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Understanding how community management has shaped a park as a place:

A case study of Randwick Park, Manurewa, Auckland



Hannah Louise Chapman-Carr

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Abstract

Parks and green spaces have been recognised as helping to mitigate the adverse impacts of urban living on both environmental and human health. They go beyond providing essential ecosystems services, additionally offering a wide range of intangible benefits supporting community development such as social cohesion, building community capacity and resilience.

Parks are generally managed in a top-down manner and are the responsibility of the local governing authority. This research examines the case study of Randwick Park, a community in South Auckland, that has assumed *de facto* ownership of their local park and shaped the park into a place the community love and can be proud of. To understand and examine this phenomenon, semi-structured interviews were conducted with members of the Randwick Park community involved with the management of the park or highly engaged it. A thematic analysis approach was applied to the interviews and themes were developed for critical analysis and reflection. The findings are presented as four key themes which relate to the key concepts for this research: place attachment, ownership, citizen participation and community outcomes. The case study demonstrates the benefits of allowing community to take ownership and participate in their parks as an approach to supporting positive community outcomes and overall community wellbeing.

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Lastly, if nothing else, this research has made me realise the full potential parks have in urban environments and supporting community development. Parks are able to provide such a vast range of environmental, economic and social benefits to communities. This one quote from the literature has stuck with me throughout my research and I would like to share it with you as a reader:

"If you want to build a successful community first start with the park"

– Jones 2002

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Chapter 1 Introduction & Overview

Urbanisation and densification are linked to the decline of access to parks and open spaces in cities (Hartig, Hagerhall & Fry, 2009). As pressure on land in urban areas increases, parks are becoming increasingly valuable to the urban life. Urbanisation and city life have been recognised as impacting determinants of environmental health such as poor air and water quality, reducing biodiversity and negatively affecting ecosystems (Duh, Shandas, Chang & George, 2008). City life has also been associated with adverse effects to human physical health and psychological health such as stress and depression related issues (Godfrey & Julien, 2005). Urban environments, by design, often do not have many areas that provide a healthy and soothing effect. However, it has been noted that the enhancement and protection of green areas has the potential to mitigate negative effects associated with urban development (De Ridder, Adamec, Bruse, Burger, Damsgaard & Thierry, 2004). Green spaces in the form of parks have been regarded as the 'lungs of the city' (Eisenman, 2013). Parks are able to support city life not only through providing oxygen and the essential services needed for human life but also by supporting wellbeing and providing opportunities for social development. Most commonly parks have been recognised for their tangible benefits such as providing aesthetic values to the landscape, environmental values of providing ecosystem services and reducing pollution (Swanick, Dunnett & Wolley, 2003), as well as being places of recreation and physical exercise (Birge-Liberman, 2010). There has been less attention paid to the importance of green space for quality of life, livability, social and psychological well-being (Chiesura, 2004). The social and wellbeing benefits parks provide contribute significantly to fostering a sense of community and overall community development. It has been suggested that 'if you want to build a successful community first start with the park' as parks are recognised as spaces that bring people together (Jones 2002; Jones 2002a). Parks can facilitate social cohesion in a community and enhance the development of place attachment through community participation and shared values (Peters, Elands & Buijs, 2010).

When there is a shared sense of place attachment parks can be linked to community development (Kearns, 1998). Being publicly accessible, they can act as third places, being neither home nor work. Third places have been described as the 'anchor of the community' (Oldenburg, 1989:420) and as third places parks are generally accessible to all offering the opportunity to relax, recreate and connect with other members of the community. The social interactions that parks facilitate allow the development of relationships within the community and building capacity, which is further strengthened through involvement and participation.

The collective efficacy of community members working toward and contributing to a shared goal to influence change in their local environment can result in a reimagined place (Flint, 2009). Shaping a space into a place that not only reflects, but also serves, the community around it, should be the focus for local governments and open space designers. However, often this is not the case. Allowing community members to be involved is one step towards creating space that is suitable and unique to each community. But what if this was flipped around and the community were the ones designing the space? Empowering and supporting community to shape their environments through co-creation (Lefebvre, 1991) provides the platform for communities to participate in the political realm and puts community needs at the forefront of decision making in public space design.

In New Zealand, parks are managed in a top-down manner by local authorities who are responsible for the operational maintenance and governance of these spaces. This research will focus on a unique case study of a park and its facilities managed by community members. This case study emphasises how parks can facilitate and support community development outcomes through community management. Riverton Reserve, in the suburb of Randwick Park, Manurewa, Auckland has been managed by community members for nearly ten years. The journey, experiences and outcomes of this type of park management will be explored throughout this thesis.

1.1 Research question and objectives

The research question guiding this research is – *How has Riverton Reserve evolved as a place where the Randwick Park community have assumed management responsibility?*

Four research objectives were developed to provide depth and highlight areas of importance within the research topic. The objectives are as follows:

1. *To understand how community members have shaped the park as a place*

This objective seeks to understand how the community has taken control of the park and influenced how it has developed as a place. The community influence, and subsequent place attachment, have encouraged a positive association with the park, which in the past has accrued negative associations through various instances of criminal activity. This objective seeks to account for how the community has shaped the park such that it is now a place that is cared for and looked after by its community.

2. *To understand the governance of the park from the community's perspective*

The park is governed through an arrangement between community and local government, Auckland Council. The second objective of this research is therefore to understand this

governance arrangement through attention to power, participation and citizen empowerment. By understanding the community's perspective and their experiences I aim to provide insights that will support improvements in how local government can work with communities in these types of relationships.

3. *How did the story of community involvement and management of the park evolve?*

This objective seeks to understand the unique situation occurring at Riverton Reserve that has evolved over several years of community involvement. Understanding this management model will focus on key elements such as place attachment, sense of community, community resilience and cohesion and overall community development.

4. *To understand how the management model that has evolved has supported community development over time*

This final objective is centered around analysing and understanding how the park management model has developed, as well as the wider impacts it has on the park and the community of Randwick Park.

The main concepts underpinning this research and framing each of the research objectives are: place attachment, citizen participation, community involvement and community development. These concepts will be reviewed and critiqued in the literature review and subsequently reflected upon during the presentation of key research findings.

1.2 Definitions of key terms

As several of the key terms and concepts in this research have multiple meanings or interpretations it is important to clarify the context in which they will be used throughout this thesis.

In the context of this research:

Management – management will refer to the operating and decision-making aspects of managing the park, Riverton Reserve.

Ownership – will refer to *de facto* ownership. *De facto* ownership describes the practice in reality, although not officially sanctioned legally. Comparatively, *de jure* ownership is legally sanctioned ownership. In relation to this research, the Randwick Park community have assumed *de facto* ownership of Riverton Reserve, through a governance arrangement. However, local government remain the legal owners.

Community – will be a blend of the spatial definition of community and the social organisation of community. Spatially members of the residential community which surrounds the park and lives in the Randwick Park suburb are considered the ‘community’, but also the social organisation of people with commonality between themselves (Flint, 2009) or community of interest.

Park – for clarity, when the term park is used this refers to Riverton Reserve and not the suburb or community of Randwick Park.

Place – space that has become associated with specific meanings for those who use or relate to it (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009).

Place attachment – is the emotional bond between people and an environment that has specific meaning to them (Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012).

Social cohesion – a geographical group of people who become a collective through a sense of shared values, cooperation and interaction (Beckley, 1994).

Community development – the overall improvement of a community through positive social outcomes. Building community capacity, social cohesion, improving community well-being and resilience all contribute to community development.

1.3 Research rationale

In order to address the research question – *How has Riverton Reserve evolved as a place where the Randwick Park community have assumed management responsibility?* – I built upon my professional knowledge and personal experiences with Riverton Reserve by reviewing, analysing and comparing current academic research relating to the research question. The combination of literature reviews and professional knowledge confirmed that the case study of Riverton Reserve and the Randwick Park community held some valuable insights, contradictions and reflections on community involvement and management of a park. Randwick Park is a unique case study for community management of parks in Auckland and New Zealand. Gaps in current research will be highlighted through review of the literature and the limited number of examples demonstrating the impact a community can have on shaping their ‘third places’ will be discussed. Most research on parks to date has focused on physical activity in parks, people’s health and the environmental aspects of parks (Bedimo-Rung, Mowen & Cohen, 2005; Chiesura, 2004). This case study differs in that it is an example of community park management and the community benefits associated with and facilitated by the functions that parks provide. It is also apparent that research into

communities who are volunteering or participating in park-based activities has tended to focus on activities which contribute to economic or environmental outcomes (Cronkleton, Pulhin & Saigal, 2012; Ryan, 2005). This case study presents some contrasting evidence to much of the literature that describes volunteering and community participation as a middle-class act (Brightbill, 1960; Andrew, Harvey & Dawson, 1994; Omoto, 2004). Randwick Park is defined as a low socioeconomic and high deprivation area (Massey & Ministry of Health, 2013), yet there is significant levels of volunteering and community participation. This case study will not only fill gaps in parks focused literature but will also demonstrate the contribution of parks to their community in supporting long-term community outcomes and community development opportunities.

1.4 Thesis Structure

This thesis is comprised of six chapters. This first chapter has offered an introduction and overview. The remaining chapters are described below:

Chapter Two – ‘Place, Parks and Participation’ discusses the relevant literature and concepts relating to this research. Various critical social geography concepts will be explained and explored in relation to the research question and objectives. Concepts such as public spaces and community will provide the context for the main theories that underpin this research: place and place attachment, parks, ownership, participation and community development outcomes.

Chapter Three – ‘Parks and Randwick Park’ covers the history of parks, their functions and typical management processes. This chapter also provides an overview of Auckland’s parks and the background of the suburb of Randwick Park, including its history, demographics, and involvement with Riverton Reserve with the aim of enabling the reader to have an informed picture of the park.

Chapter Four – ‘Research Strategy’ discusses the research approach for this thesis, including the rationale for the research plan, data collection and analysis, and presentation of the findings. Within this chapter, the critical inquiry in which this research is grounded and the application of a mixed method approach is explained. Interview processes including recruitment and interview structure, and the use of thematic analysis to present key themes from the community member interviews, are discussed

Chapter Five – ‘The Randwick Park Community and its Relationship with Riverton Reserve’ explores the key themes within the interviews. There are four major themes presented in this

chapter: 1) place and place attachment; 2) evolution and transformation; 3) ownership and responsibility; and 4) citizen participation and partnership.

Chapter Six – The final chapter reflects upon the overall findings of this research. The core concepts and their interrelations are discussed, and a brief review of the research, as well as identification of future research areas, is provided.

Chapter 2 Place, Parks & Participation

The purpose of this chapter is to review and assess the merits of literature and key concepts related to this research. Undertaking this process will provide a foundation and platform upon which to consider geographical concepts in relation to the research question and objectives. It is also the chance to identify gaps in the literature and areas where this research can contribute valuable, although possibly conflicting, evidence to academic literature. This chapter will examine the differences between public and private spaces and consider how public spaces, such as third places, are likely to facilitate place attachments among local communities. A stock take of past and current research on parks will highlight gaps and illustrate the uniqueness of the Randwick Park community and this research. Lastly, aspects of community involvement, participation and community development will be explored to demonstrate the valuable social and community development functions that parks can provide to their communities. This chapter will therefore provide a framework to explain why this research has been undertaken and its significance to both academic knowledge and park management practices.

2.1 Understanding Space – Public vs Private

Understanding space and particularly public space is important for this research as the case study is set in a public space. Space has been described as how people perceive the world through their various interpretations (Thrift, 2017). Space can generally be categorised as public or private space. The public/private dichotomy perpetuates the idea of two separate spheres in space (Bondi, 1998). This segregation of space often results in the exclusion of people from spaces (Bondi, 1998). Public space is largely collectively owned space that is open to the public (Nissen, 2008); it is also space that is perceived to be inclusive of all (DeMuynck, 2017), accessible to all and provides spontaneous non-political interactions (Chapman, 2006). Private space on the other hand is largely all other space and is generally exclusive and not accessible to all. Private space, such as the home, has been described as socially divisive and a contributing factor to community segregation, community fragmentation and civic disengagement (Putnam, 2000; Kirby 2008). The contrast between these two types of space is important to acknowledge as both provide opportunities for different interactions, experiences and engagements between different types of people.

Public space comprises most urban space and is characterised by being functional, normative and symbolic (Nissen, 2008). In reality, public spaces are spaces that provide

practical use, demonstrate the standard expectations of society and are representative of how the space should be used. Generally, public spaces comprise parks, plazas, streetscapes and some widely accessible buildings such as libraries and community halls. Since the nineteenth century, public spaces have been managed by public authorities who have allowed the public to utilise these assets (Collins & Shantz, 2009; Nissen, 2008). As public spaces are open to all and perceived as inclusive on the surface, they can appear to be a positive. However, this is not always the case. DeMuynck (2017), suggests that public space is subjective and there can be cases of exclusion through rules or in circumstances of violence, crime, and perceived feelings of discomfort due to particular groups or activities occurring in the space. Several other authors also suggest that the inclusivity and accessibility of public space is not always equal or positive. Burgess, Harrison & Limb (1998) discuss that even though public space is owned by no one it can be contested space. This concept of contested space is often the result of conflicting uses or conflicting user groups, resulting in one group or activity being excluded. Massey, who is well known for theorising space and place, writes that 'social relations of space are experienced differently, and variously interpreted, by those holding different positions as part of it' (Massey, 1994:3). This quote demonstrates how people and their positions, whether political, socioeconomic, age- or gender-based, inform how each person experiences and relates to space, particularly public space which, compared to private space, is diverse and full of opportunity (DeMuynck, 2017).

