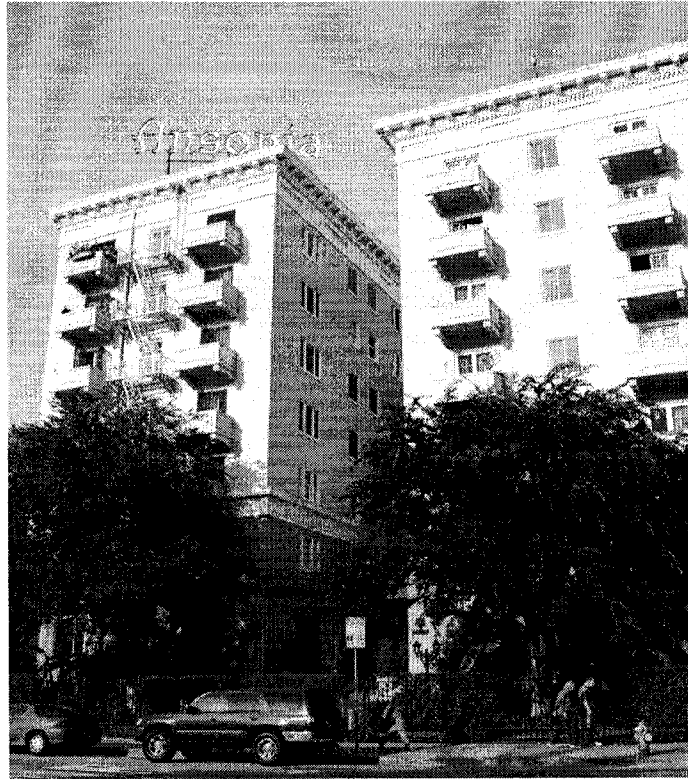


Figure 16. The Ansonia.



Figure 17. Additional apartments on Sixth Street.

good condition. Sidewalks are often cluttered with trash and debris. The street furniture is modern but also in disrepair. Many of the buildings, whether or not in disrepair, through their signs and window dressings display many goods and services from areas of Mexico and Central America and provide symbolic reminders of the community's roots.

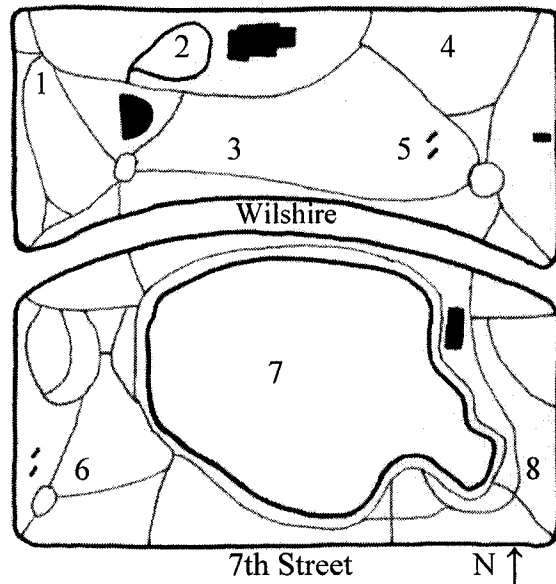
IV. The Park Setting

Originally a contiguous 32-acre plot, MacArthur Park's bisection by Wilshire Boulevard in the early 20th century created two distinct northern and southern areas. Two tunnels below Wilshire Boulevard link the two areas of the park. From the sidewalks that surround it, the park feels visible and connected to the street. For purposes of observation and surveying, the park was divided into eight activity areas. The southern portion of the park was divided into three areas: (a) the southeastern entrance, (b) the area surrounding the lake, and (c) the southwestern corner; the northern half of the park was divided into five areas: (d) the grassy areas east of the soccer field, (e) the red sculpture area, (f) the soccer fields, (g) the grassy area west of the soccer fields, and (h) the children's playground. See Figure 18.

A. The Southern Park

A.1. The Southeastern Entrance

Grassy slopes along almost the entire circumference of the park, except for the southeastern corner at 7th Street and Alvarado, make that corner of the park seem like its official entrance. The southeastern entrance is the most densely populated part of the southern portion of the park. Small and large groups of men sit on the concrete landscape borders along the entry path and the adjacent grassy areas. On weekends, when many people are in the park, the southeastern entrance is heavily used, sometimes populated by men and women. When fewer people are in the park, the entrance is dominated by men. At this corner, along with everyday chatting and exchanging of stories, men drink alcohol



Northern Park Activity Areas

- 1 - Grassy area west of the amphitheater
- 2 - Children's play area
- 3 - Soccer fields
- 4 - Grassy area north and west of the soccer fields
- 5 - Red sculpture picnic area

Southern Park Activity Areas

- 6 - Southwestern entrance
- 7 - Around the lake
- 8 - Southeastern entrance

Figure 18. Map of MacArthur Park showing eight activity areas designated for purposes of the study.

and play card games. One participant said that the site was a good place for “girl watching.” On several occasions, men discussed women and called out to them as they walked through the entrance. Figures 19 and 20 show the entrance from two perspectives.



Figure 19. Southeast corner of the park.



Figure 20. View of the southeast corner from inside the park.

A.2. Around the Lake

The southern part of the park contains the park's most noticeable feature: a large lake and fountain with a boathouse, all visible from the southeast entrance. An empty fountain and utility building sit just to the west of the entrance. A pathway extends north of the entrance and eventually by the boathouse and through the tunnel that leads to the northern part of the park. Just before the tunnel, another sidewalk extends left, off the main pathway, and loops around the entire lake. Throughout the day, people relax on the grass get up and stroll around the lake in leisurely fashion. Several older women make several loops around the lake in what appears to be a daily exercise program, but this is an unusual activity. There were rarely joggers around the lake, even on the weekends, although sometimes there were one or two joggers early in the morning when the park was largely unpopulated. North of the lake is a narrow grassy area that slopes down from a concrete wall that separates the park from Wilshire Boulevard. Generally, unless the park is very crowded and most of the

other grassy areas occupied, only a few people (usually men) sit along this grassy slope or on the concrete wall. Especially on warm days in the summer, this space feels somewhat exposed, unwelcoming, and unpleasantly warm because there are very few trees and the sound of the rush of traffic arrives from Wilshire Boulevard. On most days, compared to the southeast entrance, the north side of the lake looks a bit abandoned and lonely.

The eastern side of the park is well used, particularly on weekends. Small pathways criss-cross this area, making for smaller landscape beds and grassy areas containing many trees. This makes the eastern side of the lake feel protected, less exposed to the elements, and more on a human scale, particularly when compared to the northern part of the lake. Both on weekdays and weekends, one finds small groups and individuals sitting on the grassy areas, under trees, looking out over the lake. In addition, from this side of the park, the skyscrapers of downtown Los Angeles provide an impressive urban backdrop to the park. Grassy areas with trees border the southern portion of the lake all the way back to the southeastern entrance. In contrast to the exposure to Wilshire on the north side of the lake, this side of the lake is buffered from 7th Street by a line of large old trees (Figure 21).

Along the edge of the sidewalk that borders the lake, several small areas extend into the lake including large planters and modern, block-shaped concrete benches for viewing the lake. Signs regarding caring for the lake and the park are painted on the sides of the planters, which are either empty or holding plants that appear to be struggling to survive. The benches were not used very frequently. They are uncomfortable and, on warm days, these extensions into the lake do not provide much protection from an intense sun. In addition, up close, the lake's water can appear murky and sometimes has an unpleasant odor. All in all, these spaces into the lake do not achieve what their designers



Figure 21. View of the lake from the southeast corner of the park.

probably meant to achieve: small and human-scale spots for more private experiences of the water. Even in the late afternoon, when the shade from the trees along the southern edge of the park extends over the lake, people rarely used these areas.

Until fall 2007 paddle boats were a frequent sight on the lake. On the weekends, for the past two summers, 8 or 9 paddle boats were observed on the lake at any one time. Recently (July 2007), the city decided to eliminate the boats because the fees from boat rides (\$7 per half hour and \$10 per full hour) did not cover the costs of program. Upset about the city's suspension of boat rides, local residents organized to save the boats. As of October 2007, the future of paddle boat use in MacArthur Park was still being debated (*Los Angeles Weekly*, October 17, 2007).

A.3. The Southwestern Corner

Picnic benches, grassy areas, and shady trees, not the lake, are the main attractions of the southwestern corner of the park. Figure 22 shows the lake from its northwestern corner. A street-level entrance cuts diagonally into the park but, even on



Figure 22. View from the northwestern side of the lake.

busy weekends, this entrance seems almost quiet compared to the southeastern entrance. This area is dominated during the week by groups, primarily of men, sitting at the picnic benches and chatting, playing card games, and gambling (Figure 23). These men are observant of who is in the area; they frequently looked over their shoulders to check who was coming and going on the pathways.

On weekends, a church service is held in this corner of the park, across the pathway from the gamblers. Banners are strung in the trees and folding chairs are set up for the congregation. On the Sundays that services were observed, attendance ranged from 10 to 30 people.

B. The Northern Park

B.1. Grassy Areas North and East of the Soccer Field

The grassy areas north and east of the soccer field are also very popular areas of the park on both weekdays and weekends. From the grassy areas of the northern portion,

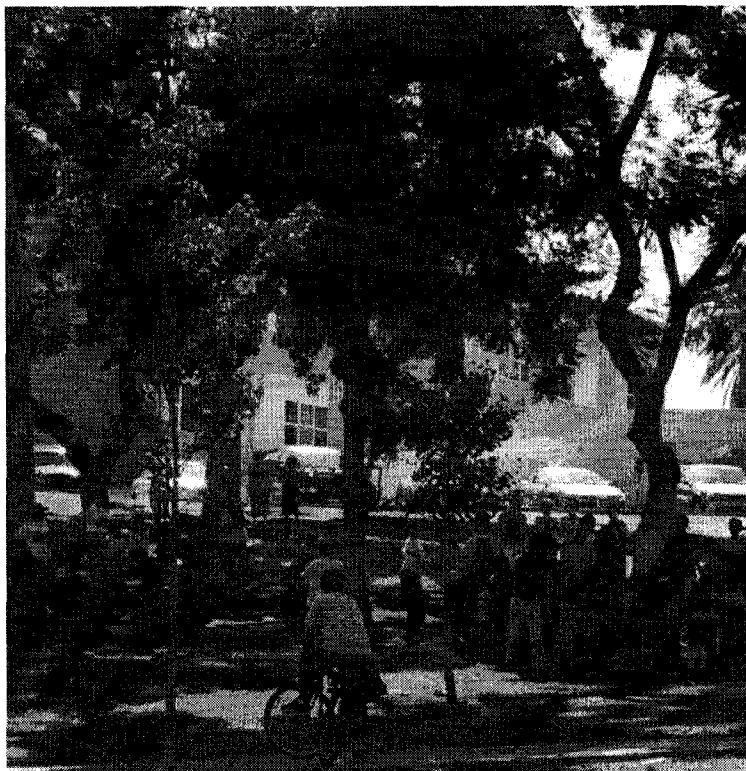


Figure 23. Southwestern corner of the park.

which slope steeply upward toward 6th Street, one can see southwest into the soccer fields and southeast toward the corner of Wilshire and Alvarado. On weekends, the pathway through this corner is one of the busiest in the park. Alvarado Boulevard is a busy shopping street and many people rest in the grassy areas at the southeast corner before and after shopping. In addition, this pathway provides quick access from Wilshire Boulevard under the tunnel and to the southern part of the park. Because so many people use the pathway through this area, this is a great place for people watching. Just on one Saturday, well over 100 people used this pathway (Figures 24 and 25).

The pathway enlarges to contain a large circular landscaping bed with a palm tree in it. Park benches are dotted all around the circumference, and from these benches one can observe passersby and other people sitting in the circle. Small groups of men



Figure 24. View of the soccer field from northern grassy area of the park.



Figure 25. View of the northern grassy area from the soccer field.

regularly sit on specific benches and meet to chat with each other in the circle. This is a good vantage point to see and be seen on weekends, when 1,000 to 2,000 people might be in the park at any one time (Figure 26).



Figure 26. View north from Wilshire Boulevard toward the northeastern part of the park.

The restrooms are in this area, along Alvarado Boulevard, but they are in very bad condition. Four or five bathroom stalls, each with a door to the outside, line the north and south sides of the building. Locks do not work and the stalls are dark and appear both dangerous and unsanitary. The walls are covered with graffiti. One day, after knocking on one of the stall doors and hearing no reply, I opened the door to find a young woman “shooting up” with a hypodermic needle. Women or children rarely used this bathroom.

B.2. Red Sculpture Picnic Area

The red sculpture picnic area (Figure 27) is a relatively small activity area in the park, but it is distinctive because it is one of the few areas where a couple of park benches are grouped so that a large party might use the space for a picnic. It is also a distinctive activity area because on weekdays both benches are occupied by groups of men playing cards, gambling, and chatting. Sometimes, on weekends, large parties stake out the area for picnics and celebrations.



Figure 27. View from Wilshire Boulevard north to the red sculpture picnic area.

B.3. Soccer Fields

The soccer fields are probably the most predominant feature of the north side of MacArthur Park. Park benches dot the circumference of two essentially unofficial fields. The league brings the portable goals and a tent, which the league organizer uses to operate the league. The tent is a hub of activity through the day, as coaches and players

check in to find out about schedules and other organization matters. The league organizer was cooperative in talking about the league and its predicaments in the park. Particularly on weekends, it was quite common to see mothers or fathers approaching the tent to sign up their children, both girls and boys, for the league. Figure 28 shows a view of the soccer field from Wilshire Boulevard.

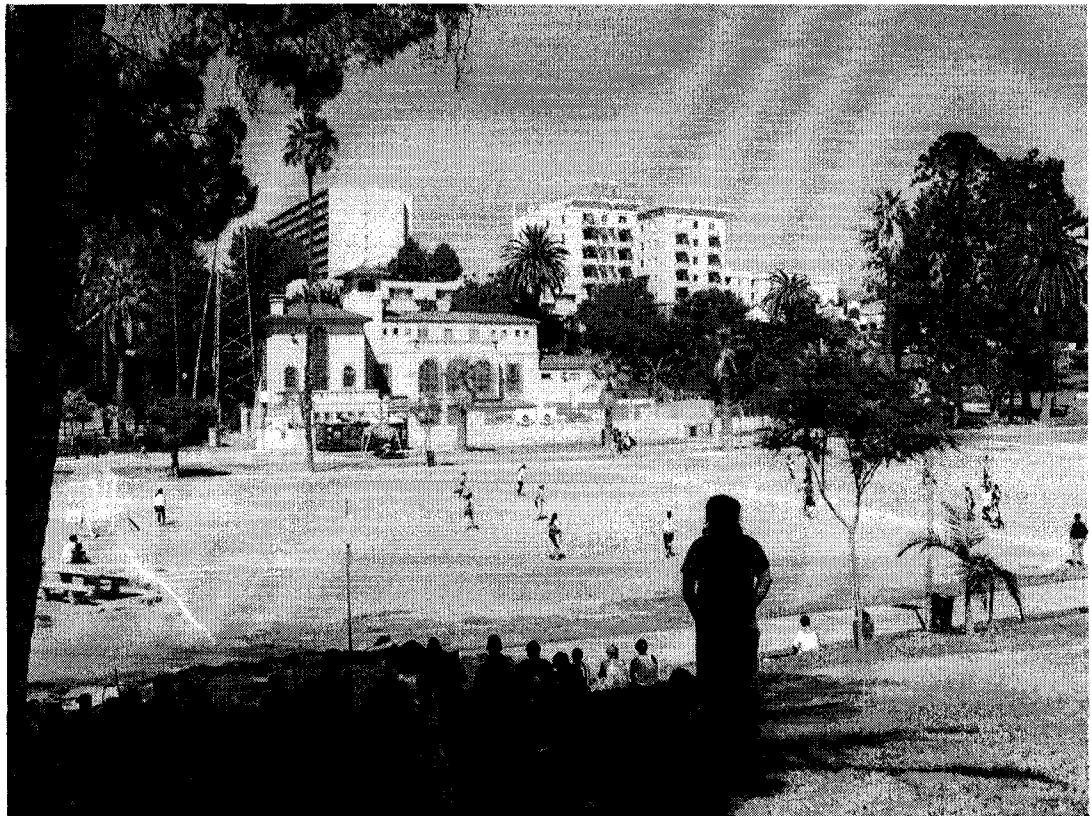


Figure 28. View from Wilshire Boulevard, looking north over the westernmost soccer field.

The soccer fields are located on what was once the lake bottom on the north side of the park. There are almost no trees directly adjacent to the fields, making for good views from the grassy areas nearby. The lack of trees around the fields means that

viewers are exposed to the sun, and on summer days it can become quite warm on the field. Any grass in the field area has been worn away by use, exposing earth and resulting in a great deal of dust on windy days. The surface of the fields has been a major source of contention between the soccer league and forces opposing the league (see chapter 6). The soccer league has asked for a proper surface. Apparently, according to both the park manager and the soccer league organizer, those who would like to see the league leave the park want to see dust taken care of and the area landscaped with grass. According to city officials, maintaining real grass for the fields, given their level of use, would be quite expensive. Thus, while still not officially sanctioning the soccer fields, in 2006 the city approved funding to put artificial turf over the fields.

Behind the tent and north is the park community center (Figure 29), the activities of which are not included in this study. Soccer players and their families use rooms there to change for games and, possibly just as important, to use the restroom facilities. Other than people who participate in the league, most of the survey participants were not aware of the bathrooms in the center.

Physically, the center is not well integrated into the park. The official entrance of the center, rather than being oriented toward the park, is oriented toward 6th Street. The rear elevation of the building, which faces the interior of the park, is surrounded by a chain link fence with barbed wire at the top (Figure 30). Except for signs on the chain link fence that announce some of the programs or events inside the building, the complex is unwelcoming. The park's pumping station, used to keep water out of the northern portion of the park, and the center's equipment, maintenance trucks, and garbage bins are all located in the parking lot behind the fence and between the building and the park. If one were brave enough to wander into the building from the park, one would be greeted



Figure 29. View of the community center from inside the park.



Figure 30. Fence separating the community center and its parking and equipment yard.

by small entryways and stairs. The main floor of the center is located neither in the park level/bottom floor nor the street level (6th Street), but in the floor between.

B.4. Children's Play Area

The children's play area is located just west of the community center. It is a relatively small circular space, approximately 50 feet in diameter. The center of the area contains play equipment—slides, swings and other features—and is almost always crowded with many children on weekends. Picnic benches surround the play equipment. A fence separates the playground from the park and there are only two access points to the area. North of the playground, the terrain slopes upward toward 6th Street. A chain link fence and locked gate prevent access to the children's play area from 6th Street, giving the area an enclosed and protected feeling. The retaining walls that line the pathways up from the children's play area permit one to sit and look down and over the play area and onto the soccer fields. There is a great number of trees on this slope, making it a comfortable place to rest in the summer. Spots within the playground itself, depending on the time of day and temperature, are not shaded and can become uncomfortably hot. The picnic benches in these spots, then, become unusable and empty out. Figure 31 shows the children's play area.

B.5. Grassy Area West of the Amphitheatre

The grassy area west of the amphitheater is another popular spot, particularly on warmer days. The area has many mature trees and, in the afternoons, is one of the coolest and most shaded spots in the park. Sometimes, on weekends, puppet shows and other programs that are quite popular are held in front of the fence surrounding the amphitheater. This area slopes down from Park View and steps lead down to the area from the corner of Wilshire and Park View. There are several park benches in this area that look down upon the amphitheater (see Figure 32).



Figure 31. The children's play area.

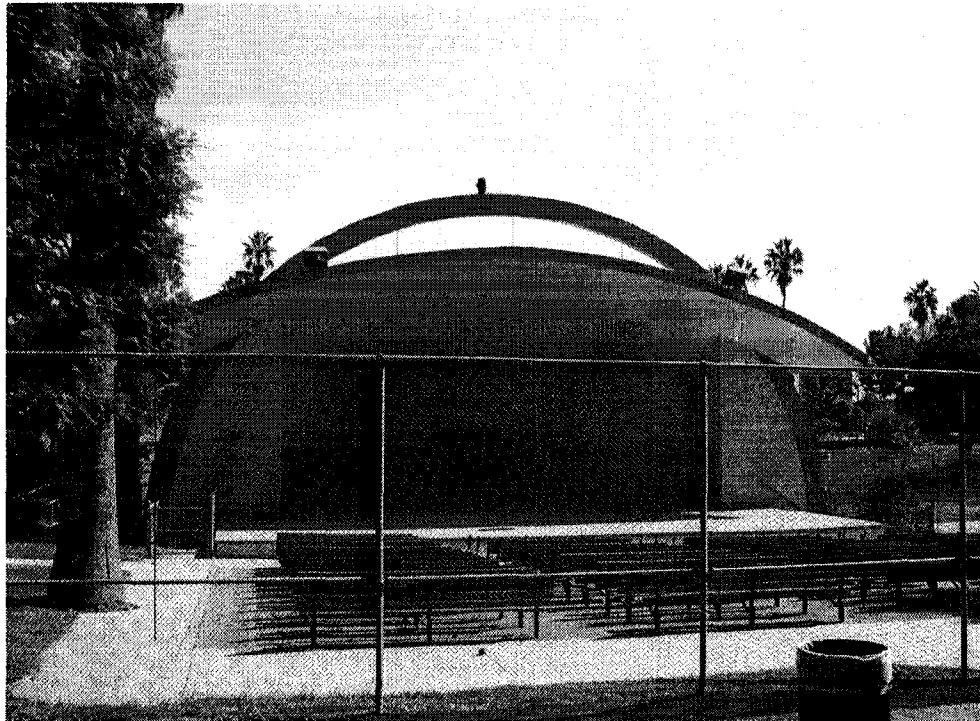


Figure 32. The amphitheater west of the soccer field.

Until recently, the amphitheater was in poor condition, had been declared unsafe, and was surrounded by a chain link fence. Recently a nonprofit group, Friends of the Levitt Pavilion (which had refurbished an amphitheatre in Pasadena), restored the amphitheater and introduced a summer concert series there (Figure 33).



Figure 33. The grassy area west of the amphitheater.

There was some concern from some of the community members regarding whether the music program would include members of the local Latino community in programming efforts. Previously, the city had funded an Independence Day celebration that had featured classical music, to which attendance was quite poor. Lack of attendance may have had more to do with the impressive police presence in the park than the music. According to one of the local community members who attended the performance, police officers were stationed around the edge of the park, presumably to make park visitors feel

safer. Instead, the police presence intimidated the local community, who could be seen approaching the park and then turning away. The program for MacArthur Park included one night of Latino/ Hispanic music. The remaining evenings were devoted to various types of music, and the Sunday program was devoted to children's programming.

V. General Demographics of the Survey Sample

This section provides a summary of demographic and other statistics for the sample surveyed for this project, along with a comparison with similar statistics for the population provided in Part II. The sample surveyed for this project varied most significantly from the population of the WCPA with regard to gender, country of origin, employment, and English proficiency. Related to the substantive differences in gender, as described in chapter 3, there was difficulty in obtaining an equal number of surveys from men and women because women were underrepresented in the park population (1:4) and women were more hesitant to agree to take the survey. Eventually, this discrepancy was addressed by limiting surveys to women in the park (see chapter 3), meaning only women were approached by student surveyors until the total number of women surveyed equaled 42.3% (77 of 182) of the sample. Women make up 47.1% of the total population of the WCPA. Table 10 summarizes the demographics of the study sample.

One of the significant differences between the WCPA population and the survey population was the percentage of the population that is foreign born. Just under 98% of the survey participants were foreign born, while approximately 66% of the total WCPA population is foreign born. While more than 90% of the survey sample was born in Mexico or Central America, this group makes up just over 50% of the total population in the WCPA (see Table 11).

There may be several factors contributing to this difference. Only adults (over 18) were surveyed for this project, and the native and foreign-born population figures from

Table 10

Demographics of the Study Sample (N = 182)

Gender	<i>f</i>	%	% of park area population
Female	77	42.3	47.1
Male	105	57.7	52.9

Source: Table P8 (Sex by Age: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

Table 11

Country of Origin of the Survey Sample and Park Area Population

County of origin	<i>f</i>	%	% of area population
Mexico	74	41.1	27.8
El Salvador	37	20.6	11.3
Guatemala	53	29.4	10.5
United States	4	2.2	34.4
Other	12	6.7	16.0
Total	180	100.0	100.0

Source: Table PCT 63H (Place of Birth by Citizenship Status [Hispanic]: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

the U.S. census include children. The 2000 census showed that a significant portion of the WCPA population—almost 33%—was under 20 years old. If, compared to the adult population, a larger percentage of children were native born, then excluding children from the survey would explain some of the difference between the survey sample and the WCPA population. This possibility is supported by data from the survey regarding the birthplace of participants' children. Just under half of the survey respondents (47.8%) indicated that they had children, and just under half of those with children (45%) indicated that their children were born in the United States. Therefore, while approximately 2% of the survey respondents were native born, approximately 21% of survey respondents (45% of 47% of survey respondents) had children who had been born in the United States. Other possible explanations for the relatively heavier use of the park by the area's foreign-born population are provided throughout this and the following chapters.

While almost 70% of the surveyed population was employed outside the home, approximately 51% of the WCPA population (16 years and older) was employed outside the home, according to the 2000 census (Table 12). This difference is partially explained by the overrepresentation of males in the sample (approximately 60% employment rate for men 16 years and older versus 40% for women according to the 2000 census) and 20- to 49-year-olds in the survey, both of whom had higher employment rates than their counterparts. Other potential explanations for this difference are provided in this and following chapters.

The 2000 census categories for English proficiency among Latinos were slightly different than those provided to survey participants. In addition, the census figures

Table 12

Employment Status of the Study Sample and Area Population

Employment status	<i>f</i>	%	% of area population
No work outside of home	55	30.6	48.6
Work outside the home	125	69.4	51.4
Total	180	100.0	100.0

Source: Sample Data, Table PCT85 (Sex by Industry for the Employed Civilian Population 16+ Years: 2000) from *2000 Census Summary File 4*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DSubjectShowTablesServlet>

include children 5 years and older.² According to the 2000 census, just over 46% of the WCPA Hispanic/Latino population spoke English “well” or “very well.” Fewer than 20% of the survey population rated themselves similarly. A comparison of the results is presented in Table 13 and Figure 34.

²The 2000 census has three categories related to language for Latinos: (a) Speaks only English, (b) Speaks Spanish, and (c) Speaks other language. Within the category Speaks Spanish, the census responses are as follows: (a) Speaks English very well, (b) Speaks English well, (c) Speaks English not well, and (d) Speaks English not at all. The categories related to language in the survey were as follows: (a) Speaks a great deal of English (*mucho*), (b) Speaks English moderately, (c) Speaks English a little, and (d) Speaks no English. The four Spanish-speaking categories were compared with the four survey categories for English proficiency. The four Spanish-speaking categories from the census actually comprise 91% of the Latino population, but they were included here as 100% because “English only” and “Other language” categories were not included in the study survey. If the 2000 census “English only” population were included in this calculation as speaking English “very well”, as the survey participants may have been compelled to answer if they spoke only English (since they were not given the opportunity to answer “English only”), then the contrast between the two groups is even greater.

Table 13

English Proficiency Self-Ratings of Survey Participants and Area Population

English proficiency	<i>f</i>	%	% of area population
None	78	43.3	24.6
Limited	70	38.9	29.2
Moderate (Well/Census)	16	8.9	21.1
Proficient (Very Well/Census)	16	8.9	25.1
Total	180	100.0	100.0

Source: Table PCT11 (Age by Language Spoken at Home by Ability to Speak English for the Population 5+ Years [Hispanic]: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DSubjectShowTablesServlet>

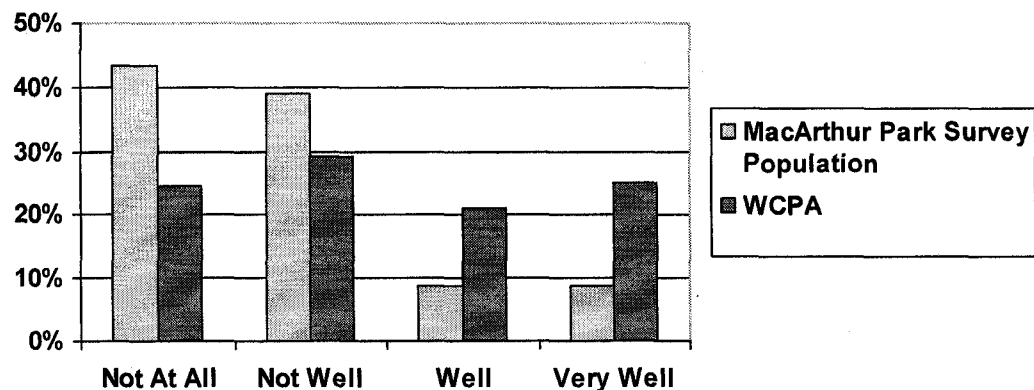


Figure 34. English proficiency self-ratings of survey participants and area population. Source: Table P37 (Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25+ Years: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DSubjectShowTablesServlet>

The significant difference may partially be explained by the difference in the two groups under consideration. The survey sample included adults only—18 years or older—while the census population included Latinos over 5 years old. It seems appropriate to assume that children in the WCPA were going to school, were being taught English, and were, therefore, more likely to be proficient in English than their first-generation parents. Including children in the census numbers for the WCPA, therefore, would raise the English proficiency level of Spanish speakers in the WCPA population. As an example, almost 22% of the Latino population in the WCPA is between the ages of 5 and 17 years. If a corresponding percentage of children were added to the survey population (assuming that those surveyed were 78% of the population and children over 5 made up an additional 22% of the population) and it were assumed that those children spoke English well or very well (then the English proficiency of the sample would appear as in Figure 35). With this change, the difference in language proficiency is a bit less pronounced but still a potentially interesting difference.

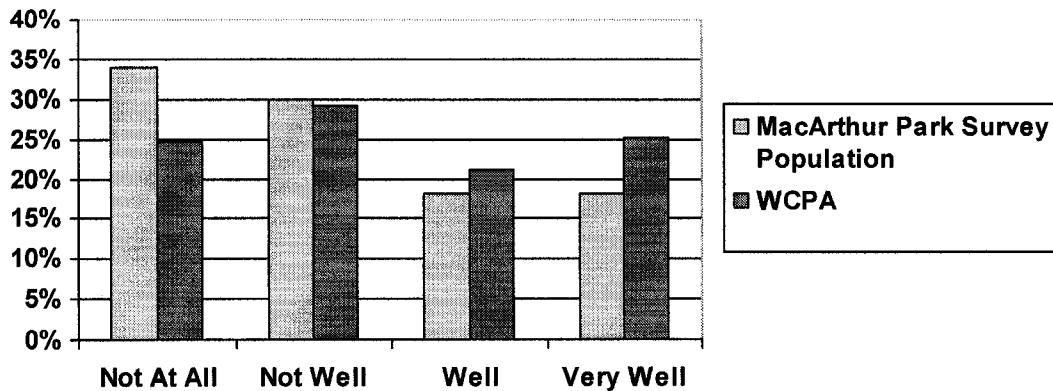


Figure 35. English proficiency self-ratings of survey participants and area population adjusted for proportions of children in the census and sample. Source: Table P37 (Sex by Educational Attainment for the Population 25+ Years: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES>

The survey sample and foreign-born WCPA population were relatively similar in terms of number of years in the United States. Foreign-born survey participants mirrored the foreign-born population of the WCPA. Just under 50% of the parks users surveyed had been in the United States for fewer than 10 years (Table 14). According to the 2000 census, approximately 52% of the foreign-born population of the WCPA had been in the United States for less than 10 years.

Table 14

Length of Residence in the United States by Participants and the Area Population

Length of residence	<i>f</i>	%	% of area population
Less than 5 years	42	24.3	27.3
5-9 years	44	25.4	24.3
10-14 years	23	13.3	19.7
15-19 years	27	15.6	13.2
20+ years	37	21.4	15.5
Total	173	100.0	100.0

Source: Table PCT 20 (Place of Birth by Year of Entry for Foreign-Born Population: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

The survey sample and WCPA population were most similar in terms of owner/renter status and age. In the WCPA, renters made up 94% of the population, while 96% of the survey sample were renters. The age of the sample and the age of the WCPA population are compared in Table 15 and Figure 36. The population under 49 was slightly

Table 15

Ages of Participants and the Area Population

Age	<i>f</i>	%	% of area population
18-24 years	30	16.8	20.1
25-34 years	54	30.2	28.9
35-44 years	49	27.4	20.3
45-54 years	26	14.5	13.0
55-64 years	10	5.6	7.3
65+ years	10	5.6	10.4
Total	179	100.0	100.0

Source: Table P8 (Sex by Age: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

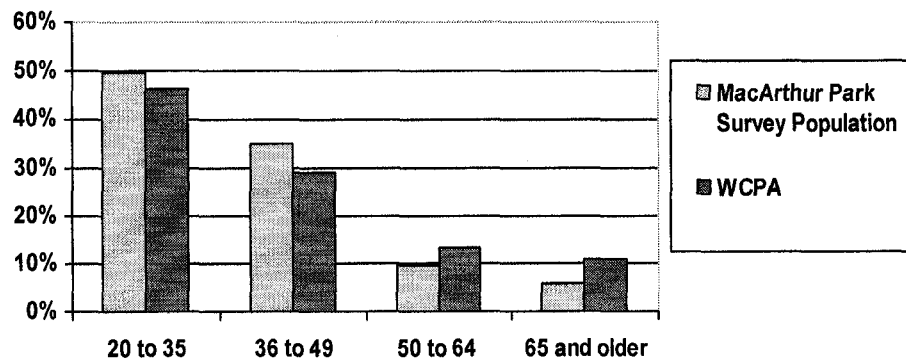


Figure 36. Ages of participants and the area population. Source: Table P8 (Sex by Age: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

overrepresented in the sample, with 84.6% of survey participants between the ages of 20 and 49, while 75.5% of the WCPA population was between the ages of 20 and 49.

A comparison of home ownership versus renting by the study sample and the area population is presented in Table 16.

Table 16

Home Ownership/Renting Status of Participants and the Area Population

Status	<i>f</i>	%	% of area population
Own home	6	3.7	5.5
Rent	157	96.3	94.5
Total	163	100.0	100.0

Source: Table H7 (Housing Tenure: 2000), Table H8 (Vacancy Status: 2000), and Table H15 (Total Population in Occupied Housing Units by Tenure: 2000) from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLES> Servlet

The focus of this study is on those who use the park and their emotional responses to the park. As discussed in chapter 3, the findings of this study are not meant to be generalized to the larger neighborhood. Still, it is useful to contextualize and compare the park and its users within and with the larger neighborhood. While there are several differences between the survey sample and the WCPA population, most of the significant differences can be explained by the exclusion of children from the survey and the overrepresentation of males and those under 49 in the sample. Indeed, in most categories the sample was very similar to the WCPA population. In many ways, MacArthur Park

reflects the WCPA and an important role that the neighborhood continues to play for the City of Los Angeles and the region: that of an enclave for newly arrived immigrants. This characteristic of the park has significant implications for the role that the park may play in the formation of place-related identity, a concept closely related to place attachment. These implications are discussed in chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

EMOTIONAL RESPONSES AND ATTACHMENTS

This chapter reviews data related to the broadest question posed in this dissertation: What types and intensity of emotional relationships to MacArthur Park are experienced by park users? The first part of the chapter covers study participants' positive and negative emotional responses to MacArthur Park, and the second part of the chapter explores their attachment. The following three chapters present MacArthur Park as different landscapes, reflective of the homeland (chapter 6), the urban environment (chapter 7), and a park setting (chapter 8), each of which has social, cultural, and physical components that affect attachment and other emotional responses to the Park.

I. Emotional Responses to Place

One of the central questions that this study explores regards what type and intensity of emotions the Latino users of MacArthur Park have in relation to the Park. The survey administered in this study included several questions that are frequently used in park surveys: Why do you visit the park? What do you like best about the park? What do you dislike about the park? What about the park would you change? These questions were open ended and respondents could provide as many answers as they wished. Respondent's answers were coded and the order of the responses tracked; in other words, answers were logged as the first, second, third, fourth, or fifth answer provided by the respondent. Answers that were more elaborate than the coding key were included with their entire text. Although a number of emotional responses could be detected in the answers to these questions typical of park surveys, they were less successful at eliciting expressions of emotional responses to the park than were other questions asked of the respondents. Responses to both types of questions are included in this section on positive and negative emotional responses.

A. Positive Emotional Responses

The survey included an open-ended question asking respondents why they come to MacArthur Park. The question produced 279 responses; 181 survey respondents provided one reason for visiting the park, 78 provided two reasons, 15 provided three reasons, 4 provided four reasons, and 1 provided five reasons; 43 respondents elaborated on their results.

Some of the responses (19.7%) explicitly indicated an emotional response to the park. Approximately 14.7% related to coming to the park to “rest” or “relax,” reflecting feelings of relaxation, tranquility, or peacefulness (e.g., “because I feel tranquil here, peaceful”). Approximately 5% indicated that they “like” or “enjoy the park” or some specific aspect of the park (e.g., “I enjoy the park,” “I enjoy the trees”), expressing emotional responses of enjoyment and pleasure.

In providing reasons for coming to the park, most respondents did not directly express emotional responses; however, emotional responses could be inferred from some of their answers. Approximately 13.6% of responses reflected that participants visited the park for the purpose of “distraction” or “diversion,” “for something interesting to do,” or to escape the “boredom,” “crowdedness,” or “heat” of their homes, indicating potential feelings of amusement and relief.

The majority of reasons respondents offered for visiting the park revealed less regarding their emotional responses to the park. Over 19% of responses (19.4%) reflected visits to the park for children (respondents bring their children to “play,” “play in the playground,” or “play soccer”). Nearly 17% of responses were related to coming to the park to experience the outdoors: for the “trees,” “nature,” “fresh air,” “shade,” “lake,” “to watch the ducks,” and “to watch the birds.” Approximately 8.6% of the responses related to getting together with family or friends or to meet new people as the reasons that participants come to the park. Over 7% of the responses listed coming to the park for a

physical activity: to play soccer, to fish, or some other physical activity. While these responses are not direct expressions of emotional relationships, they imply some type of emotional response to the park, such as pleasure and enjoyment of family life, the outdoors, social gatherings.