Kirby (2008:76) suggests public space is a 'repository of collective memories and cultural practices' which is highly relevant for this research into community-based park management and *de facto* ownership of space. A 'repository of collective memories and cultural practices' is likely to be developed in public spaces by the local community who are often the most spatially connected to public space and can feel a sense of belonging in 'their' local public space (Aitken, 2009). On a small-scale, collective memories and cultural practices can contribute to the development of a space into a place and a sense of place attachment. This view is echoed by Massey (1994:120) who suggests that 'the social structure, political character, its local culture' are key to the formation of the identity of a place. It is within the concept of place that social attachment to space occurs. Place demonstrates how space can be transformed when a social framework is applied. The case study in this research, Riverton Reserve in Randwick Park, is an example of how a social framework can transform a public space that had perceptions of exclusivity due to the groups and activities dominating the park in the past. The following section will focus on public spaces and how space can become a place through a sense of place and place attachment, with emphasis on the role of community in these processes.

2.2 Place and Place Attachment

The concept of place will underpin this research as place and place attachment to Riverton Reserve by members of the Randwick Park community have allowed the development of the community-park based management model to succeed. The concept of place is a well-researched topic and one of a handful of the most important concepts to geographers (Adams, 2017). Cresswell (2009) describes place as a meaningful site that combines location, locale and sense of place. Place is not necessarily about where in space the place is but rather what the place means to people (Foote & Azaryahu, 2009). Massey (1993:66) talks about places as 'moments in networks of social relations and understandings' and suggests that they are spaces constructed out of interaction rather than a long-internalised history. Place is reliant on social frameworks and without the imposition of socially constructed ideas, discourses and society places would remain spaces. Often the meanings given to places are produced by people who do not have the power to assign meaning (Cresswell, 2009). It is usually the local or regular users of places who assign meanings and develop connections, rather than people in political power who build or are the decision makers. A place is heterogenous and not homogeneous, and conducive to a 'progressive sense of place', which develops gradually over time (Massey, 1993). As Massey has described, places are different, which is what gives places their identity and allows a space to become meaningful and distinct from other spaces. Another author who writes about place identity is Eyles who describes how a person can gain a sense of place through experiences in local space and the feelings that are a result of spending time in that space (1985). Collins and Kearns (2010) also describe sense of place as the relationships between people and spaces in their local areas that are familiar. Place and sense of place are not only associated with space but also time. Further observations from Massey are that place is associated with 'memory, stasis and nostalgia' and that 'it is not only the changing fortunes of an area which must be understood by locating within a wider context but also the character of the place itself' (1994:119-120). Place and a sense of place can change over time and often people who are involved with a place are the ones who can influence changes to that place.

A place is as dynamic as the community that has become attached to it. Place attachment is often an emotional bond between people and their environment (Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012; Collins & Kearns, 2013). The occurrence of similar individual experiences in a group of people or a community could result in the generation of a collective sense of place attachment. This idea links back to Kirby's description of public space as 'a repository of

collective memories and cultural practices' (2008:76). Place attachment is likely to result in various manifestations of place identity, place dependence and place affect (Schroder, 2008; Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith 2012; Collins & Kearns, 2013). It is possible for people to both consciously and unconsciously become attached to a place. Conscious attachment is active and often the person becomes involved with the place, compared to unconscious attachment which occurs through a personal connection and natural bonding (Moulay, Ujang, Maulan & Ismail, 2018). However, the strongest types of place attachments are the result of emotions and the emotional connections that people have to places. Wright (2012) suggests that emotions can not only be found between people, but also between people and places. With reference to emotions, place attachment can develop when there is a threat or perceived threat to the identity of a place (Collins & Kearns, 2013). Conversely, a place can develop character through actions in response to place attachment and the collective values, ideals and memories of its users. Community members are essential in the development of a place and its character. Manzo & Perkins (2006) assert that place attachment can promote community commitments and involvements in place. Manzo & Perkins (2006) are not the only ones who discuss the link between positive attachments to place the potential for supporting community development. Schroder (2008:178) writes about how attachment to place has been 'associated with subjective wellbeing' and 'closely linked to community development'. The idea of 'community development' and place attachment is also supported by Kearns and Gesler who assert that participation in social action in defence of a place may strengthen sense of community (1998). Place attachment and community will be among the key concepts within this research which explores community ownership and management of a place, Riverton Reserve. Place can have different meanings in relation to its purpose, function and who may be using it. Consequently, place can take on specific characteristics that often dictate how people may experience space, especially when they are attached to it.

2.3 Third Places

Place can also be classified by particular functions, interactions and characteristics which were first described by the sociologist Oldenburg (1989). Place can exist as 'first place', 'second place' and 'third place'. 'First place' is often private space with intimate interactions and likely to be the home (Oldenburg, 1989; Carroll, Witten, Kearns & Donovan, 2015; Jeffres, Bracken, Jian & Casey, 2009). 'Second place' is often structured and interactions within it are likely to be formal. Examples of second places include the workplace and the school (Jeffres *et al.*, 2009; Carroll *et al.*, 2015). Lastly there is 'third place' which is quite distinct from first and second places. Third places can be defined by being publicly used, accessible without any physical barriers and characterised by informal social interactions (Oldenburg, 1989; Carroll *et al.*, 2009; Harris, 2007). Oldenburg (1989) characterised third

places as neutral ground in which conversation is one of the main activities. This definition is similar to Slater and Jung Koo's (2010) characterisation of a third place as somewhere that people can sit, converse and feel equal. Third places have been described as the 'anchor of the community' and facilitate social connections (Oldenburg & Brissett 1982; Oldenburg 1989:420). Users of third places often consider the place as "their own" and feel they are part of the place and associated experiences that cannot be attained elsewhere (Slater & Jung Koo, 2010). Examples of 'third places' are parks, churches, libraries, local shops and community centres.

The idea that a park is a 'third place' by providing opportunities for interactions, connections, relationships and a sense of well-being (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982:269) demonstrates the value a park can have to its community. Along with the concepts of place, identity, and place-based attachment, third places are 'not a place outsiders find necessarily interesting or notable' (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982:270). Third places, much like places in general, become a place when space is used and lived in (Cresswell, 2009). The people who are closest and use a third place the most are likely to be the community surrounding the place. A park is a third place that provides a 'hub' for the community, brings people together and attracts people to it (Jones, 2002). As third places are public spaces there is an assumption that these places are accessible to all. However, there is some variance in the literature relating to class and use of third places. Reeves (2000:159) writes about parks and third places as places where people from all socioeconomic levels are able to interact, increase opportunities for social cohesion and community development, and form 'strong community identities'. Conversely, Aitken (2008), describes third places as a part of a comfortable middle-class life. There are several authors who suggest the opposite to Aitken (2008) and describe the importance of third places for poorer families and neighbourhoods, insisting that there is more value for these groups by offering alternatives to other costly recreation activities (Elsley, 2004). This assertion is significant for this research as Riverton Reserve is located in a low socioeconomic area. The community of Randwick Park have demonstrated the importance of access to free and quality opportunities in the local environment, including opportunities to be involved with local parks and experience the benefits that parks provides. Aside from low socioeconomic communities, parks hold significant value for free recreation opportunities and contribute to people's well-being by providing a space for members of the community to connect and enjoy recreation and relaxation pursuits (Maller, Townsend, St Leger, Henderson-Wilson, Pryor, Prosser & Moore, 2009). Oldenburg mentions that the attraction to third places is often set by the mood of people who occupy the space (1999). The mood of a space is critical for a park. For example, an underutilised and unmaintained park may become a safety issue (Moulay *et al.*, 2018; Troy & Grove, 2008) compared to a

park that has maintained vegetation, which can be a territorial marker that the community is active and involved in their park (Troy & Grove, 2008). This concept of mood and perception impacting how third places are engaged with is supported by Appleton (1996) who wrote that behaviour can be a result of a person's perception of the environment. Similarly, Wong and Domroes (2005) describe user perception as contributing to the overall image of the place. Most third place literature talks about the important role these places play within communities. However, there are not many examples demonstrating the impact a community can have on shaping their third place or specifically a park. Parks are integral to urban living and supporting positive community outcomes, which will be highlighted in the next section.

2.4 Parks

Parks have been recognised as valuable assets in urban areas for a wide range of benefits. There is rich literature defining the environmental benefits, recreational benefits, and well-being and mental health benefits of parks (Sherer, 2003; Swanwick, Dunnett & Wolley, 2003; Birge-Liberman, 2010; Chiesura, 2004). There are also many studies focusing on physical activity in parks and health and wellbeing outcomes (eg., Bedimo-Rung, Mowen & Cohen, 2005; Quigg, Gray, Reeder, Holt & Waters, 2010). This increasing focus on green space as important to people's health (Maas *et al.*, 2009) and strategies to mitigate the effects of urbanisation (De Ridder *et al.*, 2004) is important. However, academic research on these topics is not often presented in terms of how green spaces such as parks can contribute to overall community well-being and development. There is some research which considers parks and community engagement, such as Slater, Pugach, Lin & Bontu (2016) who assessed increased park use as a result of playground improvements and park-based activities. Additionally, Middle, Dzdic, Buckley & Bennett (2014) write about community gardens and the empowerment of locals through 'bottom up' planning approaches. Both of these examples of parks and community engagement are focused on the usage of the space by the community, rather than what the park means to the community. Further studies which focus on park use are linked to attributes of the park, such as the facilities and amenities it provides (McCormack, Rock, Toohey & Hignell, 2010; Gobster, 2002), as well as safety and vandalism or crime (McCormack *et al.*, 2010; Wong & Domroes, 2005; Groff & McCord, 2012). There is limited literature focused on what a park means to the community and examples of community park 'ownership' in the literature, especially in the New Zealand context. Therefore, this research conducted at Riverton Reserve aims to understand community park 'ownership' and will be a valuable contribution to the academic literature. Community ownership of a park is generally preceded by the community engaging with the park and becoming involved in activities to demonstrate commitment and place attachment.

2.5 Involvement in Parks

The majority of community involvement in parks occurs through participating in voluntary activities such as volunteering in sports activities at parks or volunteering in conservation activities. Both sports and conservation are focused on achieving positive economic and ecological outcomes for the park (Cronkleton, Pulhin & Saigal, 2012; Dresner, Handelman, Braun & Rollwagen-Bollens, 2015; Ryan, 2005; Ryan, Kaplan & Grese, 2001). Further supporting this assumption of volunteering in parks for ecological outcomes is research by Barnes and Sharpe (2009) on traditional volunteering in parks and how volunteers are seeking environmental enhancement. Ajzen & Driver (1991) suggest that volunteering in parks often occurs as people wish to improve the conditions of the park to respect the environment. Research conducted by Caissie and Halpenny (2003) on why people volunteer in conservation revealed that one reason for volunteering was place-based and motivated by seeing nature and animals. Glover, Parry and Shinew (2005) also discuss 'place' in relation to volunteering through their example of volunteering in community gardens on parks where volunteer support is more localised. Volunteering can also lead to further involvement in the community as members become committed and willing to undertake sacrifices for the overall benefit of the community (Kelly, 1997). Understanding why people undertake volunteering in parks reflects studies by Caissie & Halpenny (2003), as well Barnes & Sharp (2009), that demonstrate motivation for volunteering as linked to values, such as contributing to the community and being altruistic, alongside expectations of future reward for efforts and moral causes.

This section has outlined the general volunteering participation activities in parks such as sports and conservation. It has, however, only demonstrated limited evidence of community development outcomes as a motive for community involvement and volunteering. The community of Randwick Park are unique in that their motivation for becoming involved and volunteering in their park, which subsequently led to *de facto* ownership, has been solely community development driven. Examples from Randwick Park are making the park safer, getting locals employed, and engaging with the community to develop a sense of community and cohesion

Another important part of participation and involvement in parks is the question of 'who'? Who are the people most likely to volunteer and contribute to their parks? Much of the literature frames volunteering as being a middle-class act. Brightbill (1960:17) observed that the people who have money and time available are able to give direction to community and society. Specifically, in the case of volunteering in parks in Northern America, it has been

noted by several authors that voluntary acts are often from particularly 'affluent' individuals (Andrew, Harvey & Dawson, 1994; Markham, 1991). Further perpetuating the idea of volunteering relating to affluence and class, Omoto (2014) discusses the relationship between voluntary membership and class. Omoto (2014) found that poorer neighbourhoods are less likely to have voluntary associations. By linking voluntary associations to volunteerism, Omoto found that neighbourhoods with several voluntary associations had high rates of volunteering and 'collective volunteering' (2014). The significance of class or socioeconomic status and volunteering or community involvement is important because the Randwick Park community are in a high deprivation area yet they still take part in volunteering and are highly involved in their local park, Riverton Reserve. This case study of the Randwick Park community and their park addresses a gap in the literature and offers a unique study of participation and volunteerism in a less affluent neighbourhood.

2.6 Ownership and Parks

As mentioned at the end of the previous section, there is limited literature focused on community park management or community park 'ownership' in general and even less evidence of community involvement and volunteering in less affluent areas. Reflecting on the third places literature, it is clear that users of third places such as parks often feel as though these places are 'their own' and feel part of the place and experience (Slater & Jung Koo, 2010). The reasoning behind these feelings of ownership, as explained by Slater & Jung Koo (2010), is that people who are outsiders are not likely to attain the same experience as those who are familiar with the place. The relationship between feelings of ownership and place highlights a 'shared sense' of place (Collins & Kearns, 2013). In other words, a community is likely to share similar feelings towards a place, as well as similar experiences, that promote feelings of ownership. Ownership at a community level has been described as involving 'community assets' that are managed and owned by a place-based community (Moore & McKee, 2014). Part of the challenge of community ownership is that it does not fit perfectly into government frameworks and it cannot be applied universally. Community ownership is specific to each community; it is diverse and there is no guiding model for a community to follow (Moore & McKee, 2014). Rose (1996) further describes the challenge of community ownership and empowerment as 'new territory' for government and a 'devolution of responsibilities'. Devolution of responsibilities may seem to involve a somewhat unknown process and be perceived as high risk to government and managing authorities. However, there are some positive benefits to communities when they are entrusted with the ownership of their community assets.

There have been numerous pieces of literature which describe ownership of local places in supporting community development, resilience and long-term social benefits (Varghese, Krogman, Beckley and Nadeau, 2006; Shuman, 1998). Exploring the concept of community resilience and its relationship to community ownership, Berkes and Folke (1998) describe resilience as the community's capacity to rebuild, renew and restructure themselves when affected by change. Therefore, community resilience is likely to be strongest when the community are in control of their assets and resources. Community resilience will promote social benefits for the community and allow appropriate behaviour and activities to be maintained when threatened (Adger, 2000). Examining Chicago parks, Slater *et al.* (2016) find that feelings of community ownership as a result of involvement in a park contribute to community resilience and increased park use. Parks, as easily accessible public spaces, often have little intrinsic guardianship (Groff & McCord, 2012). With a lack of guardianship, parks are potentially vulnerable to undesired activities such as crime. This vulnerability also relates to underutilised or unmaintained parks that become perceived as safety concerns (Moulay, Maulan & Ismail, 2018; Troy & Grove, 2008). By allowing a community to take ownership of a park, community members can maintain the park's vegetation and create a territorial marker of ownership that signals community involvement in their park (Troy & Grove, 2008). An example of promoting positive activity in space by supporting community involvement and ownership of parks is offered by Groff and McCord (2012) who state that parks with sports facilities, such as fields and courts, are likely to have less crime due to the activation of the space through sporting activities. These authors also illustrate how coaches or people who regularly use the park are likely to intervene or discourage inappropriate activities. The case study of Riverton Reserve in Randwick Park will further demonstrate the importance of community ownership in efforts to decrease crime and make parks safer.

2.7 Participation

Community ownership or, in the case of Riverton Reserve '*de facto*' ownership, is often a result of prior involvement and participation, which demonstrates a commitment to managing the community resource. Local community participation has been described as a subset of public participation and often held with a moral perspective that by participating a person is 'doing the right thing' (Buono, Pediti & Carsjens, 2012). There are two levels of participation. Firstly, there is physical participation in the space, for example, volunteering to collect rubbish or volunteering to organise a community activity. Often physical participation is related to place attachment and aspirations to improve the place (Ajzen & Driver, 1991). The second type of participation is political participation, which involves governance and

decision-making participation. Public political participation, sometimes referred to as 'citizen participation', can take various forms and was first theorised by Arnstein (1969). Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969) demonstrates the various levels of citizen participation. Although this ladder has been reviewed many times over the years, I nonetheless use this framework as a prompt to understand a community perspective to citizen participation.

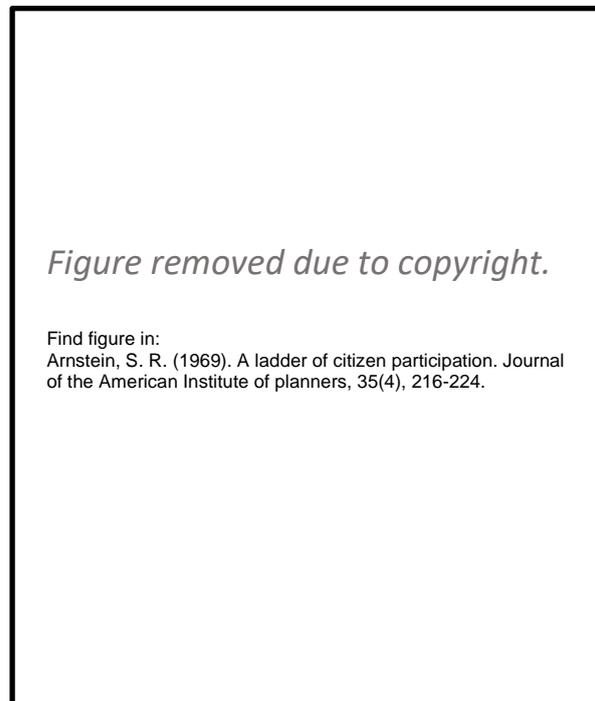


Figure 1. Arnsteins Ladder of Citizen Participation.

The focus will be on the upper rungs of the ladder, specifically in the citizen power area. Partnership is one of the most common forms of citizen participation by communities. Partnership involves a spectrum of engagement and decision-making power, and is the most ambiguous component of the framework. Partnerships between local governments and community are common and are seen to have high significance as they include large numbers of volunteers (Jones, 2002a), which leads to the perception of a 'bottom-up approach' to empowering community (Middle, Dzdic, Buckley & Bennett, 2014). Partnerships also have the capacity to engage with the local community members (Baker, Wilkerson & Brennan, 2012). Delegated power could also be a form of partnerships through the decentralisation or transfer of powers and roles (Parag, Hamilton, White & Hogan, 2013) to the community. However, it is likely there will still remain some control by the governing authority otherwise the process would be complete citizen control. Participation is political

and there can be underlying tensions as a result of who is involved, how they are involved and related power dynamics (White, 1996). Parag *et al.*, (2013) recognise that an imbalance in power is not always negative but rather is the result of a traditional power roles that are perpetuated by authority and regulation. Partnering, supporting, working or collaborating with community can promote participation in the community (Fleeger & Becker, 2008). Community are the 'experts' in their community and local issues, and therefore their participation and involvement is vital for local authorities. 'Expert' discourse has marginalised community knowledge for many years. Only recently has involving communities through partnerships and collaborations been regarded as a way to counter the 'expert' discourse (Winz, Brierley & Trowsdale, 2011). Henri Lefebvre (1991) theorised that residents should be involved and 'co-create the city by living in it'. He further explained that 'co-creation' allows the participation of community in urban space and allows community members to appropriate these spaces. Lefebvre's (1991) notion of 'co-creation' is reflected in how Riverton Reserve and the community of Randwick Park have developed their community-based park management model.

Participation is often considered to result in community empowerment. Community empowerment is often an agenda of the local authority and requires collective action with the community (White, 1996; Fleeger & Becker, 2008) to instil the capacity and opportunities for community action and development. The concept of empowerment has become part of a government agenda (White, 1996). White (1996) suggests that empowerment cannot be achieved through a top-down process. Empowerment comes from the community and is a source of community identity; this view reinforces the importance of community leading or, at the very least, being part of the partnership to build community empowerment from the 'grass roots' up. Community identity is key to community empowerment. Research by Reeves (2000) found that parks that allow interactions between a range of people from a range of backgrounds are able to promote social cohesion and form strong community identities. Community empowerment and social cohesion are significant aspects of long-term community development as a result of participation in local parks. The final section of this chapter will explore this concept.

2.8 Community development outcomes

As discussed above, place, place attachment, ownership, resilience, sense of community, citizen participation, empowerment and social cohesion are all relevant to community development outcomes. Community development and community capacity is often described as developing social capital. Social capital is defined as the value of social

networks and the predispositions of social norms and reciprocal relationships (Degraaf & Jordan, 2003). For Bourdieu (1986) social capital involves the relationships of mutual acquaintances and their recognition of each other, which is similar to the manner in which group membership provides individuals with the backing of collectively owned capital. Coleman (1988) refers to social capital as relationships within social structures that lead people to follow specific norms, expectations and responsibilities. When social capital is discussed in the context of community it comprises the relationships between neighbours and the collective capacity, trust and support (Flint, 2009). Putnam (1993) recognises that the relationships and trust underpinning social capital emerge through participation in the community. The key to understanding social capital is understanding the relationships and the norms of the group who 'own' or participate in the activities that build and reinforce social capital between the collective. With respect to the case study of this thesis, it can be speculated that the community of Randwick Park demonstrate characteristics of community social capital. Evidence in support of this contention will be presented and analysed in Chapter Five.

Although he does not directly reference social capital, Frederick Olmsted (who during the late 1800's was the father of American landscape architecture) understood the concept and referred to parks as places 'where people come together, with a common purpose' (Eisenman, 2013). Olmsted understood the significant role parks could play in encouraging social interaction ultimately resulting in social and community benefits. There has been other research around parks and the social capital they can develop. Peters, Elands and Buijs (2010) write about a Dutch government which researched whether parks could facilitate social cohesion in neighbourhoods. The results revealed that to achieve social cohesion social interaction and place attachment were needed. Further to these results, Peters *et al.* (2010) also contend that social capital relies on the relationship between people and place. This inclusion of place in building social cohesion, and in turn social capital, is significant to the case study of Riverton Reserve. This is because the starting point for this investigation is that the community of Randwick Park has a strong sense of attachment to the park that has allowed them to develop a strong sense of social cohesion and build their community's social capital.

It is worth noting that social cohesion and social capital potentially provide significant benefits to a community. Flint (2009) recognises that when communities have social cohesion they are able to utilise mechanisms, either through formal or informal relationships, to regulate the behaviour of their community in public spaces. It is also the interaction of people in public spaces such as parks that promotes social cohesion and builds community

identities (Reeves, 2000:159). In a community where there is strong social cohesion, children are more likely to access the outdoors and safe recreation spaces (Davidson & Lawson, 2006). There are also health benefits associated with community cohesion, such as increased life expectancy, improved cardiovascular health and mental health benefits (PHAC, 2008). Increased life expectancy is likely a result of both improved physical and mental health. Community cohesion is likely to prompt community members to be more active in the community, access the outdoors and participate in green spaces and recreation activities that increase their physical activity. Access to green space is associated with lower rates of stress and depression (Public Health Advisory Committee, 2010). Parks are an asset to their communities and should be recognised for the wide range of functions and benefits they provide to their local community.

2.9 Summary of Concepts

Space, and particularly public spaces, provide specific opportunities and services to communities. When a public space becomes a meaningful place through the attachment of purpose and emotion, this indicates that a group of people have developed affective ties and are associated closely with the space. Many places have different meanings and associations for different people, especially when places are used by a wide range of people with little in common. Local places, however, with a smaller group of users are more likely to have a shared sense of place. Places change over time depending on human engagement and meaning-making, hence, place and place attachments are fluid and dynamic.

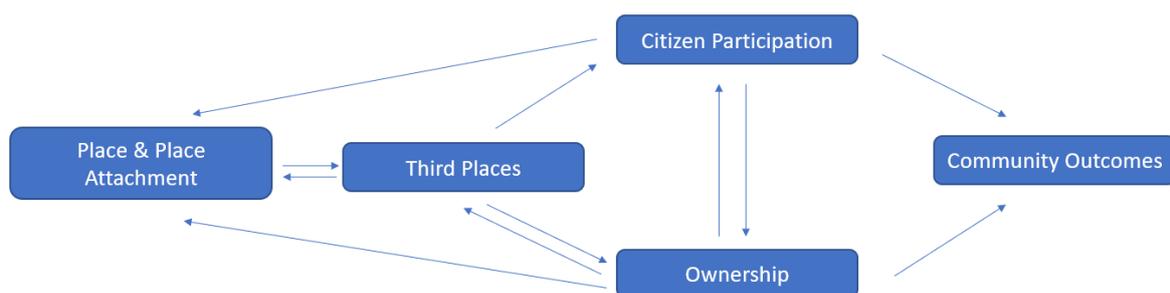


Figure 2. Diagram of key theoretical concepts for this research.