When respondents elaborated upon their answers, the elaborations suggested that some of the simple reasons given for visiting the park may represent complex underlying feelings about experiences in the park. Several respondents remarked that they come to the park “to get together with other Latinos,” because they “know members of the community,” and because the park “reminds me of Mexico” and “brings me memories from my teenage years, it reminds me of my country and my people.” The feelings of nostalgia, community, and familiarity expressed in these statements could be the motivation behind simple answers such as “I come here to see things,” for “diversions,” “because of the liveliness,” and “to see people.” Several respondents also spoke about feeling safe in the park, indicating that “today the park conditions are better than before” and “it is safe for the kids to play.” These elaborations raise the possibility that some of the respondents’ feelings of relaxation, peace, and tranquility may be related to the safety that they feel in the park. Table 17 lists the reasons provided for coming to the park.

Veronica, a 40-year-old woman from Mexico and interview participant, confirmed that she comes to the park to visit with family and friends: “I talk with my friends. [We] talk bad about our husbands. [We come] to have a potluck. Oh! That’s fun. To play with kids. And to relax.” Rogelio, a 45-year-old man from El Salvador interviewed for the study, comes to the park so that his daughter can play in the soccer league. When asked how often he is in the park, Rogelio responded, “Sometimes I’m here from 9am to 5pm but not always. The thing is that there are three soccer teams, and every 2 hours there is a game. I’m here at least every 8 days.” Gilberto, an 86-year-old

Table 17

Survey Participants' Reasons for Visiting MacArthur Park

Reason for coming to the park	<i>f</i>	%
Children	54	19.4
Enjoy outdoors, trees, natural environment	47	16.8
Rest/relax	41	14.7
Distraction/liveliness of the park	38	13.6
Get together with family and friends/meet people/see people	24	8.6
Soccer	18	6.5
Location	18	6.5
Other	39	14.0
Total	279	100.0

man from Mexico interviewed for the study, indicated that he comes to rest. "When it's hot, it's fresher here because of the trees and the lake.

Survey respondents were also asked to list their favorite things about MacArthur Park. This question generated 332 responses; 180 respondents named one favorite thing about the park, 96 cited two favorite things, 40 named three favorite things, 6 named four favorite things, and 2 named five favorite things; 16 respondents elaborated on their responses. Succinct responses to this question revealed little more about emotional responses to the park than the question about reasons for visiting the park, although two respondents mentioned a feeling of freedom as their favorite thing about the park.

Succinct answers supported findings that emotional responses to the park include relaxation, peacefulness, tranquility, and safety: (a) About 6% of the responses were

related to relaxation, peacefulness, and tranquility as a favorite thing; and (b) over 3% of the responses mentioned safety as a favorite thing. The frequency of favorite things taken alone does not necessarily indicate the intensity of emotional responses. However, frequency taken together with other responses to the survey, discussed in the remaining chapters, illuminates the intensity of specific emotional responses and factors that contribute to these responses. For instance, over 53.9% of survey respondents named natural elements of the park first when listing their favorite things about the park: the grass, trees, shade, lake/water/fountain, fresh air, birds and other creatures. This result raises the possibility that the park's natural elements may play a large role in emotional responses to the park. Several of the interview participants mentioned natural elements of the park when listing their favorite things: trees and shade (Jacobo, Hector, a 25-year-old vendor), birds (Jacobo), fish (Jacobo), the lake (Rogelio), fresh air (Hector), its restfulness (Zoraida, a 46-year-old woman from Mexico).

Respondents' elaborations on their favorite things about MacArthur Park suggest feelings of enjoyment and pleasure ("I enjoy the outdoors," "[the park] is big and beautiful"), and amusement/diversion ("Sunday's show by the amphitheatre"), familiarity and community ("the people," "the people that visit this side of the park," "the diversity of the people, they speak Spanish"). Table 18 summarizes responses to the question "What are your favorite things about MacArthur Park?"

Thus, while succinct responses to the question of why people visit the park and their favorite things about the park revealed feelings of enjoyment, relaxation, peacefulness, and tranquility, safety, and freedom, the majority of responses were not direct expressions of emotions related to the park. However, elaborations of succinct responses reflected the possibility of feelings of amusement/diversion, nostalgia, and familiarity among some of the respondents.

Table 18

Survey Participants' Reported Favorite Qualities of MacArthur Park

Favorite quality of the park	<i>f</i>	%
Aesthetic/natural	179	53.9
Natural environment	5	1.5
Beauty of the park	1	.3
Spaciousness of the park	2	.6
Grass	13	3.9
Trees	43	13.0
Shade	19	5.7
Lake/water/fountain	43	13.0
Fresh air	22	6.6
Cleanliness	8	2.4
Birds, animals, other creatures in the park	23	6.9
Social	55	16.6
All the diversions, liveliness	17	5.1
See the people	10	3.0
Friends	4	1.2
Family	1	.3
Kids	4	1.2
Vendors	1	.3
Watch Soccer	11	3.3
Community events/fiestas	5	1.5
Weekend shows	2	.6

Table 18 (continued)

Favorite quality of the park	<i>f</i>	%
Activities/Physiological	43	13.0
Playground	23	6.9
Place for kids to play	16	4.8
Walk or jog	2	.6
Exercise	1	.3
Play Soccer	1	.3
Peaceful/quiet/tranquility/restful	19	5.7
Psychological	14	4.2
Freedom	2	.6
Safety	11	3.3
Feeling comfortable	1	.3
Location (e.g., close to home)/convenience	6	1.8
Other	16	4.8
Total	332	100.0

B. Negative Emotional Responses

In an effort to expand understanding of emotional relationships to place beyond positive feelings and attachments, the survey included questions meant to elicit potentially negative feelings about the park: “What do you dislike about the park?” “What would you change about the park’s design and natural environment?” and “What would you change about other aspects of the park?” All of these questions provided insight into the negative emotions that park users experienced in relation to MacArthur Park.

In response to the question “What do you dislike about MacArthur Park?” survey respondents provided a total of 248 responses; 149 respondents cited one thing that they did not like about MacArthur Park, 57 provided two responses, 7 provided 3 responses, 3 provided four responses, and 1 provided five responses; 38 respondents provided some elaboration of their answers. Thirty-one respondents (17.2%) indicated that there was “nothing” they did not like about MacArthur Park. The majority of the answers to this question were in three categories: (a) dirtiness of the park (33.8% of responses), (b) certain types of people in the park (25.4%), and (c) other maintenance/quality of facilities issues (8.8%).

Related to the dirtiness of the park, respondents primarily cited the overall condition of the park, litter, and the public restrooms as the things they liked the least about the park. Elaborations suggest that emotional responses to the park ranged from feeling annoyance to dismay and even disgust (“People don’t respect the rules,” “I don’t like it when people throw their trash everywhere,” “We throw trash on the floor and not in the cans!” “The dead animals (ducks) and the bad smell from the water are horrible,” “People use the park as a bathroom”).

Most of the photographs taken by Jacobo, an interviewee, were of litter and the unsanitary conditions of the park. When asked what he would like to change in the park, he showed his frustration.

To have this [the park] nice and neat, because this is garbage [looking around], so people don’t get dirty. . . . [We also need] cleaner restrooms because if you go there right now to take a picture, believe me! [The restroom] is the most disgusting thing I have ever seen, not even in my ranch have I seen that. Yet, I come to this country where they say there is enough money, to see these disgusting things. Where is the money, then? Is the money only used for war or for what? I don’t understand. If there is enough money, why don’t they fix this park up for people who live around the park and want to take out their families? Ah!, it is very sad!

Veronica, a 40-year old woman whom the researchers interviewed and accompanied around the park while she took pictures for the project, spoke often of these issues:

In every picture I've taken, you'll notice every place is dirty, full of trash; its 11:30 AM and the park shouldn't be that dirty. The last picture I took, the one by the entrance, almost everyone is always drunk and dirty there, right?

When naming "people" as what they did not like about the park, 19.8% of the responses included mention of "drunks," "drug addicts," "homeless people," and "gamblers," and 4.4% of the responses cited "gangs," "robbers," or "drug dealers." Danger, vandalism, and lack of security were cited (2.4% of responses) as things that people liked the least about the park. These answers seemed to represent feelings that ranged from irritation and discomfort with others to fear. Elaborations on these responses confirmed these feelings. One of the respondents complained about "men taking over the tables to play [gamble] instead of eating." Another respondent stated that he had been "attacked by a drunk woman" and another that "we need more police officers to protect us." Two respondents mentioned problems with the authorities, one respondent indicating that "officers from the immigration department come to the park and arrest people" and a vendor complaining that the police tell her to stop selling things. These comments suggest feelings of fear, harassment, and anger.

Respondents also listed problems with the quality and maintenance of the natural elements and facilities as what they did not like about the park. Problems with the soccer field (5.6% of responses) and problems with the grassy areas (2.8% of responses) were the most common things cited. Generally, it was difficult to discern feelings beyond displeasure (and perhaps some irritation) and concern about the condition of the park related to these statements. However, some survey respondents' answers and tone of voice hinted at feelings of anger, resentment, and marginalization when discussing the

condition of the park—feelings that were confirmed in extended interviews. One of the survey respondents mentioned that the park administration was “not doing their job of keeping the park in good condition.”

Related to the questions about changes to the park’s design or natural environment, there were 270 responses; 159 respondents mentioned one thing that they would change, 75 mentioned two suggested changes, and 16 offered three suggested changes; 156 elaborated on their answers. Twenty respondents (11.2% of respondents) indicated that they would change “nothing” about the park’s design or natural environment.

Most of the responses to this question addressed issues with the quality, quantity, and cleanliness of the park’s landscaping, soccer fields, children’s playground, children’s programs, and restrooms (44% or 119 responses), revealing little about emotional responses to the park except for a concern about conditions at the park. Issues related to feelings of fear and safety were raised by respondents. At least 30 responses (14.4% of total responses) were related to concerns about safety, including suggestions about adding “security cameras,” “more policemen,” “streetlights,” “lights in the restrooms,” and a “fence” or “gate” that limited access to the park. One respondent indicated that the “government was doing a great job in terms of safety,” reflecting that some park users felt safe in the park. Several of the interview participants indicated that they felt that the park was unsafe. When asked whether the park was dangerous, Hector, the 25-year-old vendor, stated, “Yes, more or less, not as much as before but still [it] is. Before it was worse. Now the police keep an eye around the park. It is a little dangerous.” Both women interviewed discussed the safety of the park for children. Zoraida stated, “It’s unsafe, there are lot of drunks and that’s not good for the children. When they get really drunk, they piss in front of the kids and the drunk ladies fall asleep.”

When asked what additional changes they might make to improve the park, respondents offered 209 additional suggestions; 169 respondents provided one additional suggestion, 35 provided two additional suggestions, and 5 provided three additional suggestions. This question revealed very little about emotional responses to the park except for feelings of concern related to the condition of the park. Thirty-six responses (17.2% of total responses) related to feelings of fear and safety.

In addition to the open-ended questions, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with statements that directly reflected negative emotions toward the park: (a) “MacArthur Park is a dangerous place,” and (b) “I feel lonely when I am in MacArthur Park.”

In response to the statement “MacArthur Park is a dangerous place,” respondents could answer *no* or *yes*. If they answered *yes*, they were offered the choices that the park was a *little dangerous*, *moderately dangerous*, or *very dangerous*. A majority of respondents (55%) agreed that the park is a dangerous place. A larger percentage of women (68.9%) than men (45.1%) agreed that the park was a dangerous place. Table 19 illustrates the differences in responses to this statement between men and women.

The table also reveals that the majority of women rated the park as moderately or very dangerous (52.7%), while a much smaller percentage of men (30.4%) gave this rating. The Pearson chi-square test of difference by gender was statistically significant, $p = .004$. Based on these results, some level of fear for personal safety was a common emotional response among those who visit MacArthur Park. Jacobo, a 55-year old man who spends a great deal of time at the southeastern entrance of the park, spoke about fear: “The problems continue with the insecurity of the park. I think the park is unsafe.” I asked him whether he felt safe in the southeastern part of the park and unsafe in other parts. “No, all the way around the park. Everything is dangerous.”

Table 19

Survey Participants' Assessment of Safety/Danger of MacArthur Park by Gender

Assessment	Females		Males		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Not dangerous	23	31.1	56	54.9	79	44.9
A little dangerous	12	16.2	15	14.7	27	15.3
Moderately dangerous	26	35.1	15	14.7	41	23.3
Very dangerous	13	17.6	16	15.7	29	16.5
Total	74	100.0	102	100.0	176	100.0

In response to the statement “I feel lonely when I am in MacArthur Park,” respondents were given the choice of answering *yes* or *no*. If respondents chose *yes*, they were given the response choices of *a few times*, *sometimes*, or *many times*.¹ Over all, 22.7% of the respondents indicated that they felt lonely in MacArthur Park. A greater percentage of men (28.6%) than women (14.9%) reported that they felt lonely in the park. Table 20 illustrates the differences in responses to this statement between men and women.

A much greater percentage of men (16.3%) than women (1.4%) indicated that they frequently felt lonely in the park. Results of Pearson chi-square tests of differences between men and women reporting feelings of loneliness in the park were statistically significant, $p = .013$. This finding corresponds with observations of the park’s population.

¹When testing the survey, this question was asked in several ways, for example, “I have felt lonely in this park” with responses *never*, *infrequently*, *sometimes*, *frequently* or *never*, *once in awhile*, *sometimes*, *very often*. These forms revealed confusion from

Table 20

Survey Participants' Reported Experience of Loneliness in MacArthur Park by Gender

Experience of loneliness	Females		Males		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Never	63	85.1	70	71.4	133	77.3
A few times	4	5.4	4	4.1	8	4.7
Sometimes	6	8.1	8	8.2	14	8.1
Many times	1	1.4	16	16.3	17	9.9
Total	74	100.0	98	100.0	172	100.0

Men were frequently observed in the park sitting or walking alone or in pairs. Women were typically observed in groups, with other women, children, and men. A single woman alone with a single child was an infrequent occurrence in the park.

These findings are supported by respondents' answers to the question "When you come to the park, do you come alone, with others, or sometimes alone and sometimes with others?" A small number of women come to the park alone (11.8%, or 9 of the 76 women who answered this question), while 49.5% of the men reported that they come alone. Clearly, particularly among men, feelings of loneliness are part of the experience of MacArthur Park.

Feelings of loneliness were confirmed in answers to some of the open-ended questions in the survey and in the extended interviews. Rogelio, a 35-year-old immigrant from Mexico, commented on the sadness when first arriving in the country:

several respondents. All of the surveyors found that the final question and response choices met with no confusion from respondents.

I wasn't really content because I was leaving my family behind. When we arrived here, without knowing the language, not knowing anybody, with nothing, we do feel sad. However, at the same time once we are here, we try to go forward, to learn a little more, to adapt to the new culture and all the forms [laws] and thank God I have succeeded.

In describing the differences between MacArthur Park and a homeland park, one respondent remarked that "families would go together to the [homeland] park as opposed to MacArthur [Park]. I see a lot of lonely people [here]." One of the survey respondents, a young man just over 20 who had been in the United States only 6 months, relayed that, when he first arrived in Los Angeles (from his homeland), he knew no one. He came to MacArthur Park to meet people and, at first, he was extremely lonely. Seeing people in the park who were from his country provided some relief from his loneliness, but not knowing anyone also made his sense of himself as a stranger more acute. At this point in the discussion he became quite emotional, stopping to hold back tears. The painful emotions that he had experienced just after arrival in this country and when he had first come to the park were palpable.

As with positive feelings toward the park, the succinct answers to open-ended questions revealed almost no direct expressions of emotion toward the park. Through elaboration of succinct responses and interpretation of answers, supported by extended interviews, negative feelings of fear, annoyance, dismay, discomfort, disgust, resentment, and marginalization became clear.

Responding to more direct statements expressing negative emotions, survey participants expressed relatively strong feelings of fear and loneliness associated with the park. The intensity of these emotions would have been difficult to detect using the standard survey questions. For instance, 25.4% of responses to the question "What don't you like about the park?" were related to people in the park. These responses hinted at concerns about safety but also could be interpreted as irritation and discomfort. Similarly, when respondents were given two separate opportunities to list what they would change

about the park, 15.7% of the responses were related to safety. It would have been difficult to gauge from these responses that a majority of the survey participants (55%) considered the park to be at least a little dangerous and that a majority of women (52.7%) and almost one third of the men (30.4%) rated the park as moderately dangerous or very dangerous. Only through elaborations on other questions (e.g., “What are the differences between your homeland park and MacArthur Park?”) and through responses to a direct statement of feeling (“Sometimes I feel lonely in the park” did the sense of the loneliness experienced in the park emerge.

C. Conclusions Regarding Emotional Responses

The open-ended questions and direct statements asking for expression of feelings produced some interesting findings. First, they elicited emotional responses to the park, both positive and negative, including enjoyment, relaxation, peacefulness, and tranquility, safety, freedom, amusement/diversion, nostalgia, familiarity, fear, annoyance, dismay, discomfort, disgust, resentment, and marginalization. Through succinct answers to open-ended questions, survey participants directly expressed positive feelings of enjoyment, relaxation, peacefulness, and tranquility, safety, and freedom in the park. Elaboration and other methods confirmed positive feelings of amusement/diversion, nostalgia, and familiarity only hinted at in the succinct responses. Similarly, negative feelings of fear, annoyance, dismay, discomfort, disgust, resentment and marginalization were only hinted at in the succinct answers.

Second, in comparison to the statements of direct emotions regarding the park, the open-ended questions were not very useful in eliciting the variety and, particularly, the intensity of emotional responses. Only through elaboration of succinct responses and interpretation of responses supported by extended interviews did the positive and negative emotional responses to the park become clear. Only through direct statements to

which participants had to agree or disagree did the intensity of fear and loneliness expressed in the park become clear. In other words, while the standard questions found on park surveys produced a “laundry list” of things that the respondents liked or did not like about the park, the questions did not reveal much about how those likes and dislikes translated into emotional responses nor did they reveal the meaning of the park for the people.

Third, along with the positive attributes and emotions associated with the park, survey participants also cited a significant number of problems and negative emotional responses. Some of the problems that participants cited were extensive (the condition of the park) and serious (the danger of the park and the associated fear). This raises questions about the intensity of attachment that is possible to a place with so many problems and negative feelings associated with it, feelings that are both substantively negative and intense. Certainly, urban planners make assumptions about the importance of places that seem neglected and, to some degree, dangerous. This question seems particularly relevant because parts of many large American cities could be described this way. Indeed, conditions of neglect and crime are often arguments for the revitalization and gentrification of downtown areas. (This was the argument for many of the urban renewal in the 1960s and 1970s.) Is it possible for deep attachments to forms in such an environment? The next section examines attachment to the park and the potential consequences of mixed feelings for positive bonds to place.

II. Attachment

As reviewed in chapter 2, a strong majority of studies regarding emotional responses to place have concentrated on positive attachments. These studies offer a variety of methods and questions to test attachment. Along with open-ended questions that allow a respondent to talk about positive attachments, the survey in the present study

included three statements adapted from other studies to assess various components of attachment: (a) “I would miss MacArthur Park if my family and I moved to another community,” (b) “MacArthur Park is like a friend of mine,” and (c) “MacArthur Park is one of my favorite places.” This section reports responses to each of these statements, as well as other data that contribute to an understanding of park users’ attachment to MacArthur Park.

A. Gauging Attachment

All three of the statements cited above, meant to measure positive attachment, were taken from Ryan’s (2005) study of three urban natural areas in Michigan. Ryan used 13 statements to measure the affective qualities of positive general attachment, each intended to measure a specific theoretical expression of attachment, such as missing a place, preference for a place, identifying with a place, feeling at home in a place, and pride of place. In testing the survey for the present study, most of Ryan’s statements were tested. Since the purpose of this study was not only to detect attachment but also to detect other emotional responses and to look comprehensively at the social, cultural, and physical elements of the park that may be affecting the full range of emotional responses, only three positive attachment statements were considered essential. These three statements were chosen for the following reasons.

The statement “I would miss MacArthur Park if my family and I moved to another community” is a modified version of what is probably the single most commonly used statement to assess attachment: “I would miss this place if I moved to another community.” The statement stems from a conceptualization of place attachment (Giuliani, 1991) that correlates attachment to either a psychological well-being associated with the presence of a place or a state of distress with the absence of a place. The statement is also designed to address a problem reported in other studies (Brown, B. B.,

& Perkins, 1992; Proshansky et al., 1983) that place attachment is frequently unconscious unless there is a break from the place of attachment. One of the problems with the commonly used version of this statement is that it muddles attachments to social components of place with the place itself. In other words, one might interpret the question to mean that one was leaving one's social relationships behind along with the place itself. If this were so, a researcher could not tell from the answer whether the respondent missed the place or solely the social relationships associated with the place.

The version of the statement used in the present study was taken from the Hidalgo and Hernandez study (2001) measuring attachment to the social and physical components of place within three spatial ranges: house, neighborhood, and city. To extract some of the social components of attachment, Hidalgo and Hernandez asked people to agree or disagree with the statement, "I would miss this place if I moved to another community with the people I live with." This and other variations of the Hidalgo and Hernandez question were tried, eventually resulting in the version, "I would miss MacArthur Park if my family and I moved to another community." This allowed the respondent to focus more on feelings of loss with regard to the place than with family members. The question does not completely remove the social component from attachment, as friends and other community members would still be left behind. Still, Hidalgo and Hernandez tested it in a sequence of questions meant to isolate attachment to place and found that it achieved its purpose.² When asked whether they would miss MacArthur Park if they moved to another

²Hidalgo and Hernandez asked three questions for each spatial range. "I would be sorry to move out of my house/neighborhood/city without the people I live with" captured attachment to both place and people. "I would be sorry if the people I lived with/people in my neighborhood/people in the city moved away" captured attachment to the social element. "I would be sorry moving away from my house/the neighborhood/the city along with the people I live with" was meant to isolate attachment to the physical place.

community with their families, current survey respondents were given the choice of *yes* or *no* responses. If the respondent answered *yes*, further choices were *a little*, *some*, or *a lot*.

The statement “MacArthur Park is like a friend of mine” is a modified version of Ryan’s “The park is like an old friend.” The statement allows for a straightforward assessment of whether a positive emotional relationship has been formed with the park. Respondents who answered *yes* to this question were asked to choose *a little*, *more or less*, or *a very good* friend.

The statement “MacArthur Park is one of my favorite places” was meant to measure place preference as an element of attachment.³ After a choice of *yes* or *no* response to this question, respondents who answered *yes* were asked to choose *a little*, *more or less*, or *a lot*. While the English translation of these choices may seem odd for further defining a *yes* answer, they were developed by the four bilingual surveyors. They were suggested by both the Spanish-speaking surveyors and several respondents during the pilot test, and they resulted in minimal confusion.

As reviewed in chapter 2, previous place attachment studies have shown that intensity of attachment to place varies with length of experience/number of years in a place (increasing with length of experience/number of years), gender (women typically being more attached to places than men), and age (attachment generally increasing with age). To test these statements as valid gauges of attachment and to assist in a comparison of findings from this study with those of traditional place attachment studies, responses to

³This statement was used by Jorgenson and Stedman (2001), who studied attitudes of lakeshore property owners in northern Wisconsin to develop a measure of sense of place. One of their components of sense of place was place attachment, and they included a similar statement, “My lake property is my favorite place to be,” to measure attachment. They also asked property owners to respond to the statement, “I really miss my lake property when I’m away from it for too long.”

each of the “attachment” statements included in the current survey are reviewed in terms of amount of experience, gender, and age.

A1. Missing MacArthur Park

In response to the statement “I would miss MacArthur Park if my family and I moved to another community,” 84% percent of the respondents responded positively, indicating that they would miss MacArthur Park. The majority of respondents (55.9%) indicated that they would miss MacArthur Park *very much* (Figure 37).

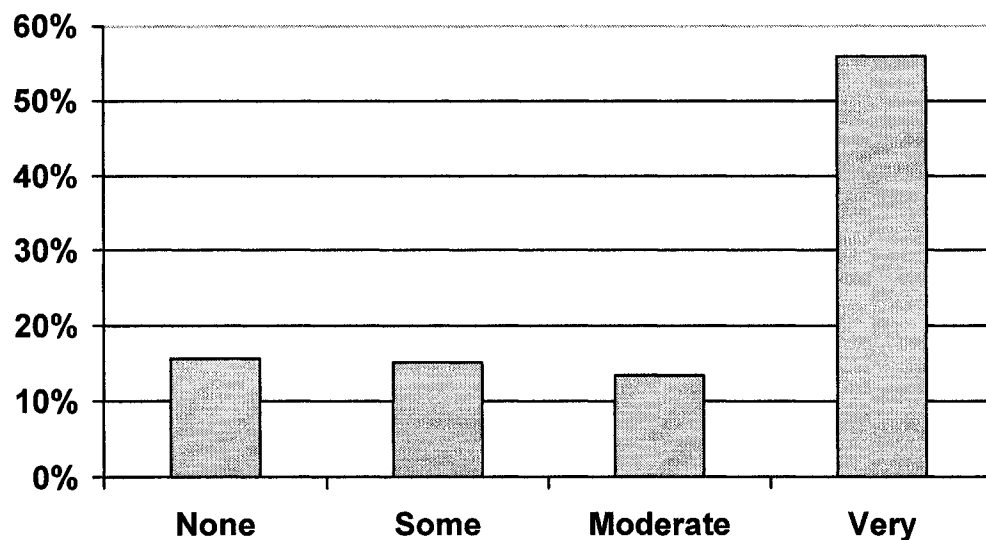


Figure 37. Survey participants’ assessment of missing MacArthur Park if they moved.

The degree to which respondents anticipated missing the park had a positive and statistically significant relationship to the amount of experience in the park, as measured by the number of hours spent in the park per month. (Number of years in the United States and number of years visiting MacArthur Park (10 years, 5 years, 1 year, etc.) were not statistically significant.) While 50% of those with less than 5 hours per month in the

park indicated that they would miss the park *very much*, 65% of those with 20 or more hours per month gave that response (Table 21).

Table 21

Relationship of Survey Participants' Exposure to MacArthur Park Per Month to Missing MacArthur Park

Degree to which they would miss the park	Hours spent in the park each month and percentage within category											
	< 5		5-9		10-14		15-19		20+		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
None	13	25.0	7	15.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	15.0	26	15.5
Some	9	17.3	9	20.5	3	13.6	1	10.0	4	10.0	26	15.5
Moderate	4	7.7	9	20.5	5	22.7	1	10.0	4	10.0	23	13.7
Very	26	50.0	19	43.2	14	63.6	8	80.0	26	65.0	93	55.4
Total	52	100.0	44	100.0	22	100.0	10	100.0	40	100.0	168	100.0

The difference between men's and women's responses regarding missing the park was statistically significant, most notable in the category of missing the park *very much* (64.8% of men versus 43.2% of women). Finding a difference between men's and women's degree of attachment corresponds with results reported in much of the place attachment literature. However, this result is surprising, given that traditional place attachment studies have found women to be more attached to places than men (e.g., Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001). So while the present study found that attachment to the park differed significantly by gender (as with other studies), the direction of difference contradicted previous findings. Potential explanations for this contradictory finding are

discussed in the remaining chapters and include the role that the park plays in the social life of men who have recently immigrated to the United States without their families and women's responses to the condition and safety of the park. The gender differences in reports of missing the park are summarized in Table 22.

Table 22

Survey Participants' Responses Regarding Missing MacArthur Park by Gender

Degree to which they would miss the park	Females		Males		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
None	13	17.6	15	14.3	28	15.6
Some	14	18.9	13	12.4	27	15.1
Moderate	15	20.3	9	8.6	24	13.4
Very	32	43.2	68	64.8	100	55.9
Total	74	100.0	105	100.0	179	100.0

The relationship between age and missing MacArthur Park was not statistically significant ($p > .05$), partly because of the strength of emotion expressed by those in the youngest category, 18 to 24. Among those 25 years and older, survey participants were more likely to miss MacArthur Park with increasing age. However, those 18 to 24 years old were at least as likely to miss MacArthur Park as those 45 years and older. One potential explanation for this is the importance of the park to younger single people, particularly men who arrive in the United States without their families. Many of these men reported how important the park was to them: how it served as a place to make new friends and contacts, be reminded of the families they left behind, and rest after long

hours of work. The strength of feeling among those 18 to 24 (57% of whom would miss the park *very much*) in comparison to those 25 to 34 years (49.1%) or 35 to 44 years (50.0%) prevented a statistically significant and positive relationship between age and missing MacArthur Park.

A2. MacArthur Park as a Friend

In response to the statement “MacArthur Park is like a friend of mine,” 87.3% of the survey participants agreed, and 52.0% stated that the park was a *very good friend* (Figure 38).

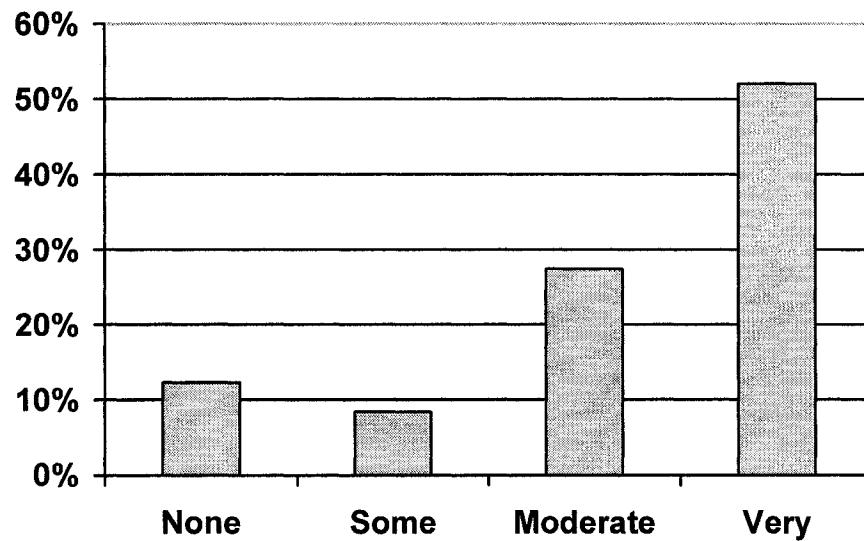


Figure 38. Survey participants’ assessment of MacArthur Park as “a friend.”

The degree to which respondents agreed that the park was a friend had a positive and statistically significant relationship with the amount of experience in the park ($p < .05$), as measured by the number of hours spent in the park per month. (Length of time in the United States and length of time visiting MacArthur Park (10 years, 5 years, 1 year, etc.) did not prove to be statistically significant in terms of responses to this question.)

While 46.2% of those with less than 5 hours per month in the park indicated that the park was a *very good* friend, 55% of those with 20 or more hours per month were in that category. While 23.1% of those who spent less than 5 hours per month in the park disagreed that the park was their friend, only 2.5% of those with 20 or more hours per month disagreed (Table 23).

Table 23

Relationship of Survey Participants' Exposure to MacArthur Park Per Month to Rating MacArthur Park as "A Friend"

Degree to which park is considered "a friend"	Hours spent in the park each month and percentage within category											
	< 5		5-9		10-14		15-19		20+		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
None	12	23.1	4	9.3	2	9.1	1	10.0	1	2.5	20	12.0
Some	6	11.5	5	11.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	4	10.0	15	9.0
Moderate	10	19.2	13	30.2	7	31.8	3	30.0	13	32.5	46	27.5
Very	24	46.2	21	48.8	13	59.1	6	60.0	22	55.0	86	51.5
Total	52	100.0	43	100.0	22	100.0	10	100.0	40	100.0	167	100.0

The difference between men's and women's responses regarding this gauge of attachment was not statistically significant, $p > .05$. With regard to gender, results were consistent with the findings regarding missing the park, with a greater percentage of men (90.4%) than women (84%) indicating that the park was a friend. A greater percentage of men (57.7%) than women (44.0%) considered the park to be a *very good friend*.

The relationship between age and attachment as measured by agreement by the statement that MacArthur Park is a friend was positive and statistically significant, $p < .05$. In the category of 18 to 24 years old, 20.7% of the respondents disagreed that the park was their friend and 51.7% agreed that the park was a very good friend. In the categories of 55 to 64 years and 65 plus years old, only 10% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the park was their friend, while 60% and 70%, respectively, agreed that the park was a very good friend. It was concluded that increasing age was associated with decreasing likelihood of describing the park as a friend.

A3. MacArthur Park as a Favorite Place

In response to the statement “MacArthur Park is one of my favorite places,” 78.9% of the survey participants agreed, and 48.6% stated that the park was *very much* one of their favorite places (Figure 39).

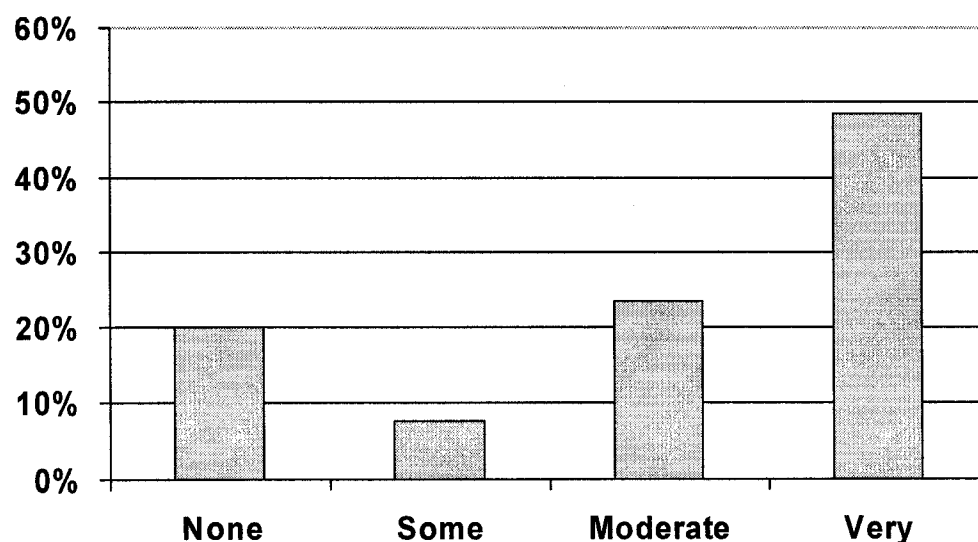


Figure 39. Survey participants' assessment of MacArthur Park as a favorite place.

The degree to which respondents agreed that the park was one of their favorite places had a positive and statistically significant relationship, $p < .05$, with the amount of experience in a place, as measured by the number of hours spent in the park per month. (Length of time in the United States and length of time visiting MacArthur Park (10 years, 5 years, 1 year, etc.) were not statistically significant in terms of responses to this question.) While 43.1% of those with less than 5 hours per month in the park agreed that the park was *very much* one of their favorite places, 62.5% of those with 20 or more hours per month in the park were in that category. While 23.5% of those who spent less than 5 hours per month in the park disagreed with the statement that the park was one of their favorite places, only 15% of those with 20 or more hours per month in the park disagreed (Table 24).

Table 24

Relationship of Survey Participants' Exposure to MacArthur Park Per Month to Rating MacArthur Park as a Favorite Place

Degree to which park is a favorite place	Hours spent in the park each month and percentage within category											
	< 5		5-9		10-14		15-19		20+		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
None	12	23.5	10	22.7	6	27.3	1	10.0	6	15.0	35	21.0
Some	5	9.8	6	13.6	0	0.0	1	10.0	2	5.0	14	8.4
Moderate	12	23.5	12	27.3	4	18.2	2	20.0	7	17.5	37	22.2
Very	22	43.1	16	36.4	12	54.5	6	60.0	25	62.5	81	48.5
Total	51	100.0	44	100.0	22	100.0	10	100.0	40	100.0	167	100.0

The difference between men and women's responses regarding this gauge of attachment was statistically significant, $p < .01$. Results were also consistent with the findings regarding missing the park and MacArthur Park as a friend, with a greater percentage of men (86.7%) than women (70.3%) indicating that the park was one of their favorite places. In addition, a greater percentage of men (59.0%) than women (33.8%) considered the park *very much* one of their favorite places (Table 25).

Table 25

Relationship of Survey Participants' Gender to Rating MacArthur Park as a Favorite Place

Rating of park as a favorite place	Females		Males		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
None	22	29.7	14	13.3	36	20.1
Some	6	8.1	8	7.6	14	7.8
Moderate	21	28.4	21	20.0	42	23.5
Very	25	33.8	62	59.0	87	48.6
Total	74	100.0	105	100.0	179	100.0

The relationship between age and MacArthur Park as a favorite place was statistically significant, $p < .05$. In the category of 18 to 24 years old, 24.1% of the respondents disagreed that the park was one of their favorite places and 41.4% agreed that the park was a favorite place. In the categories of 55 to 64 years and 65+ years, only 20% and 10%, respectively, of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the park was their friend, while 50% and 80%, respectively, agreed that the park was *very much* a favorite place (Table 26).

Table 26

Relationship of Survey Participants' Age to Rating MacArthur Park as a Favorite Place

Rating of park as a favorite place	Age (years) and percentage within category											
	18-24		25-34		35-44		45-54		55-64		65+	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
None	7	24.1	15	27.3	6	12.8	5	19.2	2	20.0	1	10.0
Some	1	3.4	7	12.7	3	6.4	3	11.5	0	0.0	0	0.0
Moderate	9	31.0	13	23.6	13	27.7	3	11.5	3	30.0	1	10.0
Very	12	41.4	20	36.4	25	53.2	15	57.7	5	50.0	8	80.0
Total	29	100.0	55	100.0	47	100.0	26	100.0	10	100.0	10	100.0

Note. Totals: None = 36 (20.3%), Some = 14 (7.9%), Moderate = 42 (23.7%), Very = 85 (48.0%), Total = 177 (100.0%).

A4. An Attachment Index

To directly assess the existence and level of intensity of attachment that users had for MacArthur Park, three statements were included in the survey with which participants could agree or disagree. Each of these statements was chosen because it had been used and found to be useful in previous place attachment studies to assess various components of attachment. First, to gauge what is considered an essential measure of place attachment, a sense of loss associated with displacement, and the problem of respondents not being conscious of an attachment until an imagined break from place, survey respondents were asked about missing MacArthur Park. The degree to which park users stated that they would miss MacArthur Park had a statistically significant relationship with two of three demographic characteristics: amount of experience and gender. Second, to gauge the existence of an emotional relationship with the park, survey respondents were asked

about whether they considered MacArthur Park to be a friend, thereby directly asking whether their feelings about the park could be compared with those toward a friend. The degree to which park users considered the park to be a friend had a statistically significant relationship with two of three demographic characteristics: amount of experience and age. Third, to gauge attachment associated with place preference, survey respondents were asked whether MacArthur Park was one of their favorite places. The degree to which park users reported that MacArthur Park was one of their favorite places had a statistically significant relationship to all three demographic variables: amount of experience, gender, and age). These statistically significant relationships are summarized in Table 27.