Third places are often public spaces. Parks can be third places and are sometimes understood as the 'hub of the community', or a place that brings people together allowing the community to participate and engage with the space. Third places such as parks can develop a strong sense of place attachment to the point that communities perceive that they

own them. As depicted in Figure 2, attachment to a third place such as a park could encourage a person to participate more in their park. Conversely, if a person is participating in their park, they may become more attached to it and develop a stronger connection. Citizen participation is likely to encourage formal ownership of place, although a sense of ownership (not necessarily formal ownership) may also influence citizen participation. Formal ownership of a place such as a park will strengthen place attachment through ongoing commitment to caring for and being responsible for the place. As the above figure illustrates, community outcomes can be expected when there is formal community ownership of a place and active and ongoing community participation, but there is no direct link to place attachment and community outcomes, nor is there a direct link to third places and community outcomes. This is not to say that place attachment and the concept of third places are not important or relevant to community outcomes. Rather, they are essential expressions of citizen participation, ownership, and place attachment relationships which may lead to positive community outcomes. Parks take the form of and facilitate these processes and, if they converge in time and place, positive outcomes for the community will potentially result.

Chapter 3 Parks and Randwick Park

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of parks, including the history of parks, their functions and an understanding of how parks are typically managed. As this research uses a case study of an Auckland park, the relational context of the city's other 4000+ parks will be given to highlight the uniqueness of Riverton Reserve. The history of the Randwick Park suburb, its community demographics, experiences and specific description of Riverton Reserve will be provided to allow the reader to be well informed of the case study. As place is the key concept underpinning this research, it is vital to understand the park as a place and the history which has influenced the various iterations of Riverton Reserve. As well as contextualising the case study, this chapter will demonstrate how theoretical concepts outlined in the previous chapter are applied in the research.

3.1 History of Parks

The history of urban parks stems from the 19th century urban parks movement in the United States. This movement was a response to industrialisation and the ills it was causing to the urban population (Eisenman, 2013). Frederick Olmsted, a landscape architect and urban planner was a key figure in the parks movement and was the designer of well-known parks such as Central Park in New York and the Boston Park System (Scheper, 1989). Olmsted did not merely design parks for the purpose of aesthetics, rather his intentions were for the overall improvement to a city for its citizens. Olmsted explained his motivation for designing parks as:

“...not simply to give the people of the city an opportunity for getting fresh air and exercise . . . a place for amusement or for the gratification of curiosity . . . the main object and justification is simply to produce a certain influence in the minds of people and through this to make life in the city healthier and happier”(Olmsted, *Forty Years*, 2:356 cited in Scheper, 1989:371).

Olmsted believed that parks could improve the health of city by being the “lungs of the city” (Eisenman, 2013), reducing pollution and improving the mental health of its citizens (Kowsky, 1987) while also meeting societal needs that were lacking from institutions such as churches and museums (Scheper, 1989). The ultimate goal was for parks to be a place where people ‘with a common purpose’ and from all parts of society could come together (Eisenman, 2013; Kowsky, 1987).

By the 20th century, social reforms which sought the improvement of health and wellbeing were thought to have evolved from the 19th century parks movement (Eisenmann, 2013). In the 21st century, parks were understood to be an essential component to city life, now with a focus on the benefits of green infrastructure often constructed or naturally occurring in urban parks (Eisenman, 2013).

Today there is renewed focus on green space and the relationship between people's everyday environments and health (Maas, Spreeuwenberg, Van Winsum-Westra, Verheij, Vries & Groenewegen, 2009). Current urbanisation trends present a 'threat' to people's health and the environment much like the rise of industry in the 18th and 19th centuries. By 2050, it is expected that over 60% of the world's population will live in cities (Mexia, Vieira, Principe, Anjos, Silva, Lopes & Pinho, 2018). Urban cities around the world are likely to become highly densified and gentrified reducing people's access to nature and green spaces. Parks and the enhancement of green spaces have once again been seen to have the potential to mitigate the negative impacts of urbanisation through the various environmental, physical, psychological and social benefits they can provide (De Ridder, Adamec, Banuelos, Bruse, Burger, Damsgaard & Thierry, 2004).

3.2 Park Functions

The concept of a 'park', like that of 'nature' or 'social nature', is a social construct since nature does not exist, nor can it be (re)produced, without the social relations and ideas placed on it by people (Fitzsimmons, 2017). Dominant social relations and ideals about 'nature' and what it can do for humans have produced parks as spaces that are bounded, planned, and designed to ultimately serve and benefit people. There are four main functions and benefits associated with parks that will be briefly explored in the following sections: biodiversity, ecosystem services, health and community.

3.2.1 Biodiversity

Defining biodiversity can sometimes be controversial. Often in human-dominated systems, such as urban areas, there can be high numbers of exotic species (Dearborn & Kark, 2010). With 85 per cent of New Zealand's population living in urban areas, biodiversity in their backyards or in parks and open spaces will be their main interactions with nature (Freeman & Buck, 2003). Parks play a significant role in protecting biodiversity in urban areas and allowing for its users to experience nature in a somewhat natural setting. In the Auckland region alone, it is estimated that there are 20,000 species of plants and animals, which includes 130 birds, 17 frogs and reptiles (Meurk & Hall, 2000). Most of these species are likely to be found in local parks and regional parks, as these are the least modified and well

protected areas of natural habitat. Biodiversity does not just provide a range of interesting species; it also supports the health of urban environments. According to the Department of Conservation (2000:1), '[s]ustaining New Zealand's biodiversity will benefit the whole community, through clean air and water and biological productivity that come from healthy ecosystems'. Parks host a range of ecosystems that produce the essential services for life in an urban and highly modified environment.

3.2.2 Ecosystem services

Ecosystem services are vital for the health of all organisms around the globe. Urban sprawl is destroying natural ecosystems which in turn causes a decline in the health of the surrounding environment (Schwendenmann & Mitchell, 2014; Binning, Cork, Parry & Shelton, 2001). The United Nations has declared that ecosystem services have essential benefits for humans through controlling services that regulate environments, managing cultural services that provide for social uses and providing material services, such as resources, for manufacturing products (2005). Without these services, infrastructure would have to be built to recreate the natural ecosystem processes. Parks are the keepers of many of the ecosystem services provided for city life. Parks host a range of services such as pollination of flowers for seed and fruit production (Binning *et al.*, 2001), stormwater retention by reducing the flow-off effects of impervious surfaces and trapping pollutants from entering waterways, removal of pollutants from the air (Harnik & Keenan, 2014), terrestrial carbon storage (Kulshreshtha, Lac, Johnston & Kinar, 2000; Schwendenmann & Mitchell, 2014) and many recreational opportunities.

Parks can contribute significantly to a city's health through the ecosystem services they provide. For example, research in San Francisco estimated trees covered 31.5 per cent of parks in the city and provided the service of removing particulate matter from the air, which without the trees would have cost the city \$2 million USD a year in health and removal costs (Harnik & Keenan, 2014). Terrestrial carbon storage is another essential service that parks provide. Plants and vegetation provide carbon sequestration, which is the process of removing carbon dioxide from air by photosynthetic processes to store carbon in the plant biomass and soil (Kulshreshtha *et al.*, 2000; Schwendenmann & Mitchell, 2014). With increased greenhouse gas emissions and the need to remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, parks are increasingly being recognised for their carbon sequestration capabilities and their potential to act as large carbon sinks (Takashashi, Amano, Kumchimura & Kobayashi, 2008).

3.2.3 Health

Parks have long been associated with providing opportunities for recreation and exercise (Scheper, 1989). However, these opportunities are now being linked to improved citizen health. Current lifestyles are becoming increasingly sedentary and opportunities for physical activity are essential to a person's health and wellbeing (Bedimo-Rung, Mowen & Cowen, 2005). Parks provide places to walk, run, play sports and some provide exercise equipment that is free to access and open to all. It has been shown that regular physical activity can reduce the chances of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and feelings of depression (Bedimo-Rung, *et al.*, 2005). There is growing research into the mental and psychological benefits of both physical activity and parks. Several studies suggest spending time in green environments is related to improved self-perceived health (Maas, Verheij, Groenewegen, de Vries & Spreeuwenberg, 2006; de Vries, Verheij, Groenewegen & Spreeuwenberg, 2003; Mitchell & Popham, 2003). These studies demonstrate that even passive interaction with green spaces (e.g., viewing green space) reduces stress, improves mood and increases wellbeing (Orsega-Smith, Mowen, Payen & Godbey, 2004; Maas *et al.*, 2009; Chiesura, 2004). By providing a wide range of health and wellbeing benefits, parks and green spaces play a vital role in creating liveable cities and healthy communities.

3.2.4 Community

Local communities, regardless of geographic distance, are the people most likely to use their nearest park. Along with the many benefits to the environment and to individuals, parks provide some essential benefits to society and communities. As well as the health benefits outlined above, parks also provide many social benefits to people and communities. Within a community, parks can often provide opportunities for social cohesion and community development (Peters, Elands & Buijs, 2010). As a communal public space, parks can facilitate social interactions and build social cohesion within the community (Peters, Elands & Buijs, 2010). Jones (2002:21) suggests parks should be the 'hub of the community' and play a role in 'bringing people together'. There are also suggestions that social cohesion can affect life expectancy. It is thought that individuals living in communities with high social cohesion have better cardiovascular and mental health (PHAC, 2008). These physical and mental health benefits are a likely to stem from individuals physically participating in their communities and engaging in regular physical exercise as a result (Public Health Advisory Committee, 2010). In terms of mental health, individuals are likely to experience reduced feelings of loneliness and depression as they are connected to other community members and support. Parks can be meeting places to develop social networks, relationships and engage in activities (Bedimo-Rung *et al.*, 2005). The development of social networks and relationships through community space such as parks are important for not only social

cohesion, but also building community capacity, resilience and overall long-term community development. Parks have a facilitation role in that they enable opportunities for interaction and participation.

3.3 Auckland Parks

The Auckland urban area is 25 per cent green space, most of which is comprised of parks and reserve land (Schwendenmann & Mitchell, 2014). Across the entire Auckland region there are over 4000 parks (Council, 2013) providing for a wide range of opportunities including recreation, conservation of nature, ecosystem services, preservation of heritage, places of cultural and spiritual significance to mana whenua and an aesthetic landscape within the urban sprawl.

Auckland's network of parks can be generally categorised as sports parks, regional parks and local parks. Each park typology provides difference experiences to its users, whilst at its highest level could be defined as public green space. Green space is the fundamental element of a park whether it be grass, paddocks, sports field, native bush, gardens or exotic trees.

The sports parks in Auckland make up a small portion of public green space and include 224 parks that provide for formal or informal sporting opportunities (Council, 2018). Sports parks generally have a mixture of sports infrastructure and some have a sports club based at the park.

The 26 regional parks in Auckland are small in number but large in size (Council, 2013). The land covered by regional parks in Auckland is over 40,000ha (Council, 2013). Regional parks are generally on the outskirts of urban areas and encompass large areas of bush, farmland and beach. The most common and varying parks across Auckland are local parks. Local parks range from small green space areas with a playground in the suburbs, to large patches of bush, wetlands, esplanade reserve along beaches or estuaries, and parks with a combination of play facilities, bush, pathways and sports facilities.

This research will focus on one park typology – local parks. In particular, the research is interested in understanding how a local park is managed by the community and the benefits this provides to the park and to the local community. A case study approach will be used looking at one park, Riverton Reserve, situated in the community of Randwick Park in Manurewa, South Auckland.

3.4 Park Management

The management of local parks is typically undertaken in a top-down manner. Across New Zealand the local governing authority are responsible for local parks and their management, as explained under the Local Government Act, 2002. Section 11A of the act states that:

“in performing its role, a local authority must have particular regards and contribution that the following core services make to its communities” (with relevance to) “(e) libraries, museums, reserves and other recreational facilities and community amenities”.

Local governments have governance over parks and reserves in their jurisdiction. In practice this is observed in the form of contractors maintaining their parks by mowing the grass, emptying rubbish bins, weeding and operating community facilities. There are, however, often cases of volunteer groups taking on tasks as a way of making a change that will be viewed as advantageous or an improvement in the condition of society (Driver, Brown & Peterson, 1991). With the above definition in mind, most volunteering is undertaken to achieve conservation or ecological improvements. Volunteering for conservation or ecological restoration causes has become a popular activity over the last few decades (Wearing, 2001) and can be attributed to environmentalism, pressure on natural environments, growing support for citizens to be involved in scientific research (citizen science) and lack of significant funding (Halpenny & Cassie, 2003). Conservation or ecological restoration volunteering can be perceived to be very rewarding and the tasks generally enjoyable. Many people find it morally important or part of their civic duty to plant a few trees in their local park or to pull a few weeds or trap a few possums in an effort to improve or enhance the parks biodiversity and the environment. According to Galbraith, Bollard-Breen & Towns (2016) there have been over 3500 ecological restoration projects undertaken by more than 4000 community groups over the last 20 years.

Compared to conservation or ecological volunteering, there are significantly less volunteers and less records of volunteering for the more mundane tasks involved in maintaining and managing a park, such as lawn mowing, emptying rubbish bins or cleaning the facilities. There may be individuals who are model citizens and collect litter when they are on their morning walk, or who notify the council when there has been vandalism at the park which supports the work completed by council contractors. However, it is uncommon for an individual, let alone a community, to go beyond the ‘normal’ volunteer activities and take over full management and maintenance to become the kaitiaki (guardians) of their local green space. A community-based park management model is unique and demonstrates a

power shift from the traditional power holder, the local authority to the community. Participation in local governance has been highlighted by The World Health Organisation's (WHO) Commission on Social Determinants of Health that '[l]ocal government and civil society, backed by national government [should] establish local participatory governance mechanisms that enable communities and local governments to partner in building healthier and safer cities' (WHO, 2008). By allowing the involvement and participation of a community in the governance of local issues, especially issues that affect them daily, a community can become empowered, shape political decisions (Rock, Degeling, Graham, Toohey, Rault & McCormack, 2015) and achieve better outcomes for the park and its users.

This thesis examines a case study which exemplifies a community that has achieved great outcomes for their community and their park through partnering with local government and taking over the management of their local park. The case study used in this research relates to the community of Randwick Park who have taken *de facto* 'ownership' of Riverton Reserve, whereby the community are responsible for all aspects of park maintenance, operations and management decisions, but the land remains vested with Council as a reserve under the Reserves Act 1977. By taking a proactive role in managing the park the community have transformed the park into a place of safety and inclusivity for the community. This concept of community 'ownership' of a park is unique for park management within Auckland and New Zealand.

3.5 Randwick Park

Randwick Park is a small community approximately 26km from the Auckland CBD and is a locality within the Manurewa Local Board in the South Auckland region. As a small suburb on the fringe of Manurewa, Randwick Park covers 181 hectares and includes both the Randwick Park and Hyperion census area units (CAUs) as depicted in Figure 3 below.

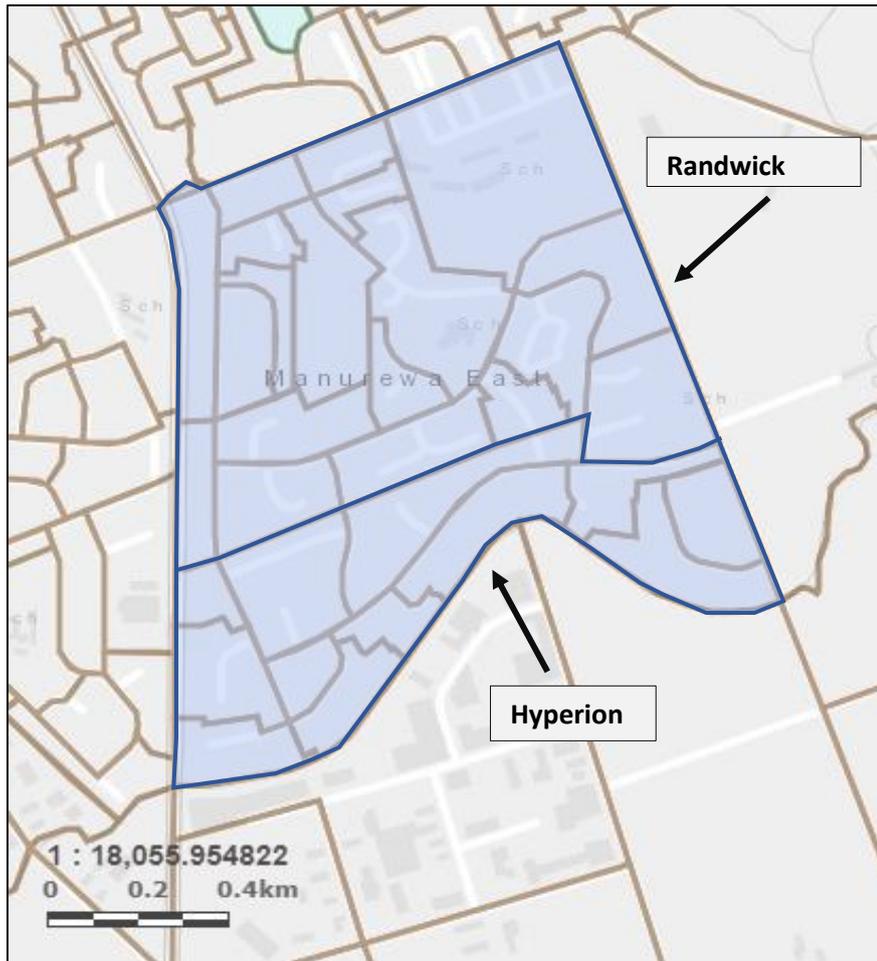


Figure 3. Map of Randwick Park and Hyperion Census Area Units which comprise the Randwick Park suburb.

3.5.1 Brief history of Randwick Park

Randwick Park has not always been an exemplar community and has faced more challenges than the average New Zealand community would. Prior to the 1970's the area that is now known as Randwick Park was farmland and became disconnected from the majority of Manurewa when the southern motorway was constructed in 1963 (Ringer, 2009). Not far from the land that would soon become Randwick Park was the Takanini horse racing grounds and this is where the name 'Randwick Park', as well as several other street names within the area (Charisma, Foxlaw, Secretariat and Shifnal), have been inherited from (Ringer, 2009). By 1975, the Manukau City Council (the governing body at the time) had plans to develop the farmland at Randwick Park into a residential subdivision with several cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets (Ringer, 2009). This new subdivision of Randwick Park

lacked even simple facilities such as shops for many years and perpetuated the isolation from the main area of Manurewa. In the late 80's a housing corporation began to buy up property which increased the proportion of rental properties and state housing in the area leading many of the original residents to leave Randwick Park (Ringer, 2009). The changing community demographics resulting from less home ownership and higher rates of renting and state housing could be perceived as a contributing factor to the current socio-economic status of the Randwick Park area. Although Manurewa began to expand and other subdivisions were developed near Randwick Park, the community remained isolated with minimal facilities and a lack of opportunities to develop a sense of community life.

3.5.2 Demographics of Randwick Park

According to the New Zealand Index of Deprivation (NZDep Index, 2013) Randwick Park has a deprivation index of 9-10, with 10 being the most deprived (Massey & Ministry of Health, 2013) when measuring at a census area unit (CAU) level. When the index is used at a meshblock level, several meshblocks make up a CAU. There are a few sections of Randwick Park more recently developed which have a lower deprivation index, however, the majority of the Randwick Park area is classified as highly deprived (see the map 3. below).

Figure removed due to copyright.

Find figure on page 7 of document below:

Wildish, B., Cain, T., Stones-Havas, T., & Osborne, B. (2015). Hopes and Dreams – Randwick Park: Community Survey Analysis 2015 (online publication).

<https://www.randwickpark.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Hopes-and-Dreams-Survey-Results.pdf>

Figure 4. Map of New Zealand Deprivation Index 2013 applied to the Randwick Park area at a mesh block level. Sourced from Hopes and Dreams 2015 document pg 7.

Figure removed due to copyright.

Find figure on page 9 of document below:
Atkinson J, Salmond C, Crampton P. (2014). NZDep2013 Index of Deprivation. Wellington:
Department of Public Health, University of Otago, Wellington.
Available online: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/wellinEgqton/research/hirp/otago020194.html>

**equivalisation is the method used to control/standardise household composition variations.*

*Table 1. Deprivation index variables for the New Zealand
Deprivation Index 2013. Table content sourced from Atkinson,
Salmond & Crampton, 2014.*

Deprivation levels are measured by assessing a person or household's access to a range of set variables that are used to describe deprivation. Table 1 above outlines the variables that have been measured to provide a deprivation index score. For the area of Randwick Park to score a 9 or 10 deprivation score, most if not all the variables stated in the above table would be met. As the deprivation variables cover a range of attributes, it is clear that deprivation is more than just low income and unemployment, although both of those are in the top four deprivation variables. Deprivation relates to socioeconomic position or, in other words, the conditions in which people experience daily life (Salmond, King, Crampton & Waldegrave, 2005). There are multiple factors that affect a person or communities' socioeconomic position, such as resource ownership, power differences, attitudes and other factors which lead to wellbeing (Salmond *et al.*, 2005). Over generations of inequalities in education, income and employment perpetuate poor wellbeing and socioeconomic problems (Johnson, 2004).

Further supporting the deprivation index of 9-10 score for Randwick Park, the median personal income for Randwick Park is just \$23,700 annually. The Manurewa Local Board area has a median personal income that is slightly higher at \$24,700 annually, but both are

significantly lower than the median personal income for the Auckland region, \$29,600 per year (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). The 2013 census data recorded that the population of Randwick Park at the time was 5769 (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). The median age for the area was 27 years of age which is lower than the average for Auckland, 35.1 years of age (Statistics New Zealand, 2019). When the age composition for Randwick Park is broken down there is a high proportion of young people, with over 40% of the population under the age of 20. The ethnic composition of Randwick Park is diverse and comprised of European, Maori, Pacific Islander, Asian and a few others. Maori and Pacific people make up over half of the population followed by Asian and European. For more information regarding the demographics of Randwick Park see figures 1-3 below.

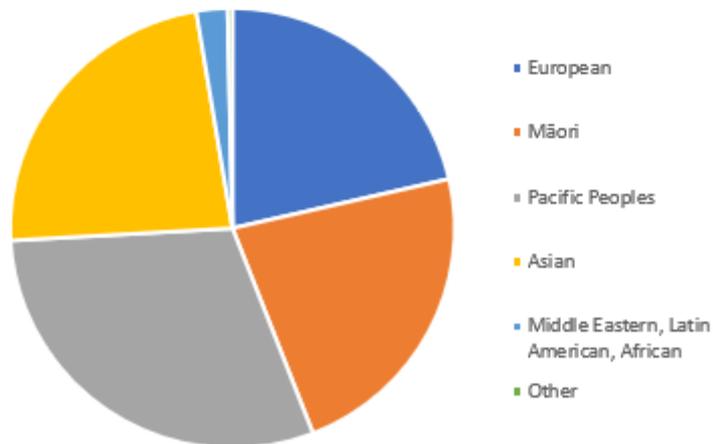
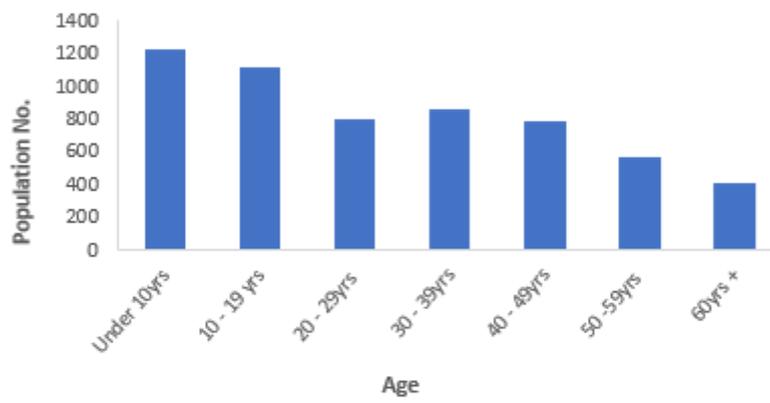
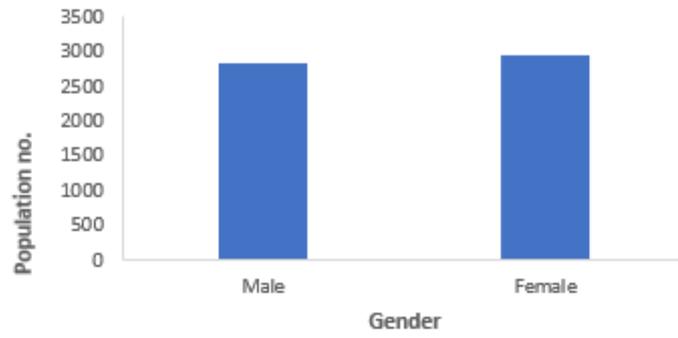


Figure 5. Demographic breakdown of gender, age, ethnicity of Randwick Park from census 2013 data.

3.5.3 Randwick Park Facilities

Table 2. Break down of facilities within walking distance for the Randwick Park community as at 2019.

| Break down of facilities within walking distance |
|---|
| 1 high school |
| 1 primary school |
| 1 kura (Maori immersion school) |
| 1 community house |
| 1 community facility (Manu tukutuku) |
| 2 early childhood centres |
| 1 skate park |
| 1 liquor store |
| 1 dairy |
| 1 takeaway store |
| 4 playgrounds |
| 6 parks |
| 4 places of worship (all for different religions/beliefs) |

Considerable growth and development have occurred since the establishment of the Randwick Park subdivision, however, to this day it remains an isolated community. There is minimal access to everyday facilities such as groceries. There is one dairy that caters for a population of over 5,000 people and one fast food store. No other food stores are within walking distance for this community. There is also only one primary school within walking distance of the Randwick Park community. The number of parks in the area (6) is an adequate amount for the size of Randwick Park and demonstrates there is no socioeconomic injustice regarding access to greenspace. This contradicts theories that low socioeconomic areas often have poor availability of green space when compared to higher socioeconomic areas (Bedimo-Rung *et al.*, 2005). Parks in Randwick Park are an important feature. There are six parks dotted around the subdivision of varying size and function. Most of the parks provide opportunities for recreation, aesthetic views and playground activities to entertain children. Further, cul-de-sacs and dead-end streets are connected creating a network of green pathways.