Table 27

Statistical Significance of Measures of Attachment to MacArthur Park

Question	Experience	Gender	Age
Would miss the park	Yes	Yes	No
Park is like a friend	Yes	No	Yes
Park is a favorite place	Yes	Yes	Yes

The differences in attachment among user groups corresponded with findings from other place attachment studies that documented differences in attachment to place based on length of residence, gender, and age, indicating that the statements were gauging attachment in much the same manner as other studies. Therefore, these statements work conceptually and methodologically to assess both the existence and level

of intensity of various components of attachment and to allow a comparison of the results of this study to those of other place attachment studies.

This section and the next two chapters review the social, cultural, and physical landscape of MacArthur Park and its neighborhood to assess possible influences that these landscapes may have on attachment to the park. Because results related to the three attachment statements in the present study were consistent with traditional findings in place attachment studies, an index of responses to all three statements⁴ was used to analyze the relationship between attachment and the social and physical environment of MacArthur Park. This allowed the social and physical components of MacArthur Park to be measured against a more complex construction and measurement of the intensity of attachment than that which would be allowed using any of the attachment statements alone. Using the resulting MacArthur Park Attachment Index, the analysis of the relationship between the intensity of attachment amount of experience, gender, and age was repeated.

The relationships between both amount of experience and gender and attachment, as measured by the MacArthur Park Attachment Index, were statistically significant, $p < .05$. The relationship between age and attachment, as measured by the Index, was positive but statistically weak ($.05 < p < .10$). The strength of attachment among those from 18 to 24 years old in comparison to those 25 to 34 years old and those 35 to 44 years old (for reasons previously discussed) resulted in a U-shaped relationship between age and attachment. Based on the statistical significance of the relationship of the MacArthur

⁴All three attachment statements measured levels of attachment from 0 to 3 (0 = *None*, 1 = *Some*, 2 = *Moderate*, 3 = *Very*). To create the index, the scores for all three statements were summed for each respondent and then divided by three. Scores were then regrouped into a new variable as follows: 0 through 0.67 = *None*; 1 through 1.67 = *Some*; 2.00 through 2.67 = *Some*; 3.00 = *Very*.

Park Attachment Index and differences between amount of experience and gender, the attachment index is a useful measure by which to test the relationships between social, cultural, and physical elements of MacArthur Park's landscape and attachment.

B. Conclusions Regarding Attachment

While there were differences in responses among groups according to the demographic variables of amount of experience, gender, and age, and these differences were predictable based on past attachment studies, several outcomes were surprising: (a) the large percentage of participants attached to the park, (b) the significance of attachment, and (c) the differences in attachment between men and women.

First, relative to all attachment statements, there was a very strong affirmation of attachment among all groups (see Table 28). For example, approximately 84% of the respondents indicated that they would miss MacArthur Park at least to some degree if they moved. There was little range between groups relative to this statement. The lowest percentage of those indicating that they would miss the park (those who spent less than 5 hours per month at the park) was still relatively great at 75%. The results were similar for the other two attachment statements, with some degree of attachment being relatively high (87.7% for MacArthur Park as a friend and 79.9% for MacArthur Park as a favorite place) and the lowest percentage for a specific group within a category remaining relatively high (76.9% and 70.3%, respectively).

Even more surprising was the large percentage of park users who expressed a strong attachment for the park, with approximately 56% indicating that they would miss the park *very much*, 52.0% indicating that the park was a *very good friend*, and 48.6% indicating that the park was one of their favorite places. For all three variables—amount of experience, gender, and age—the lowest percentage of those with strong attachments did not drop very much below the average, with the lowest percentage being 43.2% for

Table 28

Summary Statistics, MacArthur Park Attachment Index (Percentages)

Category	Would miss the park		Park is like a friend		Park is favorite place	
	Yes	VM ^a	Yes	VM	Yes	VM
Experience with park (hours per month)						
Statistically significant	Yes		Yes		Yes	
Total percentage	84.5	55.4	88.0	51.5	79.0	48.5
< 6	75.0	50.0	76.9	46.2	76.5	43.1
5-9	84.1	43.2	90.7	48.8	77.3	36.4
10-14	100.0	63.6	90.9	59.1	72.7	54.5
15-19	100.0	80.0	90.0	60.0	90.0	60.0
20+	85.0	65.0	97.5	55.0	85.0	62.5
Gender						
Statistically significant	Yes		No		Yes	
Total percentage	84.4	55.9	87.7	52.0	79.9	48.6
Female	82.4	43.2	84.0	44.0	70.3	33.8
Male	85.7	64.8	90.4	57.7	86.7	59.0
Age (years)						
Statistically significant	No		Yes		Yes	
Total percentage	84.2	55.9	87.6	51.4	79.7	48.0
18 to 24	85.7	57.1	79.3	51.7	75.9	41.4
25 to 34	78.2	49.1	81.5	40.7	72.7	36.4
35 to 44	89.6	50.0	91.7	52.1	87.2	53.2
45 to 54	76.9	65.4	100.0	61.5	80.8	57.7
55 to 64	90.0	60.0	90.0	60.0	80.0	50.0
65+	100.0	90.0	90.0	70.0	90.0	80.0
Total percentage	84.4	55.9	87.7	52.0	79.9	48.6

^aVM = very much.

missing the park *very much*, 40.7% for the park as a *very good friend*, and 33.8% for MacArthur Park as a favorite place.

The results were similar for the attachment index, with the percentage of respondents with some degree of attachment being relatively high (84.7%) and the

strongest possible attachment (a response of *very* for all three statements) being 33.3%. Table 29 and Figure 40 illustrates the strength of attachment expressed by survey respondents, as measured by the attachment index,.

Table 29

Respondents' Reported Levels of Attachment to MacArthur Park

Level of attachment	<i>f</i>	%
None	27	15.3
Some	30	16.9
Moderate	61	34.5
Very	59	33.3
Total	177	100.0

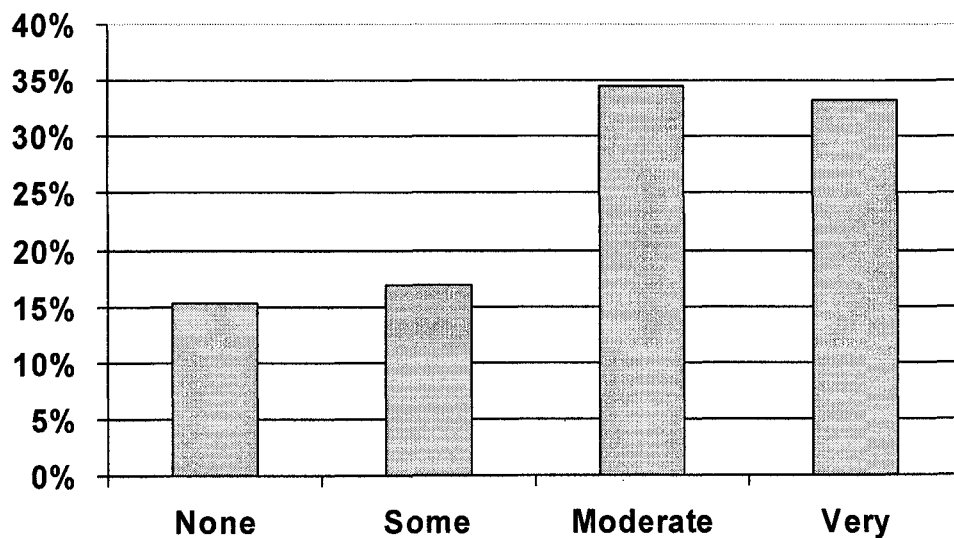


Figure 40. Respondents' reported levels of attachment to MacArthur Park.

This high degree of attachment and particularly strong attachment are surprising for several reasons, not the least of which is the relatively short length of time that park users had been visiting the park. Traditional place attachment studies have linked length of residence in a neighborhood with attachment to that neighborhood. The majority (59.2%) of survey respondents had been visiting MacArthur Park for less than 5 years, as shown in Table 30 and Figure 41.

Table 30

Number of Years Respondents Had Visited MacArthur Park

Years visiting the park	<i>f</i>	%
< 5 years	103	59.2
5-9 years	34	19.5
10-14 years	18	10.3
15-19 years	7	4.0
20+ years	12	6.9
Total	174	100.0

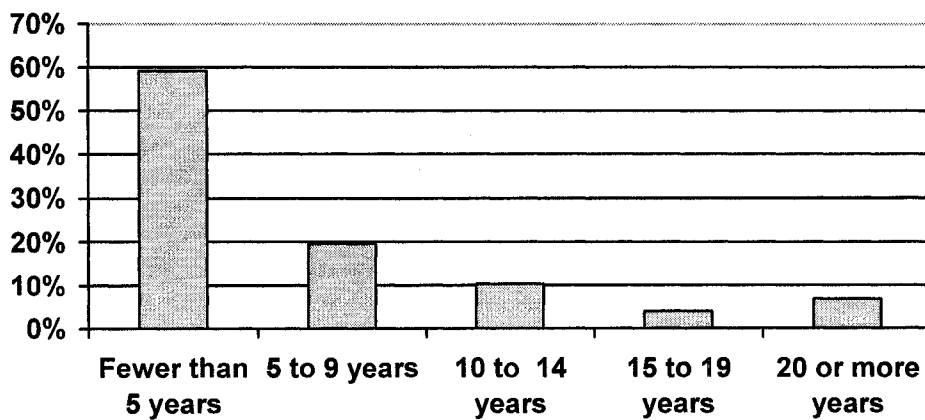


Figure 41. Number of years respondents had visited MacArthur Park.

There was no statistical significance in the relationship between the number of years visiting the park and level of attachment to the park. That is, as the number of years visiting the park increased, there was not statistically significant increase in attachment. Thus, at least in terms of MacArthur Park, it is not the number of years one has been coming to the park but the amount of time one spends each month having experiences in the park that relates positively to attachment. This finding has important implications for the way in which the potential for attachment to place among immigrant populations is viewed.

There is significant debate regarding the importance of different and what might appear to be contradictory factors related to place attachment. On one hand, several studies have found that length of residence in a neighborhood (Hay, 1998; Shumaker & Taylor, 1983) and expectations of remaining in the residence (Shumaker & Taylor) are positive predictors of attachment, as they allow for the significant accumulation of experiences and reflect a commitment to a place. This might suggest that a neighborhood of recent immigrants, considered a transitional place for jumping off to more permanent locations and thus a neighborhood where the chance to accumulate experiences in a place and long-term commitment to the place is somewhat limited, there would not necessarily be strong attachments. On the other hand, Fried (2000) speculated that lower income and ethnic neighborhoods may experience particularly strong and resilient place attachments because of their relative isolation from larger society, the limited alternative resources of their residents, and the social support that residents provide to each other. Fried was referring primarily to the long-established ethnic enclaves (with long-term residents) of Boston, the loss of which caused their residents extensive psychological trauma. However, the strong attachments for MacArthur Park expressed by survey respondents, many of whom had visited MacArthur Park for a relatively few number of years, suggest

that Fried's theory about attachment may provide an explanation for the significant attachment expressed by survey respondents. The number of years in a place and whether or not one expects to remain in that place may be less important than the quality and relative importance of those experiences. This theme will be addressed in this and the next two chapters.

The other surprising outcome, thus far, was the degree to which men were more attached to MacArthur Park than women. While gender differences in attachment are predictable based on other place attachment studies, studies have confirmed that women are more attached to place than men. As discussed in preceding sections, based on the three attachment measurements, men who participated in this study were substantially more attached than women. Using the attachment index, 91.3% of the men, compared to 75.3% of the women, expressed some degree of attachment to MacArthur Park. In terms of expressing the strongest possible attachment, 37.5% of the men, compared to 27.5% of the women, responded *very* to all three attachment statements. A much greater percentage of men (49.5%) than women (11.8%) came to the park alone, possibly because these men had arrived in the country alone and came to the park to make friends and meet people. Thus, the park serves an extraordinarily important role in their emotional lives and, as Fried (2000) suggested, may function as an important part of their emotional support system. Again, it is not the number of years visiting the park or whether one expects to stay in the neighborhood but the role of the park in the emotional lives of its visitors that strengthens attachments.

CHAPTER 6

HOMELAND SCAPE

One of the questions posed as part of this study was whether there is a relationship between survey respondents' feelings toward MacArthur Park and feelings toward their homeland and homeland parks. This question was based on literature sources that have implications for place attachment among relocated populations. A significant amount of the place attachment literature draws a connection between place attachment and place identity, or the role that place plays in the formation, maintenance, and expression of identity. Chapter 2 reviewed two somewhat contradictory bodies of literature about identity and attachment that are relevant to the Westlake community and to MacArthur Park: literature on transnational identity and literature on identity associated with ethnic enclaves. The former, on transnational identity, argues that, with globalization and migration, identity and belonging are increasingly deterritorialized (i.e., ties to local places are increasingly disassociated from local places, or "dis"placed). This literature concentrates on transmigrant populations that maintain economic, political, and social relations "that link together their societies of origin and settlement" (Glick Schiller et al., 1992, p. 7) and places that are characterized by migration or other forms of human mobility (Gustafson, 2001b, p. 669). The literature on ethnic identity and enclaves argues that, through the establishment of communities that symbolize a collective memory and past, belonging and local ties are reterritorialized (or "re"placed). In ethnic enclaves continuity of identity is achieved through the alteration of place to recreate or refer to specific places that have emotional significance for the group, or what has been referred in the literature as "place referent continuity" (Twigger-Ross & Uzell, 1996). Ethnic enclave literature often concentrates on immigrant populations within specifically

bounded spaces with relatively longstanding and homogeneous cultural norms and ethnic identities (Featherstone, 1996; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2002a).

In addition to the literature on identity, the findings of a few place attachment studies on relocated populations suggest that attachments to previous places may carry over to new places through other psychological mechanisms. Feldman (1990) and Hummon (1990) identified the development of bonds to generic types of settlements, such as urban, suburban, and small-town life. In addition, bonds to different places were partially explained by similarities in the general characteristics of places, or what Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) defined as place-congruent continuity: characteristics of places that are easily transferable from one place to another. For example, if one has grown up in the mountains, one might feel more at home in mountainous communities.

These findings led to several specific research questions for the present study regarding the relationship between past places and attachments and current place attachment. Do park goers have transnational ties? Does identity—transnational or ethnic—play a role in attachment to MacArthur Park? How do experiences with homeland parks affect attachments to MacArthur Park? The first part of this chapter addresses the multiple identities that can be found in the park and the ways in which identity—transnational and ethnic—may influence attachment and other emotional responses to the park. The second part of the chapter reviews the ways in which experiences with and feelings about homeland parks affect attachments to MacArthur Park.

I. Identity

A. Park Identities

The WCPA is more of the heterogeneous “ethnoscape” described by Appadurai (1996), with more multiple identities (ethnic, immigrant, national) than the 19th century

community typically suggests related to urban ethnic enclaves. While the ethnic makeup of the WCPA is by no means homogeneous, it is decidedly Latino (Figure 42).

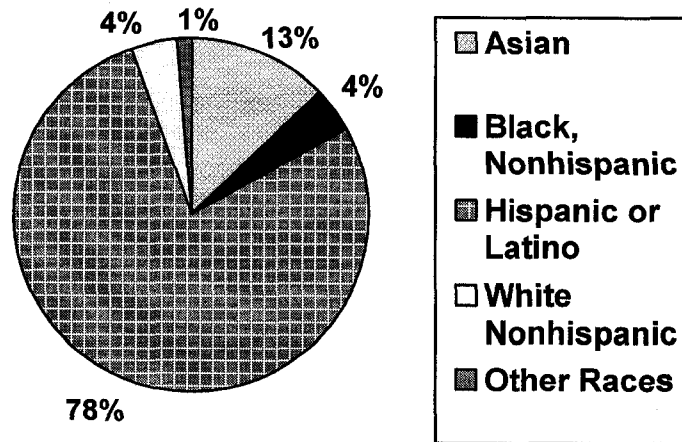


Figure 42. Distribution of ethnicity in the Westlake Community Plan Area (WCPA). Source: Source: Table P6 (Race: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLESServlet>

In terms of national identity, the WCPA population is also decidedly foreign born (65.6%), with the majority of foreign-born population (82%) from Latin America. Of the WCPA population born in Latin America, 51% comes from Mexico and 46% from Latin Central America (Figure 43).

Observations of MacArthur Park (see chapter 5) showed that the park reflects the heterogeneous character of the neighborhood and its Latino majority. In terms of national identity, the Latino population that was surveyed was almost exclusively foreign born (97.8%). Figure 44 displays the distribution of the country of origin of the foreign-born survey sample.

According to the 2000 census, approximately 52% of the foreign-born population of the WCPA had been in the United States for 10 or fewer years, while just under 50%

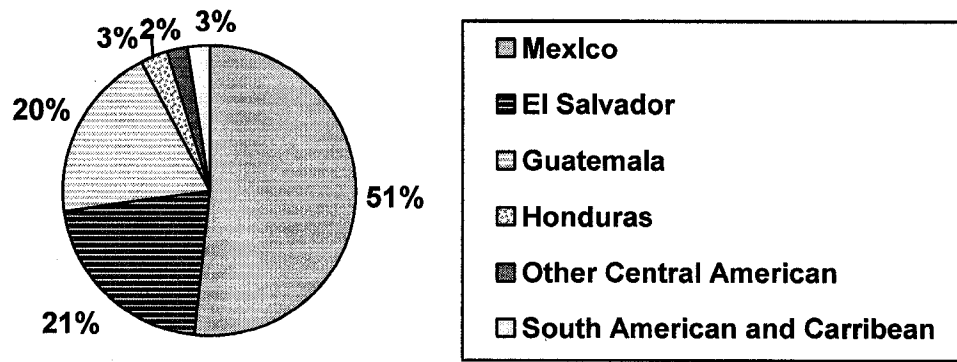


Figure 43. Ethnicity of the population of the Westlake Community Plan Area from Latin America. Source: Table PCT 63H (Place of Birth by Citizenship Status [Hispanic]: 2000), from *2000 Census Summary File 3*, by U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001, Washington, DC: Author, retrieved November 30, 2007, from <http://facfinder.census.gov/servlet/DTSUBJECTSHOWTABLESServlet>

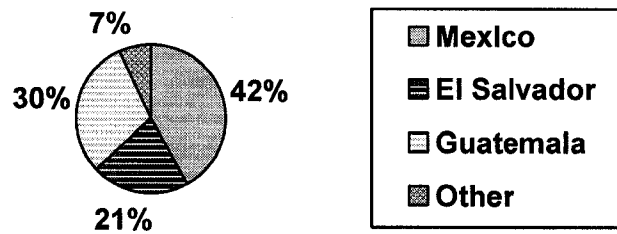


Figure 44. Distribution of survey participants' country of origin.

of the park's users surveyed had been in the United States for the same length of time. With a large foreign-born population, many of whom had recently immigrated and maintained ties with their homelands (as discussed in the next section), the WCPA might be appropriately characterized as a transnational enclave.

MacArthur Park's visitors thus reflect the identity of the larger neighborhood often found in newspaper articles and other popular literature: immigrant, Latino, and Central American and Mexican. As an example, Wikipedia's discussion of the Westlake Community describes it as "home of Los Angeles' vibrant but severely impoverished

Salvadoran community” and “a popular destination for illegal immigrants” (2007).

Recently, local residents and business owners submitted a petition with 500 signatures to have the MacArthur Park neighborhood designated as “Central American Town” (*Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 2007). This assertion of Central American identity reflects that, for some, the local landscape has become imbued with cultural meaning, signifying a linkage between place and identity that research has shown supports the development of attachment (Hummon, 1990, 1992).

Central American identity is just one of several identities associated with the area. One of the reasons the petitioners gave for the need to assert Central American identity was “perennially [being] overshadowed by the city’s far larger Mexican American population.” The nearby Pico Union area, part of which is in the WCPA, has become at least partially associated with the burgeoning Oaxacan community in Los Angeles. In a similar action linking place and the assertion of cultural identity, a Oaxacan group collected up to 2,000 signature requesting that the city rename nearby Normandie Park after former Mexican President Benito Juarez, a Zapotec Indian from the state of Oaxaca (*Los Angeles Times*, May 6, 2006).

Neither of these formal claims on parks has been unanimously supported by the local communities. In the case of “Central American Town,” restaurant owner Norm Langer indicated that he was “100% opposed.” Langer’s delicatessen, located across 7th Street and Alvarado from MacArthur Park, has been a local landmark in the neighborhood for 6 decades, reflecting the large Jewish community that claimed the area as home for many years. In the case of Normandie Park, the head of another adjacently located landmark, Father John Bakas of St. Sophia Cathedral, urged the Oaxacans to reconsider and think of the large Greek community that once dominated the area. African Americans also once made up a large part of Pico Union, which is now predominantly

populated with Mexican, Salvadoran, Guatemalan, and Korean immigrants. It is clear that the WCPA and Pico Union, with a history of changing ethnic identities, can claim a long and rather consistent history as an immigrant community.

B. Transnational Enclave

To measure transnational ties, survey participants and interviewees were asked questions about the birthplace and current location of their extended families, how frequently they were in contact with their homeland (either through communication from here or making return trips), and what their future plans were for contact and residence. Chapter 5 reported that emotional responses to MacArthur Park range from virtually no attachment (15.3% of survey participants) to being very attached (33.3% of survey participants). This section reviews the specific data gathered regarding homeland ties and assesses the manner in which those ties affect attachment to MacArthur Park.

B.1. Cultural and Familial Ties to the Homeland

To achieve some sense of the transnational cultural and familial ties of study participants, they were asked where they were born and where their children and parents were born. It was assumed that, if all three generations of a family—parents of participants, participants, and participants' children—were from the same country, this would suggest strong cultural ties with the participant's birth country. Similar but possibly less strong ties with the participant's birth country might exist if the children were born in this country. Approximately 50% of the foreign-born survey sample claimed three generations to the participant's country of birth. Almost all of the foreign-born sample claimed two generations from the participant's country of birth. Table 31 summarizes these results.

To determine the strength of ties to the participant's homeland, the participants were asked where the majority of their family members lived. Three quarters (75.3%) of

Table 31

Survey Participants' Familial Ties: Country of Origin

Country of origin	Three generations (parents, participants, and children) from country of origin (%)	Two generations (parents and participants) from country of origin (%)
Mexico	40.6	100.0
El Salvador	59.1	100.0
Guatemala	54.2	98.0

the survey participants' family members were still in their homeland. Based on both generational linkages and current location of family members, a large percentage of the survey sample had past and continuing cultural and familial ties to their homeland. Table 32 summarizes the results.

Table 32

Survey Participants' Familial Ties: Location of Majority of Family

Location of majority of family	<i>n</i>	%
Homeland	125	75.3
Half here, half homeland	12	7.2
Here	29	17.5
Total	166	100.0

B.2. Current Contact With Homeland

To assess the strength of ties to the homeland, participants were asked questions about their current contact with friends and family in the homeland. First, they were asked how frequently and by what method they were in contact with their homeland. Second, they were asked to report the number of times they had visited their homeland since they had arrived in the United States.

When asked whether they were still in contact with their homeland, 93.9% of participants (169) answered affirmatively. Of those who responded *yes*, all but 5 of the 169 participants were in contact with their homeland by telephone. This finding was supported by field observations. It was quite common to observe park goers on cellular phones, and several of survey participants excused themselves from the survey to take calls from relatives or friends in their homeland. Very few participants indicated that they were in contact by letter (22 participants) and even fewer by e-mail (10 participants). As Figure 45 shows, most participants (77.5% or 127 of 164 respondents) were in contact with their homeland two times per month or more frequently.

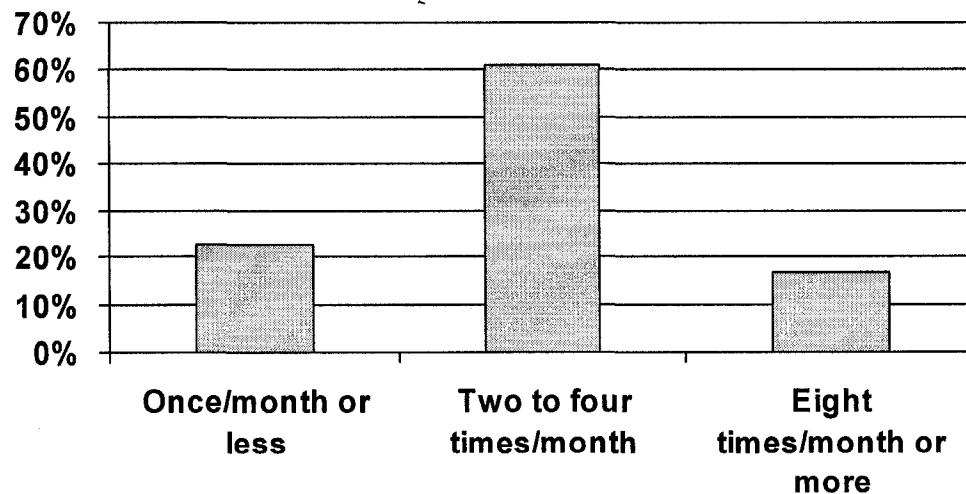


Figure 45. Survey participants' reported frequency of contact with their homeland.

In addition to telephone contact with family and friends in their home countries, local newspapers, radio, and television, and the Internet permit information regarding home to reach the WCPA population. Local television reporters were frequently observed at the park; several of them indicated that their reports on the community were broadcast in Mexico and Central America. Figures 46 through 48 illustrate the presence of local and foreign media at local events and Figure 49 show information regarding home communities available at local celebrations in the park.

Rogelio confirmed that people from his village participated in improving their village through donations and planning. When asked whether he planned to visit parks and plazas in his village when he returned home, he spoke of the changes to them.

Yeah!, [I plan to visit the parks and plazas] every time I go [home]. . . . Now it's [the plaza] very different, everything is changed. They [the local people] have improved it. Yes, as a matter of fact, a group of people from the same town had fundraising activities here, to collect money and send it down there. There was a man who donated a plot of land to build a park with a soccer field that we helped to build there [with donations]. . . . Now, for the plaza, that's something different? This [the plaza] is old, but now they have benches. . . . They have a playground area for kids as well.

Veronica, an interviewee from Mexico, said that she uses the Internet to track news from home, including news about the central plaza in her home town:

Yes, when I talk to my daughter in Mexico, she tells me about the park. About 15 days ago we were looking at the pictures on the Internet and we were thinking about the old days. She tells me what has changed there [in the plaza and town]. Yes, we talk with my sister in law about what it was and what it's now.

Participants were asked to estimate the number and average duration of return visits to their homeland. The majority (64.7%, or 110 of 170) had not returned to their homeland since arriving in the United States. Only 17.6% (30 of 170) had made 1 to 3 trips to their homeland and 17.6% had made four or more trips. Of the 58 participants who described the length of their trips to their homeland, the majority (69.0% or 40 of 58) reported that they had spent 2 months or less in their homeland.



Figure 46. A television reporter for an international cable station films a report on the local El Salvadoran Day celebration in MacArthur Park.



Figure 47. A bus carrying local television station personalities negotiates the parade route to MacArthur Park for Central American Independence Day.



Figure 48. A local broadcaster interviews one of the soccer players in MacArthur Park. (This story was broadcast locally and internationally.)



Figure 49. Booth at Central American Independence Day celebration showing emergency vehicle purchased with money sent home.

B.3. Imagined Returns to Homeland

The transnational literature asserts that transnational practices can be affective and symbolic in nature and can include “imagined returns to the homeland (through selective memory, cultural rediscovery, and sentimental longings)” (Espiritu & Tran, 2002, p. 369) and the maintenance of cross-border connections “at the level of emotions, ideologies, and cultural codes” (Wolf, 2002, p. 258). Relevant to this form of transnational practice, survey participants were asked whether they anticipated making trips to their homeland or planned to return to their homeland to live. Of 172 participants who responded to the question, 160 or 93% indicated *yes*. The majority of those who planned to make return visits (73.7% or 118 of 160) indicated that they planned to return home at least once each year (Table 33).

Table 33

Survey Participants' Reported Planned Frequency of Trips to Homeland

Plans	<i>n</i>	%
No definitive plans	33	20.6
Less than once per year	9	5.6
Each year	85	53.1
More often than once per year	33	20.6
Total	160	100.0

It is interesting to note the contrast between planned and actual frequency of visits to participants' homeland. While 118 survey participants reported that they planned to return home at least once a year, only 2 reported that they had actually visited their

homeland that frequently. This finding supports what many transnational scholars have identified as a firm but often unrealized belief on the part of transmigrant populations that they will return to their homeland. Two of 6 participants who were interviewed for this study, Veronica (in Los Angeles for 18 years) and Hector (in Los Angeles for 7 years), stated that they had not been able to travel home yet but wished to do so in the future. Gilberto (in Los Angeles for 19 years), the oldest interviewee, had not returned to Mexico for 3 years. Jacobo (in Los Angeles for 40 years) and Zoraida (in Los Angeles for 30 years) reported that they had returned to Mexico once a year since their arrival in the United States. Rogelio (in Los Angeles for 24 years) had returned to El Salvador once a year since arriving in the United States.

To further test ties with their homeland, survey participants were asked where they planned to live in the future. They were prompted with the responses *here, your birth country, or other*. Surveyors made clear to respondents that they could chose more than one place to live. Figure 50 displays the responses to this question.

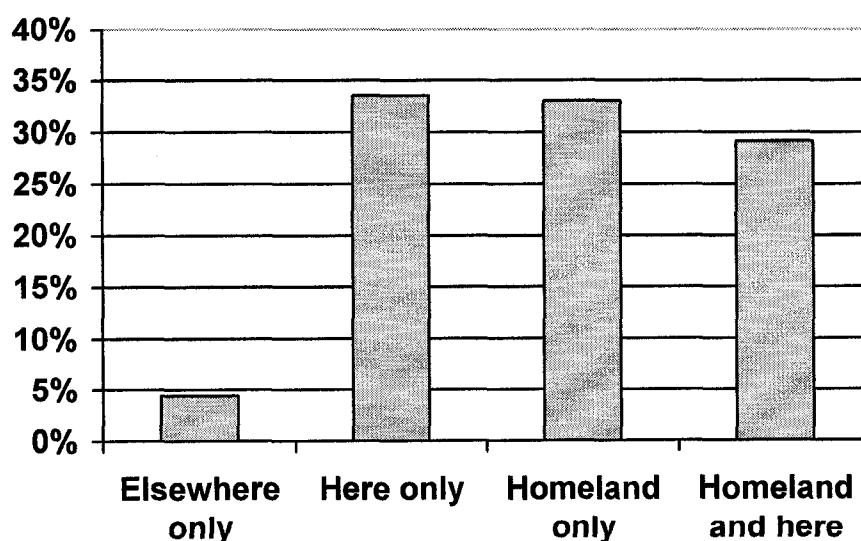


Figure 50. Survey participants' reported plans for future residence.

The responses to this question have interesting implications for understanding the ties to place that survey participants were experiencing. A large number of participants (29.1% or 52 of 179) reported that they wished to move back and forth between two locales. Those who planned to live only here (33.5% or 60 of 179) were about equal in number to those who wished to go home permanently (33% or 59 of 179). To understand whether or not the choices respondents made reflected their ties to the United States and their homeland, they were asked to elaborate on their responses to this question.

Approximately 58% (35 out of the 60) of the respondents who planned to live here only elaborated that they had made the choice because of opportunities here, primarily jobs and education. One respondent said, "I would like to form a family here and give my kids an education with more opportunities for advancement." Many respondents who mentioned opportunities also mentioned their children: "for my son's education and for my job," "because of my future and my children," "because there are more opportunities here for a better life." Several respondents related their desire to live here to feelings or preferences that they had formed: "because it's pretty [here]," "because I like Los Angeles," "because of the organization, the discipline and the laws." One woman said, "I feel free, with more liberties, even though there are always insecurities." Several people (5) spoke of feeling safer here: "there's not too much violence," "it's safe to be living here with my kids," "because this country is safe." Some respondents referred directly to the length of time they had spent here: "I have lived here half of my life and I'm used to it," "I like it here and have lived here a long time and feel like this is my country."

Of those who indicated that they would like to move back and forth between their homeland and the United States, approximately 62% (32 of 52) indicated that they would want to move back and forth because of the opportunities here and their family in their

homeland. Approximately 19% (10 of 52) indicated that they would want to move back and forth because of family here and family in their homeland. The same number were in two categories, offering a variety of reasons for binational or trinal lives:

Here because its peaceful and safe and in Mexico because it's my homeland

Because my husband has a job and my son does not want to leave this country and my homeland because my parents and the rest of my family live there.

Here because of the job opportunities and in El Salvador because I have my roots there and we always wish to go back to the place we come from.

Here because of my age with the doctors and good medicine, they saved my life from a stroke and in my native country because I want to die in peace. Here it is too expensive and they throw you in the ocean or cremate you.

The US because I was raised here; my homeland because I was born there.

Here because of the opportunities and because I'm accepted and in my homeland because I know people and they know me, and in Mexico because I like it there and I've lived there before.

Because I like this country and my country too. Here because of the possibilities, Guatemala because it's my country and Spain because I want to know the country of my ancestors.

In the US because of the economics, in Honduras because of my family and in France because of the quality of life.

Of those who indicated that they would like to move back to their homeland, approximately 13% (8 of 59) did not elaborate beyond the fact that they wanted to return there because they had been born there. Approximately 29% (17 of 59) of this group cited family as the reason to return home. The remaining 58% (34 of 59) mentioned other reasons, including preferring their country to others, missing and needing their country, feeling freer in their country, and feeling that their homeland was "their place." The following are samples of the reasons that respondents provided for the choice of their homeland.

I'm from Guatemala and I need it.

I miss my country.

I feel like I have more liberty to go anywhere. Here I feel like a chicken in a barn locked up.

Mexico is better. There is more liberty there.

You are more free in your own country.

I feel better there because it is my place.

I would like to know the places of where I was born.

In Mexico you live a more tranquil life. Here it's dangerous with violence and shootings.

There are lots of things to do there.

The history of Guatemala and the climate.

The culture and traditions.

One would expect that, among survey participants over time, there might be some change in ties to the homeland and that these changes might have some impact on attachment to places here in the participants' new homeland. However, based on the data gathered via the survey, homeland ties appeared to remain strong, despite some changes in the indicators used to measure transnational ties.

There was a significant negative relationship ($p < .01$) between increased time in the United States and frequency of contact, suggesting that transnational ties might weaken somewhat (see Figure 51). For instance, among those who had arrived 20 or more years ago, 32.3% had had contact with their homeland once per month or less frequently, while among those who had arrived in the past 9 years, only 11.4% had had contact, and among those with 5 or fewer years, only 2.5% had had contact. Still, while there were changes to the frequency of contact over the years, the absolute level of contact remained relatively high, with the majority of participants in each of the three categories for period of arrival in the United States remaining in contact with their homelands at least once per week, suggesting that transnational ties remained strong.

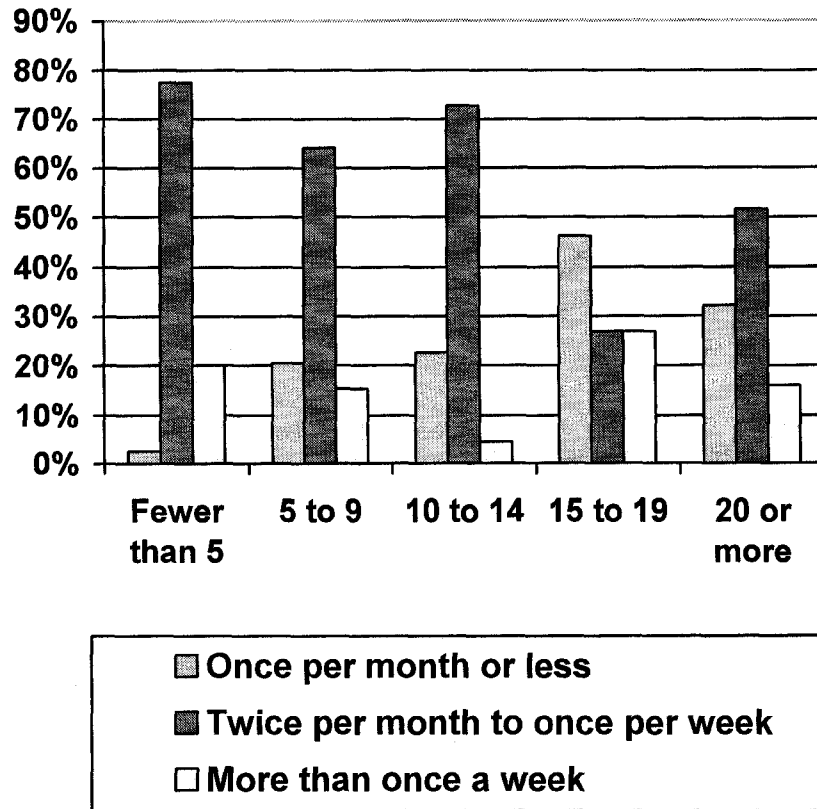


Figure 51. Survey participants' frequency of contact with homeland by years in the United States.

As the frequency of contact with the homeland diminished, frequency of trips to the homeland increased with length of time in the United States. For instance, only 4.5% of the participants who had been in the United States for 5 to 9 years had traveled to their homeland as frequently as once or twice per 5-year period, while 33.3% of those who had been in the United States for 20 or more years were traveling to their homeland as frequently as once or twice per 5-year period. There are several potential explanations for this, including a change in legal status over time that allows one to travel more freely or the accumulation of knowledge over time regarding how to negotiate moving back and forth between the United States and one's homeland. At any rate, the increase in

frequency of visits as length of residence in the United States increases supports the finding that ties between immigrants here and people in their homeland are sustained over long periods of time.

There was a statistically significant negative relationship ($p < .01$) between plans for future residence in the homeland and length of experience in the United States. Forty-four percent of the participants who had been here 9 or fewer years planned to live in their homeland, while only 17.1% of those with 20 or more years in the United States had similar plans. There may be several explanations for this. It may be that those who plan to return home carry out these plans over a long enough period of time that those who remain in the United States for a long period of time are those who choose to live here. It may also be that, after an extended period of time in the United States, immigrants begin to prefer life here or become more realistic about the difficulties of making a move back to the homeland.

Two of the 6 persons interviewed for this study (Jacobo and Zoraida) indicated that they would remain in the United States because their economic situation here was better. Hector and Veronica indicated that they would like to live in Los Angeles, in their homeland, and in other places (such as Hawaii and Alaska) for the adventure. Gilberto was not sure where he wanted to live. Only Rogelio spoke definitely of his plans to return home and to visit the United States.