3.5.4 Riverton Reserve

Of the six parks in the Randwick Park area, Riverton Reserve is the largest. It is located in the centre of the subdivision and will be the focal point of this research. Riverton Reserve covers an area of 7.1 hectares (Isthmus, 2014). It is bounded by houses on all sides and can be accessed from Magic Way to the north east of the park and via the formal entrance and carpark off Riverton Drive in the south east.



Figure 6. Aerial photograph of parks in the Randwick Park area, with Riverton Reserve highlighted in red. Sourced from Auckland Council Geomaps 2019.

Presently Riverton Reserve has the following features (also see aerial photograph 3):

- A skate park
- A basketball court
- Netball courts
- A playground (not featured in the photograph as was only completed mid 2019).
- A path network
- Toilets
- Carpark
- A community hub (known as Manu tukutuku)
- Sports fields
- Volleyball pitch
- Cricket nets
- Field and skate park lighting
- An early childhood centre



*Figure 7. Aerial photograph of Riverton Reserve 2019.
Sourced from Auckland Council Geomaps 2019.*



*Figure 8. Aerial photograph of southern portion of Randwick Park 2019.
Sourced from Auckland Council Geomaps 2019.*

Riverton Reserve has not always been well developed or plentiful in infrastructure or opportunity. There is no exact date that Riverton Reserve became a park, however, it is likely the area was zoned as reserve when the Manukau City Council outlined its plans for the Randwick Park subdivision in 1975 (Ringer, 2009). The series of aerial photographs in Figure 10 demonstrate the progressive development of the park from 1959 – 2019. The aerial photograph from 2001 shows that less than 20 years ago the park only had a small playground and only the southern portion of the park was maintained. Comparing this to the 2019 aerial photographs demonstrates that the entire park, along with various pieces of infrastructure, is presently maintained and functional. There was a significant improvement in the park between the years 2010 – 2019. It should not be merely assumed that the improvement in the park is attributed to the passing of time or council deciding to invest in the park. Rather, this is the period in which the Randwick Park community took 'ownership' of the park. From 2008 onwards the Randwick Park community, represented by the Randwick Park Residents Association, began influencing and driving the decisions around their park.



Riverton Reserve 1959.



Riverton Reserve 2001.



Riverton Reserve 2010.



Riverton Reserve 2019.

*Figure 9. Aerial photographs of Riverton Reserve from 1959 – 2019.
Sourced from Auckland Council Geomaps 2019.*

3.5.5 Riverton Reserve and the community

In 2008 Randwick Park, was in the spotlight for the infamous murder of a liquor store owner next to Riverton Reserve. From this event Randwick Park gained attention for both the solidarity of the community, demonstrated by a march of 1000 residents (Stuff, 2009), and problems associated with the area. The murder perpetuated negative narratives and stereotypes such as ‘It’s a rough area, eh’ – the title of an article published a year later by Stuff (2009a). Within this article it was suggested that the community feared speaking out because of gangs, and that people were too scared to go to the park with children due to drunken fights and stealing (Stuff, 2009a). There were numerous similar articles circulating at this time and stating facts and figures to frame the problems faced in low socioeconomic

areas such as Randwick Park. However, this was not the end of Randwick Park's media attention. Through the commitment and motivation of community members, Riverton Reserve and the Randwick Park community became an example of participation and volunteering, community empowerment and community park management. To name a few of the Randwick Park communities' successes – they founded several successful social enterprises, were named New Zealand Community of the year in 2016 (Our Auckland, 2017), took over the operation of a community facility (Manu tukutuku), achieved New Zealand's first Community Green Flag Award in 2018 (Green Flag Award, 2018) and developed not only a safe and welcoming park, but a safe and welcoming community. In order to manage the park, community members realised that they needed to establish a Trust. The community as a collective were unable to 'own' or have a contractual arrangement with council as they were not a legal entity. But by establishing a Trust they became a legal entity and were able to engage in legal contracts as well as operate financially. Representatives of the Randwick Park community sit on a board governing the Trust's operations and the relationship with council on behalf of the community.

3.6 This research

This research will utilise the community of Randwick Park as a unique case study in park management, citizen participation and community outcomes facilitated by a park. Riverton Reserve is a unique case across Auckland and New Zealand and there is plenty to be understood from this model (more than can be covered in this thesis). There are likely to be many future research opportunities to come from this research. Grounded in key concepts in the literature discussed in Chapter Two and an understanding of the context for this case study as explained in the present chapter, the following chapter will explain how this research has been conducted and the rationale for this approach.

Chapter 4 Research Strategy

This chapter outlines the research strategy for this thesis. The research sought *to understand the evolution of Riverton Reserve as a place where the Randwick Park community have assumed management responsibility*. This research is underpinned by the concepts of place, parks and community participation. To understand the evolution of Riverton Reserve's community management model the conditions, constraints and enablement of community place-making of the park will be explored. A case study approach was taken. This involved the collection of qualitative data in the form of responses to interviews focusing on community members' perspectives. The data was analysed through a thematic analysis approach (Braun and Clarke, 2006) allowing the researcher to form themes around common ideas presented in interviews. The themes will be examined and discussed in the next chapter.

4.1 Developing a mixed methods approach

The data collected for this research can be categorised as quantitative or qualitative. Neither data category is more superior. In fact, both types of data have been beneficial to set the context of the research and to answer the research objectives. Quantitative research methods are used to ascertain a link between a form and a process through empirical analysis (Stewart Fotheringham, 2017). Comparatively, qualitative research takes an approach of assuming social reality is a subjective experience related to people's experiences and encounters (Jones, 2015; Hay, 2000). I assembled a range of evidence to address the thesis objectives. The qualitative data in this case includes maps and demographic statistics for the suburb of Randwick Park. Although neither address the research question, both the maps and demographic statistics have been highly valuable in building the context and background of Randwick Park and its community. As this research utilises a case study, it is important to set the scene of the research and provide the reader with enough detail to understand where the case study locale is, what it looks like and the demographics of its citizens. The maps are considered a primary data source as these are aerial photographs taken over time that I have produced as maps. This type of primary quantitative data demonstrates the significant physical changes to the landscape and infrastructure at Riverton Reserve over time. The demographic statistics on the other hand are a form of secondary data collected by another person for another research purpose (Johnston, 2017). The demographic statistics collected by Statistics New Zealand during the 2013 census provide valuable insight into the Randwick Park area and its community

composition. Qualitative research approaches are valuable when research involves communities (Silverman & Patterson, 2015) as these types of methods allow for the researcher to gain an understanding of the community and community members' perceptions and experiences, as well as particular events, situations and issues. As this thesis aims to capture the perspectives and experiences of people in Randwick Park who use or are involved with the management of the reserve, a qualitative case study approach including interviews was central to the research strategy. Data collected during the interviews is analysed from a thematic perspective in the findings chapter of the thesis.

4.2 My position as a researcher

Within research, particularly qualitative research, it is important to reflect upon one's own position as a researcher. Certain bias, conscious or unconscious, may occur during observations, analysis and interview responses (Bourke, 2014). When a person has prior knowledge or assumptions associated with the research topic, the knowledge becomes partial and situated (England, 2017). Situated knowledge is shaped by 'cultural, intellectual, spatial locations as well as lived experience' (England, 2017:1). The various positions I hold as a parks professional, a long-term resident of South Auckland and a researcher interested in promoting parks as key places in the community, as well as community ownership of place, have likely influenced why I have chosen Randwick Park as a case study for this research. These various positions will be further explained and contextualised in the below paragraphs.

Firstly, at the time of writing I work at Auckland Council in the Parks Services Unit currently as a Senior Parks Project Specialist. In my work I specialise in researching the current trends that affect the parks industry and council's management of parks. I began my career in parks as an intern working for the southern local parks team. Working as an intern whilst studying allowed me to experience the world of park management and coincidentally led me to encounter Riverton Reserve in Randwick Park at the time the skate park was being developed. I also worked part-time delivering park activation programmes in South Auckland, which again by coincidence involved activities delivered at Riverton Reserve.

Secondly, I grew up in South Auckland. I lived in Weymouth, a suburb of Manurewa, for 18 years and my mother's family had been in South Auckland for over 50 years, becoming well established there. South Auckland, despite the negative associations and stigmas such as 'the hood', 'a rough place', 'unsafe' and 'poverty', is a place that I have an affinity for and it will always be a part of my upbringing that I am proud of. Pride is something I feel when I

think of where I grew up. It is a place I have become attached to; it is my lived experience of place-based attachment. 'Pride in South Auckland' is something that only a person from South Auckland can understand, as would be the case for any other place that has shaped a person through lived experiences. I have spent many years exploring, playing, running, walking my dog and working in South Auckland parks. Although Riverton Reserve was not near my house, the old Riverton Reserve resembled and faced challenges that were similar across several parks in Manurewa. I grew up hearing about the homicide at Randwick Park that occurred in 2008 and it became a familiar story as there were several other unfortunate events of a similar nature at that time. Negative perceptions and tragedies aside, I also felt a sense of welcoming, openness and warmth when I told the interview participants I had grown up in Manurewa. I felt accepted because they didn't see me as an outsider coming into observe them; rather I became part of the Randwick Park story. I felt very honoured when one of the participants said "I appreciate you coming out here and looking at this design and people, so you can maybe help spread it off into other low wage places". This meant a lot to me as I have always wanted to be able to give something back to South Auckland, the place that shaped me and the place I will always recognise as my roots.

Lastly, my motivation for exploring the topic of community-based park management is also related to previous roles I have held at council. In 2017, I was engaged in work with communities involved in maintaining sections of park land for ecological and educational outcomes. There is a lot to be learnt from community involvement in parks and not just the tangible outcomes of fewer weeds or less litter, but also the intangible community development and participation outcomes. Community involvement in parks is an area that park managers, parks professionals and local governments across New Zealand recognise as a growing area that will continue to grow as people become more civic minded and realise the benefits of greenspace. Therefore, community park management is a valuable area of research and will be particularly useful for councils and park management agencies around New Zealand. Local parks are also an under-studied topic in New Zealand, particularly in relation to their role in the community. As a professional working in the industry and undertaking academic research, I struggled to find studies on community involvement in local parks that were not focused purely on the ecological outcomes. From my observations in New Zealand, we as New Zealanders will easily get involved to protect our indigenous flora and fauna, however, there is less enthusiasm when it comes to picking up rubbish or maintaining infrastructure at a park. As a researcher with a particular positionality, I hope my research will:

- Demonstrate the community park management model at Riverton Reserve and all its evolutions over time.
- Help to inform park managers and council to have a greater understanding of the benefits to community development when community are managing the park.
- Demonstrate the care and ownership a community can have for a park when they are involved in the management and decision making.
- Showcase the success of a low-socioeconomic community in South Auckland and all they have achieved.

4.3 Case study approach

As this research is focused on a particular community and their park, a case study approach was adopted. Hardwick (2017) describes the case study approach as being a holistic, nuanced and integrated approach to studying a single instance. Similarly, Yin (1995) suggests that case studies are the most useful and effective approach when studying a particular place and asking 'why' and 'how' questions in order to understand events that the researcher is unable to control. Other useful characteristics of case studies are their rich descriptive data, insights from participants and potential to contrast different perspectives and understandings of issues (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Gray, 2014 & Jones, 2015). The characteristics and definitions mentioned above demonstrate the effectiveness of a case study approach for understanding community park management at Randwick Park.

When taking a qualitative approach to research there is the association of a range of epistemological positions (Hay, 2017). By epistemological position, it is meant that the researcher understands how the knowledge has been created. As a researcher it is important to understand your positionality and how this may affect your research. In regard to case studies and positionality there are three main approaches; intrinsic, where the researcher already has an interest prior to the research; instrumental, where the case is used to for observation and analysis; and collective, where a group of cases are used to compare and contrast (Stake, 2005). For this research a combination of both intrinsic and instrumental approaches are relevant to the case of Randwick Park's community park management model. Firstly, an intrinsic approach applies as I have been interested in this topic prior to the thesis research. Secondly, an instrumental approach is relevant as I drew observations from the case study that added a broader analysis of community involvement in parks (Stake, 2005). The intrinsic value of this research is important to consider in more detail as this explains my interest as a researcher and my positionality. In terms of addressing my research question, a case study approach allowed access to perspectives

from one community who I, as a researcher, examined in relation to the academic literature. This case study appeared to be unique and novel in its management of the park, community involvement and outcomes for place and community development. The fact that Randwick Park is also an area of high deprivation is of interest and should be upheld as a positive example of community involvement and park transformation in Auckland and New Zealand.