I want to go back to El Salvador. [Why?] Because the money from the retirement services [here] wouldn't be enough to pay rent [here]; however, over there I'd only pay taxes for my house Because my grandchildren would be living here, . . . I would have to come back here [to visit].

The survey participants' reported plans for future residence according to years of residence in the United States are summarized in Figure 52.

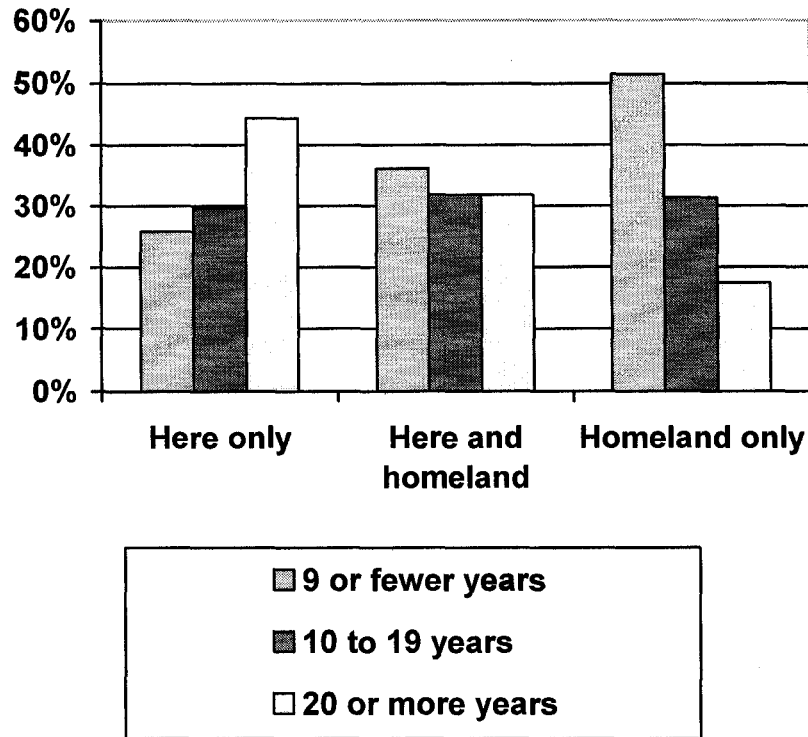


Figure 52. Survey participants' plans for future residence by years in the United States.

B.4. Transnational Ties and Attachment

No statistically significant ties were found between transnational ties to the homeland—generational ties, location of the majority of family members, frequency of contact, imagined returns to the homeland—and attachment to MacArthur Park. A 3-point index for transnational ties included all of the transnational measures except for generational ties. (Using this variable would have meant eliminating part of the population that had no children, which would reduce the valid survey participant numbers by almost one third.) A value of 1 in the index meant being in less frequent contact with the homeland, having more family members here, making less frequent actual visits to the homeland, planning less frequent visits, and planning to live here. A value of 3 meant being in more frequent contact with the homeland, having more family members there,

making more frequent trips, planning more frequent trips and planning to return to the homeland to live. Using this index, no statistically significant relationship or tendency in terms of attachment to MacArthur Park was found. See Figure 53.

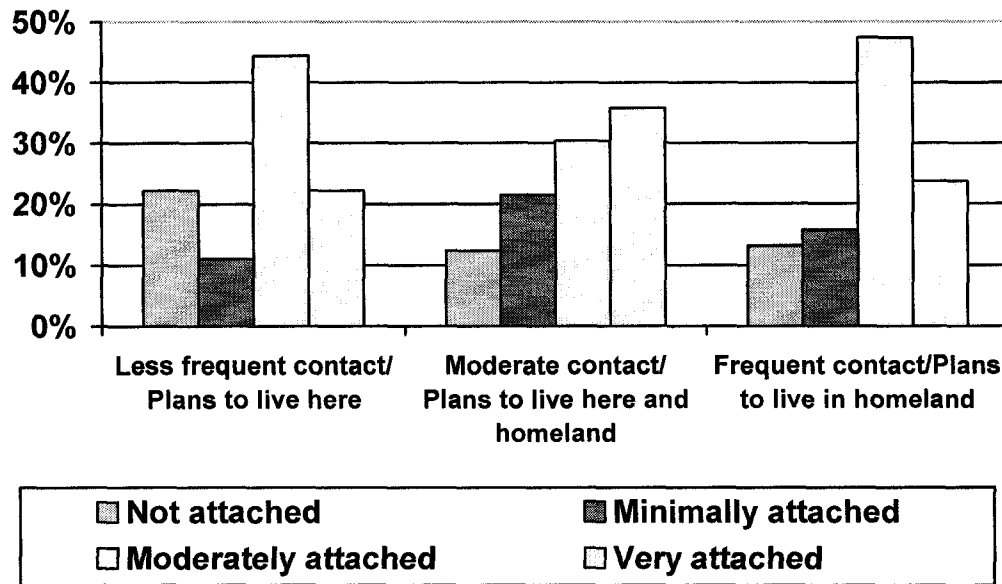


Figure 53. Survey participants' attachment to MacArthur Park by measure of transnational ties.

While the transnational measures in this study are not meant to represent all possible ways of measuring ties to the homeland (for instance, the survey could have asked whether they sent funds home), they provide some indication of the cultural and familial ties and actual and planned frequency of contact with the homeland. These measures should indicate how important relationships with the homeland were for study participants. The responses to survey questions and comments from the interviewees support the finding that, for the foreign-born population using the park, there continued to be a deep association with the homeland and homeland culture. It seems equally evident that continuing strong ties with the homeland did not prevent very strong attachments to

places in the new homeland, at least in the case of MacArthur Park. Survey participants were very attached to MacArthur Park (chapter 5), even in the short time most had been using the park, despite strong associations with their homeland reported in this chapter. Both of these findings contradict conceptualizations and findings found in a significant amount of the place attachment literature. Moreover, attachment to the park existed despite its significant problems, shortcomings of which survey participants have demonstrated they are quite cognizant. Taking all of this together, one must ask what it is about the study participants, about MacArthur Park, and about the nature of attachment to public places that led to these contradictory findings. The following sections and chapter 7 provide an analysis of the unique and complex circumstances leading to the strong and sometimes counterintuitive emotional responses to MacArthur Park that were discovered in this study.

C. Ethnic/Multi-Ethnic Enclave

Chapter 2 reviewed the literature on attachment to ethnic enclaves. The primary focus in much of the literature on ethnic enclaves is economic integration into the host country. However, attention has also been given to the ways in which enclaves, through the preservation of cultural traditions, help immigrants to address the physical and social displacement that accompanies displacement from their homeland (Gold, 1992). Studies have found that enclaves help immigrants to “‘retrieve,’ ‘engrave,’ and ‘enclose’ segments from their collective memory and their collective past,” thereby helping them to mitigate “the psychological trauma of displacement” (Mazumdar et al., 2000, p. 330; see also Halbwachs, 1980). However, while attention has been given to the significant social attachments associated with enclaves (Abrahamson, 1996; Ehrkamp, 2005; Fried, 1963; Gans, 1962; Rivlin, 1987), much less attention has been given to the symbolic communication of ethnic identity through the physical environment and the resulting place identity

and attachment that might be occurring (Mazumdar et al.) This section explores whether the Latino users of MacArthur Park saw their ethnic identity expressed in MacArthur Park and the resulting effects upon attachments to the Park and reviews the ways in which identity in the park was contested and renegotiated through the activities of the actors in the park.

As reviewed in chapter 2, one of the key purposes and benefits of place identity is place's role in helping to achieve continuity of identity (Cooper Marcus, 1992; Hummon, 1990; Milligan, 1998; Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996). The ethnic enclave, by having characteristics that are similar or reminiscent of places left behind, helps an immigrant to maintain continuity of place and thus continuity of identity. This is sometimes referred to as *place-referent continuity*, noting that continuity via places has emotional significance for a person (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, p. 208). The area immediately surrounding the park is full of reminders of Mexico and Central America (see Figures 54 and 55).

In order to get a more direct measure of perceived similarities, survey participants were asked to agree or disagree with the statement, "MacArthur Park reminds me of home." Respondents who answered *yes* were asked to respond further with *a little*, *some*, or *a great deal*. As reported in chapter 5, 76.4% of the respondents (136) agreed with this statement and 43.3% indicated that the park reminded them of places in their homeland *a great deal* (Table 34). These results suggest a strong linkage between MacArthur Park and homeland identity.

The relationship between the degree to which MacArthur Park reminded a survey participant of home and level of attachment was positive and statistically significant ($p < .01$). As an example, among those who indicated that MacArthur Park did not remind them of their homeland, 26.2% were very attached to the park, while among those who



Figure 54. Many local businesses prepare or carry products from home.

indicated that the park reminded them of their homeland a great deal, 45.3% were very attached to the park (Table 35).

Clearly, MacArthur Park reminded many study participants of home, which correlates with their reporting feelings about the park. This section looks at the ways in which MacArthur Park reminded study participants of their homeland and, ultimately, preserving ethnic identity.



Figure 55. A business adjacent to the park includes vivid images of home.

Table 34

Number/Percentage of Survey Participants Who Reported Being Reminded of Home by MacArthur Park

Degree to which park reminded of home	<i>n</i>	%
None	42	23.6
A little	23	12.9
More or less	36	20.2
A great deal	77	43.3
Total	178	100.0

Table 35

Level of Attachment to MacArthur Park by Degree to Which MacArthur Park Reminded One of Home

Degree of reminder	MacArthur Park Attachment Index				Total
	None	Some	Moderate	Very	
None	12	10	9	11	42
A little	6	5	7	5	23
More or less	5	8	13	9	35
A great deal	3	7	31	34	75
Total	26	30	60	59	175

C.1. Social Life and the Ethnic Enclave

Some of the literature on identity reviewed in chapter 2 emphasizes the role of the ethnic enclave in “retrieving,” “engraving,” and “enclosing” segments of a collective

memory (Halbwachs, 1980; Mazumdar et al., 2000). The social life of the ethnic enclave is a key component in fulfilling this role. According to Mazumdar et al., “The people, the networks, the shops, celebration of religious events. and holidays all cumulatively contribute to communal solidarity and ethnic identity” (p. 323). The results of the survey, extended interviews, and observations of the park confirmed that the social life of the park contributes to its role as part of an ethnic enclave.

Many study participants mentioned the liveliness of the Park as a reminder of home. Analysis of study participants’ comments confirm that references to the park’s liveliness often included descriptions of ethnic and cultural expressions that could be found in the park. When asked via an open-ended question about their favorite things about the park, survey respondents mentioned people or events related to their ethnic identity. Out of 177 people who responded to the question, 28 specifically mentioned people or events, such as vendors, soccer games, and community events and fiestas, relative to their culture as their favorite things about the park. All but 2 of those respondents were in the category of being attached to MacArthur Park, with 24 being moderately or very attached to the park. Results were similar for an open-ended question about reasons for coming to the park. Out of 177 respondents, 23 mentioned people or interactions relative to their ethnic identity. Of those 23 respondents, 20 indicated some level of attachment and 16 were moderately or very attached.

Observations of the park, particularly on weekends, confirmed that MacArthur Park was a lively place with many reminders of parks in Mexico and Central America. Everywhere Spanish was being spoken. On the soccer field, soccer coaches yelled commands to their players and parents and friends cheered on the soccer players. Some park patrons carried radios playing a variety of music: salsa, indigenous folk ballads from Oaxaca, *ranchera*, *cumbia*, *marimba*, and the newest Salvadoran rock music,

“Guanarock” (from the slang *Guanaco* for a person from El Salvador). Religious speakers and singers, some with megaphones, gathered at the corners of 7th and Alvarado and at the Wilshire eastern entrance to the park, preaching and singing in Spanish. On Sunday, unofficial church services are held at the southeastern corner of the park in an open-air gathering, replete with a portable microphone, chairs, and banners.

Several survey participants who gave extended interviews confirmed that the liveliness of the park and its atmosphere “felt like home” and reminded them of many of their homeland customs. Veronica, remarking on her feelings about the park in relationship to her homeland, said,

Yes, yes, I think that a park is the prettiest thing we have, a park is like going back to where we live, where we were born, where we were raised, is like going back to our childhood, to be happy again. Yes, a park is like a friend, like the one that gives you a hand and a hug. See!, when you have a problem, when you feel sad, when you owe money, when you have a lot of stress, you come to the park and you feel calm, you forget about your job and the bad times and perhaps you remember all the good things about your childhood.

C.1.1. People. The survey and extended interviews with park visitors and users confirmed that the mere sight of others from their own culture contributed to place-related ethnic identity. Of the 136 people who agreed that the park reminded them of homeland places, 98 expanded on why. Twenty-eight specifically mentioned “people” (“Latin people,” “people from my homeland,” “many people from Mexico,” “many Latin and Mexican people”) as the reason. The majority of survey participants who linked people with reminders of their homeland places (22) were in the category of having the highest level of attachment to MacArthur Park, suggesting a link between ethnic identity and attachment.

In addition to the survey questions, extended interviews and observations of the park confirmed the role of the park in the continuity of its users’ ethnic identity. Veronica spoke of feeling at home in the park: “Yes, I feel comfortable because I am among my

people, I have never felt out of place, but here I feel more familiarized with them.” Regelio, when asked whether the park reminded him of his homeland, said, “Yes, a lot.” When asked how, he answered, “People” and then added, “How we greet each other, ‘good afternoon’ and ‘good evening.’” Figure 56 illustrates the familiar sites from home that can be found in the park.



Figure 56. A familiar site in Mexico and Central America, a woman shades herself from the hot sun with an umbrella. Her daughter is dressed in her Sunday best, while her sons are dressed for a soccer game.

Chapter 5, in the section on negative feelings associated with the park, reviewed the significant number of men who were alone in the park. About one third of the survey participants (33.7%) indicated that they came to the park alone. Survey responses supported the finding that a much larger percentage of men than women went to the park alone (Table 36).

Observations of the park during both weekdays and weekends supported the finding that a large number of park goers, particularly men were alone in the park (Table 37 and Figure 57).

Table 36

Visitors Arriving at MacArthur Park Alone Versus With Others by Gender

Group	Men	Women	Total	%
Alone	52	9	61	33.7
With someone	48	67	115	63.5
Both alone and with others	5	0	5	2.8
Total	105	76	181	100.0

Table 37

Park Users by Gender

Group	Men	% of males	Women	% of females
Alone				
Weekends	146	11.9	3	0.5
Weekdays	97	19.5	0	0.0
With someone				
Weekends	1,028	88.1	516	99.5
Weekdays	401	80.5	145	100.0
Total				
Weekends	1,228	100.0	519	100.0
Weekdays	498	100.0	145	100.0

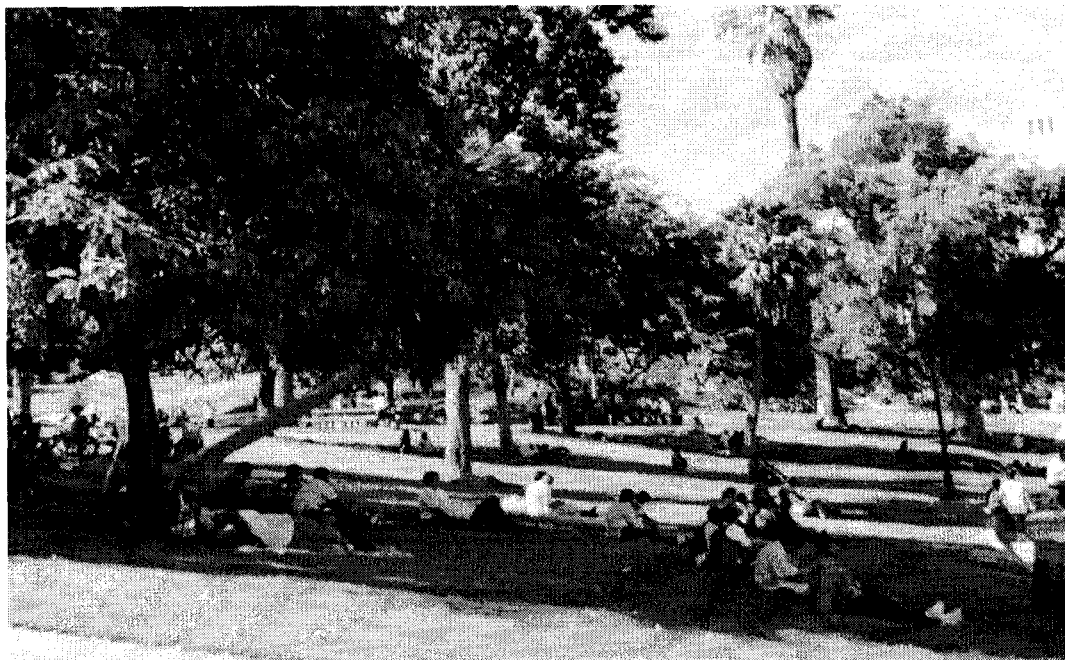


Figure 57. Park users, a majority of whom are male, observe the lake and other park users passing by. Some of the men are in groups of two to three, while others are alone.

Chapter 5 reported that a considerable proportion (16.3%) of men using the park were experiencing a reported profound sense of loneliness in the park. Many of the men had immigrated here alone, without their families. Asked about the lone men in the park, Veronica commented,

[There are] a lot of men by themselves, and it's because of the same reason, we come from our countries and we leave behind our wives, our children . . . and they live to work to send money and since we don't have the resources, like to be spending extra money, they just come to the park to feel happy to rest and to remember their families. Here we have some entertainment like the boats, walk around the park, to get wet a little, to sunbathe a little.

As reviewed in chapter 2, an argument for the value of public spaces in urban centers is the “public realm relationships”—the relationships between “familiar strangers” (people whom one regularly observes but does not interact with; Milgram, 1970) that these spaces afford (Lofland, 1998). The survey results on frequency of visits

confirmed that the park was a world of familiar strangers. Seventy-eight percent of survey participants visited the park at least once a week (Table 38).

Table 38

Frequency of Visits to MacArthur Park Per Month

Frequency of visits to the park	<i>n</i>	%
Less than once per week	38	22.0
Once per week	77	44.5
More than once per week	58	33.5
Total	173	100.0

Lofland (1998) argued that the importance of these relationships to well-being has been undervalued because of a bias toward primary relationships (relationships with family and friends). Public realm relationships in MacArthur Park provide an important physical and symbolic links to homeland, families, and ethnic identity for the men who have arrived here alone and with very few resources.

C.1.2. Soccer. One of the most prominent features of MacArthur Park is the weekend soccer games and weekday soccer practices that occupy a large part of the north side of the park. Several survey participants mentioned playing soccer, watching soccer, or watching their children play soccer as reminders of home, reasons for coming to the park, or their favorite thing about the park. It is hard to imagine a sport more associated with Latin American culture than soccer. On weekends, games conducted by a soccer league continue throughout the day on two separate adjacent fields. Just to the east of

those two fields it is common to see unofficial games being played in small groups and many individuals and small groups working on their soccer skills. The soccer players' and their families' T-shirts and baseball caps are physical elements of the game that provide cues and reminders of identity, branded with the names of homeland teams and products and companies catering to the Latino market.

On weekends throughout the year 200 to 500 people watch the games. Clearly, the soccer games were a major source of social interaction in the park. The groups gathered around the fields were made up of family members who had children in the games as well as individuals and small groups standing on the sidelines. A grassy area that slopes up on the south side of the fields is a perfect place for a shaded and excellent view of the game. A great variety of social groupings occur there as well, including included both men and women. Families greet other families with children on the same team. Men gather in small groups, watching the game and chatting about the players. Figures 58, 59, 60, and 61 illustrate the popularity of soccer in the park.

As in the rest of the park, there were many lone men and men in pairs. Frequently, over the course of the game, men sitting alone begin to speak intermittently to other men whom they did not know, eventually joining in a full conversation. Conversations often included references to homeland soccer teams and players, another way in which soccer linked the park goers to their homeland. The Los Angeles soccer team, Chivas, was also a frequent topic of conversation; some observers were clearly fans, demonstrating allegiance and ties that were forming here. The soccer field appeared to be a place where people could speak to strangers and meet new people in a fairly nonthreatening setting. This was confirmed by several male survey participants and interviewees who described making friends as a result of watching or playing soccer.

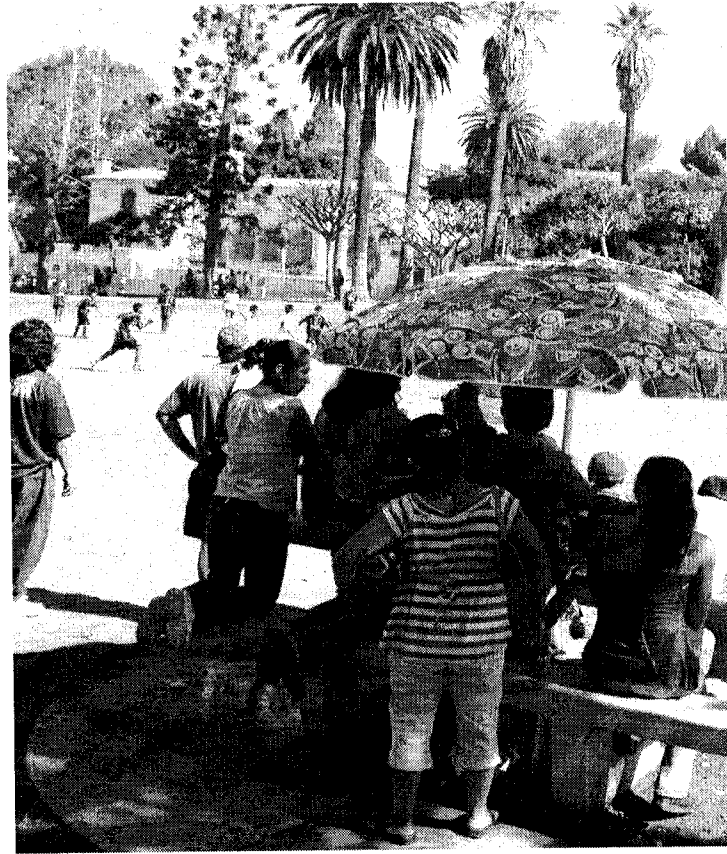


Figure 58. Family and friends watch soccer.



Figure 59. League members play a weekend game.



Figure 60. A seasonal tournament draws a significant weekend crowd.

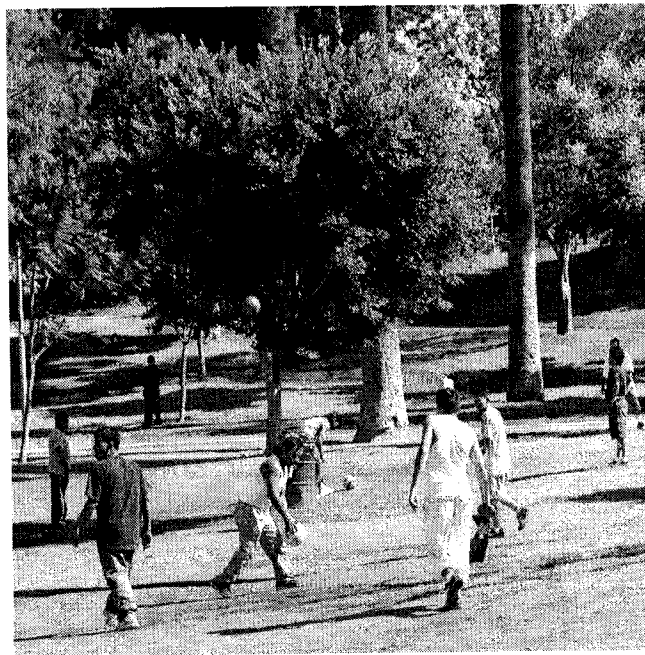


Figure 61. Young men play a pick-up game near the soccer fields.

One of the male survey participants in this study who had been in the United States for less than 6 months indicated that he had met all of his friends in the park. “Without this park I don’t know what I would have done when I first moved here. I found people from my town here, watching soccer. All of my friends play around with soccer here in the park.” Rogelio, the interviewee who spends most of his time in the park at the soccer field, confirmed that he made friends in the park and that the park continues to support friendships: “Sometimes I bump into my friends [here] . . . We just talk to see how everything is going When we can’t talk [don’t have time] at home, we agree to meet here in the park to talk.”

C.1.3. Vending. The sights of and interchanges with vendors are clearly also an important part of the experience of MacArthur Park. Parks in Mexico and Central America would not be complete without the vendors selling everything from clothing to freshly prepared foods. The very presence of vendors in the park is a pronounced symbol of home. Vendors announce themselves with their own unique calls, distinguishing themselves through pitch, tone, and emphasis on specific words and phrases, often to the amusement of their customers, a custom quite common among vendors in Mexico. A few survey participants specifically listed vendors as one of their favorite things and/or one of the reasons they come to the park. In any part of the park, one can observe one third to one half of the people buying something from passing vendors.

While much of the time the vendors in MacArthur Park are moving as quickly as they can, selling as much as they can throughout the park, when things slow down, they stop and talk to customers and other vendors. Sometimes vendors can be seen looking together with customers at local newspapers that report news from home, debating politics, and gossiping about mutual acquaintances and other vendors in the park. Sometimes vendors break up small skirmishes between local teenagers, lecturing the young

people about getting along or staying in school or littering the park. Vendors function as the shopkeepers of MacArthur Park, providing local news about the park and the community. They spend all their time in the park and speak to almost everyone in an attempt to sell. An extended interview with one vendor and survey of two others showed clearly that the park is their territory; they keep a careful eye on what is happening in the park and in the neighborhood, partially because it affects their livelihood. They are valuable sources of information for park goers.

The items that vendors sell are important physical reminders of home. Vendors in Latin America hawk everything from toys and balloons, jewelry and clothing, packaged snacks such as gum and peanuts and popsicles to freshly prepared fruit and yogurt, roasted corn, and shaved ice. All of these can be found in MacArthur Park on weekdays and weekends.

Food is a potent reminder of culture and home (Abrahamson, 1996). Many of the food items sold in the park seem to be made by the vendors or locally made. On hot days it is not uncommon to see eight or nine vendors hand shaving large blocks of ice and then pouring over the ice neon-colored syrups or juices of orange, pineapple, lime, or tamarind from large unmarked jars. Vendors also sell prepackaged items that they clearly buy locally, such as candies and popsicles with company logos. While some products, such as canned soda, could be geared for any audience, other products are clearly made for Latin American consumers, including tropically flavored popsicles and candies seen only in Latino grocery stores and chili-lime peanuts without brand packaging. Figure 62 shows a vendor selling ice cream and popsicles.

Vendors with large tubs of roasted corn that they somehow keep warm in handmade carts pour sauces and sprinkle chili powder at the customer's request. If a vendor who serves one's roasted corn one's favorite way is not recognizable by sight, he

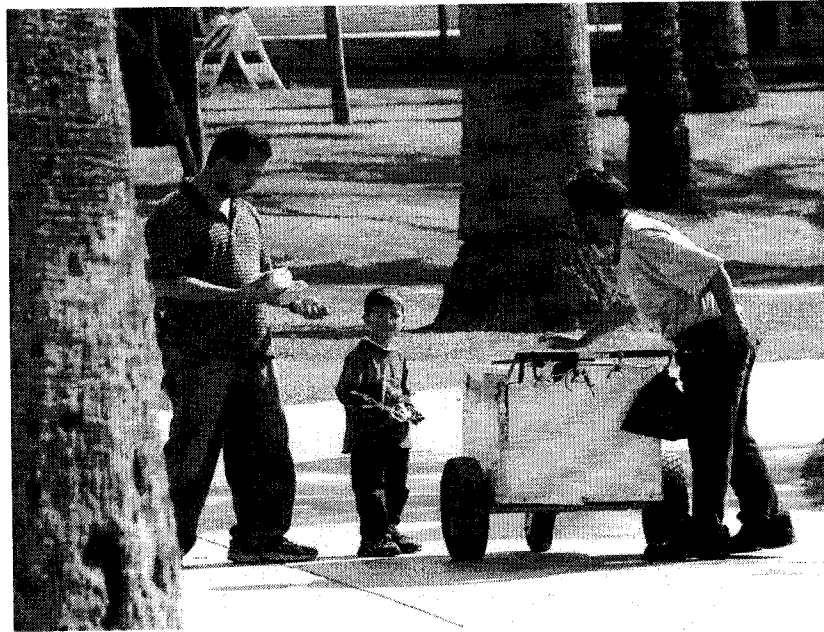


Figure 62. A street vendor sells ice cream and other frozen products.



Figure 63. A vendor sells roasted corn out of a drum, along with prepackaged foods.

can be recognized by call. There is no need for the corn vendors to announce themselves, though, as the strong, earthy, and delicious smell of the roasted corn proceeds them; heads turn in anticipation before a sound is uttered (see Figure 63). There is hardly a plaza in Mexico that, at some time or another during the day, is not filled with the sight and smell of roasting corn and the sound of a vendor scraping his large block of ice into a cooling antidote to the hot sun (see Figure 64).

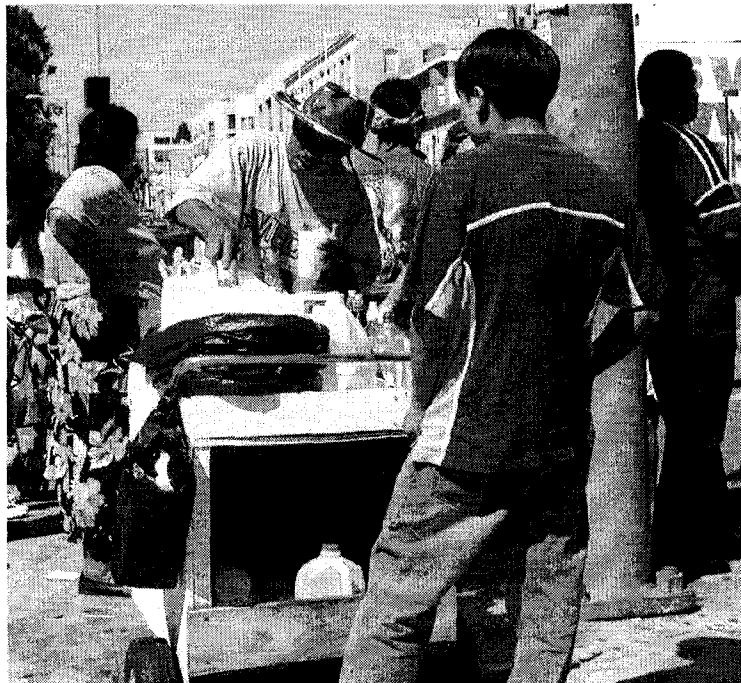


Figure 64. A vendor shaves ice before covering it with a syrup of the client's choice.

Along with traditional foods, such as the roasted corn and shaved ice, and prepackaged foods, such as canned sodas and popsicles, vendors in the park seem to create new traditions that fuse traditional foods with vendor cart foods found in the United States. One example of vendor fusion cuisine in MacArthur Park is a hot dog, roasted on-the-

spot on large cookie sheets placed over some type of cooking device, accompanied by grilled peppers, bacon, and a hot dog bun, all also roasted on the spot (Figure 65). Several park visitors said that they had observed this particular way of serving hot dogs in Mexico. One of the vendors from El Salvador said that she had no idea where this particular version of the hot dog originated; she was confident that it was not from El Salvador because “we don’t have spicy food.” She made the hot dogs this way because she had noticed others who were successful by doing so.

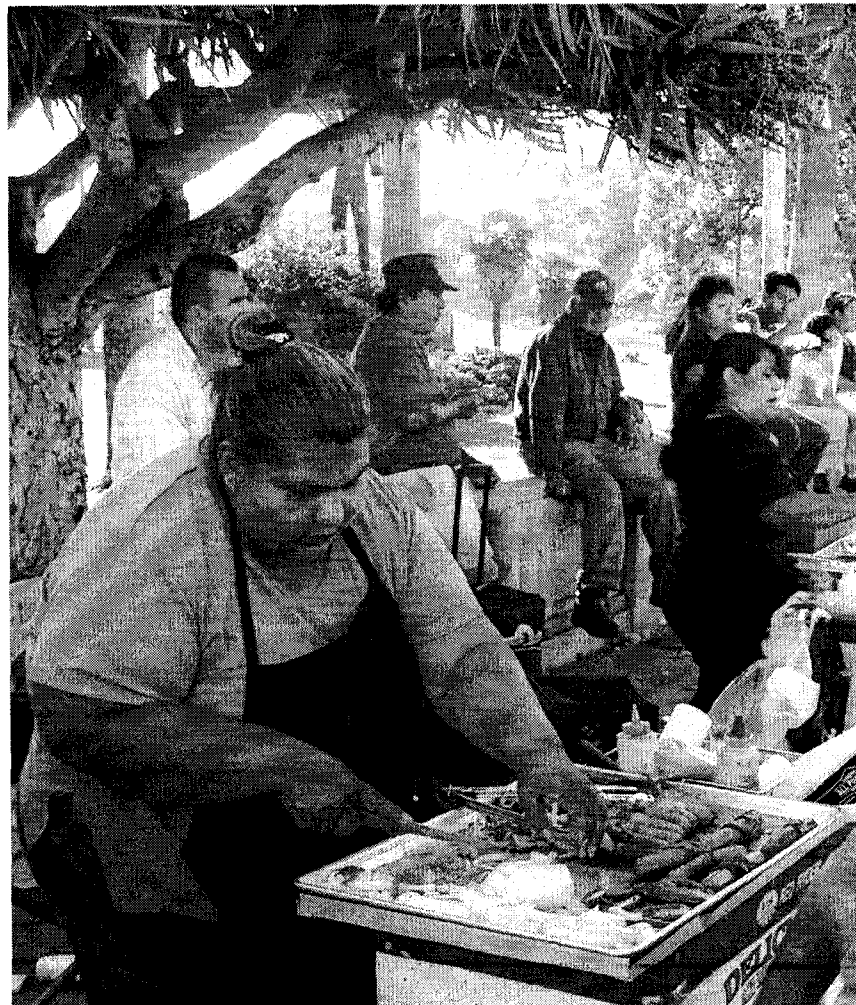


Figure 65. A woman prepares a mixture of hot dogs, hot peppers, and onions.

Vendors in MacArthur Park also sell toys and balloons for children and small personal items, such as jewelry and watches. Toy vendors, made almost invisible by the brightly colored balloons that float above and all around them and surrounded by large groups of small children, are a common and colorful sight in MacArthur Park, as in Mexico and Central America (see Figure 66). Vendors selling religious jewelry, such as rosaries and necklaces and bracelets with religious figures (such as the Virgin of Guadalupe, an important figure in Mexican culture) are less frequently seen but are popular in the park, as well.



Figure 66. Balloon and toy vendors are very popular on weekends.

Surveys and extended interviews confirmed that vendors and the food that they sell are reminders of home. While walking through the park taking pictures of things that reminded her of home, Veronica (an interviewee) spoke about the variety of foods available in the park that are from Mexico. Zoraida, a middle-age woman who said that she had spent a great deal of time in MacArthur Park when her children were small, indicated that the park reminded her of home because it had “a place to ride your bikes, playground area for smaller kids, and vendors selling fruits, snow cones.”

C.1.4. Community events. If the daily life of MacArthur Park serves to provide continuous and largely unself-conscious reminders of everyday aspects of homeland culture, the large community events and fiestas that take place in and around the park serve as an opportunity for complete and self-conscious saturation in homeland culture. MacArthur Park has become the epicenter for Central Americans’ assertion of their homeland culture in their new home. Two major events—(a) Feria Agostina, an annual celebration for El Salvadorans celebrated in the beginning of August, and (b) Central American Independence Day celebration and parade, celebrating the independence of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua, all on September 15th—bring thousands to MacArthur Park in ritual reenactments of ethnic and national identity. Both events last for 2 days in the park. The portion of Wilshire Boulevard going through MacArthur Park is closed and filled with food and information booths, carnival rides, and bandstands for music performances and speeches (see Figure 67).

According to much of the publicity about the annual Feria Agostinas or Feria de Salvadoreños, it is a time when many Salvadorans from all over Southern California unite in the park to celebrate their heritage. Some of those at the celebration are returning to the neighborhood and the park after many years, others are in the neighborhood and park for the first time. This was revealed in 20 or so short interviews conducted in the park during



Figure 67. Feria de Salvadorenos on Wilshire Boulevard, 2006.

the celebration in August 2006. The park was full of people, spilling over from the celebration on Wilshire Boulevard. The attempt to pilot test the instrument at this time was abandoned because a large proportion of the visits to the fair had never been in MacArthur Park before or had been in the park only a few times or many years ago.

Feria Agostina takes place around the time of Las Fiestas Agostinas and *la bajada*, when thousands of Salvadorans gather in the streets of San Salvador celebrating the transfiguration of the Divine Savior of the World, El Salvador's patron. The tradition

marks the founding of “El Salvador” in 1525, and according to the Salvadoran American National Association Web site (www.sanavision.org) serves as a powerful symbol of Salvadoran identity and civic pride. The celebrations are held in two separate locations in Los Angeles, with the Fiesta held in MacArthur Park and the religious ceremony and soccer tournament held in Exposition Park. The *la bajada* festival in Los Angeles was initiated by the Salvadoran American National Association (SANA), which commissioned an exact model of El Divino Salvador housed in the national cathedral in San Salvador. The primary ritual of the holiday is the lowering of a statue of El Divino Salvador, dressed in purple robes, into a globe. The globe shows no national borders, only continents. After a short time the figure reemerges dressed in white to symbolize a transfiguration. Upon the statue’s emergence, El Salvadorans customarily yell, “Viva El Salvador!” This statement has both religious and national/spatial meanings for Salvadorans—praise for both the savior and El Salvador.

The recreation of the celebrations in Los Angeles helps Salvadorans to recapture their past, tell their story of migration, and remain in touch with loved ones. When the model of El Divino was completed in El Salvador, it became a pilgrim, too. It traveled through El Salvador in the back of a red pickup truck, and Salvadorans gathered to touch the image, “hopeful that their loved ones in America would be able to do the same” (California State Fullerton Press Release, July 16, 2004, of the screening of “Transnational Savior,” a film by Jeanette Reedy Solano, assistant professor of comparative religion at California State University, Fullerton). In the past several years over 20,000 people were estimated to attend *la bajada*, with approximately the same number of people attending the more secular celebration in MacArthur Park. The event in MacArthur Park provides many physical reminders of life in and the culture of El

Salvador. Figures 68, 69, 70, and 71 show booths at Feria Agostina that provide reminders of El Salvador.



Figure 68. Packs of photos of El Salvador are available at Feria Agostina.



Figure 69. Food stands provide a mix of food from El Salvador and the United States.



Figure 70. Cooks make *pupusas*, a traditional El Salvadoran dish.



Figure 71. Feria de Salvadorenos include folk dances.

Central American Independence Day brings a multicultural celebration of ethnic identities to MacArthur Park. The celebration includes a parade that starts on Pico Boulevard, moves along Alvarado Street (the eastern border of the park), and spills into MacArthur Park. The festival begins with a carnival at the park and continues for 2 days with bands, folkloric music and dancing, speeches, and food vendors (Figure 72). Attendance at the parade has been estimated at 300,000 (Figures 73 through 79).

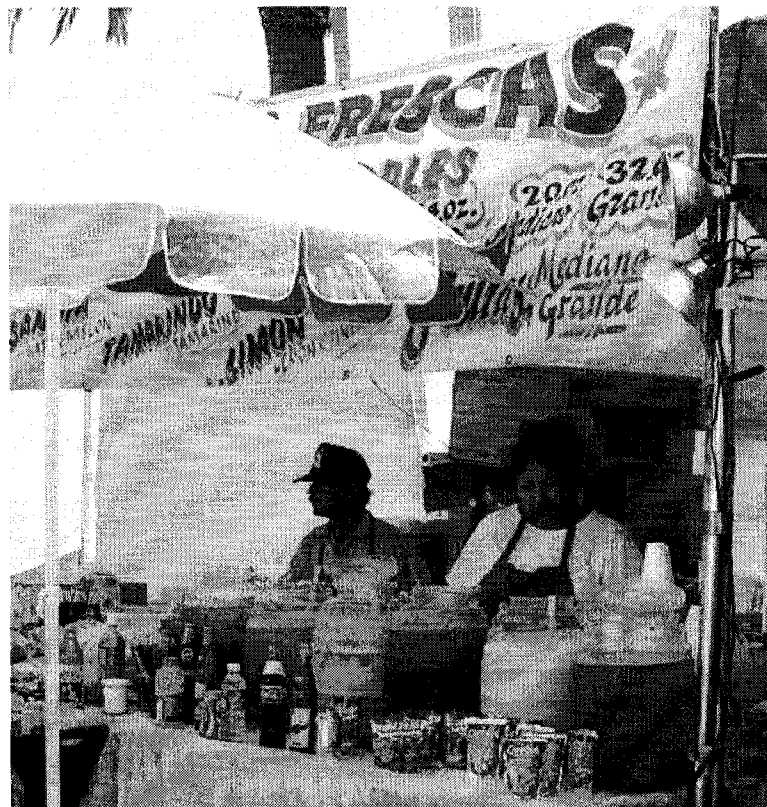


Figure 72. Food booth at the carnival for Central American Independence Day on Wilshire Boulevard.



Figure 73. People line the parade route, adjacent to MacArthur Park, on Alvarado Boulevard.



Figure 74. A float in the Central American Independence Day parade, 2006, depicting traditional Spanish architectural elements.



Figure 75. A young man along the parade route displays a Guatemalan flag.



Figure 76. A family displays their support as the El Salvadoran floats pass.



Figure 77. A float displays Central American flags and iconic figures from pre-Columbia ruins.



Figure 78. Marchers in the parade wear indigenous clothing.



Figure 79. A parade participant in ritual costume.

C.2. Contested Activities and Identity

This study has identified two important activities of the social life of MacArthur Park—soccer and vending—that contribute to the expression of local ethnic identity and attachment to the park. Both of these activities have physical elements associated with them that are markers and, as such, provide a continuity of identity for Latinos using the park. Both of these activities are not officially permitted in the park.

The vending that is conducted both inside and outside the park is illegal. Generally speaking, vending is illegal in the City of Los Angeles. In 1994 the city legalized vending in the designated MacArthur Park vending district, with the caveat that vendors use approved carts and obtain the appropriate business licenses (*Los Angeles Times*, 1999, p. A1; Figure 80).



Figure 80. The approved vendor carts line the sidewalk on Alvarado Boulevard, adjacent to MacArthur Park.

The license and carts were relatively expensive for most vendors in MacArthur Park. Only six or seven carts were available. The carts could be acquired through a local nonprofit agency that offered to train local vendors. Owing to financing difficulties, the cart program has been temporarily stopped (personal communication, Sandi Romero of Mama's Hot Tamales on 7th Street across from the park). Outside the park, informal vending is aggressively discouraged by the local police and businesses, and several witnessed vendors were observed being ticketed. Inside the park, the LAPD does not appear to discourage vendors as aggressively. At least in the several months of daily observations for this study and over 3 years of random visits to the park, no LAPD officers were seen attempting to stop a vendor from selling legal goods in the park. When the police patrol the park, vendors sometimes stop selling and move away from police

patrols so that their vending is not as obvious. The police move by them in what seems to be an uneasy dance in which neither partner wishes to acknowledge the other. One of the vendors asserted the legality of what he was doing, indicating that he had a business license. Another vendor mentioned that the police had asked her to stop selling things. Another vendor said nothing at all about the issue of vending in the park. There appears to be a silent agreement to allow vending to continue without formal acknowledgment.

The organized soccer league serving over a thousand youth holds practices every weekday and games every weekend on two unofficial fields. In what appears to be a nod to the significant importance of the league to the community and the lack of other locations for play, the city has assisted the league unofficially with funds and with staff. Currently, this funding has been suspended. According to the chief organizer, Daniel Morales, historic preservationists want to see the park return to its more historic role as a passive space with beautiful landscaping and without soccer fields. The preservationists argue that the park's historic designation prevents any "new activities," such as soccer, from being added to the park. The debate about the league seems to be going on among politicians and city staffers and the community but not in any official public forum. The city is looking for other sites for the league and wishes to allow the soccer to continue at the park unofficially until another site is found, perhaps at a school.

In the summer of 2006 a ritual event was added to MacArthur Park when the park held its first annual Soccerfest. The event, sponsored by State Senator Fabian Nuñez, was, according to the Senator's staff, meant to reinforce the importance of soccer to the community and to the park at a time when the appropriateness of the soccer fields and the league was being debated, officially or unofficially, by city politicians. It was an assertion of both ethnic and political identity for the Latino population of the park and the neighborhood. Several Spanish-speaking television stations covered the event and one

station sponsored it. Semiprofessional teams played several exhibition games on the soccer fields. The league played tournament games. Presentations were made by several politicians and trophies were given to the winners (Figures 81 through 83). A grant was given to the league organizer to continue running the league. Over the course of the day there were an estimated one thousand onlookers at the soccer fields. Local nonprofits groups dispensed information, food booths sold a variety of traditional foods, and other booths sold everything from crafts to learn-to-speak English CDs.



Figure 81. The main tent at Soccerfest, 2006.



Figure 82. A championship team poses for a picture after collecting their trophy.



Figure 83. More soccer at Soccerfest, 2006.

Along with the local fervor for soccer, MacArthur Park has been at the center of the Latino community's resistance to the anti-immigration movement. As reviewed in chapter 3, by spring of 2006 rhetoric in the immigration debate in the U.S. Congress had become so negative that immigrants' rights groups and religious groups organized in support of immigrants. In March 2006 protests against anti-immigrant legislation pending in the House of Representatives were held throughout the country (*Los Angeles Times*, May 2, 2006, p. A.1). Hundreds of thousands of protestors gathered at MacArthur Park as part of a peaceful protest that caught the attention of the nation (see Figure 84).

MacArthur Park was again at the center of protests held on May 1, 2007. This time a smaller group of protesters ended their demonstration in MacArthur Park, where police confronted them and shot at them with rubber bullets. The conflict has been



Figure 84. Marchers fill Wilshire Boulevard and the pathways in MacArthur Park, March 2006.

termed the *May Day melee*, and there have been several investigations into the police's response to what several witnesses have called a small confrontation in one part of the park that turned into a massive police response throughout the park (*Los Angeles Times*, May 3, 2007, p. A.1). The choice of MacArthur Park as the center for immigration rights protests in Los Angeles is a reflection of the park's importance to the Latino and immigrant community and its link with Latino and immigrant identity (see Figure 85, a photograph of anti-racist graffiti in one of the tunnels in MacArthur Park). This study focuses on the importance of the park in the everyday lives of park users and resulting attachments; political identity, as such, is not under consideration. However, MacArthur Park's centrality to the political movement for immigrants' rights further signifies its importance to Mexican and Central American identity. The role that political identity plays in place attachment is one that merits further investigation.

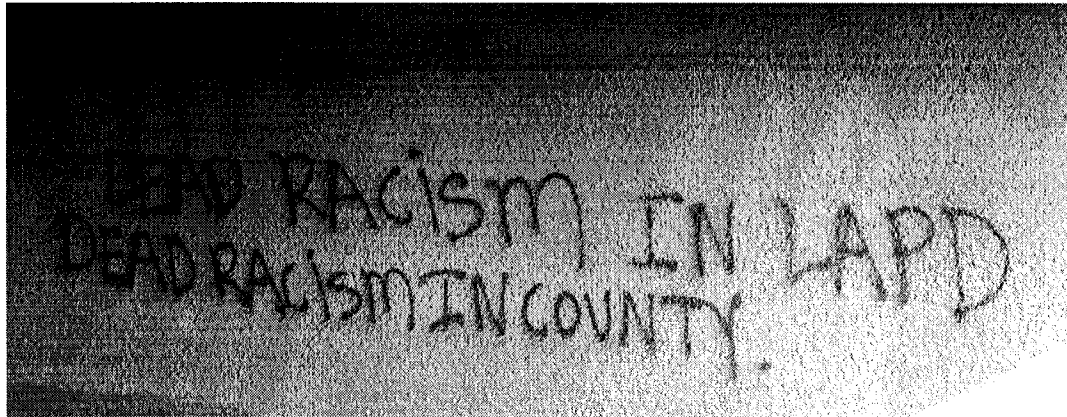


Figure 85. Graffiti in the MacArthur Park tunnel under Wilshire Boulevard, appearing after the May 1, 2007, police activity in the park.

C.3. Park Design and Place Identity

One of the most surprising results from the survey was that natural elements of the park (the trees, grass, lake, birds, and other creatures) were most frequently cited (51.5% of responses) by participants as reminding them of home (Table 39).

Dividing participant responses into two categories according to the first response given for coming to the park—social and outdoors, there was a statistically significant difference ($p < .01$) between the two categories in terms of how much MacArthur Park reminded the participants of home (Table 40 and Table 41). Among those who cited the outdoors or rest or relaxation as the main reason for visiting MacArthur Park, 58.5% were reminded a great deal of home by the park. Among those who cited children, family, friends, or liveliness first as the main reason for visiting MacArthur Park, 30.2% were reminded a great deal of home by the park. The differences were more dramatic when those who cited children first were compared with those who cited the outdoors first. Among those who cited children first as the reason they came to MacArthur Park, 26.2% were reminded a great deal of home by the park; among those who cited the outdoors first, 65.5% were reminded a great deal of home by the park.

Table 39

Park Elements That Reminded Survey Participants of Home

Element	<i>n</i>	%
Environment	53	51.5
Trees	15	14.6
Natural Environment	9	8.7
Birds	9	8.7
Grassy Areas	9	8.7
Water	7	6.8
Fresh Air	2	1.9
Shade	1	1.0
Squirrels	1	1.0
Social	30	29.1
People	28	27.2
Family gatherings	1	1.0
Parties	1	1.0
Soccer	10	9.7
Restful	4	3.9
Food	2	1.9
Freedom	2	1.9
Distractions	1	1.0
Fun	1	1.0
Total	103	100.0

Table 40

Degree to Which Survey Participants Were Reminded of Home by Reasons for Visiting MacArthur Park, Social Versus Outdoors/Rest/Relaxation

Degree of reminder	Children/family/friends/liveliness		Outdoors/rest/relax		Combined	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
None	21	33.3	7	10.8	28	21.9
A little	8	12.7	10	15.4	18	14.1
More or less	15	23.8	10	15.4	25	19.5
A great deal	19	30.2	38	58.5	57	44.5
Total	63	100.0	65	100.0	128	100.0

Table 41

Degree to Which Survey Participants Were Reminded of Home by Reasons for Visiting MacArthur Park, Children Versus Outdoors

Degree of reminder	Children		Outdoors		Combined	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
None	13	31.0	1	3.4	14	19.7
A little	7	16.7	7	24.1	14	19.7
More or less	11	26.2	2	6.9	13	18.3
A great deal	11	26.2	19	65.5	30	42.3
Total	42	100.0	29	100.0	71	100.0

Several participants who were questioned about whether the trees and birds were exactly those found in their homeland answered affirmatively. This question was not included in the survey, so it is not possible to determine whether the landscaping was

place referent (actually specific characteristics that also exist at home, such as specific species of trees and plants that are in the park and at home) or place generic (general characteristics that are transferable, such as trees and grass and parks). Both contribute to a continuity of identity. Several of the participants mentioned that they were from the countryside, and so the natural elements of the park may be reminders of their rural roots, particularly important to them in an urban environment. These results raise the possibility that landscaping can be an important element of ethnic identity, as important as architecture or the other temporary reminders discussed in this chapter.

Extended interviews confirmed that landscaping and other physical elements of the park were strong reminders of public spaces at home. When Veronica, a 40-year-old participant, was asked to identify the most important similarities between the plaza that she visited as a girl and MacArthur Park, she answered: “The plants, trees, and the peacefulness.” Veronica was asked what she would remember most about MacArthur Park; she replied, “My childhood teen years. I think about the restfulness and its tranquility, how good it feels to be in the park!” Hector, an interviewee who grew up in the countryside in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, indicated that the park reminded him very much of his homeland because of “the birds and their singing, the pigeons, the trees, and the sound of the water.” Zoraida, the second woman interviewed, relayed that MacArthur Park reminded her of her homeland a great deal because “you can play and it [the park] has a lake.”

The park’s topography, location, and circulation pattern make it the ideal spot for viewing physical and social reminders of home. The northern and southern parts of the park are bowl-shaped, meaning that there are many vantage points from which to view others. The park’s location in a dense neighborhood and the two bus stops and metro stop located adjacent to the park ensure that the park is full of “familiar strangers”: regulars

who visit on a weekly, semimonthly, or monthly basis. The flow of pedestrians from the surrounding commercial and residential uses and the easy accessibility of the space to its environs mean that the park is often crowded.

II. Homeland Parks and MacArthur Park

If, as Feldman (1990) and Hummon (1990) found, people transfer or carry over bonds for similar/generic types of settlements, is it possible that they also carry over bonds for similar/generic types of places, such as parks? The survey included several questions that were designed to test the relationship between survey respondents' feelings about their homeland parks and plazas and the subsequent effects on feelings about MacArthur Park. Out of 182 survey respondents, 128 indicated that they had had experiences with parks and plazas in their homeland. They were asked to determine their level of attachment to their homeland parks and plazas and compare their favorite park or plaza at home with MacArthur Park. This section reviews these data and their implications for attachment to MacArthur Park.

A. Attachments to Parks

To determine attachment levels to homeland parks and plazas, respondents were asked to agree or disagree with statements about their favorite homeland parks or plaza that were similar to those asked about MacArthur Park: (a) "I miss my homeland park," (b) "My homeland park was like a friend of mine," and (c) "My homeland park was one of my favorite places." The responses from these three questions were combined into an attachment index for homeland parks and plazas using the same methodology as for MacArthur Park.

Responses to these statements demonstrated strong attachments to homeland parks among the survey population. A large percentage of the sample strongly agreed with all three positive attachment statements, 56.2% indicating that they missed their

homeland park/plaza *very much*, 69.8% indicating that their homeland park/plaza was like a *very good friend*, and 77.9% indicating that their homeland park/plaza was one of their *favorite places*. Overall, 46.1% of the sample who had visited homeland parks and plazas indicated the strongest possible attachment (a response of *very* for all three statements). See Table 42.

Table 42

Comparison of Degrees of Attachment to Homeland Park and MacArthur Park

Level of attachment	Homeland park		MacArthur Park	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
None	6	4.7	27	15.3
Some	21	16.4	30	16.9
Moderate	42	32.8	61	34.5
Very	59	46.1	59	33.3
Total	128	100.0	177	100.0

Attachment to both MacArthur Park and homeland parks/plazas was strong in the sample, but is there a relationship between them? The two indices had a statistically significant relationship ($p < .01$), as shown in Table 43.

For instance, among those in the category of having no attachment to their homeland park, the percentage of those with no attachment to MacArthur Park and those very attached to MacArthur Park was exactly the same: 16.7%. In comparison, among those in the category of having a great deal of attachment to their homeland park, the percentage of those with no attachment to MacArthur Park (10.3%) was substantially less

Table 43

Relationship of Attachment to MacArthur Park to Attachment to Homeland Parks

Homeland Park Attachment Index	MacArthur Park Attachment Index				Total
	None	Some	Moderate	Very	
None	1	3	1	1	6
Some	5	2	9	5	21
Moderate	4	8	19	9	40
Very	6	8	16	28	58
Total	16	21	45	43	125

than those with strong attachments (48.3%). This relationship between levels of attachment to homeland parks and MacArthur Park suggests that a portion of the survey population (those who had experiences with parks in their homeland) may have developed bonds to a generic type of place: a park.

Gilberto, the oldest interviewee, indicated that, while his homeland plaza and MacArthur Park were physically different, they made him feel the same way.

They are very different. [In my hometown plaza] there is no lake; it's only the plaza in front of the church with the trees which make it fresh. Here, there are some benches, same thing there. The only thing that they would have in common would be the benches to sit down, [but] I look at them the same way; I feel good there, and I feel good here, too.

One of the participants, Veronica, explicitly discussed the relationship between her feelings about her hometown park and MacArthur Park. With regard to the attachment index, Veronica expressed very little attachment to the park. She was asked her opinion about why other study participants are attached to the park and, particularly, why other participants stated that the park was like a friend.

I think that a park is the prettiest thing we have, a park is like going back to where we live, where we were born, where we were raised, is like going back to our childhood, to be happy again. Yes, a park is like a friend, like the one that gives you a hand and a hug. See, when you have a problem, when you feel sad, when you owe money, when you have a lot of stress, you come to the park and you feel calm, you forget about your job and the bad times and perhaps you remember all the good things about your childhood.

A.1. Park Preferences

How do differences in the homeland parks and MacArthur Park affect preferences and attachments for the two parks? Participants were asked to choose which park they preferred (their homeland park or MacArthur Park). Table 44 summarizes the responses to this question.

Table 44

Participants' Preferences for Homeland Parks Versus MacArthur Park

Response	<i>n</i>	%
I like my homeland park better	45	48.9
I like them equally	13	14.1
I like MacArthur Park better	34	37.0
Total	92 ^a	100.0

^aFewer respondents than the total number of people who indicated they spent time in homeland parks because the question regarding preferences was added later in the survey.

The relationship between preference for homeland parks versus MacArthur Park and attachment levels showed that attachment to MacArthur Park was higher among those who preferred MacArthur Park over their homeland parks, $p < .01$ (Table 45 and Figure 86). Similarly, attachment to homeland parks was stronger among those who indicated a preference for homeland parks, $p < .01$ (Table 46 and Figure 87).

Table 45

Relationship of Attachment to MacArthur Park to Park Preferences

Preference	MacArthur Park Attachment Index				Total
	None	Some	Moderate	Very	
Prefer homeland park	10	13	12	10	45
No preference	1	3	6	2	12
Prefer MacArthur Park	2	2	15	15	34
Total	13	18	33	27	91

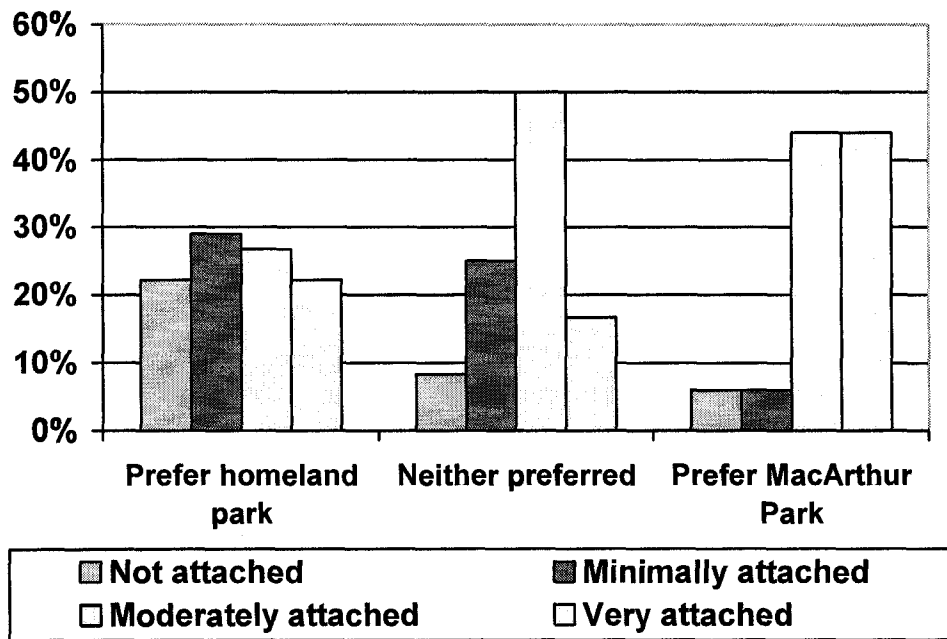


Figure 86. Relationship of level of attachment to MacArthur Park to park preference.

Table 46

Relationship of Attachment to Homeland Parks to Park Preferences

Preference	Homeland Park Attachment Index				Total
	None	Some	Moderate	Very	
Prefer homeland park	1	3	15	25	44
No preference	2	2	5	4	13
Prefer MacArthur Park	3	6	15	8	32
Total	6	11	35	37	89

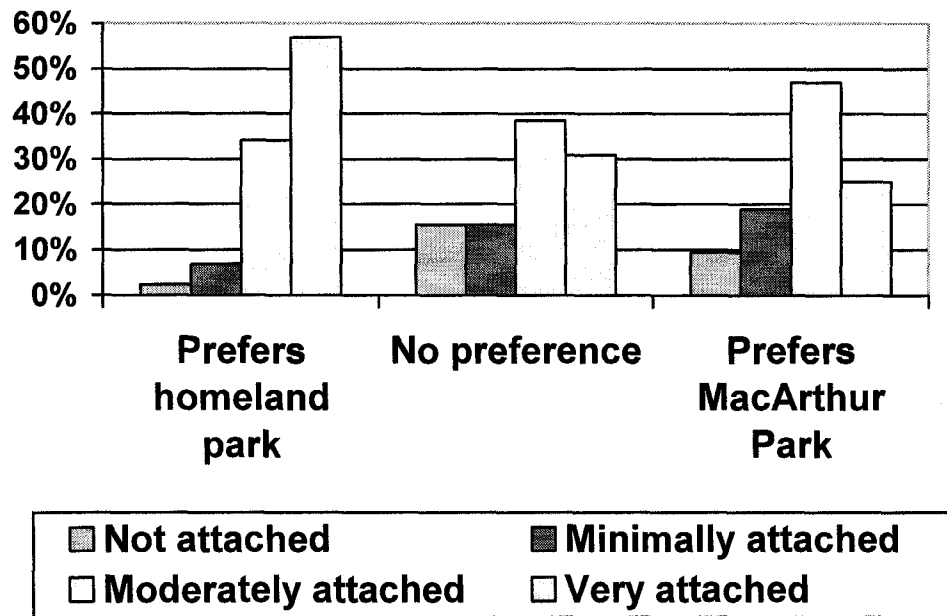


Figure 87. Level of attachment to homeland parks in relation to park preference.

Thus, while a strong positive relationship between attachment to homeland parks and MacArthur Park (generic bonds to place) was verified, this relationship was modified by differences in the social and physical qualities of the two parks. That is, while those who had higher levels of attachment to their homeland parks also had higher levels of attachment for MacArthur Park, they still showed preferences for one over another that affected attachment levels for some but not for others. Jacobo, who had the highest level of attachment to MacArthur Park, responded passionately to the questions about preferences. “Oh! [Parks]. Over there [Mexico] 100%!” For Jacobo, preferences for homeland parks did not undermine the importance of MacArthur Park. For Veronica, who expressed strong preferences and ties to her homeland park and low attachment to MacArthur Park, the differences between them affected attachment levels. For Veronica, the condition of MacArthur Park ultimately affected her attachment; these factors are discussed in chapter 7.

Examples of responses explaining the participants’ preferences are shown in Table 47.

A.2. Place-Congruent Continuity

Based on Twigger-Ross and Uzzell’s (1996) idea that bonds to several places may be related to place-congruent continuity (characteristics of places that are transferable from one place to another), the study examined whether perceived similarities between homeland parks and MacArthur Park might be contributing to the relationship between levels of attachment.

Separating those who indicated that they had visited homeland parks and plazas from those who had not done so, there was a striking statistically significant difference ($p < .01$) in terms of whether MacArthur Park reminded them of home (Table 48 and Figure 88). Of those who had visited parks in their homeland, 50.4% indicated that

Table 47

Explanation of Attachment to Homeland Parks by Park Preference

Response	Reason
I prefer my homeland park	<p>There were kiosks where people would sing.</p> <p>It was cleaner and I had happier times there.</p> <p>It has more places where we can eat.</p> <p>All my friends were there.</p> <p>It's in my homeland.</p> <p>It has national symbols such as the palace.</p> <p>It reminds me of my family.</p> <p>It was safer.</p> <p>I had more freedom there.</p> <p>There are more flowers, trees, and plants.</p> <p>I knew everyone in the town.</p>
I like both parks equally	<p>Each of them has something I like.</p> <p>In my homeland park we had family gatherings and in MacArthur Park my kids can play.</p>
I prefer MacArthur Park	<p>It's safer here.</p> <p>It's bigger and it has a lake.</p> <p>It has a lake and trees that provide shade.</p> <p>It's prettier, bigger, and has a lake.</p> <p>It's close to home.</p> <p>I'm living here in Los Angeles.</p> <p>My kids can play.</p> <p>It's peaceful and it has a good view.</p>

Table 48

Degree to Which MacArthur Park Reminded Participants of Home in Relation to Whether Participants Had Visited Homeland Parks

Had visited homeland parks	MacArthur Park reminded participant of home				Total
	No	A little	More/less	A great deal	
No	28	4	5	13	50
Yes	13	18	31	63	125
Total	41	22	36	76	175

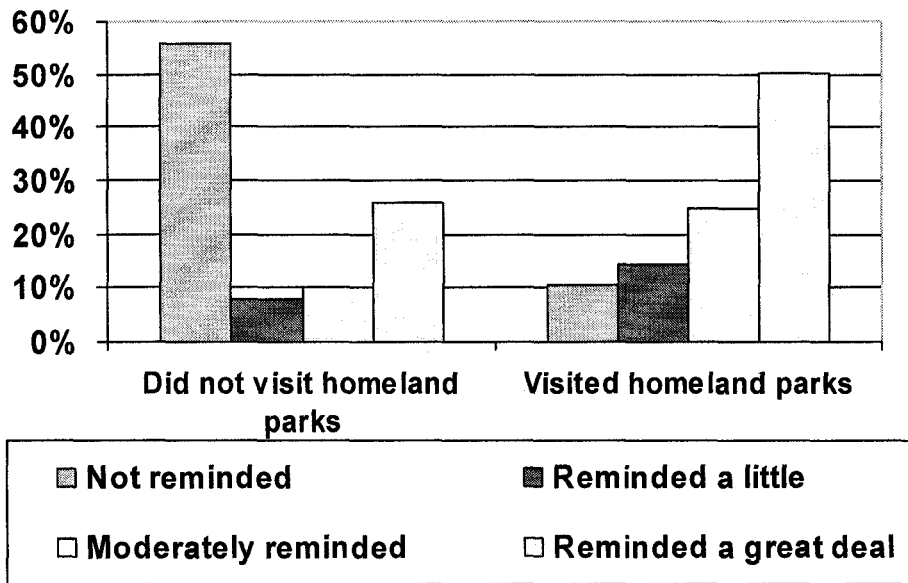


Figure 88. Degree to which MacArthur Park reminded participant of home in relation to whether participant had visited homeland parks.

MacArthur Park reminded them of home *a great deal* and only 10.4% said that MacArthur Park did not remind them of home *at all*. In contrast, among those who had not visited homeland parks, only 26.0% said that MacArthur Park reminded them of home a great deal and 56.0% said that the park did not remind them of home.

Survey participants were asked to elaborate on their agreement or disagreement with the statement that the park reminded them of home. Table 49 summarizes example answers to this question.

Among those who said that the park did not remind them of home at all were those who did not visit any parks at home either because “we didn’t have any parks like this one in our town,” or “I didn’t see parks like this one in my homeland.” Table 49 illustrates that those who were reminded of their homeland, whether a little or a great deal, saw aspects of their homeland’s social environment (“There are many Salvadorans”) and physical environment (“It’s very pretty, and it has little hills”) in MacArthur Park. It is clear from their statements that some of the qualities that reminded them of home were related to culture and ethnicity and to very specific places of importance (place-referent continuity), while others were more generic in character and easily transferable (place-congruent continuity). Rogelio, one of the interviewees, described similarities between his homeland park and MacArthur Park that were place referent: “There is a Salvadoran community that gathers here in this park. That’s why I like this park, because it brings me memories from over there.” Rogelio also described similarities between his park at home and MacArthur Park that may reflect place-congruent characteristics, mentioning trees and the liveliness of both parks.

As being reminded of home was strongly related ($p < .01$) to attachment to MacArthur Park, it seems likely that both place-referent and place-congruent continuity

Table 49

Responses Related to MacArthur Park Reminding/Not Reminding Participants of Home

Response	Reason
No, MacArthur Park does not remind me of home	<p>I didn't see parks like this one in my homeland</p> <p>My town didn't have parks</p> <p>I didn't visit parks in my homeland</p> <p>Nothing can compare with Michoacan</p> <p>They have cleaner parks than MacArthur Park</p> <p>Because parks are smaller in Guatemala and there are more tourists in Guatemala</p> <p>It doesn't look like the one's in Mexico, there are different cultures here in one park</p> <p>I have been here in LA since I was 10 years old</p>
MacArthur Park reminds me a little of home	<p>Because it's not so safe here</p> <p>Because there are people here from my country</p> <p>Because of the trees</p> <p>When I look at the grassy areas</p> <p>Because I rest here and there</p>
MacArthur Park, more or less, reminds me of home	<p>Because there are a lot of trees and I see Latin people</p> <p>It reminds me of a lagoon in San Pablo Guelatao</p> <p>Because you can rest</p> <p>Because it brings me memories and there are many Salvadorans</p>
MacArthur Park reminds me of home a great deal	<p>The freedom to run and walk</p> <p>Because there are a lot of people, soccer players, and the natural environment</p> <p>Because of the Hispanic food</p> <p>Because there are parties here too</p> <p>Because I used to go there to rest</p> <p>I think of my family I left behind</p> <p>As soon as I lay down on the grass I think about my homeland</p> <p>Because they have parks like this in Guerrero</p> <p>It's very pretty, and it has little hills</p>

contributed to this relationship and that experiences with past parks increased the experience of both types of place continuity.

A.3. Transnational Ties and Attachment to the Homeland Park

With regard to individual transnational measures and attachment to homeland parks, there was a tendency ($p < .10$) toward higher attachment to homeland parks when the majority of the family members were in the homeland. There was a significant ($p < .05$) relationship between plans to return to the homeland to live and attachment to homeland parks. There was also a relationship ($p < .05$) between higher scores on the transnational index and higher attachment to homeland parks. Higher scores on the transnational index were related to more frequent contact with the homeland, more family members in the homeland, more frequent actual and planned visits to the homeland, and plans for future residence in the homeland (Figure 89).

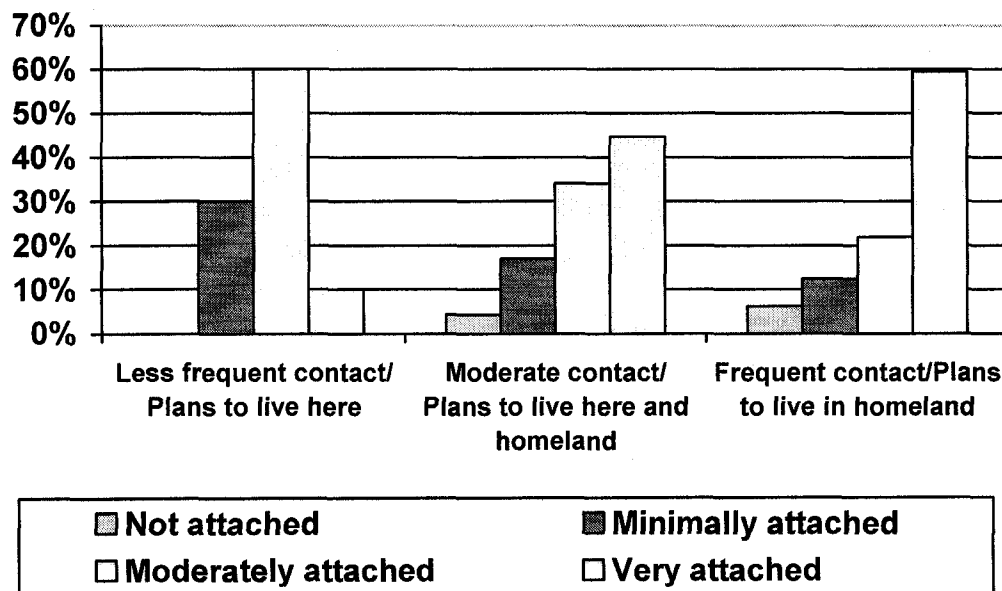


Figure 89. Survey participants' attachment to homeland park by measure of transnational ties.

There was a strong relationship ($p < .01$) between plans for future residence and preference for MacArthur Park versus one's homeland park. Among those who planned to live in the United States, 55.6% indicated that they liked MacArthur Park better than their homeland park. Among those who planned to return to their homeland, only 21.4% preferred MacArthur Park to their homeland park (Figure 90).

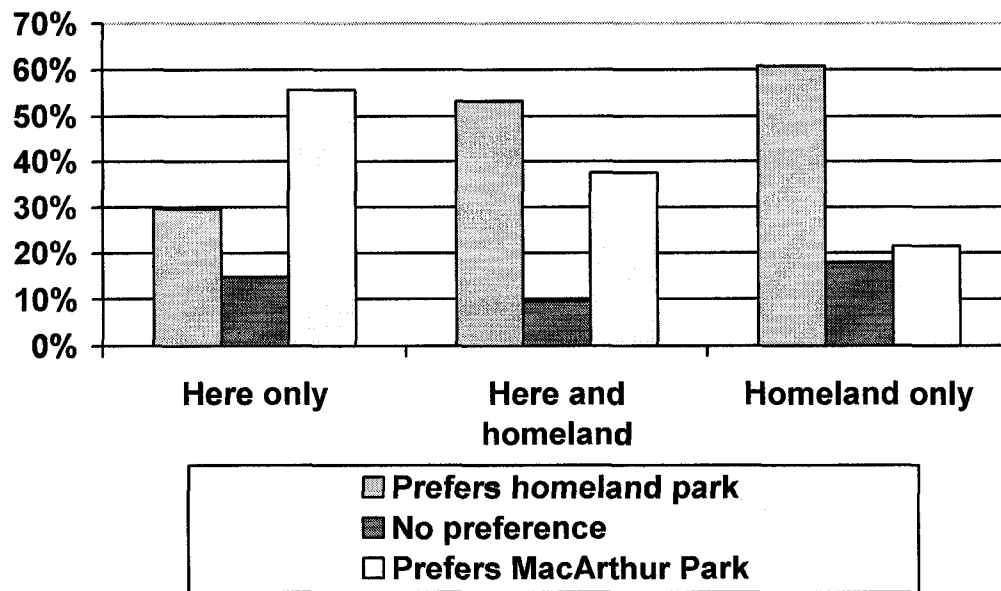


Figure 90. Survey participants' preferences for MacArthur Park versus homeland parks by plans for future residence.

III. Conclusions

Thus far, the data have shown a relationship between levels of attachment to MacArthur Park and levels of attachment to homeland parks, implying a potential bonding to generic types of place. The relationship between intensity of attachment to MacArthur Park and degree to which park goers were reminded of home implies that identity and attachment are strongly correlated and the park serves the purposes of an ethnic enclave, providing park goers with continuity of identity through both place-

referent and place-congruent characteristics. Temporary physical elements of the park provide important reminders of past places. More surprising, permanent physical elements such as the trees and other aspects of the natural environment were named most as reminders of home. While the park provides continuity of identity, the activities that provide symbolic and physical reminders of home are contested.

In contrast to speculation that transnational relationships diminish relationships with place, strong and continuing relationships with the homeland, at least in terms of the present study's ability to measure them, did not seem to affect attachment to MacArthur Park. However, strong and continuing relationships with the homeland were related to higher levels of attachment to homeland parks and plazas. Transnational ties, as measured by plans for future residence, were related to preferences to MacArthur Park versus homeland parks, despite no relationship to attachment to MacArthur Park. This finding suggests that it is important to distinguish between preferences for place and emotional relationships with place, which are influenced by different factors.

CHAPTER 7

URBAN LANDSCAPE

MacArthur Park is an urban park. It is surrounded by dense development. The park itself is used intensely during peak periods. Major travel routes border and bisect the park. Views from the park include a panorama of downtown Los Angeles in the distance and the busy commercial areas immediately adjacent to the park in the foreground. While in the park, one is very aware of being both part of and separate from an urban landscape that is bustling and vibrant.

Both demographic information and observations of the physical condition of the park were reported in chapter 4, demonstrating that the surrounding neighborhood is relatively poorer and has suffered both economic and physical decline for some years. Strong place attachment to “declining” neighborhoods has been observed since the devastating effects of urban renewal projects in the 1960s (Fried, 1963; Gans, 1962). In contrast, studies have documented the positive effects of neighborhood stability—length of residence and homeownership (Brown, B. B., & Perkins, 1992; Hay, 1998; Shumaker & Taylor, 1983; Taylor, 1996) and the negative effects of crime and “physical incivilities” (Brown, B. B., et al., 2003) on place attachment. These findings, taken together, suggest that there may be contradictory forces for and against attachment in declining urban neighborhoods with low rates of homeownership, short lengths of residence, crime, and poor physical conditions such as those in MacArthur Park.