4.4 Data collection processes

Interviews and the method of interviewing is common in qualitative research and case studies. An interview in the simplest terms is inviting individuals to a set time and place to answer questions about a particular topic (Bosco, 2017:1). Interviews are used to gather data on people and places to gain an in-depth understanding of a particular issue or situation. A people-oriented research method is generally used when the researcher is focusing on social relationships and interactions (Bosco, 2017), as well as understanding opinions and experiences (Hay, 2000). Generally, the outcomes of interviews are descriptive, rich and multi-layered data (Valentine, 2005) that can then be analysed for themes, ideas and concepts relating to the context of the situation. In this research interviews were used to gain insight into the Randwick Park community in order to understand emerging processes and structures of importance to members of the community (Herbert, 2017). Often a researcher will have a specific focus in mind. However, as an outsider, this may be different to how a person inside the group may perceive events and interactions. A person who is 'inside' a group is an individual who can talk about their experiences, understanding and the realities of being part of a community, organisation or other structured group (O'Leary, 2017). As the researcher, I was in a unique position of being both an insider and outsider. I was an insider in the sense that I grew up in South Auckland and to an extent I understood the journey of this community. However, I was still an outsider as I was not one of them. I was not a part of the community and never would truly understand everything that it means to be part of the Randwick Park. It is essential to be an empathetic listener to obtain valid data (Herbert, 2017) and to be open to the focus shifting as a group of individuals collectively are likely to hold a complex range of power relations, interactions, identities and experiences (Aitken, 2001; McDowell, 2010).

4.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

Interviews can range from structured questions to open-ended interpretive questioning (Bosco, 2017). In order to gain the most useful, reliable and detailed data, semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were used in this research. According to Herbert

(2017), semi-structured interviews are the most common compared to highly rigid and standardised interviews. Herbert (2017) also suggests that allowing flexibility within the questioning enables the emergence of unanticipated ideas and themes. Following a semi-structured set of questions enables the interview session to be less formal, facilitate trust and be more conversational. With a loose structure to the interview schedule, the interviewer is able to ask questions following up on specific ideas or concepts that the participant may mention (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). This flexible structure was essential to allow myself the room to ask further questions if concepts of interest were mentioned by the participant. Often, an initial question I posed would be answered with a high-level example that did not provide enough information to understand the participant's perspective. I found allowing for question flexibility very useful. For example, I was able to probe further with additional questions such as 'why do you think that is?'

4.4.2 Interview schedule & questions

For this research an interview schedule was developed as a guide to prompt participants, but this was not strictly followed in order to allow participants to expand on certain ideas that were important to them. The interview schedule covered three broad overarching topic sections, as follows:

Part one – Personal relationship with the park

This section of the interview schedule aimed to understand the participant's personal relationship with the park. Questions were framed in such a way that the participant could share their personal interactions, experiences and involvement with the park. Also included were questions about the 'feel' of the park in order to understand the park as a 'place' and how individuals felt about the space.

The key questions for this section were:

- *Tell me about the park and what it means to you?*
- *How would you describe the feel of the park?*

Prompts were prepared to follow each of these questions to enable as much detail as possible to be collected from the participant. Examples of prompts were 'how do you like the park?' or 'can you explain what you like about the park?' and 'why do you think the park feels this way?'. The combination of questions and prompts was designed to highlight what was significant, special or unique about the park to each individual.

Part two – The community’s relationship with the park

This section of the interview schedule aimed to understand the community’s relationship with the park, from the perspective of the participant. As people come from different backgrounds, with a range of complex power relations and experiences (Aitken, 2001; McDowell, 2010), each person will observe and perceive ideas and concepts differently. Part two focused on what each participant had observed within their community and how the community as a collective interacted with and experienced the park.

The key questions for this section were:

- *Can you tell me how this park is used?*
- *Tell me about the relationship the Randwick Park community has with the park?*
- *In a few words can you describe what the park means to the Randwick Park community?*
- *Can you tell me why this park is special/unique to the Randwick Park community?*
- *In your opinion, what has been the most significant change in the park over the years?*
- *Is there a sense of ownership and responsibility for the park?*

Prompts for this section were also prepared to follow each of these questions.

Examples of prompts were ‘who uses the park?’, ‘is there anyone that doesn’t use the park and why might this be?’, ‘how does the community show this?’, ‘what has this meant for the community?’ and ‘can you give some examples?’. The last prompt ‘can you give me some examples?’ is important as it allows the participant to discuss specific observations they have seen and add detail to their answers. Examples are, in a way, a mini-case study and allow the researcher to interpret and probe in-depth into an issue (Bosco, 2017).

Part three – Park Management

This final section of the interview schedule aimed to understand the type of park management taking place, as well as related processes and power relations.

Questions were asked to understand the extent of management, levels of

involvement in management, opportunities and the effectiveness of this model for the park.

The key questions for this section were

- *Are you aware of how the park is managed?*
- *How would you describe the community are involved in the management?*
- *Can you tell me why the park is managed in this way?*
- *Can you tell me what were the goals for this type of management?*
- *What opportunities have come from the community involvement in the park?*
- *In your opinion do you think this management model has been useful/effective/working well?*
- *In your opinion what does the Randwick Park community think of this model?*

Prompts were also prepared for this section. At face value these questions seem quite objective and factual. However, the prompts allowed for more detail and allowed participants to share their opinions and perspectives about the park's management. Examples of prompts that were used include the questions 'how do you know this?', 'tell me about possible triggers or motivations?', and 'how has the community been affected?'. A diagram of Arnstein's Citizen Participation ladder was also used as a prompt (this will be expanded on further in the analysis chapter).

At the beginning of each interview I asked participants to briefly outline what their role and involvement with the park was, as well as how long they had been involved. This information was useful for context and scene setting although not overly useful for analysis. For the full interview schedule see appendix A.

4.4.3 Interview recruitment

A recruitment strategy was developed in the early stages of the research in order to allow plenty of time to find willing participants. As the case study of community park management at Randwick Park evolved over a period of approximately ten years there have been many different people involved and an exhaustive list was not publicly available. Therefore, it was necessary to isolate the population or group of people who could provide the informative data needed for this research (Herbert, 2017).

The strategy for recruitment was as follows:

- Identify a key group of people or persons to make initial contact with and outline my research.

- Build a rapport with these key people, meet with them and discuss the research
- These key people share the research topic with other people they know who have been involved.
- Once interviews begin, interviewees recommend other people to be interviewed.

This recruitment strategy is also known as ‘snow-balling’, whereby one person recommends a person/persons who then recommends others, and so on. Snowballing or snowball sampling is based on the premise that participants have knowledge of others with similar knowledge or experiences (Lo, 2009). This method allows the recruitment to grow like a rolling snowball (Lo, 2009). There is a risk that snowball sampling can have a bias as participants are likely to recommend people from within their network and may have similar opinions. However, as this is a case study that specifically focuses on community park management there would not be great benefit in interviewing people who have no knowledge of how the park is managed.

4.4.4 The interview process

I undertook interviews over a period of one month during October 2019. Following the snowball sampling method, I arranged interviews when potentially interested participants contacted me via email after hearing about the research from their networks. Interviews were arranged to suit participants’ schedules as participation was voluntary. Participants were also compensated for their time and contribution to the research in the form of a koha – a \$50 Countdown (supermarket) voucher. The setting for the interviews was a meeting room in the community facility (Manu tukutuku) at Riverton Reserve. This location was chosen as it is easy for community members to get to, it is a familiar space for them and being at the site is a place-prompt for the participants. This familiar space was important as it allowed the participants to feel comfortable, potentially enhancing their recollection of activities and feelings regarding the park. All participants were required to read the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and to sign the Consent Form (CF) (see appendices B & C). With the permission of each participant the interview was audio recorded for the purposes of transcription and analysis at a later stage.

4.5 Ethical considerations

The project sought and received approval from the University of Auckland’s Human Participants Ethics Committee (see appendix D). Since the research involved interviews as

the main form of data collection, the interviews and recruitment of participants needed to be considered carefully. As mentioned in the recruitment section, snowball sampling was used to recruit participants. This method is an indirect recruitment approach that is considered the most ethical when interviewing a specific group of people. The main ethical considerations for this research were:

Confidentiality & Anonymity

All participants were assured that their identities would remain confidential, between themselves and the researcher. They were also assured that they would remain anonymous when the findings were written up. However, as there is a small select group of people involved in this particular case study their comments or perspectives may not assure them complete anonymity.

Informed Consent

At the beginning of the recruitment process and prior to the commencement of interviews, each participant was given a Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and a Consent Form (CF). The PIS explained the background and objectives of the research, the interview process, and privacy, confidentiality and anonymity considerations. The purpose of the CF was to confirm that participants had read the PIS, had agreed to the research processes including audio recording, and had been given the opportunity to ask any questions (see appendix C).

Conflict of interest

As the researcher, it was important to disclose to participants that I work for Auckland Council and to discuss with them the perception of a conflict of interest. I declared this conflict prior to the commencement of each interview to ensure transparency and for the participants' knowledge. I stated that Auckland Council supported this research but had in no way influenced the topic or its questions.

Harm & Safety

In the past the park has been perceived as unsafe and not a place to be visited alone. From recent visits to the park through my work at council, I felt that the park was safe and had changed significantly. However, in order to protect the health and safety of the participants and myself, all interviews were undertaken in public places during the hours of 9-5.

Privacy

Privacy is a top priority in this research and only I, as the researcher and primary investigator, have access to review the recordings and transcriptions. Privacy includes preserving the identities of the participants throughout the process of this research.

Potential cultural impacts

The potential cultural impacts of this study and associated ethical considerations relate to Maori and understanding how Maori may be impacted by the research and its findings. This research did not select any specific ethnicities to take part in interviews, nor did it focus on ethnicity. Therefore, there is a very low chance, if any, of cultural impacts on Maori resulting from this research.

4.6 Data analysis

The process I undertook to analyse the data involved transcribing interviews and then repeatedly reading and reviewing transcripts, followed by a system of thematic analysis informed by Braun and Clarke (2006). By applying a thematic approach to data analysis, themes emerged that were informed by critical geographical understandings of place and place attachment, as well as community participation. Braun and Clarke's (2006) approach to thematic analysis is widely recognised for offering a well-regarded counter to what is often viewed as a poorly defined, misunderstood and undervalued qualitative strategy (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Boyatzis, 1998).

A brief summary of Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis process involves six steps:

1. Read the text to become familiar with the data
2. Start coding text with initial themes
3. Theme development
4. Reviewing themes
5. Define themes
6. Describe, analyse and discuss themes.

The transcription process offered the initial familiarisation stage and was useful since it provided the opportunity to re-listen to the interviews in a more relaxed environment than the interview itself allowed. Transcription also allowed me to re-listen to selective parts of the interview I found interesting or insightful. By repeatedly reading interview transcripts I was able to pick up on similarities between interviews and these similarities led to the

development of initial themes. Using initial themes, I began coding by assigning a theme to sections of the interview transcript. Once all the interviews had been analysed and sections coded, I began refining and defining my themes further. The difficulty of refining and defining themes lies in ensuring that the themes are distinct enough from each other that sections of interviews can be categorised under one theme or another. During analysis I identified broad themes which encompassed other sub-themes, allowing an exploration into specific topics. Overall, I organised the themes into a logical sequence in order to analyse the data from the interviews and tell the narrative of the case study. The application of thematic analysis for this research was particularly valuable in that it allowed flexibility in the organisation of ideas and exploration of common themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006), whilst enabling interpretation and examination of the data from a critical geographical perspective and in relation to the key concepts underpinning this research.

Chapter 5 The Randwick Park Community & its Relationship with Riverton Reserve

The themes identified within the interview data will be both analysed and discussed in this chapter. The order of the themes has been purposeful and follows a logical sequence with each prior theme setting the scene and context for subsequent themes. The themes are presented as follows: place and place attachment, evolution and transformation, ownership and responsibility, and partnership and citizen participation. Within each theme, sub-themes are explored, analysed and discussed. At the end of this section, the overall findings of each theme are discussed further in order to suggest their relevance to the park, the community and the community park management model operating at Randwick Park.

The examples and explanations within each theme have been identified as strongly indicative of the Randwick Park community's experiences. However, the themes are derived from interviews comprising a snapshot of the community at a particular point in time and only demonstrate the potential experiences and perspectives of the Randwick Park community as a whole.

5.1 Theme 1 – Place and Place attachment

The logic for the 'place and place attachment' theme is the contextualisation and insight it provides for subsequent themes. As outlined earlier in the literature review, place attachment is often expressed as an emotional bond or connection people have with their surrounding environment and places of significance to their daily lives (Ramkissoon, Weiler & Smith, 2012; Collins & Kearns, 2013). Place attachment often occurs within groups of people or communities who all have similar experiences and develop a collective sense of place attachment over time. As will be demonstrated through the use of quotes from Randwick Park community members, there is collective sense of place attachment towards Riverton Reserve, its facilities and the transformation it has undergone.