This chapter reviews MacArthur Park as an urban landscape and the consequences for attachment and the emotional meanings that the park had for study participants. Part I reviews the ways in which the park reflects, in terms of crime, residential stability, and physical conditions, the surrounding urban landscape. Part II addresses the ways in which study participants used the park in its dual roles as a vibrant

urban public space and a restorative environment to address the challenges presented by the urban landscape.

I. Reflections of Urban Conditions

A. Crime

In their recent study on attachment to both home and block/neighborhood in a “declining” neighborhood,¹ B. B. Brown et al. (2003) found that people have relatively higher place attachment to their block with a lower fear of crime ($p < .05$). To gauge fear of crime, participants in the survey in the present study were asked to respond to the statement, “MacArthur Park is a dangerous place.” A majority of respondents (55%) agreed that the park was a *dangerous* place, and almost 40% of participants rated the park as *moderately dangerous* or *very dangerous*. There a statistically significant negative correlation ($p < .01$) between fear of crime and attachment; that is, the more dangerous one perceived the park to be, the less likely one was to be very attached to the park. For instance, 31.0% of survey participants who rated the park as *very dangerous* were very attached, while 43.6% of those who rated the park as *not dangerous* were similarly attached (Figure 91).

Attachment was relatively high even among those who perceived MacArthur Park as a dangerous place. Among those who rated the park as very dangerous, almost 65% were moderately or very attached. (Among those who did not consider MacArthur Park a

¹Eight contiguous blocks in Salt Lake City were studied. According to census data spanning 1970 to 1990, approximately 30% of the residents in the study area were under the poverty level. According to the authors, the area had “one of the worst reputations for, and reports of crime, in Salt Lake City” (p. 262). Unlike the MacArthur Park neighborhood, the majority of housing stock in the neighborhood was single family detached. At 56.6%, owner occupancy was also much higher in this area than in the WCPA. Ethnicity in the study area was different from that in the MacArthur Park neighborhood, with the authors reporting that their sample was 63% White non-Hispanic and 28% Hispanic, as reported by study participants.

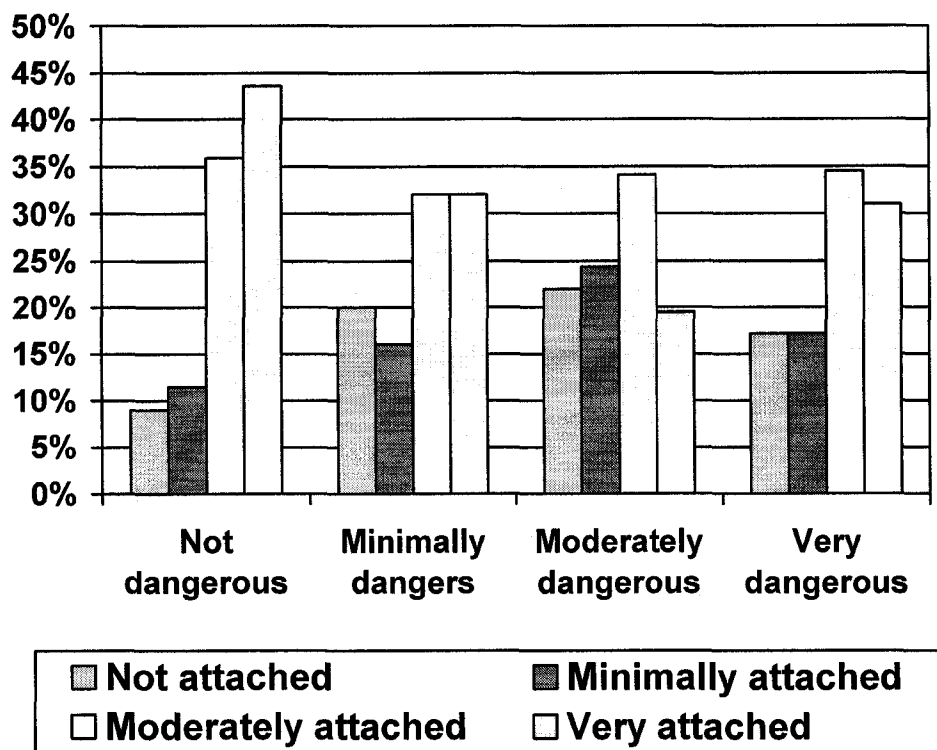


Figure 91. Attachment to MacArthur Park in relation to assessment of the park's safety.

dangerous place, almost 80% were moderately or very attached.) It may be that, among those who were considerably attached to the park, conditions in the park, even in terms of crime, did not substantially diminish attachment.

The above analysis sheds light on issues related to fear and safety that participants raised in response to open-ended questions about problems with the park. In response to the question, "What do you dislike about MacArthur Park?," 25.4% of survey responses indicated "people" in the park. Related to the questions about changes to the park's design or natural environment, 14.4% of total responses were related to concerns about safety, including suggestions about adding "security cameras," "more policemen," "streetlights," "lights in the restrooms," and a "fence" or "gate" to limit access to the park. When participants were asked about additional changes that they might make to

improve the park, 17.2% of the responses related to improvement addressing feelings of fear and safety.

As noted in chapter 5, while 14% to 17% of responses to the open-ended questions indicated some level of concern for safety in the park, they certainly did not reflect the degree of concern for safety that participants expressed (55% rating the park as *moderately dangerous* or *very dangerous*) in response to the statement designed to gauge level of fear. Comments provided during the extended interviews with participants also confirmed relatively high levels of concern about safety. Jacobo, a 55-year-old male who spent most of his time at the southeast entrance of the park with a group of friends, indicated that he considered the park to be a very dangerous place. When asked whether there were any places in the park where he felt safe, he responded: “No! All around the park, everything is dangerous.” Veronica, a 40-year-old woman from Mexico who frequently brought her children to the playground area, indicated that she certain avoided sections of the park, such as the grassy area near the restrooms in the northeast part of the park, because she felt uncomfortable there. When asked why, she talked primarily about seeing people drinking and about seeing homeless people:

In the south part of the park, walking near the lake and toward the southeast entrance, she also reflected upon the safety of the park for children:

I don't feel safe [here] because this section of the park is more dangerous for children, for adults it is fine. Most importantly, these people [in this section of the park] mind their own business, they don't bother you, but there is always a scandalous drunk that causes disturbances. Generally, these people are from our countries and we are not scared of one another, the people are calm [most of the time]. There is always a crazy one. We also don't like it when we see two to three people drinking, they fall sleep or they pee anywhere and that is the reason it is not safe for children. Also is not safe because of the lake. There is no fence that could protect the children from falling into the water.

Four interviewees indicated that their only concern for safety in the park was at night. When we asked why he felt unsafe, Rogelio, age 25, revealed both fear and friction among groups in the park:

Because of robbers, they beat up others, like people of color, they are the ones that hurt people the most. They should have more security for people to feel safe.

Gilberto, age 86, originally indicated that he felt that the park was unsafe only at night; he suggested fencing the park and closing it at night.

[I think they should] build a fence and close the fence at night to lower the number of accidents, because there are bad people. I know that they have found dead bodies in the lake. They kill people and they throw them in the water.

Later, as he discussed the issue, his concerns for safety expanded to include a specific section of the park during the day, as well.

I've seen that people play cards, some poker, and sometimes they're not okay if they don't win. They can even kill each other. They fight . . . I like to play cards, but I don't like to play for money [if there is money involved] . . . There, where the tables are near the restrooms is where they play cards. That's it [where I feel unsafe].

While B. B. Brown et al. (2003) did not analyze differences between males and females with regard to fear of crime, the present study results showed, in keeping with previous studies on fear of crime in public places, a greater percentage of females than males perceived MacArthur Park to be dangerous. For example, 54.2% (39 of 72) of female respondents perceived MacArthur Park to be a *moderately dangerous* or *very dangerous* place, while 30.7% (31 of 101) of the male respondents gave these ratings. This difference may partially explain why so few of the female participants came to the park alone, in comparison to men (11.8% of women versus 43.5% of men) and so few women, compared to men, were observed to be alone in the park (0.5% of women alone vs. 11.9% of men alone during peak periods on Sunday).

Did fear affect females more than males in terms of attachment? Among this group who found the park relatively (*moderately* or *very*) dangerous, 51.3% percent of

females (20 of 39) were moderately or very attached to the park and 67.7% percent of males (21 of 31) were moderately or very attached. This may provide at least a partial explanation for the finding that women were less attached to the park than men, which contradicts place attachment literature that supports women generally being more attached to places than men. Testing the relationship between feeling that the park was dangerous and attachment levels, women and men both had a tendency to be less attached as they rated the park to be more dangerous ($p < .10$).

B. Home Ownership and Residential Stability

Home ownership rates in the WCPA are quite low in comparison to other areas of Los Angeles. Approximately 94% of the population rents rather than owns their residential dwelling. This contrasts sharply with Los Angeles County, where 52% of units are renter occupied, and the City of Los Angeles, where 61% of residential units are renter occupied. For the sample, 96% were renters;² only 6 participants owned their own homes. With such a low number of home owners, it was not possible to achieve an analysis of home ownership or rental status and attachment that was meaningful. B. B. Brown et al. (2003) found that home ownership was a predictor of higher levels of attachment to the home ($p < .01$) and to overall attachment (an average of attachment to the home and to the neighborhood and block); however, they also found that home ownership was not related to attachment to the block and neighborhood ($p > .10$). Their findings related to attachments to the block/neighborhood, in contrast with previous studies that found links between home ownership and place attachment. By

²Out of 182 survey participants, 163 answered the question about homeownership. One of the problems with the question was that participants who were subletting from someone else who was “technically” the one renting the unit did not answer the question because they did not believe that either category applied to them. Therefore, it is likely that the percentage of renters in the survey population was actually higher than 96%.

differentiating between attachment to the home and attachment to the block, B. B. Brown et al. may have uncovered important differences between place attachment to the home (a subject that has been frequently studied) and attachment to public places. Previously, it was assumed that neighborhoods with high levels of home ownership experienced more attachment than neighborhoods with low levels of home ownership. While this might be true when considering attachments to the residence, it may not always be true with regard to the public places in a neighborhood.

B. B. Brown et al. (2003) reported that longer-term residence predicted relatively higher levels of attachment to the block and neighborhood ($p < .01$). This supports the explanation, put forth in most of the literature, that place attachment associated with a particular locale grows with the opportunities to accumulate experiences and memories in a given locale. The survey included a question regarding length of residence at current address. Figure 92 demonstrates that most of the survey participants had had a relatively short tenure at their current address.

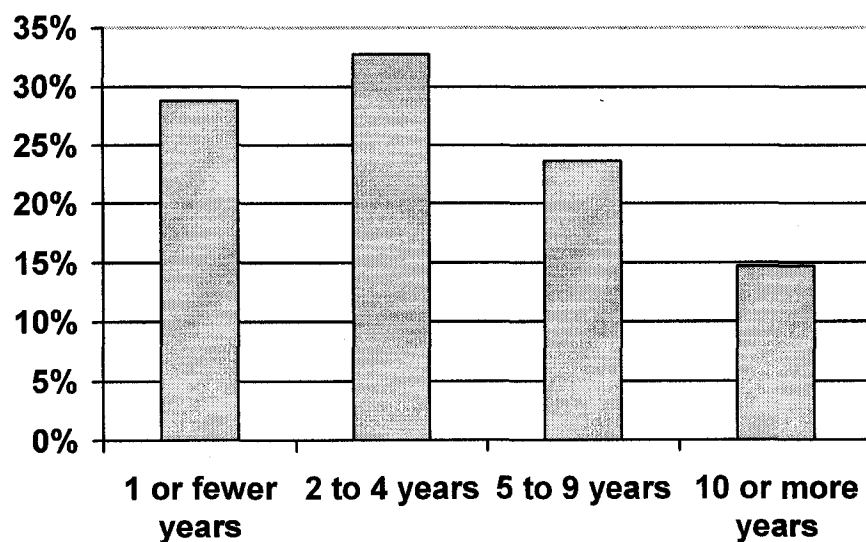


Figure 92. Length of residence at current address for study participants.

Almost 30% of the survey participants had lived at their address for 1 or fewer years. Several arrangements of residential tenure data showed, unlike B. B. Brown et al. (2003) no statistically significant relationship between length of residence at current address and attachment to MacArthur Park. As an example, 74.6% of those who had lived at their current address for 1 year or less were moderately or very attached to MacArthur Park, while 68.0% of those who had lived at their current address for 10 or more years were moderately or very attached. Similarly, as previously reported, there was no statistically significant relationship ($p > .10$) between number of years visiting MacArthur Park and living in the neighborhood, and attachment. Of those who had been visiting MacArthur Park for less than 1 year, 69.7% were moderately or very attached, while among those who had been visiting MacArthur Park for more than 10 years, 75% were moderately or very attached.

There was no relationship ($p < .05$) between amount of time spent in MacArthur Park and level of attachment. For those who spent 5 or fewer hours in the park per month, 56.9% were moderately or very attached, while for those who spent 20 or more hours in the park, 77.5% were moderately or very attached. This suggests that the same basic concept (time for accumulation of experiences and memories) was at play for the survey participants and their development of attachment to the park. However, since amount of time rather than length of time was the significant factor in the case of this public space, it also suggests that it is not just the time in an area but rather time directly engaged with the space that matters regarding attachment.

C. Park Maintenance/Conditions

In several ways the condition of MacArthur Park reflects the condition of many populated urban parks in poorer neighborhoods in an era of dwindling public resources: At best it feels a bit frayed around the edges and at worst it appears rundown and, in

some places, unsanitary. The condition and extent of landscaping and facilities in the park all reflect some level of decay, and survey respondents and those interviewed at length spent a considerable amount of time talking about necessary changes and improvements to the park. Related to this issue, B. B. Brown et al. (2003) showed that people had relatively higher place attachment to their block and neighborhood with a lower perception of “physical incivilities” and signs of decay (graffiti, litter, poor roofs and crumbling sidewalks, broken windows, unkempt lawns). Thus, the condition of MacArthur Park had potential consequences for the emotional responses reported by participants in the present study.

This study did not include a statement that directly gauged the level/ intensity of incivilities perceived by survey participants, as was done with fear. However, regarding open-ended questions about the park, survey participants responded in a manner that confirmed perceptions of incivilities and decay. Survey participants were asked three questions that prompted numerous responses about the current conditions of the park and potential improvements: (a) “What do you dislike about the park?” (b) “What changes would you make to the physical environment or design of the park?” and (c) “What additional changes would you make to the park?” Most answers were related to problems with the current condition of park landscaping and facilities or improvements that were needed.

Related to the question about dislikes of the park, 33.8% of the responses related to the dirtiness of the park and 8.8% to other maintenance/quality of facilities issues. Related to the question about changes to the park’s design or physical environment, 41.6% of the responses addressed issues of quality of the current condition of the park’s landscaping, soccer fields, children’s playground, children’s programs and restrooms. The cleanliness of the park was mentioned specifically in 20.2% of the responses.

To assess the relationship between perception of the condition of the park and attachment, the survey participants' first responses to the question "What would you change about the physical environment and design of MacArthur Park?" were divided into three categories: (a) problems/incivilities associated with the condition of the existing park, (b) additions/improvements to the park not related to incivilities (more soccer fields, more shade trees, more benches under shade trees), and (c) security. There was no statistically significant difference ($p > .10$) in attachment among those who mentioned problems/incivilities associated with the condition of the park and attachment among those whose first choice was additions to the park not related to incivilities. However, because the study did not include any direct measures of survey participants' relative feelings regarding physical incivilities, it would be premature to conclude anything definite regarding the relationship between incivilities and attachment to MacArthur Park.

Observation confirmed the condition of the park described by survey participants. In a few places—the area west of the amphitheatre, the area north and east of the soccer field, and the area west of the lake—grass was in good condition and the numerous trees provided ample shade. But in most of the park, particularly well-used areas such as the southeast entrance, the areas south of the Lake, and the soccer viewing areas immediately adjacent to and south of the soccer field, grass was nonexistent or worn and scrubby and there were very few trees to provide adequate shade. This was particularly true on the north side of the park where the soccer field was currently without grass. Frequent play on the weekends means that dust was a constant factor near the field. On windy dry days, there was quite a bit of dust in the park. The city recently approved a budget for improvements to the park that include installing an artificial turf in the soccer area (Figure 93).



Figure 93. A picture of the soccer fields taken by Rogelio, a participant in the extended interviews. Rogelio took this picture and others to illustrate the poor condition of the soccer field.

Observations also confirmed incivilities in the park mentioned by survey participants: litter, graffiti, the condition of the bathrooms, the condition of the boathouse and the water in the lake. Litter in the pathways and on the grass is a common sight, particularly on the weekends during peak use. Graffiti covers many of the surfaces in the park—the murals, the planters along the lake, the walls inside the tunnels. While the graffiti is periodically covered with paint, it remains for 2 or 3 weeks, sometimes longer, before it is removed (Figure 94).

The lake itself, while being a major attribute in the park for many park users, also appears dirty. The water is murky, and sometimes on warm days has an unpleasant odor. There are many birds in the park and fish in the lake; on several occasions, dead birds and fish were seen floating in the water.



Figure 94. Graffiti covers a mural in one of the MacArthur Park tunnels.

There are four buildings in the park: the community center, the amphitheater, the boathouse/Rampart substation, and the public restrooms located in the northeast corner. The community center was recently refurbished (within the past 10 years), and so the physical condition of the building is relatively good. One of the major problems with the building's design is its interface with the park. Essentially, the back elevation of the community center faces the park. This means that the view of the community center that park goers experience at park level includes the parking lot for park vehicles, trash facilities, a pump station, and a large block wall topped with barbed wire. There is access to the community center from the park. When the chain link gate that secures the rear area of the community center is open, one must walk through the gates and by city vehicles, the trash facilities, and the pumping station to a single unmarked door that is left open. A small room with a stairway leads to the main level of the center. At the top of the stairs, one enters a foyer and faces a large bulletin board. There is an office off this foyer

that serves as a reception desk, but very often, when the overworked staff of the center is busy somewhere else with programs, no one is at the desk. At times, the community center feels empty, despite its numerous programs for the neighborhood. Most of the survey participants who were casually asked about the community center indicated that they thought that it was some kind of police facility or maintenance facility. Virtually no one who participated in the survey or interviews was aware of the community center or the relatively cleaner restrooms in the community center.

The amphitheater was, until very recently, surrounded by a chain link fence and was unsafe to use. With funds from the Friends of the Levitt Pavilion, a nonprofit group that restored the Leavitt Pavilion in Pasadena, and from the City of Los Angeles, the amphitheater was recently restored and in good condition. The broken benches in front of the theatre have been removed and a grassy area planted. Portable restrooms have been placed near the amphitheatre so that visitors do not have to cross the park and use the permanent restrooms on the other side of the north part of the park. As reviewed in the section on contested identities in chapter 6, music is now being played in the amphitheatre.

The boathouse at the lake has been shut down due to its poor and dangerous physical condition. In 2004 an open area in the boathouse was being used to collect abandoned and broken items found in the park: grocery carts, broken down benches, other materials. The paint on the building was peeling and the siding was crumbling (see Figure 95). The City Council recently approved funds to address the safety and condition of the boathouse.

The situation with the public restrooms in the park was mentioned by almost everyone who was surveyed or interviewed. The restrooms, located at the northeast corner, are in terrible condition by any set of standards. The individual stalls/rooms are

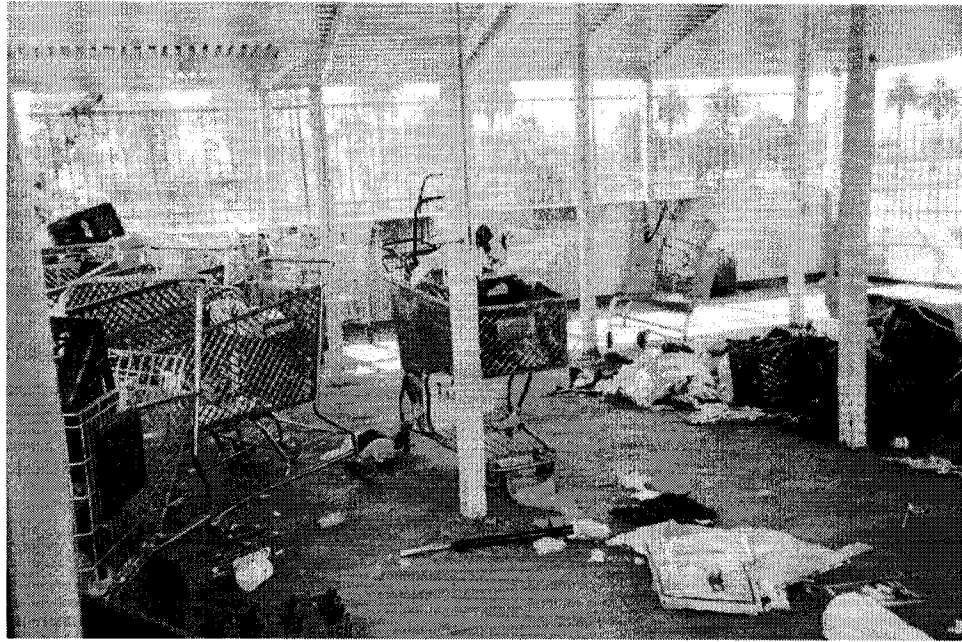


Figure 95. The boathouse in MacArthur Park. Jacobo, a participant in the extended interviews, took this picture to illustrate problems with the condition of MacArthur Park.

dark and covered with graffiti, and the locks on the doors and the lights do not work. The bathrooms are not cleaned frequently enough to keep pace with their use. Moreover, drug use in the park takes place in the restrooms, out of visibility of the police cameras installed to address criminal activity in the park. Because the bathrooms are unsanitary and dangerous, some park goers relieve themselves in the tunnel or other areas of the park, exacerbating the poor conditions in the park (see Figure 96). The lack of safe and sanitary restroom facilities is a major problem for visitors who spend significant periods of time in the park. Despite the fact that restrooms seem to be the most significant concern of survey respondents, park improvement funds have not included changes to restrooms.

Interviewees also mentioned issues of the park's condition. At the first interview these participants were asked to take pictures of things that they liked and did not like

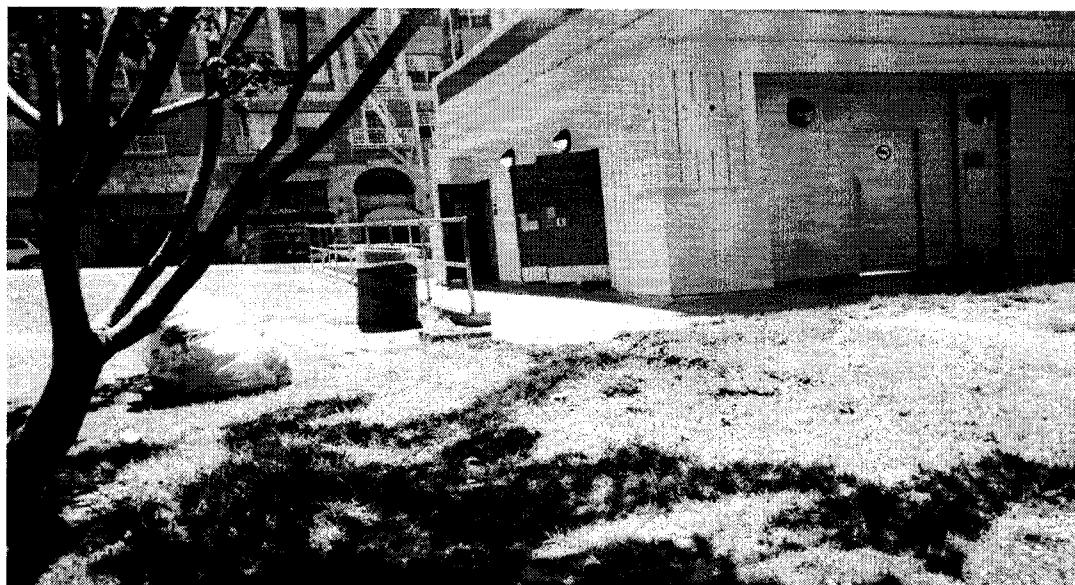


Figure 96. The bathrooms located in the northeast corner of MacArthur Park. Veronica, an interviewee, provided this picture to illustrate problems with the conditions of the restrooms.

about the park. Three interviewees (Jacobo, Enrique, and Veronica) spent their entire second interview talking about the poor condition of the park. The majority of the pictures that they took showed litter, graffiti, broken statues, problems with landscaping, and other problems with the park.

In his first interview Jacobo, who spends most of his time at the southeast entrance of the park, spoke adamantly about security and the poor condition of the park:

There are a lot [of things I don't like]. The dirtiness, the restrooms, the people, there is no security whatsoever. I have proved that there is no security to myself. . . . Bringing the beer here on purpose, drinking the beer in the open, breaking the bottle on purpose, to see if someone comes to tell me something but nothing has happened. I have proved there is no security in this dirty looking park. That's why I did it.

After indicating that he felt powerless to make changes in the park, he spoke at length about the changes that he would make if he could:

They could start off by improving the security which is the most important thing for the families. Then, to have this nice and neat, because this is garbage, so

people don't get dirty. . . . Cleaner restrooms because if you go there right now to take a picture, believe me!!! It is the most disgusting thing I have ever seen, not even in my ranch have I seen that. Yet, I come to this country where they say there is enough money, to see these disgusting things. Where is the money, then? Is this money only used for war or for what? I don't understand. If there is enough money why don't they fix this park up for people who live around the park and want to take out their families. Ah! it is very sad!!!! to see how people live here, there are no words to describe it.

Regarding areas of the park that he thought needed the most changes, he said,

There is just too much to say about [the areas that need changes] that I can't say anything. Everything needs changing. We would have to take the animals away and everything else needs the change, even the water.

Surprisingly, Jacobo, rated extremely high on the attachment scale for MacArthur Park, indicating that the park was a good friend, that it was one of his favorite places, and that he would miss the park if he moved away. Jacobo's attachment level, combined with his responses regarding the condition of the park, underscored the weak relationship between the park's condition and the participants' level of attachment. His responses also underscored the complexity of the physical conditions of a neighborhood and attachment. In reviewing his interviews for factors that might be contributing to attachment, several things stood out. First, he remembered a quite different MacArthur Park when he first arrived in Los Angeles 40 years ago.

Unfortunately, I didn't take pictures 40 years ago, I'd like you to see what a gorgeous park this was. Now it's garbage. There has been a change of 360 degrees.

Discussing how often he comes to the park and why, he said,

About 2 to 3 times a week, before I used to come here daily but now 2 to 3 times a week. . . . [I come here] Because I don't want to go the bar . . . [and] just to talk to my friends.

In his survey responses Jacobo indicated that he came to MacArthur Park for relaxation. The things he liked best about the park were relaxing, playing cards with his friends, meeting new people, walking, seeing families, and the natural aspects of the park: the ducks, the fish, the shade and the trees. Comparing his homeland neighborhood

and park with his current neighborhood and MacArthur Park and stating a preference in response to a request, he said,

Well, [in terms of differences] they don't look alike, people over there are different than here. They are humble and simpler. We can't compare them and the parks we can only say that in Mexico there is more security than here. [In terms of similarities] only the trees. Nothing else.

A number of survey participants (11.7% identified) taking better care of the landscaping or adding additional landscaping (14.8%) among the changes that they would make to the park. Several survey participants and interviewees mentioned the importance of adding shade trees and grass to the park and more benches under shade trees. The problems around the soccer field—lack of grass and shade trees—were mentioned by several survey participants (13.3%). One interviewee, Rogelio, who spends most of his time at the park at the soccer field with his children, spent his second interview sharing pictures of areas of the park that needed more grass, more trees, benches for resting, and picnic benches. He cited the lake as his favorite place in the park. He also indicated that, while one of his favorite things about the park was the soccer games in which his children participated, the field was not a favorite place because of the problems with its conditions. Despite his feelings about the condition of the park, Rogelio had the highest possible level of attachment to MacArthur Park.

Veronica, a 40-year-old interviewee, talked about what she liked least about the park:

There are no [suitable] restrooms and a lot of drunks and the dirtiness. . . . Because sometimes we want to drink something but we have to hold on to the need of drinking something because we can't use the restrooms.

Regarding what she would change in the park, she said,

Besides the restrooms, to clean, someone should be cleaning. Because if you go to the parks where White people go, everything is pretty and clean, but we are the ones responsible, because we eat and we throw the trash anywhere.

Veronica spoke almost as much about the poor condition of MacArthur Park as Jacobo. However, in contrast to Jacobo, Veronica enumerated problems with the park: litter, poorly maintained landscaping, and dirty lake water (see Figures 97 through 100).



Figure 97. Litter near the soccer field. Veronica took this picture to illustrate problems with litter throughout the park.

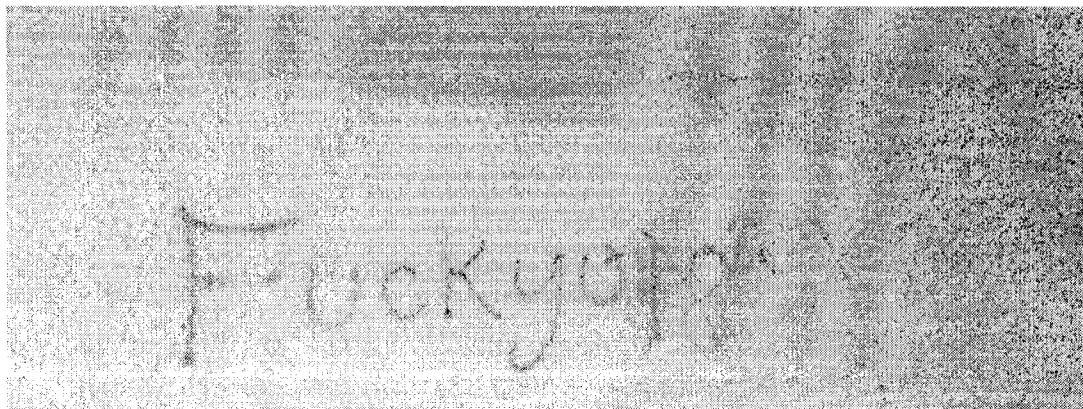


Figure 98. Graffiti in one of the MacArthur Park tunnels. Jacobo took this picture to illustrate problems with the condition and maintenance of the park.



Figure 99. A picture provided by Jacobo to illustrate problems with maintenance of MacArthur Park.

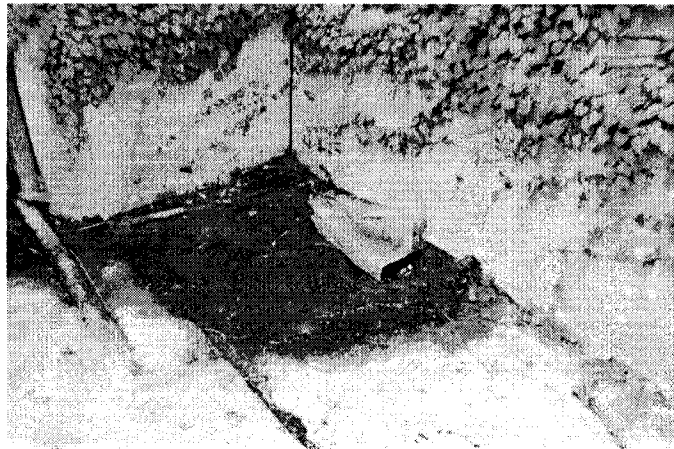


Figure 100. A picture taken by Jacobo to illustrate unsanitary conditions in MacArthur Park.

In addition, as did survey participants and other interviewees, Veronica discussed a need for additional shade trees throughout the park: in the children's playground area, over picnic benches near the soccer field, and especially over benches along the pathways (see Figures 101 and 102).



Figure 101. Unshaded park benches across from the boathouse in MacArthur Park. Veronica took this picture to demonstrate the need for more shady spots in the park.

II. A Restorative Landscape

Recent research has begun to integrate theoretical and empirical work regarding place attachment with work regarding restorative environments: environments that play a part in restoring or maintaining a person's well-being. The restorative effects of place and



Figure 102. Bright sun in the children's play area. Veronica took this picture to show her favorite place in the park and the need for more shade trees.

their consequences for place identity are receiving increasing attention (Korpela & Hartig, 1996; Korpela et al., 2001). Conceptually, place identity results from ongoing processes undertaken to achieve emotional and self-regulation. That is, people use social and physical aspects of place to regulate pleasure/pain and self-experience; place identity is formed, at least partly, as a result of this behavior. The experiences and cognitions produced from interaction with place help to mold identity associated with place (Korpela & Hartig, p. 222). Was there evidence that MacArthur Park goers were using the physical environment of the park for emotional and self-regulation? Undeniably, one of the strongest messages from survey participants and interviewees was how important MacArthur Park was for addressing the stressors of everyday life, through its relaxing and diversionary qualities.

A. Relaxation

Relaxation was one of the primary reasons that survey participants gave for coming to the park, and participants often related their ability to relax in the park to its “tranquility” and natural elements: trees, shade, lake, and fresh air, for instance. When offered the possibility of five reasons to come to the park (to which they could indicate *yes* or *no*), 75.3% of the respondents affirmed that they came to the park for relaxation.

When survey respondents were asked to identify their favorite things about the park, again allowing unlimited answers, the majority of the responses were related to the aesthetic/natural qualities of the park (53.9%) and the tranquility of the park (5.7%).

These results were somewhat surprising for two reasons. First, although MacArthur Park is large and has significant mature landscaping, it is still small enough so that one is always aware, of the surrounding traffic, dense built environment, and crowded streets. Second, when asked what they would change about the park, many people described the atmosphere of the park as dirty and needing better care. It would seem that park goers were able to enjoy the relaxing qualities of the atmosphere of the park while remaining quite cognizant of its significant shortcomings. Jacobo spoke explicitly about both the restorative qualities of the park and its shortcomings:

The trees in the park are very pretty. Everything is nice, it's just that people need to take care of it. Nobody wants to do nothing, yeah! It just needs good maintenance. In fact, this is a wonderful place in the middle of the city. It is just that is not well taken care of. It needs maintenance.

Observation of park use confirmed that park goers were coming to the park to relax. During the week it was not uncommon for many of the visitors to the park to be lying on the grass, sometimes sleeping or gazing out over the lake, up at the trees, or at the birds that gather at various spots in the park. My own experiences confirmed the restorative qualities of the natural elements of the park. Getting to MacArthur Park, whether by bus, on the metro, or by car, one must walk along crowded and sometimes

chaotic sidewalks, full of cacophony and a multitude of colorful sights, unprotected from the bright glare of the sun. On hot summer days, and particularly on weekends when the surrounding area is most crowded, one of the first and strongest impressions upon entering MacArthur Park is how fresh and cool the air feels and how quiet the space is, compared to its environs. The wind on the surrounding streets, which only a moment ago felt full of dust and automobile exhaust, seems transformed by the large trees in the park to a cool and soothing breeze. Upon reaching the park, I often sat under the first large tree I could find to restore the energy that the frenetic pace outside the park had robbed from me. When I began studying MacArthur Park, I attributed the fatigue that I felt to being in a new place and to the challenges presented by finally coming face to face with the setting for a large project. Later, after becoming more familiar with the park and feeling more comfortable with the project, I realized that the fatigue came from negotiating the frenetic world outside the park. Once in the shade of the old large trees, I felt almost immediately revived.

Interviewees confirmed that the tranquility and the natural qualities of the park provided for a restorative experience. When Veronica was asked to close her eyes and mention the first thing that came to mind about MacArthur Park, she responded,

I think about the restfulness and it's tranquil, how good it feels to be in the park! It is not the same as being at home. I think the park is a very important factor in the life of a child and an adult.

Gilberto (86 years old) explained why he came to the park and mentioned his favorite activities.

We come to rest; when it's hot, it's fresher here because of the trees and the lake. . . We used to walk around but not anymore because I get tired. I can't walk much. [I like to sit near] where people walk, the boats, the motor boats . . . I come to chat and I lay down to rest . . . and sometimes [I meet friends here].

Figures 103 through 106 are pictures taken by interviewees to identify their favorite locations or aspects of the park.



Figure 103. Veronica's favorite section of MacArthur Park. She named the shady and tranquil qualities of this area as reasons that it is her favorite.



Figure 104. A picture of the lake taken by Gilberto to illustrate one of his favorite elements of the park.

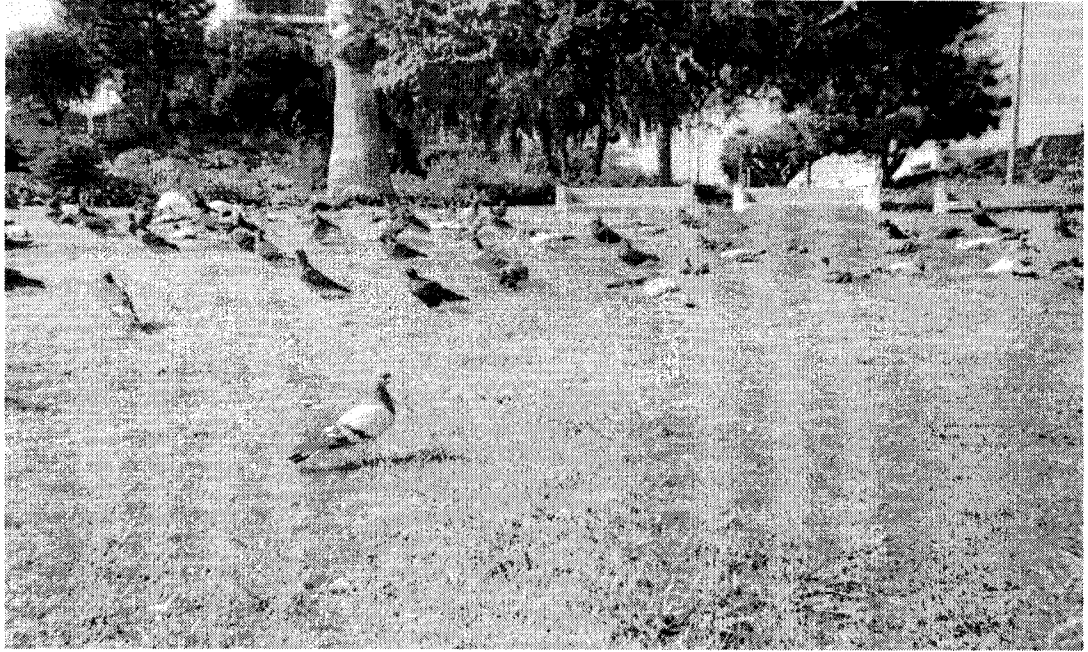


Figure 105. A picture of pigeons taken by Jacobo to illustrate one of his favorite things about the park.



Figure 106. A picture of the lake and birds taken by Jacobo to illustrate his favorite aspects of the park.

B. Diversion

Research on restorative environments has primarily concentrated on natural settings and the experiences within those settings that address mental fatigue (Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). The restorative effects of place are not necessarily restricted to environments that contain natural qualities. Kaplan and Kaplan described four types of situations as conducive to restoration: (a) being away—a sense of distance from one’s usual routine, (b) fascination—resulting in involuntary or effortless attention, (c) “extent”—being involved in an environment that is coherent and engaging, and (d) compatibility—engaging in activities compatible with one’s purpose or intention for being in a place. While the natural and relaxing qualities of the park offer opportunities for all of the above situations and certainly offered restorative experiences, the ability of the MacArthur Park to *distract*—to entertain, surprise, and amuse—was also mentioned frequently by study participants. When offered the possibility of five reasons to come to the park (to which they could answer *yes* or *no*), 38.5% of the respondents affirmed that they came to the park for distractions/diversions. In response to an open-ended question regarding favorite qualities of the park, 16.6% mentioned the social qualities of the park: its liveliness, diversity of people, getting together with friends and family, and watching soccer.

Observations and extended interviews supported the finding that the park provides multiple opportunities, beyond its natural elements, for experiencing “being away,” “fascination,” “extent,” and “compatibility.” During the years I observed the park, its ability to surprise me never diminished. One day I arrived in the park to find that a local pet store had brought many of its pets to the park to entertain the children and, obviously, to do a bit of marketing. Store employees marched through the park with snakes, colorful exotic birds, and puppies, stopping to let children ask questions and play with the

animals. On another day skateboarders were performing amazing (and possibly prohibited) feats off one of the cement walls near the boathouse. On Sundays there were always little plays and puppet shows for children in front of the fence gating off the amphitheatre. On summer evenings there are musical performances almost nightly in the renovated amphitheatre.

More recently, the park, with its dramatic downtown backdrop, has become the setting for numerous commercials and movies. In the past year I have witnessed camera crews at the park at least a dozen times. Recently, Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa and the LAPD made a public information announcement to recruit officers. During breaks from filming, Mayor Villaraigosa wandered over to people resting on the grass and talked about local matters. Prior to the El Salvadoran celebration in August, a film crew from a station that broadcasts news about the El Salvadoran-American community was filming a background story on the park. Once in the presence of a film crew a man dressed in a large hot dog costume, strolling by the lake and accompanied by a vendor's cart.

The everyday activities in the park offer opportunities to forget one's daily troubles and become absorbed in the lives of others: soccer players and their coaches shouting instructions, couples trying to find time alone, families watching their children chase birds or each other, vendors selling colorful toys and food, a local church organization singing and preaching and trying to convert Catholics into Protestants, and fishermen and women struggling to get the lethargic fish in the lake interested in whatever they are using for bait. The park is a place not only for relaxation, reflection, and meditation, but also for being drawn out of one's self into a larger and amusing world. Interviewees confirmed that both of these qualities contribute to the restorative effects of the park (Figures 107 through 110).

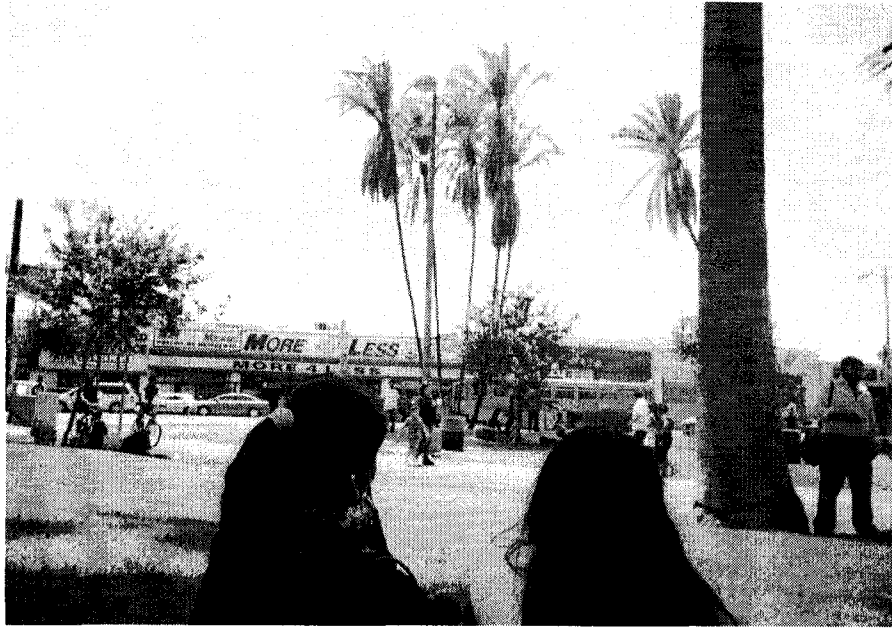


Figure 107. Two women watch activity at the southeastern corner of the park, people entering and leaving the park, the bus stop, and commercial businesses across Alvarado Boulevard and Seventh Street.

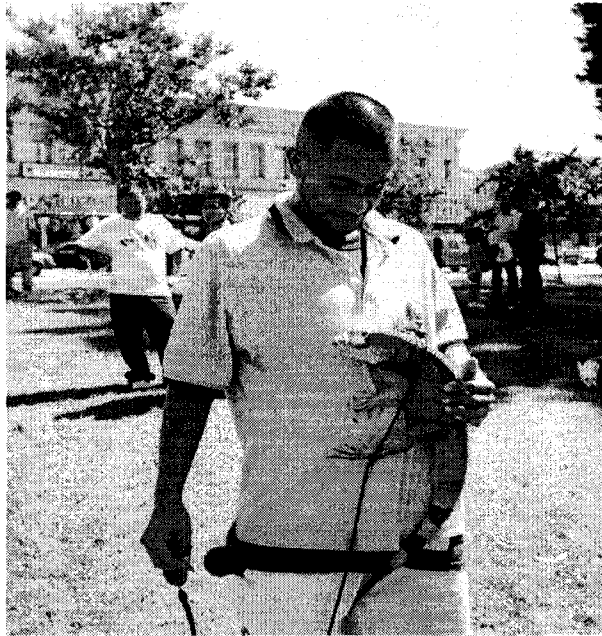


Figure 108. A local pet shop employee brings one of the shop's more interesting inhabitants for a walk through the park.



Figure 109. A clown entertains at the southeastern corner of the park.

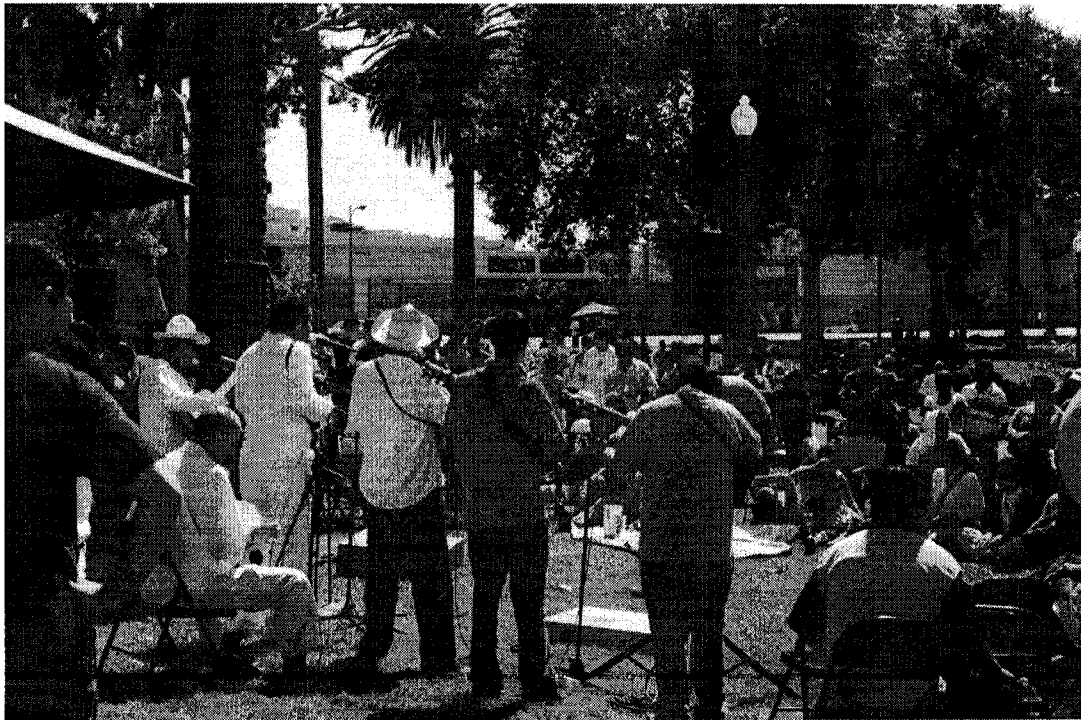


Figure 110. A musical group entertains the weekend crowd at the southeastern corner of the park.

C. Restorative Experiences and the Physical Design of the Park

How does the physical landscape of MacArthur Park support its role as a restorative environment? As reviewed in this chapter, participants explained that the lake, trees, birds, fish, grass, and other natural elements of the park contribute to the peace and tranquility the park offers. Participants described how the social atmosphere of the park—its liveliness and diversity of people and activities—make it a vibrant public space.

“Public space is the stage upon which the drama of communal life unfolds” (Carr, Francis, Rivlin, & Stone, 1992, p. 3). One of the purposes of this study was to assess MacArthur Park as a public space, focusing on the ways that its physical design provides a stage where the drama of communal life is acted out. With its location in the middle of dense urban neighborhood, a free and easy flow of pedestrians from the surrounding commercial and residential neighborhood across the park, and open access to the surrounding sidewalks and streets on almost all sides, MacArthur Park’s location and design make it the ideal space for interaction by a great diversity of people. Jane Jacobs extolled the virtues of density and diversity in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (1961), and the area surrounding MacArthur Park offers both.

Significant open and visible spaces at the center of the northern and southern parts, each at a lower elevation than the grassy slopes that surround them, make the park a wonderful place for sitting back, talking in the natural elements of the park, watching a great diversity of people and activities, and witnessing the drama of city life. Broad views of the city from various vantage points instantly place the visitor in both a park and a large city. In MacArthur Park one can both escape from the city and enjoy its diversity.

Does the park function successfully as a space in which the drama of communal life can be viewed? On weekends, population counts of the park showed that more than 2,200 people were there during peak periods, and on weekdays, population counts

reached 800 during peak periods. The average reported length of stay in the park was just over 2 hours, with 20% of survey participants spending 4 or more hours (and up to 10 hours) in the park during a visit. Almost 80% of the survey participants indicated that they came to the park at least once a week (44.5%) or more often (33.5%). The number of visitors, length of time per visit, and frequency of visits to the park suggest that the park is succeeding as a public space.

Observations of behavior in the park confirmed that the majority of park goers—all but those playing cards and in the children’s playground—situated themselves on the exterior slopes of the park in a manner that allowed them to face the interior of the park. It was unusual to observe people sitting in the park facing each other. Most were physically oriented toward the center of the park, many sitting in a single location for hours. Periodically, individuals from a group might get up to take a stroll or buy something from a vendor, but eventually they would return to their spot.

Whyte (1988) referred to public spaces in the city’s center as “often abrasive, noisy, contentious, without apparent purpose” and observations of MacArthur Park confirm this as an apt description. “But this human congress is the genius of the place, its reason for being, its great marginal edge” (p. 341). The location and design of MacArthur Park make it an ideal place to experience the benefits of a public space in an urban center (Figures 111 and 112).

Extended interviews confirmed that one of the benefits that the park provides to its users is its great diversity of activities and amusements (Figures 113 and 114).

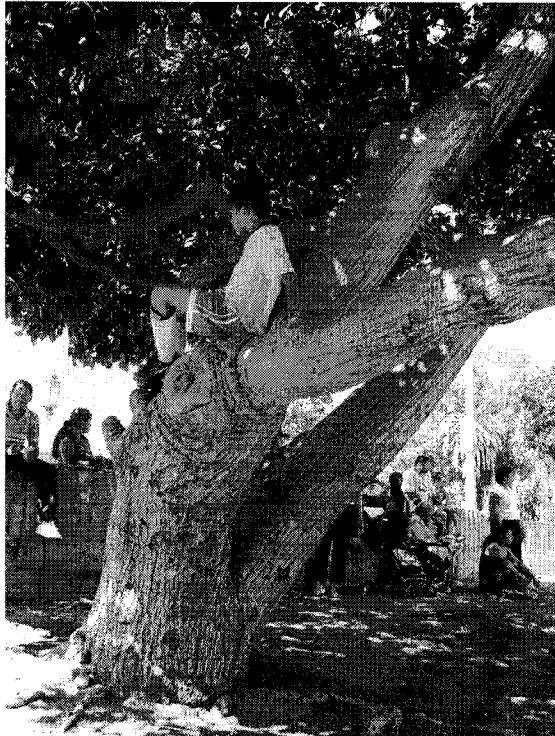


Figure 111. A young boy watches the activities on Wilshire Boulevard while others watch activities on the soccer field.



Figure 112. A squirrel rests on the fence around the amphitheater.



Figure 113. Paddleboats circle the lake.



Figure 114. A family watches activities on the lake from its western side.

CHAPTER 8

PARK LANDSCAPE

Chapter 7 identified some of the study participants' positive and negative emotional responses, including attachment, to MacArthur Park. This chapter focuses on park visitors' relationships with the park landscape, that is, their activities and preferences and subsequent affects upon attachments to the park. While chapter 7 briefly reviewed park visitors' reasons for coming to the park and their favorite qualities of the park, Part I of this chapter reviews data that provide a more complete picture of the everyday functions of the park by area. Part II looks at some of the major themes that arose from the study participants' responses. Part III reviews park uses and preferences and corresponding relationships with attachment to MacArthur Park.

I. Areas of the Park

Chapter 4 concluded with a description of the park and each of its activity areas. The focus of this section is to review use patterns in these areas. Table 50 and Table 51 categorize park user patterns of use for the northern and southern portions of the park and Table 52 summarizes use of the entire park.

Observations of the park revealed problems in obtaining equal numbers of male and female survey participants. During weekends, women made up only 23% of the park population; women were least represented in the soccer fields (13%), the southeastern part of the park (15%), and the red sculpture picnic area (15%); they were present in the largest percentages in the area around the lake (30%). On weekdays, women constituted an even smaller percentage of the park population (18%); women made up the smallest percentages in the grassy area north and east of the soccer field (7%) and the red sculpture picnic area (9%), and the largest percentages in the grassy area west of the amphitheater (27%).

Table 50

Park Use: Northern Park

	Weekend				Weekday			
	M	F	C	V	M	F	C	V
<i>Grassy Area North and East of the Soccer Fields</i>								
Peak use	Sunday = 216				Friday = 106			
Number	131	48	33	4	75	7	18	6
Percent	61	22	15	2	71	7	17	6
Time in area	Mean = 1.89 hours, Range = 0.50-4.50 hours							
<i>Red Sculpture Picnic Area</i>								
Peak use	Sunday = 34				Wednesday = 54			
Number	27	5	1	1	46	5	1	2
Percent	79	15	3	3	85	9	2	4
Time in area	Mean = 1.91 hours, Range = 0.25-4.00 hours							
<i>Children's Play Area</i>								
Peak use	Sunday = 210				Friday = 52			
Number	26	55	125	4	4	13	33	2
Percent	12	26	60	2	8	25	63	4
Time in area	Mean = 2.42 hours, Range = 0.42-7.00 hours							
<i>Grassy Area West of the Amphitheater</i>								
Peak use	Sunday = 291				Friday = 75			
Number	96	81	107	7	43	20	10	2
Percent	33	28	37	2	57	27	13	3
Time in area	Mean = 3.43 hours, Range = 0.50-10.00 hours							
<i>Soccer Field</i>								
Peak use	Sunday = 472				Friday = 135			
Number	301	59	104	8	87	13	33	2
Percent	64	13	22	2	64	10	24	1
Time in area	Mean = 2.25 hours, Range = 0.50-4.50 hours							

Note. M = males, F = females, C = children, V = vendors.

Table 51

Park Use: Southern Park

	Weekend				Weekday			
	M	F	C	V	M	F	C	V
<i>Southeastern Entrance</i>								
Peak use	Sunday = 479				Friday = 157			
Number	287	114	67	11	106	37	13	1
Percent	61	24	14	1	68	24	8	1
Time in area	Mean = 2.44 hours, Range = 0.50-8.00 hours							
<i>Southwestern Corner</i>								
Peak use	Sunday = 157				Friday = 74			
Number	125	23	8	1	63	11	11	0
Percent	80	15	5	1	84	15	0	0
Time in area	Mean = 1.82 hours, Range = 0.50-5.50 hours							
<i>Around the Lake</i>								
Peak use	Sunday = 441				Tuesday = 202			
Number	235	134	65	11	136	33	22	11
Percent	53	30	15	2	67	16	11	5
Time in area	Mean = 2.46 hours, Range = 0.25-8.00 hours							

Note. M = males, F = females, C = children, V = vendors.

On both weekdays and weekends, women made up the largest percentage of adults (over 76%) in the children's play area. In other areas of the park, women were often outnumbered by men 3 to 1. There are several explanations for women's underrepresentation in the park. Women are more likely than men to judge the park to be

Table 52

Park Use: MacArthur Park

	Weekend				Weekday			
	M	F	C	V	M	F	C	V
Peak use	Sunday = 2,291				Friday = 800			
Number	1,228	519	510	34	498	145	137	20
Percent	54	23	22	1	62	18	7	3
Time in area	Mean = 2.4 hours							

dangerous. Women are more likely to name children as their reason for coming to the park, and both women who participated in interviews mentioned that they felt that the atmosphere of much of the park was inappropriate for children. As Veronica circled the park to take pictures for this project, she relayed her concerns about bringing her children:

I don't feel safe because this section of the park is more dangerous for children, for adults [it] is fine . . . there is always a scandalous drunk that causes disturbances . . . there is always a crazy one. We also don't like it when we see two to three people drinking, they fall sleep or they pee anywhere and that is the reason [it] is not safe for children. Also [it] is not safe because of the lake. There is no fence that could protect the children from falling into the water. There are mothers that bring their small children because we don't have any other place to go. Although, there are businesses, restaurants, but mostly I think that people come to this park because we don't have another near by. If we had a choice, we'd go to a prettier one. . . . The restrooms are always super dirty, a lot of drunks and it's not good for the kids.

Zoraida also complained about the atmosphere for children:

It's unsafe, there are lot of drunks and that's not good for the children. And sometimes there is no space for the kids because it is too crowded. It is too full of drunks and then families can't enjoy the park, because that's what the park is for, for families.

As reviewed in chapter 6, Veronica acknowledged the importance of the park for the men who have recently immigrated here by themselves and noted that they made up a large percentage of the park population. She also spoke of the “masculine atmosphere” of the park:

Women don't come by themselves because they could be bothered. . . . I don't really come by this area [the southeastern corner of the park] but I could imagine if someone comes and passes by wearing a mini-skirt, they're going to tell you anything they can. Right? Yes, they will make jokes. I don't think this a place where women can come and rest. Women no, men yes. This is a masculine area. If you notice American people could say that they [the men here] are aggressive and they [the Americans] are afraid of us. But they are not aggressive, it is just that they enjoy the park the best possible way. However, [it] is not safe for children.

Clearly, there are areas of the park where women feel safer and more comfortable to take their children and to relax. In addition to the children's play area, the other areas where children make up a large portion of the population are the soccer field, the grassy area west of the amphitheater, and, on weekends, the southeastern entrance of the park.

In terms of age distribution throughout the park, a few interesting patterns were noted. Over 50% of the adults in the children's play area were ages 25 to 34. This is obviously related to the use of the children's play area and soccer fields by parents. The other areas of concentrated age groups included the red sculpture picnic area and the southwest entrance to the park. Approximately 50% of the population in the red sculpture picnic area was 35 to 44 years old. Similarly, approximately 50% of the adults at the southwest entrance of the park were 25 to 34 years old. Both of these areas are typically used by groups of men for gambling.

The areas with the largest percentages of older park users were the southeast corner (approximately 25% of the population was over 55), the grassy area around the amphitheater (17.7%), and around the lake (15.4%). In the remainder of the areas the population over 55 was less than 8%. The two oldest interviewees, Jacobo (55) and

Gilberto (86), were found in the southeastern entrance of the park. The southeastern entrance is where a large group of older men line the entrance, watching the comings and goings of the main entrance and visiting with each other. The southeastern entrance is also the busiest area of the park and the area where the activities of the adjacent commercial area are most visible. It is the best place to be in the park to see both the lake and the activities associated with the main entrance to the park.

The age distribution of adults around the lake, in the northern and eastern part of the park, at the soccer fields, and in the grassy area west of the amphitheater was evenly distributed from 18 to 54 years.

II. Major Themes in Park Use

A growing body of evidence substantiates cultural differences in park use patterns and preferences (Floyd & Shiner, 1999; Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995), although very few studies have looked at the use and park preference patterns of Hispanic/Latino park users. This section reviews major themes that have arisen in the discussion of cultural differences in park use: (a) preferences for the social versus the natural/aesthetic qualities of parks, and (b) the use of parks for stationary versus active recreation. To review these two major themes, this section compares the results of this study with the results of the study completed by Loukaitou-Sideris, which explored cultural differences in park use among Anglo, Hispanic, Asian, and African American park users at four parks in Los Angeles (discussed in chapter 2). The section also reviews a major theme that arose from this study: the importance of children in the uses and preferences related to the park.

A. Social Versus Natural Elements of the Park

As Loukaitou-Sideris (1995) found for Hispanic participants in her study, the present study found that social activities were the most frequently given reasons for visiting the park. About one quarter (28.0%) of the reasons for park visits directly named

friends, family, or people: children (19.4%) and getting together with family and friends, meeting people and seeing people (8.6%). An additional 18.6% were related to distractive qualities and liveliness of the park, a significant portion of which is likely to be related to the people and their activities in the park.

Questions regarding with whom survey participants come to the park also confirmed the social function of the park. As previously reported, 67.5% of survey respondents indicated that they always came to the park with others, 32.6% always alone, and 2.8% sometimes alone and sometimes with others. Here, in the percentage of those who came alone to MacArthur Park, the behavior patterns of the participants differed greatly from the Hispanic participants in the Loukaitou-Sideris (1995) study. In that study, which included Hispanic participants who visited four parks in the Los Angeles area, only 8.8% visited the parks alone. A much smaller percentage of MacArthur Park survey participants visited with family members (49.7%) than those who visited the four parks (77.6%). Other variations among the social behavior of the two Hispanic populations—those studied at MacArthur Park and those from the four parks of Loukaitou-Sideris study—are shown in Table 53.

On both weekdays and weekends there were as many groups of two or three men in the park as there were lone men. This suggests that some of those who indicated that they came alone to the park may have met with people whom they knew, although not well enough to make arrangements to meet at the park or call each other friends. Quite often men were seen greeting each other in the park, clearly not having made arrangements to see each other (by the subject and tone of their greeting) and sometimes sitting down to chat briefly. Many of the lone men may have had relationships that could be characterized as something beyond familiar strangers and more like acquaintances.

Table 53

Visitors Arriving at MacArthur Park Alone Versus With Others: Comparison of Two Studies

Association	MacArthur Park		Four Parks	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Alone	59	32.6	15	8.8
With others	122	67.4	155	91.2
With family	90	49.7	132	77.6
With friends	11	6.1	21	12.4
Did not specify relationships	21	11.6	2	1.2
Total	181	100.0	170	100.0

Note. The Four Parks study was conducted by Loukaitou-Sideris in 1995.

One of the biggest surprises of the survey was the importance of aesthetic and natural features of the park to participants (see Table 54). The majority of responses related to favorite qualities of the park (53.9%) were in this category, with social qualities ranking second (16.6%), activities/physiological third (13.0%), and relaxation fourth (5.7%). These results differ significantly from the findings for Hispanics' preferences in the four parks studied by Loukaitou-Sideris (1995). Hispanics in her study most favored the social qualities of the parks (31.1%), favored the peaceful/tranquil properties of the parks second (24.7%), the physiological activities third (21.8%), and the aesthetic qualities fourth (13.5%).

The importance of the natural/aesthetic qualities of the park held when favorite qualities of the park were categorized by gender, as well (see Table 55). Although a larger percentage of the male participants (60.9%) than female (46.7%) participants

Table 54

Favorite Park Qualities: Comparison of Two Studies

Favorite quality of park	MacArthur Park		Four Parks	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Aesthetic/natural	179	53.9	23	13.5
Natural environment	5	1.5		
Beauty of the park	1	0.3		
Spaciousness of the park	2	0.6		
Grass	13	3.9		
Trees	43	13.0		
Shade	19	5.7		
Lake/water/fountain	43	13.0		
Fresh air	22	6.6		
Cleanliness	8	2.4		
Birds, animals, other creatures	23	6.9		
Social	55	16.6	53	31.1
All the diversions, liveliness	17	5.1		
See the people	10	3.0		
Friends	4	1.2		
Family	1	0.3		
Kids	4	1.2		
Vendors	1	0.3		
Watch Soccer	11	3.3		
Community events/fiestas	5	1.5		
Weekend shows	2	0.6		
Activities/physiological	43	13.0	37	21.8
Playground	23	6.9		
Place for kids to play	16	4.8		
Walk or jog	2	0.6		
Exercise	1	0.3		
Play soccer	1	0.3		
Peaceful/quiet/tranquility/restful	19	5.7	42	24.7
Psychological	14	4.2	12	7.1
Freedom	2	0.6		
Safety	11	3.3		
Feeling comfortable	1	0.3		
Location of park (convenience)	6	1.8		
Other	16	4.8	3	1.8
Total	332	100.0	170	100.0

Note. The Four Parks study was conducted by Loukaitou-Sideris in 1995.

Table 55

Favorite Quality of MacArthur Park Named First by Gender

Quality named first	Female		Male		Total	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Natural environment/aesthetic	35	46.7	64	60.9	99	55.0
Social	11	14.7	16	15.2	27	15.0
Activities/physiological	18	24.0	3	2.9	21	11.7
Psychological	6	8.0	13	12.4	19	10.6
Location	3	4.0	0	0.0	3	1.7
Other	2	2.6	9	8.6	11	6.0
Total	75	100.0	105	100.0	180	100.0

named the natural/aesthetic qualities of the park as their first favorite thing, for both male and female participants natural/aesthetic qualities were named far more frequently than social qualities (15.2% of males, 14.7% of females) or activities/physiological qualities¹ (2.9% for males, 24.0% for females), the next two most popular categories.

Findings related to these numbers must be qualified somewhat, particularly relative to the importance of the relaxing, aesthetic, and social qualities of the park. Clearly, in this study there was some overlap between the aesthetic qualities of MacArthur Park and its restful/peaceful/tranquil qualities. When prompted with a list of five reasons to come to the park, 75.3% of the respondents indicated that they came to the

¹Activities/physiological qualities include the playground, which could be interpreted as a social activity for parents who meet with other parents at the playground. Even when the playground is included in the social category, aesthetic qualities were still named more frequently than social qualities by both male and female participants.

park for relaxation. It seems likely that the choice of so many natural elements of the park as favorite things about the park reflects the relaxing qualities that bring so many to the park. Also, the importance of the social qualities of the park may be understated in Table 56. In response to the list of five reasons to come to the park, 38.5% of the respondents indicated that they came to the park for “diversions” and 25.3% for “sports/soccer.” Both of these could be considered to reflect the importance of social activities in the park. Clearly, though, even with these considerations, MacArthur Park seems to be functioning in significantly different ways for its Hispanic/Latino users from the way in which the four parks were functioning for their Hispanic/Latino users.

B. Active Versus Stationary Activities in the Park

As did Hutchison (1987) and Loukaitou-Sideris (1995), the present study found that the majority of survey participants spent time in MacArthur Park engaged in stationary activities, as shown in Table 56.

Very few participants (3.3%) indicated that they came to play sports. Several factors are relevant to this information. First, MacArthur Park is essentially a passive recreation park, with no opportunities for sports other than soccer. Second, the soccer league is for children and teenagers, so adults play only informally after the league uses the fields; thus, the small percentage of survey participants visiting the park to play sports. Loukaitou-Sideris (1995) found that 25.9% came to play sports (basketball, baseball/softball, soccer, tennis, swimming, and other sports). Responses to the list of reasons to visit the park indicate that soccer was watched and played by more participants (46) than indicated from answers to the open-ended questions (12). Watching or playing a bit of soccer as part of a long day in the park might not specifically be listed as a reason to come to the park but instead be included in the larger reasons of relaxation or diversion. Third, observation of the park suggests that many more people (more than 12%

Table 56

First Reason Given for Visiting MacArthur Park, Active Versus Stationary Activities: Comparison of Two Studies

Activity	MacArthur Park		Four Parks	
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Stationary	127	84.7	101	59.4
Watch children play (including soccer)	54	36.0		
Watch soccer/sports	7	4.7		
Watch people	3	2.0		
Picnic/family-friends gathering	18	12.0		
Play cards	0	0.0		
Sit/relax	42	28.0		
Read	2	1.3		
Buy from vendors	0	0.0		
Draw	1	0.7		
Active/mobile	18	12.0	25	14.7
Walk/run	14	9.3		
Fish	1	0.7		
Vend	3	2.0		
Sports	5	3.3	44	25.9
Soccer	5	3.3		
Total	150	100.0	170	100.0

Note. The Four Parks study was conducted by Loukaitou-Sideris in 1995.

period and 109 of 800 (13.6%) of the park users during the peak weekday period walk in the park at some point in the day. While people may in fact walk in the park, they would not necessarily list this as the reason they came to the park. It is more likely that a stroll through the park is part of what makes the park relaxing, helps users to enjoy the outdoors, or contributes to the distraction/diversions that park goers seek—all common reasons given to visit the park. Still, observations of the park together with the survey

confirmed that the majority of behaviors undertaken in the park were stationary. Figures 115 and 116 provide examples.



Figure 115. A couple relaxing watches a couple strolling along the lake.

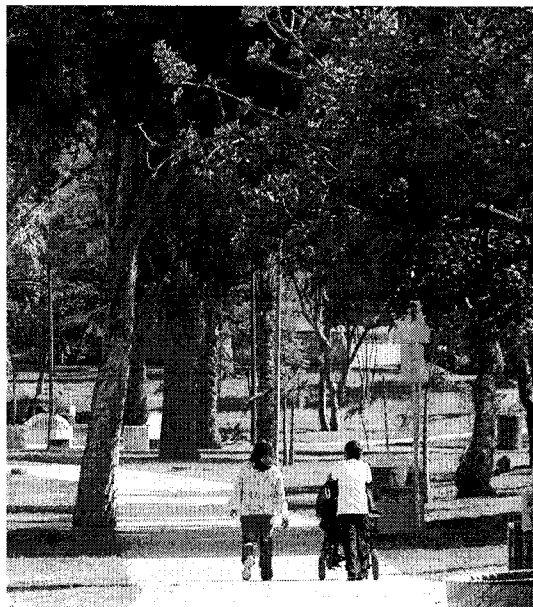


Figure 116. A family with a stroller walks along one of the park pathways.

C. Children and the Park

The most popular reason given for visiting MacArthur Park was children (19.4% of responses), with 47.8% of survey participants indicating that they had children and 26.9% indicating that they had children whom they brought to the park (Table 57).

Table 57

Reasons Given for Visiting MacArthur Park

Reason	<i>n</i>	%
Children	54	19.4
Enjoy outdoors, trees, natural environment	47	16.8
Rest/relax	41	14.7
Distraction/liveliness of park	38	13.6
Get together with family and friends/ meet people/see people	24	8.6
Soccer	18	6.5
Location	18	6.5
Other	39	14.0
Total	279	100.0

Although the results from the Loukaitou-Sideris study (1995) were not specifically grouped as the results shown in Table 57, they were similar. Of 170 Hispanic participants in the study, 32 (18.8%) indicated that they came to the park to watch their children play, the largest percentage of any of the individual activity categories included in that study.

Population counts of the park (Tables 50-52) verify that children made up 20.9% of all park users. To find out where this group might be spending the majority of their time in the park, reasons for coming to the park (participants' first responses to the open-ended question about reasons for visiting the park) were correlated with where participants were interviewed. As expected, the largest percentage of those who responded that children were their first reason to visit the park were surveyed/interviewed in the children's playground area (16 of 46, or 34.8%), the second largest percentage was at the soccer field (11 of 46, or 23.9%), and the third largest percentage was at the southeast entrance (7 of 46, or 15.2%).

This group was also reviewed by gender, age, and number of hours spent in the park per month, with the following results. As expected, the majority of those who gave children as their first reason for visiting the park (40 of 46, or 87%) were women ages 25 to 44 (30 of 46, or 65.3%). There was a slightly U-shaped relationship between the "children" group and time spent in the park. The majority of this group (24 of 46, or 55.9%) spent less than 10 hours per month in the park. However, an important percentage (11 of 46, or 25.6%) spent 20 or more hours per week in the park. When gender and number of hours spent in the park were compared for this group, there was no significant difference ($p > .10$).

Months of observations in the park and interviews with survey participants resulted in the impression that the presence of children in the park was much more important to visitors than the numbers produced by the survey suggest. Just by virtue of their energy level relative to that of the adults, the children in the park appeared to be a great source of amusement and distraction for more park visitors than just their parents (see Figures 117 and 118). Obviously, this was true at the soccer field and in the playground, where children and youth in the soccer league were the center of attention.



Figure 117. Young soccer players fill the northern park on weekends and on weekday afternoons.



Figure 118. A young boy feeds the birds near the lake.

Wherever children were playing, there were almost always visitors around them enjoying their lively behavior of playing with their toys or tag, feeding and chasing beleaguered pigeons, or hounding vendors. Several survey participants and interviewees spoke specifically of enjoying seeing families and other people in the park. Based on both observations and specific comments, it can be concluded that the energy and joy that the presence of children brings to the park contributes for many to its liveliness and capacity to entertain and relax—other reasons cited for visiting the park.

III. Park Users' Preferences and Attachment

Was there a relationship between the stated reasons for coming to the park and attachment? Correlation tests were run for first responses to the open-ended question and the MacArthur Park Attachment Index. Categories were grouped and regrouped. No statistically significant ($p < .10$) relationship between reasons for visiting the park and attachment was found. One potential explanation for this is that the specific activities possible in the park, such as relaxing or walking or taking children to the playground, are not inherently more or less likely than other park activities to support attachment. Instead, a variety of park users' needs are met through the variety of activities possible in the park. By meeting these various needs, several of which are discussed in previous chapters, attachment is supported.

Was there a relationship between favorite qualities of the park and attachment? Correlation tests were run for first responses to the open-ended question and the MacArthur Park Attachment Index. No statistically significant difference in attachment levels was found with regard to first favorite qualities listed. Categories were grouped and regrouped, and no relationship between reason for visiting the park or favorite quality of the park and attachment was statistically significant ($p < .10$). One potential explanation is that specific qualities of the park, such as its aesthetic or social qualities,

are not inherently more or less likely than other park qualities to support attachment. Instead, a variety of park users' needs were met by the variety of qualities found in the park. By meeting these various needs, several of which are discussed in the previous chapters, attachment is supported.

In terms of attachment to MacArthur Park, there was no statistically significant relationship ($p > .10$) between reasons to visit the park and levels of attachment, with one exception. There was a tendency ($p < .10$), albeit a weak one, for those who cited visiting the park for the outdoors or rest and relaxation to be more attached to the park (75.8% in the moderately and very attached levels) than those who cited children (62.8%) as the reason for visiting the park. This is at least partially explained by the fact that the latter group (87%) were women and, as reported in chapter 5, women were less attached to the park than men. However, because the tendency toward lower levels of attachment among the "children" group was weak, any conclusions related to differences in attachment levels requires additional research.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to explore the emotional responses of an immigrant community to a public park located in a diverse immigrant neighborhood. Given the transitional nature of the neighborhood as a gateway for new immigrants who have recently arrived in the United States, the transnational relationships of its residents, and questions about the safety of the park and its physical condition, the existence of significant ties to the park was in question. Previous place attachment research has found that length of residence, lower crime rates, and fewer physical incivilities (graffiti and trash) are predictors of attachment, suggesting that attachment to this park might be minimal. In contrast, other attachment studies have identified significant attachment to ethnic enclaves and economically poor communities. Ethnic enclaves provide crucial economic and psychological support to new immigrants during their first years, when they are adjusting to the challenges associated with displacement from their homeland. Some scholars have argued that the strength of ties to ethnic enclaves and economically poor communities, partly a result of a lack of resources and alternatives, actually inhibits residents from making choices to leave the community, choices that ultimately might improve their lives (Fried, 2000). Before initiating this study, given the contradictory implications of research for a community such as Westlake, it was difficult to predict the range and strength of emotional relationships to MacArthur Park that would be found.

This study uncovered strong attachments among respondents. This chapter reviews major themes related to attachment to MacArthur Park that emerged from the study and discusses the implications for local planning practice (Part I). Next, I will review the contributions of this study to the understanding of place attachment,

particularly the role of the physical environment in the formation of attachment (Part II). The results of the study raise questions regarding the complex nature of attachments to public spaces; Part III will summarize the implications of these questions for future research.

I. Emotional Responses to MacArthur Park

A. The Complexity of Place Attachment

Two of the most surprising outcomes of this study were (a) the strength of attachment that survey participants had to MacArthur Park, and (b) the significance of attachment, given the number and strength of negative emotional responses to the park. While fear was linked to lower levels of attachment, there were still relatively high levels of attachment among those who rated the park as very dangerous. As interview participants confirmed, the relationship between attachment and physical incivilities was ambiguous at best. Interviewees Jacobo and Veronica spoke most passionately about the terrible condition of the park and how unsafe it was; however, Jacobo had the highest possible level of attachment and Veronica had the lowest possible level of attachment.

Participants confirmed numerous positive emotional responses experienced in the park, such as enjoyment, relaxation, a sense of tranquility, and nostalgia. Participants also confirmed experiencing a number of negative emotional responses in the park, such as fear, disgust, loneliness, and homesickness. Survey participants' attachment to MacArthur Park clearly did not develop in an environment of solely positive feelings and responses to the park. Their attachments developed in the context of a complex set of responses. This study confirmed that very strong attachments to a place can coexist with very negative feelings about the place.

The above findings do not suggest that negative feelings have minimal affects on attachment. Among survey participants, for instance, fear had a negative and statistically

significant relationship to level of attachment. However, it is clear that positive attachments are not simply the product of strong feelings. Jacobo is a perfect example of the coexistence of very strong and very negative feelings related to place that ultimately ended in strong attachment. At one point in the interview Jacobo spoke of his complete disgust regarding the condition of the park and what a terrible place it was as a result of its condition, but later, he referred to the good times he had there, and how the park deserved better care.

In contrast to scholars of community attachment who suggest that attachment is a result of positive experiences in place, some scholars have suggested that strong attachments in economically poor neighborhoods are a result of a lack of alternatives. In other words, residents become extremely attached to local places because they are dependent on the social networks and resources in those places. The implication is that when residents are economically better off, they have access to a greater number of resources and are less reliant on the local community and, when they are less reliant on the local community, they are less attached (Fried, 2000). This thinking seems to suggest that dependence translates into attachment to and independence into detachment from community and place. The sample's emotional responses to MacArthur Park both confirmed and contradicted aspects of this conceptualization of the development of place attachment.

Several survey participants expressed that they would visit other parks, primarily cleaner and safer ones, if they were able to do so. Veronica spoke to this issue directly:

There are mothers that bring their small children because we don't have any other place to go. Although, there are businesses, restaurants, but mostly I think that people come to this park because we don't have another nearby. If we'd have a choice we'd go to a prettier one. . . . There is another park I visit but I don't remember the name but the park is beautiful. It's far and I don't have money to go, it's \$5.00. A lot of people don't go because they don't have access.

Clearly, Veronica came to the park because she did not have many choices, confirming Fried's (2000) assertion that a greater number of alternatives would permit park users such as Veronica to experience many other places, which would decrease her dependence upon MacArthur Park. However, in contrast to Fried's assertion, Veronica's dependence on and degree of exposure to MacArthur Park did not lead to attachment.

This study provided some clarification regarding the link between length of experience with place and place attachment that may shed light on Fried's assertions. Survey participants' attachment to MacArthur Park was not related to the length of time they had been coming to the park but to the amount of experience that they actually had had with the park. The more hours spent in the park per month, the more one was likely to be attached to it. This finding suggests that, if residents spend more time in their communities because they cannot afford (and thus, are less likely) to leave them, local attachments might be greater for those who are "community bound." Perhaps it is not so much a lack of alternatives but the amount of experience people have with a community that drives attachments.¹

The findings of this study suggest that it is not merely the amount of experience or the lack of alternatives, with a resulting accumulation of experiences and memories, which are generating strong attachments to MacArthur Park. The study suggests that it is a confluence of several factors—primarily the park's role in preserving identity and as a restorative environment—within a specific setting—an immigrant and predominantly

¹Fried (2000) also asserted that local attachments to poorer communities may motivate residents to stay in places that they might be better off leaving. It would be difficult to judge this assertion in relation to the sample, given that they indicated a great deal of attachment to their home countries but were willing to leave them to improve their economic situation and, in some cases, to avoid physical danger.

Latino neighborhood—creating an environment in which strong attachments are forming in a relatively rapid timeframe. These factors are discussed in the following sections.

B. Continuity of Identity

During a quiet day in MacArthur Park, when almost no one is playing soccer, watching the ducks on the lake, or using the children's playground, as in Figure 119, the predominant impression left by the park is that of a relatively culturally neutral space.



Figure 119. MacArthur Park during a quiet late afternoon.

In other words, the physical elements of the park—its landscaping, its buildings, and its fauna—do not immediately suggest any particular ethnic or cultural setting, except that of a large park for passive recreation in an urban neighborhood. This is particularly true when contrasted with physical elements in a public plaza in almost any

city in Latin America. Even in the early morning, before anyone arrives in the plaza, the gazebo at its center, the stones that cover the ground, and the park benches that line the pathways are familiar reminders of this social center of Latin American life (see Figure 120). The buildings and businesses that surround the central plaza—the church or cathedral, the government building, and the shops and cafes with views of the plaza—also serve as cultural cues. The surrounding buildings, often reflecting the historic influences of Spain upon the architectural history of Mexico and Central America, are typically visible from everywhere in the plaza.



Figure 120. View from the central plaza to adjacent businesses, City of Oaxaca, Mexico.

It was surprising, then, to find that MacArthur Park reminded such a large proportion of survey participants of home. Survey participants and interviewees confirmed that they came to the park, at least partially, because they enjoyed seeing people from their home countries and because they felt the environment in the park to be both comfortable and familiar. The social environment of the park fills it with cultural cues. The park plays an active role in the neighborhood's function as an ethnic enclave.

When used to describe the MacArthur Park neighborhood, the term *ethnic enclave* varies somewhat in meaning from its traditional uses. MacArthur Park is not “Little Mexico” or “El Salvadoran town.” Demographic statistics on the park and neighborhood confirm that the neighborhood and the park comprise what can be conceived of as several cultural groups—from southern Mexico, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, and Belize, as pictures from the Central American Independence Day illustrate (Figures 121, 122, and 123).



Figure 121. Miss Belize, Central American Independence Day Parade, 2006.



Figure 122. Honduras's representatives, Central American Independence Day Parade, 2006.



Figure 123. Nicaragua's representatives, Central American Independence Day Parade, 2006.

Even within these national identities, various distinctions were made, with references to individual indigenous groupings such as the Mayas (see Figure 124).



Figure 124. Representatives of the Comunidades Maya's, Central American Independence Day Parade, 2006.

Survey participants referred to these varied cultural/national groups when talking of the park population. For example, Rogelio spoke of the El Salvadoran community in the park with which he first connected when he moved to the United States. Veronica spoke of the differences in foods eaten by Mexicans, El Salvadorans, and Guatemalans. Both demographic statistics and the descriptions of study participants confirmed that the Westlake Community and MacArthur Park are not culturally homogenous.

Still, while not homogeneous, many of the residents of the neighborhood and park appear to conceptualize themselves as a cultural “group,” whether it be the more specific identity of Central American or the broader identity of Latin American (see Figure 125). Survey and interview participants referred to themselves by specific national identities, as well as Hispanic, Latino, and Central American. Westlake is not a culturally



Figure 125. Flags from El Salvador, Guatemala, and other Central American countries are waved during a speech at the Central American Independence Day celebration in MacArthur Park, 2006.

homogeneous ethnic enclave. It is a cultural or ethnic enclave, nonetheless, in the sense that a majority of its residents define themselves within a specific cultural or ethnic grouping, with an identity that is differentiated from surrounding identities.

Survey and interview participants made clear that MacArthur Park is a space in which ethnic/cultural identity is expressed and supported and that this is an important function of the park for them. In the sense that the park provides for continuity of identity for many of its users, allowing them to “retrieve,” “engrave,” and “enclose” elements of past identities, the park supports the neighborhood’s role as an ethnic enclave.

It is also clear from the responses of survey and interview participants that elements of MacArthur Park serve to support what Twigger-Ross and Uzzell (1996) referred to as *place-referent continuity of identity*. People in the park and their activities serve as specific reminders of Mexican, El Salvadoran, Guatemalan, Central American, and Latino culture. Hearing Spanish spoken and familiar music played, seeing families

picnic and children and adults play soccer, eating familiar foods, and buying balloons and toys from vendors are familiar scenes from childhood in their homeland for many survey participants.

Several findings of this study suggest that MacArthur Park supports place-congruent continuity of identity in addition to supporting place-specific continuity of identity. Many respondents who described their homeland parks as physically quite different from MacArthur Park—smaller, no lake, a plaza not a park, less landscaping, no area for soccer—also said that the park reminded them of home. In addition, those who had visited parks in their homeland were more likely to be reminded of home than those who had not done so. These findings suggest that, for some who visit the park, its role as a public space for gathering may serve as an important reminder of important public spaces at home. The function of the space and the general characteristics that make it a park and a social gathering space remind survey participants of the central social gathering places of home. Finally, the natural elements of the park—the trees, grassy areas, water, and birds—were the most frequently cited reasons that MacArthur Park reminded survey participants of home. This finding suggests that the general physical characteristics of a park—its openness, the inclusion of landscaping and other natural elements, the pathways for walking and benches for observing others and for taking in the scenery—provide links with past experiences in parks and plazas that were part of the formation of self- and group identity.

Whether through place-referent or place-congruent elements, it is clear from this study that MacArthur Park provides continuity of identity for many park users. The park reminded 76.4% of park users of home, with 43.3% being reminded very much of home. Past conceptualizations of and research regarding place attachment have established the importance of identity to attachment. This study confirmed the relationship between

identity and attachment: There was a statistically significant relationship between the degree to which the park reminded users of home and their level of attachment. The park's role in helping users to maintain and forge new identities in new and unfamiliar territory fosters attachment to this neighborhood space. This function provides a partial explanation for why continuing and strong transnational ties appear to be unrelated to level of attachment to the park. The park does not compete with homeland spaces for attachment; it extends and reproduces homeland spaces. It appears that, for park visitors, attachments have not been *detrterritorialized* as much as they have been *reterritorialized*. This study measured current attachment to current and past park spaces; it did not measure changing attachments to these spaces over time. Therefore, it is not possible to address the assertions of transnational scholars that attachments are becoming increasingly deterritorialized over time as a result of transnational ties and patterns of movement. However, this study confirms that for survey participants MacArthur Park mattered, and its expression of users' identity played a role in the park's importance for participants.

C. The Restorative Role of MacArthur Park

Another finding of this study was the importance of the restorative role of MacArthur Park, particularly its natural and aesthetic qualities, for survey participants. Kaplan and Kaplan (1989) suggested that restoration can result from experiences that are relaxing or diversionary, and survey participants indicated that they came to the park for both of these experiences. Certainly, the social environment of the park contributes to the diversions that it provides for park users. Many survey participants mentioned the social qualities of the park as some of their favorite elements (16.6%). Survey participants also mentioned the natural qualities of the park—the birds, fish, water, and trees that hold interest—as diversions for park goers. The majority (53.9%) of survey participants

indicated that they came to the park for relaxation than for diversions; it is this component of the restorative role of the park that had surprising implications for attachment.

The importance of relaxation and the natural/aesthetic qualities of the park was particularly surprising, given the findings of other studies related to cultural differentiation in the use of parks. Previous research has verified that Hispanic/Latino park goers are more likely than other groups to cite social reasons for coming to a park and to cite social qualities as their favorite elements of a park (Loukaitou-Sideris, 1995). Social reasons were most frequently cited by participants in this study, as well. However, unlike other studies, MacArthur Park survey participants cited natural/aesthetic qualities of the park, not social qualities, as their favorite elements (more than 50% of responses).

Several factors relevant to the specific context of this study contributed to the relative importance of the park's natural and aesthetic qualities for its users. First, these qualities served to remind many park goers of their homeland. Given that many park users had recently arrived in the United States and were probably experiencing a profound sense of displacement, the park's role in the maintenance of identity is an important one. The park's trees and lake reminded survey participants from small villages of the countryside that they had left behind and those from large cities of the landscaped areas and fountains in the parks and plazas that they had visited in their youth.

The park's location in a transitional immigrant neighborhood affects the importance of its aesthetic qualities. The significant number of survey participants who are in the United States without their families may also contribute to the importance of natural and aesthetic qualities relative to social qualities. In other words, in comparison to Latino survey participants in other studies, fewer survey participants visited MacArthur Park for social gatherings. This reduces the population for which the social qualities of

the park might be important, since the park functions for them less as a location for family parties and gatherings and more as a place to enjoy the surroundings. The park's location in an immigrant neighborhood, with many new arrivals who are the first members of their families to immigrate, alters the relative importance of its qualities within the community.

The park's urban setting affects the importance of its natural and aesthetic qualities in several other ways. The park is located in a dense neighborhood with many apartments. The average household size is larger in this neighborhood than in the rest of Los Angeles County. The surrounding streets are busy and noisy. Many of the members of the community do manual, possibly physically taxing, labor. A large percentage of the community is below the poverty line, consisting of minimum wage earners who are likely to be working more than one job and more than 40 hours per week to afford living in Los Angeles. The park serves as a de facto back yard and relatively peaceful and spacious extended living space. It provides relief—fresh air, tranquility, privacy—from crowded housing and streets. In the summer it provides relief from the heat. The park is a restorative environment that is free, accessible, and relatively safe in a city that is expensive and in a neighborhood that can sometimes be dangerous.

D. Implications for Local Planning Practice

It can be argued that many, if not most, local planning practitioners, when faced with the challenge of creating successful public places, approach this challenge through urban design. It can be further argued that, in using urban design to improve places to give them a more pronounced sense of identity, practitioners concern themselves primarily with the style and form of permanent structures (should a city require Spanish or Cape Cod architectural styles, pedestrian- or auto-oriented site plans, compact or suburban city forms?) and secondarily with the landscaping and furniture (lighting,

benches, hardscape) that accompany the structures. More recently, some planning practitioners have become concerned with the social environment of public spaces and how these elements might affect sense of place, although it is arguable that most planners are primarily focused upon the activities that should be prohibited—adult bookstores, tattoo shops, and massage parlors—rather than on the activities that might be encouraged.

The findings of this study suggest that local planning practice might benefit from several changes in the approach to design and regulation of public spaces, particularly in urban settings. Because one of the findings of this study is the importance of the social environment and activities that take place in MacArthur Park to the meaning of this space for its users, giving greater consideration to the types of uses that are encouraged or discouraged in public spaces might allow for more meaningful environments for users. In addition, because the cultural communities that make up urban neighborhoods can rapidly change and because these identities can be expressed through a variety of unique activities, planners should be more flexible in deciding the permitted or banned activities. The activities allowed in a park can reflect both the local community's needs and identity.

The study found that, despite the lack of permanent architectural representations of Mexican and Central American culture and identity in the park itself, there are many less permanent physical expressions of identity that resulted from activities in the park. These physical symbols of cultural identity add to the support that the Westlake neighborhood, as a multi-ethnic enclave, provides for its inhabitants. Public spaces might address the needs of local communities more effectively when planners consider the links among activities (such as vending or soccer), the symbolic physical elements they provide (food, toys, balloons, uniforms, local teams' paraphernalia), and the social environments that they encourage through the representation of local identities. The

importance of temporary elements, such as food, aromas, sounds, manner of dress, and people, and landscaping to the meaning of place is good news for planners working with economically poor communities. Revitalization efforts do not necessarily require expensive and time-consuming construction projects.

This study found that MacArthur Park had complex and multiple meanings for its users. Some of these meanings were not easily understood, and they did not surface as a result of the standard questions that planners ask users about places. Contrast, for instance, the information produced by asking questions about most and least favorite qualities of the park and what should be changed with information resulting from questions related to feelings about and meanings of the park as described in chapter 5. From the former questions it is clear that users come to the park primarily for social reasons and that the park's natural and aesthetic qualities and the peace and tranquility that they provide. Park users would like the park to be cleaner and better maintained. By speaking to users about the park's meaning, it is clear that the park plays a role in the continuity of its users' identity, with the result that the park has great emotional significance. Not only do survey participants want the park to be cleaner and safer; in many ways it is a safe place for them within their neighborhood. Women may feel that some parts of the park are essentially masculine spaces and that the park is not safe for children, and that for both these reasons, they are underrepresented in the park. Most important, despite the many negative qualities that survey participants can identify about the park, the park is an extremely important part of the lives of many of its users. Questions about meaning, therefore, produced a finding about the importance of the park that contradicts common misconceptions that planners have about public spaces in economically poor neighborhoods: that spaces that are degraded and unsafe are not important to or well loved by their communities.

Finally, this study suggests that the meaning of places and the resulting attachment that people feel to them are extremely sensitive to context. For instance, MacArthur Park's location within a transitional immigrant community, where there are frequent new and often solitary immigrants arriving, make it an extremely important site of integration and adjustment. Most of the survey sample grew up in villages and towns where the central plaza was at the heart of the community's social life and, as a result, many of them had an immediate affinity for public space. Given this specific context, attachments to MacArthur park developed relatively quickly, contradicting another important misconception about place attachment in transitional immigrant neighborhoods: that there is not adequate time for significant attachments to form.

II. The Significance of the Study

A significant portion of the extant literature in the social sciences regarding emotional ties to place concentrates on the concept of place attachment, often defined as a positive and strong bond to place that decreases "the perceived substitutability of other sites for the one in question" (Milligan, 1998, p. 6). This literature, coming primarily from environmental psychology, has frequently used surveys and quantitative analysis to identify and measure factors that contribute to place attachment. While this literature has made an immeasurable contribution to our understanding of the importance of places to people, it does not capture the full complexity of emotional relationships to place. Some qualitative studies discussed in this report have begun to contribute to a more complex understanding of the emotional significance of places in people's lives, including places outside the home and residential neighborhood (Gustafson, 2001a; Low, 1992, 2000; Manzo, 2003; Mazumdar et al., 2000). The present study is meant to contribute to this growing body of research.

While the social and economic importance of ethnic enclaves with relatively culturally homogeneous populations has been well documented (Abrahamson, 1996; Gold, 1992; Zhou, 1992), there has been relatively little research regarding the emotional relationships to place in new ethnic landscapes with culturally diverse and transnational populations. Place attachment literature often assumes that bonds to place and mobility (whether chosen or forced) are mutually exclusive (Gustafson, 2001b). Some researchers of relationships to place have identified a continuity that places may offer: place congruent continuity, continuity via characteristics of place which are generic and transferable from one place to another. These relationships suggest that bonds to place and mobility are not mutually exclusive experiences (Twigger-Ross & Uzzell, 1996, p. 208).

The present research into emotional relationships to place experienced by a culturally diverse and transnational population contributes to our understanding of the relationship between emotional ties to place and mobility and how emotionally significant past places might affect emotional relationships to current places. In terms of studying ethnic enclaves, the place identity literature has focused on the ties to place in culturally homogeneous populations. Little is known regarding ties to place in new ethnic landscapes that are culturally diverse. The present research should contribute to understanding of the types of emotional relationships to place that may exist in new ethnic landscapes in which multiple ethnicities are interacting with each other.

A significant number of studies (e.g., Abrahamson, 1996; Hummon, 1990, 1992; Loukaitou-Sideris, 2002b; Low, 2000) have identified ways in which local landmarks and, to a lesser degree, everyday aspects of the physical environment become imbued with personal and group meanings, supporting personal and group identity. These studies have concentrated on this relationship between the physical environment and identity in

relatively culturally homogeneous environments and environments in which cultural identity has been relatively stable. Given the culturally diverse, transitional, and transnational qualities of the sample in this study of MacArthur Park, this research should make a contribution to an increased understanding of how emotional relationships to place are affected by the physical environment in less stable and homogeneous landscapes.

III. Future Research Needs

Because this research was a case study of a single site and somewhat exploratory in nature, it raised as many questions as it answered. The level of attachment to MacArthur Park experienced by so many of its users begs the question of whether attachment to other public spaces is similar. This study was conducted in a population for which there is evidence of both higher levels of attachment to places, generally, and to public spaces such as parks and plazas, specifically. This is only the beginning of exploration of cultural differentiation in park uses and preferences, and future research in this area, along with its implications for attachments to public spaces, is needed.

While cultural identity in the Westlake neighborhood is not homogeneous, it certainly is not as heterogeneous as neighborhoods with equal representations of very diverse ethnic groups. Since the expression of Mexican and Central American cultural identity was such an important component of the meaning that MacArthur Park has for its users and their attachment to the space, questions arise regarding the level of attachment that exists among populations whose cultural identity is not as well represented in public spaces. If there is a struggle within a public space regarding the representation of cultural identities, how might attachment be affected? What other types of factors might contribute to attachment in communities where issues of identity might not be so important?

The significant underrepresentation of women in MacArthur Park and their lower levels of attachment raised questions that were not answered by this research. While it is likely that the safety of the park for women and children is a major factor in women's decisions to stay away from the park, might there be other factors? How much do the physical incivilities experienced in MacArthur Park affect women's relatively lower levels of attendance and attachment? To what degree does "the masculine feeling" of the park, as described by Veronica, affect women's responses to the park?

This study's confirmation of the benefits of public realm relationships to new arrivals in the neighborhood leads to questions about other ways in which one might measure public realm relationships and their effects on attachment and meaning. How do the physical design and regulation of public spaces affect public realm relationships and, how, in turn, is attachment affected?

This research identified ways in which local planning practice can affect the meaning of spaces, most frequently through urban design approaches and land use regulations. While having the tools to significantly affect meaning and attachment, planners have very few tools for identifying or measuring them. This study took 3 years to complete. Most planners do not have the luxury of 3 years to assess the meaning of the spaces that they affect or the potential impacts of various planning alternatives on meaning and attachment. The survey developed for this study was but a rough attempt to assess the importance of a public space in a very specific cultural context. Additional research is needed to develop various tools for measuring place meaning and attachment and to assess their efficiency and efficacy as planners use them in the routine execution of their duties.

APPENDIX

I. Survey

Survey number: _____

Date: _____ Time: _____

Location in park:

North Park _____ Grassy area west of amphitheatre _____ Children's Play Area

_____ Soccer Field _____ Red Sculpture Picnic Area

_____ Grassy area east and north side of park

South Park _____ Southeast entrance _____ Around lake _____ Southwest entrance

Gender of participant: _____ Female _____ Male

Questions about Parks

MacArthur Park: Primero, me gustaría hacerle unas preguntas sobre MacArthur Park:

1. ¿Cuándo viene al Parque MacArthur, cuanto tiempo se queda?

2. ¿Con que frecuencia visita al Parque MacArthur? **(Read all)**

_____ Cada día _____ Cada semana _____ Cada mes _____ Otros. Ppor
favor, elabore su respuesta

3. ¿Cuándo Usted viene al parque, viene _____ solo o _____ acompañado? Con quien?

4. ¿Desde hace cuanto tiempo que Usted viene al Parque MacArthur (como cuantos años
or cuantos meses)?

5. ¿Porque visita al Parque MacArthur?

6. ¿Que tipo de actividades hace usted en el parque, por lo regular? **(interviewer, please
read all choices)** _____ deportes _____ diversiones _____ reposando

_____ picnicking (dia de campo)

_____ programas en el centro de comunidad _____ otras
actividades _____

7. *¿Cuáles son las cosas que le gustan más del Parque MacArthur?*

8. *¿Cuáles son las cosas que no le gustan del Parque MacArthur?*

9. *¿Hay cambios que le gustaría hacer para mejorar el diseño o el ambiente natural de este parque?*

10. *¿Hay otros cambios que le gustaría hacer para mejorar el parque?*

Homeland Parks/Plazas: *Ahora, me gustaría preguntarle sobre los parques y las plazas que ha visitado en su tierra (país) natal:*

11. *¿Pasaba usted tiempo en los parques/las plazas en su tierra natal?*

a. **Si (If they can't provide names of the parks, ask for descriptions)**

i. *¿Como se llama _____ el parque o _____ la plaza que visitaba con más frecuencia (en su tierra natal)?*

ii. *¿Como se llama su _____ parque o _____ plaza favorita en su tierra natal?*

b. **No (then ask) ¿Porqué no? (then skip to Number 23)**

(If the interviewee has a FAVORITE park, the following questions should be asked about THAT park. If the interviewee doesn't have a favorite park, then ask about the park THEY VISITED MOST FREQUENTLY. The interviewee may not know the names of the parks. If their favorite park is different than the park they visited most frequently, just make sure that you are clearly asking them about their favorite park.)

12. *¿Típicamente, cuánto tiempo se quedaba en (favorite park or most visited park in homeland)?* _____

13. *¿Con que frecuencia visitaba (favorite park or most visited park in homeland)? (Read all)*

Cada día *Cada semana* *Cada mes*

Otros, por favor, elabore su respuesta _____

14. ¿Típicamente, Usted fue al parque/a la plaza ____ solo o ____ acompañado? ¿Con quien? _____

15. ¿Por cuanto años visitaba (favorite park or most visited park in homeland)?

16. ¿Porqué visitaba (favorite park or most visited park in homeland)?

17. ¿Típicamente, que tipo de actividades hacia usted en (favorite park or most visited park in homeland)? (Read all) _____ deportes _____ diversiones
_____ reposo _____ picnicking (dia del campo) _____ otra
actividades _____

18. ¿Cuales eran las cosas que le gustaban más de (favorite park or most visited park in homeland)?

19. ¿Cuales eran las cosas que no le gustaban de (favorite park or most visited park in homeland)?

Comparisons of MacArthur Park with Homeland Parks/Plazas

20. ¿Para Usted, cuales son las diferencias más importante entre MacArthur Park y (favorite park or most visited park in homeland)?

21. ¿Para Usted, que es lo más importante que se parece MacArthur Park con (favorite park or most visited park in homeland)?

22. Cual parque le gusta mas, _____ MacArthur Park o _____ (favorite park or most visited park in homeland)? ¿Porqué?

Statements about the Parks

23. Ahora, voy a leerle unas declaraciones sobre MacArthur Park y (favorite park or most visited park in homeland, unless they didn't visit parks in homeland. Then skip homeland park section). Por favor, dígame si estas declaraciones reflejan sus sentimientos:

<i>MacArthur Park</i>	
<i>En este pais, he visitado otros parques o plazas que me gustan más que MacArthur Park</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Si (If yes, ask)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Me gustan mucho (más) <input type="checkbox"/> Regular <input type="checkbox"/> Poco <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No (If no, ask)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Me gustan igualmente <input type="checkbox"/> Me gusta MacArthur Park más <input type="checkbox"/> No he visitado otros parques o plazas
<i>MacArthur Park es uno de mis lugares favoritos</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Si (If yes, ask)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Mucho <input type="checkbox"/> Mas o menos <input type="checkbox"/> Poco <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No</i>
<i>MacArthur Park es un lugar peligroso</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Si (If yes, ask)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Muy <input type="checkbox"/> Mas o menos <input type="checkbox"/> Poco <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No</i>
<i>MacArthur Park es como un amigo mio</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Si (If yes, ask)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Muy buen amigo <input type="checkbox"/> Mas o menos <input type="checkbox"/> Poco <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No</i>
<i>Hay cosas que quiere hacer en MacArthur Park, pero estan prohibidas</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Si (If yes, ask)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Muchas cosas <input type="checkbox"/> Algunas <input type="checkbox"/> Pocas <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No</i>
<i>Yo extranaría (echaría de menos) MacArthur Park si mi familia y yo nos mudamos a otra comunidad</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Si (If yes, ask)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Mucho <input type="checkbox"/> Regular <input type="checkbox"/> Poco <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No</i>
<i>Me siento solo cuando estoy en MacArthur Park</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Si (If yes, ask)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Muchas veces <input type="checkbox"/> Algunas <input type="checkbox"/> Pocas <input type="checkbox"/> <i>No</i>
<i>MacArthur Park me recuerda de lugares en mi tierra natal</i>	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Si (If yes, ask)</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Mucho <input type="checkbox"/> Mas o menos <input type="checkbox"/> Poco (AND) ¿Porqué? _____ _____	
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>No (If no, ask)</i> ¿Porqué no? _____ _____	

Homeland Park/Plaza	
(Same as above) era uno de mis lugares favoritos	___ Si (If yes, ask) ___ Mucho ___ Mas o menos ___ Poco ___ No
(Same as above) fue un lugar peligroso	___ Si (If yes, ask) ___ Muy ___ Mas o menos ___ Poco ___ No
(Same as above) fue como un amigo mío	___ Si (If yes, ask) ___ Muy buen amigo ___ Mas o menos ___ Poco ___ No
En (same as above), habian cosas que querian hacer, pero eran prohibidas	___ Si (If yes, ask) ___ Muchas cosas ___ Algunas ___ Pocas ___ No
Extrano (echo de menos) (same as above)	___ Si (If yes, ask) ___ Mucho ___ Regular ___ Poco ___ No
Me sentía solo cuando estaba en (same as above)	___ Si (If yes, ask) ___ Muchas veces ___ Algunas ___ Pocas ___ No

Demographic Questions

Ahora, me gustaría hacerle unas preguntas sobre usted y su vida aquí. Estas preguntas me ayudaran entender lo que afecta los sentimientos sobre los parques/las plazas.

24. ¿Que tan lejos de MacArthur Park vive usted (en cuadras, kilometros, metros, miles, whatever) ? (If the participant gives you a time period, ask the mode of transportation) _____
- ¿Hace cuanto tiempo vive allí? _____
 - ¿Cual es la intersección principal más cercana de su casa/apartamento? _____
25. ¿Ha vivido alguna vez más cerca de MacArthur Park? ___ Si (Go to a) ___ No (Skip to 25)
- ¿Por cuanto tiempo? _____
 - ¿Cerca cual intersección? _____
26. ¿Cuando fue la primera vez que vino a los Estados Unidos? _____
- ¿Cuantas veces ha regresado a su país natal? _____
 - ¿Regularmente, cuanto tiempo se queda en su país cuando Usted va? _____
27. ¿Como llega MacArthur Park? Usted puede elegir más de un. (Read all)
___ A pie ___ En bicicleta ___ En coche ___ En autobús ___ En metro
28. ¿Es dueño ___ o alquila ___?
29. ¿Trabaja Usted fuera su casa? _____ ¿A que se dedica? _____

30. ¿Con permiso, Cual es su edad? _____ (Ask for an approximation. Estimate if they refuse. Estimate: _____)

31. ¿Habla ingles? (Read all) ___Mucho ___Mas o menos ___Poco ___No

32. ¿Tiene hijos en Los Angeles? ___Si ___No (If yes, go to a; if no, go to 33)

a. ¿Cuántos anos tienen sus hijos? _____

b. ¿Cuántos anos viven en Estados Unidos sus hijos? _____

c. (If the children are teenagers/adults) ¿Cuándo eran niños, Usted traía sus hijos a MacArthur Park? ___Si ___No

d. ¿Ahora, sus hijos visitan a MacArthur Park? ___Si ___No (If yes, then ask following questions)

i. ¿Con que frecuencia visitan a MacArthur Park sus hijos?
___Cada día ___Cada semana ___Cada mes
___Otros. Por favor, elabore su respuesta _____

ii. ¿Típicamente, que tipo de actividades hacen sus hijos en el parque?
(interviewer, please read all choices) ___deportes
___diversiones ___reposando
___picnicking (dia de campo) ___otras
actividades _____

Questions about Contact with Homeland

Ahora, me gustaría hacerle unas preguntas sobre sus viajes a su tierra natal.

33. ¿De donde es Usted? _____

e. ¿Y sus padres? _____

f. ¿Y sus hijos? _____

g. ¿Donde vive la mayoría de su familia? _____

34. ¿Está en contacto con personas en (use name of their homeland)? ___Si ___No

a. (Read all) ___por teléfono ___carta ___correos electrónicos ___
mensajes de otros

b. ¿Con que frecuencia? (Read all) ___Cada día ___Cada semana ___
Cada mes

___Otros (then) por favor, elabore su respuesta _____

35. ¿En el futuro, planea usted a visitar (use name of their homeland)? ___Si ___No

a. Con que frecuencia? (Read all) ___Cada ano ___Más (que
cada ano)

___ *Menos (que cada ano)* ___ *No tengo planes definitivos (a visitar)*

36. *¿En que país o países desea vivir en el futuro? Usted puede elegir más de uno.*

(Interviewer read all choices)

___ *aquí* ___ *su tierra natal* ___ *otro país (ask for name if they indicate “otros”)* _____

a. **(Whatever the choice, ask)** *¿Porqué?*

Quiero agradecerle su tiempo en participar en esta investigación.

II. First Interview

Questions about Past Places/Parks

1. What were the places you liked most in your town? Least?
 - a. What about public places?
2. What were your favorite activities in your town? Least?
 - a. With whom did you do these activities?
 - b. Where did these activities take place?
3. I see from your response to the survey that you spent time/didn't spend time in the parks and plazas of your town?
 - a. (If participant did spend time in the parks and plazas):
 - i. Can you tell me more about why?
 - ii. On the survey, you've listed some of your favorite activities:
 1. Please tell me a little bit more about what you did? And about who was with you?
 2. Please tell me a bit more about things about the park that you didn't like?
 - iii. I see from your response to the survey that you felt safe/unsafe there? Please tell me more about what you meant by this.
 - iv. Did you meet relatives/friends there?
 1. Who?
 2. What did you do after you met?
 - v. Did you make new friends there?
 - vi. Please tell me about some of your favorite memories of times you spent in the park/plaza?
 1. Least favorite?
 2. Who was with you?
 - vii. What are your most vivid memories of the parks and plazas in your town? Of the design or the natural environment?
 - viii. You indicated on your survey that _____ was what you like most about the parks and plazas in your town? Can you tell me a little bit more about that?
 - ix. You indicated on your survey that _____ was what you didn't like about the parks and plazas in your town? Can you tell me a little bit more about that?
 - x. If you could change the parks and plazas in your town, what would you change? What would you keep the same?
 - xi. Do you plan on visiting this park or plaza in the future?
 1. If yes, why?
 2. If no, why not?
 3. Do your friends or family still visit the park?

4. Do you ever speak of the park/plaza with your friends or family?
- b. (If participant did not spend time in parks and plazas):
 - i. Tell me more about why?
 - ii. Did your friends and family spend time in the parks or plazas?
 - iii. Do you plan on visiting these parks or plazas in the future?
 1. If yes, why?
 2. If no, why not?

Questions about Current Neighborhood/MacArthur Park

1. What places do you like most in Los Angeles/current neighborhood? Least?
 - a. What about public places?
2. What are your favorite activities here? Least?
 - a. Where do these activities take place?
 - b. With whom would you do these activities?
3. I see from your response to the survey that you spend time/don't spend time in MacArthur Park?
 - a. (If participant does spend time in MacArthur Park):
 - i. You have indicated that you visit MacArthur Park because _____? Can you tell me a little bit more?
 - ii. On the survey, you've listed some of your favorite activities:
 1. Please tell me a little bit more about what you do in the Park? Who is usually with you?
 2. You have also mentioned what you don't like? Can you tell me a little bit more?
 - iii. I see that you have indicated on the survey that you feel safe/unsafe in the park? Please tell me what you meant by this.
 - iv. Do you meet relatives/friends in MacArthur Park?
 1. Who?
 2. What did you do after you met?
 - v. Do you make new friends there?
 - vi. Please tell me about some of your favorite memories of the times you've spent in MacArthur Park?
 1. Least favorite?
 2. Who was with you?
 - vii. When you think about MacArthur Park, what do you remember most vividly? About the design and natural environment of the park?
 - viii. You mentioned in the survey that you like _____ most about MacArthur Park? Can you tell me a little bit more?
 - ix. You mentioned in the survey that you don't like _____ about MacArthur Park? Can you tell me a little bit more?
 - x. You indicated that if you could change MacArthur Park, you would change _____? Tell me a little bit more about that? **AND** Do you

have anything to add? / **OR** I see here that you didn't mention any changes that you would make to MacArthur Park. **AND** Do you have anything to add?

- xi. What would be the most important things to you to keep the same?
 - xii. You indicated that MacArthur Park reminds/doesn't remind you of places in your homeland. Can you tell me a little more about why?
 - xiii. Are there things from your homeland/your culture that you would like to see more of in the park?
- b. If participant's children spend time in MP: I see from your survey that your children visit MacArthur Park? Can you tell me a little bit more about why?
- i. And what they do there?
 - ii. You've indicated that they do _____-in the park. Can you tell me a bit more? What do they spend most of there time doing?
- c. If participant has not spent time in MacArthur Park:
- i. You indicated that you don't spend time in MacArthur Park. Can you tell me a bit more about why?
 - ii. Do your friends or family spend time in MacArthur Park?
 - iii. In the future, do you plan on spending time in MacArthur Park?
- d. If participant's children don't spend time in MP: I see from your survey that your children do not visit MacArthur Park? Can you tell me a little bit more about why?
- i. Where do your kids go for recreation/for fun?
4. Do you spend time in other parks and plazas here?
- a. If yes,
 - i. Why?
 - ii. What do you do there?
 - 1. What are your favorite activities? Least?
 - 2. Who is with you?
 - iii. Do you feel safe there? Please tell me more.
 - iv. Do you meet relatives/friends there?
 - 1. Who?
 - 2. What do you do after you meet?
 - v. Have you made new friends there?
 - vi. Please tell me about some of your favorite memories of the times you've spent in other parks and plazas here in Southern California?
 - 1. Least favorite?
 - 2. Who was with you?
 - vii. When you think about these parks and plazas, what do you remember most vividly?
 - viii. What do you like best about other parks and plazas here in Southern California? Least?
 - b. If participant has not spent time in other parks and plazas,
 - i. Why?

- ii. Do your friends and family spend time in other parks and plazas?
 - iii. Do you plan on spending time in parks and plazas here in the future?
5. You indicated that MacArthur Park reminds you/doesn't remind you of places in your homeland because _____? Can you tell me a little bit more about this?
6. Would you say the neighborhood around MacArthur Park reminds you or doesn't remind you of your neighborhood back home? Why?

Comparisons of Current/Past Places/Parks

1. Please tell me about the similarities and differences between your previous neighborhood and your current neighborhood?
 - a. What are the most/least important differences?
 - b. What are the most/least important similarities?
2. Please tell me about more the similarities and differences between parks and plazas in your town and MacArthur Park?
 - a. In the survey, you indicated that _____ are the most/least important differences to you? Can you tell me more? **OR** In the survey, you didn't mention any differences between the two parks. How about now?
 - b. In the survey, you indicated that _____ are the most important similarities to you? Can you tell me more? **OR** In the survey, you didn't mention any differences between the two parks. How about now?
3. Please tell me about the similarities and differences between MacArthur Park and other parks and here that you visit?
 - a. What are the most/least important differences to you?
 - b. What are the most/least important similarities to you?

Photo Assignment

The next interview will be to go over photographs, both photographs you have taken and any photographs of yours that you are willing to bring and discuss with me. If you would, before the next interview:

1. Please look at any photos you may have at home of places in your homeland, including photos of parks or plazas in your homeland. If you wish, please bring them to our second interview to discuss.
2. Please take photographs of MacArthur Park and the surrounding neighborhood. I'm going to give you a camera to take photographs of MacArthur Park and the surrounding neighborhood. I am giving you an envelope so that you can mail the camera back to me when you are done with it so that I can develop the pictures and we can discuss them in the final interview. I also have an information sheet to give you which gives you an idea of the some of the things I would like you to photograph. Let's take a few minutes to go over this information sheet here.

III. Second Interview

Questions about Past Parks and Places

1. Were you able to find any pictures of people/places/things from your original neighborhood? Please tell me about them.
2. I have some pictures of the parks in your country. Please tell me about them.

Questions about MacArthur Park

3. Let's look at the pictures of the Park and the neighborhood that you have taken. Tell me about them and why you took them.
4. I have some pictures of MacArthur Park and the neighborhood. Tell me about them.

Wrap-up Questions

5. Is there anything that you would like to add to what you have said?
6. Do you have anyone that you would recommend for this study?

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