Interviews revealed a strong sense of positive place attachment among Randwick Park Community members. This was indicated by affective words that appeared consistently across multiple interviews, such as "love", "home", "gather" (meet, congregate) and "proud". "Love" of the park as a place was probably the word that recurred most often throughout the interviews. A few examples are:

"I love its location, its right in the centre of our community." Interviewee A

"I love the way it's changed." Interviewee G

"We absolutely love it, I can't see us living any other place now." Interviewee B

Love is a strong emotion and the emotional connection that community members expressed for their park appears to be a connection that, as Massey (1994) suggests, develops over time and builds upon layers of memories and experiences. The quote that most clearly demonstrated place attachment for the park through the emotion of "love" was: "People from this place, love this place". Referring to people who are "from this place" (the place being the suburb and the people being the community of Randwick Park who "love this place") signifies the emotional journey and memories that the people of Randwick Park have experienced, reproduced and projected, which have resulted in attachment to the space that is Riverton Reserve. Not exclusively, but most likely, only people from Randwick Park will love Riverton Reserve, and possibly at another point in time the park did not/will not evoke this same sense of attachment. A place is as dynamic as the community that has become attached to it. Therefore, place attachments are never fixed and can change alongside different representations and experiences in time and space (Cresswell, 2009). Riverton Reserve as a dynamic space that encompasses changing attachments, perceptions, experiences and representations of place will be explored through the next theme of evolution and transformation. Throughout the next theme the significance of temporal influences will be highlighted in regard to place attachment. This focus will illustrate how changes to a place can affect the emotions evoked in users of the park.

Another set of strong emotional connections expressed in the interviews were sense of home and sense of belonging. A few examples are:

"It brings me home." Interviewee C

"I think everyone has a sense of belonging". Interviewee D

"If you live in an area and you don't feel right in there, then you move. . . but never once has it ever crossed my mind." Interviewee B

The concept of a place feeling like 'home' or place of 'belonging' illustrates the link between first place and third place. As discussed earlier, first places can be regarded as the private spaces that are generally home (Jeffres, Bracken, Jian & Casey, 2009; Oldenburg, 1989) and third places, although public spaces, can be considered the home away from home. Users of third places such as parks often consider the place as 'theirs' and feel that they are part of the place itself (Slater & Koo, 2010). Residents of Randwick Park, especially those who have been or are currently involved in the management of the park, are likely to

consider themselves as part of the park. Although not directly mentioning 'home' or a 'sense of belonging' there was mention of both during interviews. For example, participants suggested that they felt part of the park and the park was a part of the community. The statement "I feel like it's got our fingerprints on it" is significant since, although a personal opinion, it does refer to the concept of 'our' which suggests that the collective community has an intimate involvement with the park.

The interviewee who commented that "We call it our heart and soul of Randwick" was referring to the park as a part of the community itself. This concept goes beyond the theory of third places and suggests an acute expression of place attachment. The use of the word 'heart' can be interpreted in multiple ways. Firstly, 'heart' links back to prior examples of 'love' for the park, in this instance a heart that is symbolic of love. This symbolic interpretation demonstrates the emotions between people and a place they feel very strongly about (Wright, 2012). Secondly, referring to the park as the 'heart' signals a strong sense of love for the park as a place and suggests a particular type of place attachment. Tuan (1990) describes the strongest attachment to place, specifically love of place, as topophilia – a term he coins to indicate the affective bond between people and place. It is clear from the examples currently presented that the interviewed members of Randwick Park love their park. Thirdly, the reference to the park by one interviewee as the 'heart and soul' of the community indicates a sense of attachment being expressed through metaphor. For this interviewee, the park is in the centre of the community and is a living component of the community. Additionally, speaking of the 'heart and soul' can be interpreted as indicating embodied engagement with the park through active engagement involving, for example, sport or voluntary caretaking. In other words, the relationship between the park and the people is embodied and tangible because people in their bodiliness interact with the park physically. There is various research suggesting the body 'knows' or engages with space not only through body work but also through the location the body is in (Humberstone, 2013). Expanding on the concept of a body knowing and engaging with space around it, Humberstone (2009) proposes that the body-mind situating of embodiment in space can be linked to the spiritual relationship of the body, mind and environment. Humberstone's ideas alongside the interviewee's reference to the 'soul of Randwick' suggest that the park is likely to provide more than just a place that community members go for physical movement of their bodies; it also offers a spiritual connection (whether it is conscious or unconscious) to members of the community.

Place and place attachment mean something different to everyone. Feelings of 'love', 'pride', 'home' and 'sense of belonging' are all emotions that the interviewed members of Randwick

Park expressed when asked what the park means to them and the community. When specifically considering Riverton Reserve as a place, participants stated that the park is in the center of the community, it is a highly valued asset and a space that they have shaped, resulting in a strong sense of place. As a community the residents of Randwick park have had similar experiences in the reserve and have generated a collective sense of attachment. Kirby (2008:76) describes public space as 'a repository of collective memories and cultural practices' which interestingly was how one member of the Randwick Park community described the relationship between the park and the community. The interviewee said:

"It should be the community church, it should be the thing that everyone's had their baptisms at, had their 21sts at, they came to a function here after their cousins got married, they came to a man-up program here, they came to a community consultation here, you know, it's just something that's been in their lives the whole time." Interviewee F

Riverton Reserve and all its facilities have collectively become the place where community members gather, whether that be for a 21st birthday, a sports event, or for recreation and relaxation. Members of the community and those outside the community are able to interact with the space and experience it in their own way, whilst still being part of the collective experiences and 'collective repository of memories' (Kirby, 2008:76).

While all the interview participants were part of the Randwick Park community, they held different relationships with the park in terms of their role. For example, they could be a user of the park, a parent of a child who uses the park, employed to work in the park or a park facility, have led or influenced decision making, or taken part in driving change in the park and community. Participants often held several of these roles. It is important to acknowledge the role(s) of interview participants because, as Massey (1994:3) theorised, 'social relations of space are experienced differently, and variously interpreted, by those holding different positions as part of it.' Therefore, though community members appeared to have similar meanings and attachments to the place as a collective, each individual had experienced, observed and interpreted the space differently before forming their own unique place attachments.

By understanding examples of place attachment to the reserve provided by the interview participants, the next question that arose was *why* do they feel this? Why do people have a sense of place and place attachment for Riverton Reserve? It is more than just a park within their community and more than just a facility they use or gather at? To answer 'why' the community felt so strongly about their park, theory relating to community participation needs

to be considered. Shumaker & Taylor (1983) suggest ways that place and the motivational bonds developed by communities to places can be linked with participation in the planning and design process. This theory holds true in the case of Randwick Park. The community at Randwick Park, represented by a few key members, participated significantly in the planning, design, decision-making and operation of Riverton Reserve. The statement “I feel like it’s got our fingerprints on it” not only illustrates the strong connection to the reserve that the community feels, but also points to community involvement in the design, decision making and delivery of the reserve and its facilities. The involvement and participation the community had in the design of the park allowed them to have influence and shape the park to suit their needs and expectations. One interviewee suggested that “the facility [park] should reflect the community that lives here”. Not only does involvement and participation in the park build expressions of place attachment such as *de facto* ownership, it can also occur in reverse as well. Manzo & Perkins (2006) describe how place attachment when strongly emotional can be complemented by a sense of community and become a motivator for members of the community to participate in activities that are seeking to improve the place. Manzo & Perkins’ (2006) theory may not be the case for Randwick Park. However, I am unable to confirm whether there was place attachment and a strong (positive) emotional bond with the park and community prior to the community participating in the park’s design and delivery. It may be the case that Riverton Reserve was not a place that was always loved. The next theme, evolution and transformation, and subsequent themes will provide more context, examples and explanation of the journey that the Randwick Park community have traversed with their park.

5.2 Theme 2 – Evolution & Transformation

What happens in a place is part of the place itself, both materially and conceptually. As mentioned in the literature review and in theme one above, place and place attachments are never fixed but rather are dynamic and change through time producing different experiences (Cresswell, 2009). Riverton Reserve is a place that has changed and evolved over the years; it has become a place that interviewees ‘love’ and are ‘proud’ of, and a highly valued asset. As explained in the context chapter, Riverton Reserve has been previously perceived as ‘a rough area’ (Stuff, 2009a.) and an unsafe place to be. When interviewees were asked what the park used to be like prior to the community becoming involved in managing the park, these were some of their responses:

“Back then no one cared. I could come up here and get drunk and stoned and just nobody came up here, except for those kinds of people.” Interviewee C

“cos at the time it had this really yucky old skate park that was often getting graffitied, people were scared to walk through the park, when we arrived, we got told that different gangs looked after the park on different nights, so we had to be careful, so it wasn’t a safe place really to be, especially not at night. And it looked pretty horrible too.” Interviewee A

“the park was, it was real scary, you had the skate guys in the skate park, but there was broken glass everywhere, graffiti everywhere, even though Manukau Beautification would come clean in and clean it up, by the next weekend it was all graffitied again.” Interviewee E

“there was a lot of alcohol, there was drug-dealing, there was gang involvement, there were gangs, there were some unbelievable violence with some of the stuff that we saw, some of it we caught on video once we put a camera up, yeah it was scary, you wouldn’t walk, like I wouldn’t recommend a female to walk through here at that time and at night time, even myself, I would be very aware of who was around.” Interviewee E

The quotes above tell a very different story to those presented in the foregoing theme of place and place attachment. The key point suggested by these quotes is that Riverton Reserve was a park that was ‘unsafe’, ‘scary’, ‘looked pretty horrible’, was ‘graffitied’, and featured ‘gangs’ and ‘alcohol and drugs’. None of these elements should ever be part of a park and are not the purpose of a park. Unfortunately, however, parks that are uncared for often attract these elements and associations. Safety issues, in particular, are a common concern when people consider parks. Maas *et al.* (2009) suggest that green space can be perceived as dangerous and encourage crime. Moulay *et al.* (2018) claim that parks that are unmaintained or underutilised may become a safety issue. Reflecting upon the history of Riverton Reserve with the support of the aerial photos presented in the context chapter, the park was both unmaintained and underutilised (see Figure 10). The poorly maintained park and underutilisation as a result of a lack of facilities and opportunities left the park open to be used by gangs and as a hangout for alcohol and drug consumption.

The way the interviewees talked about the old park (prior to community involvement) can be interpreted loosely as fear or dislike of the place. Much like topophilia is place attachment through love of a place (Tuan, 1990) there is also topophobia which involves fear of place (Bowring, 2013). It seems that in the past the park had a weak degree of place attachment,

other than for the first of the participants whose comment is presented above; for him, it was a safe place for inappropriate activity. When discussing past representations of the park, participants also spoke of how the park felt in the present tense, as follows:

“it’s made it safer up here for the nanas and koros,” [grandfathers] Interviewee B

“it’s gone from a place that was really unsafe, really ugly, quite scary, to a place now where there’s so many engaged in it, in a passive way and also in an intentional way, it looks good now and there’s lot of age groups involved all at the same time, lots of different sports involved at the same time, the building is beautiful.” Interviewee A

“it’s like a palace. It’s like you stand on the bridge at nighttime and look down here and the park just glows, it’s like paradise in the middle of what was shit.” Interviewee C

“it’s changed, it’s like when you have fights in the past, no-one would intervene, now there’s a whole lot of adults that will get involved if the kids are playing up and tell them off, so it’s, it seems like the village raises the child kind of comes from the heart and soul this place.” Interviewee E

Presently, Riverton Reserve is perceived by the interviewees as ‘safer’, ‘engaged’ and a ‘paradise’, as was implied by the aforementioned reference to the park as the ‘heart and soul’ of the community. The transformation of Riverton Reserve materially and conceptually has been dramatic in a short timeframe (less than ten years). Understanding why the park is safer relates to displacement of gang-related and other undesirable activity through increased maintenance and care leading to a sense of *de facto* ownership and increased utilisation of the park by local residents. Collins and Shantz (2009) explain this phenomenon as attracting desirable people and encouraging them to linger in the space while at the same time excluding less desirable people from the space. The park now offers a range of activities including a playground, sports fields, community hub, spaces for hire, personal development programmes, creative programmes and access to health services. These activities and services appeal to a wide range of people in the community and offer much more than a skate park. A renovated or in this case new playground combined with increased community engagement has led to increased park use (Slater, Pugach, Lin & Bontu, 2016). There are also quite distinct changes to the aesthetics of the park indicated by the interviewees. In the past the park was described by interviewees as ‘yucky’,

'horrible'[visually] and 'graffitied'. This is in contrast to comments made by interviewees in relation to the present-day park and its facilities which described the park as 'a paradise', 'beautiful' and a 'village'. This stark contrast between the old and present park aesthetics demonstrates the transformation that the park has undergone physically. Further explanation for the physical transformation of the park and its role in the park becoming a more desirable place will be explored in the subsequent sections of this chapter.

During the interviews there were some specific quotes referencing change within the community as a result of the park's transformation that are worth discussing. Quotes that directly referenced notable changes are indicated below:

[Kids], "that its usually the younger kids which is another dynamic that's changed about the old park to the new park." Interviewee C

"I mean to win Community of the Year, New Zealand Community 2017, pretty significant." Interviewee H

"but we take the view that bringing people into Randwick helps destigmatise the past and having people come over here to do fun things just makes it normal to come here, which then is better for the community." Interviewee F

"the significant changes for me is that people have realised that they have power, so the fact that their hopes and dreams were supported and then taken to reality, you know, like realised, I think is massive." Interviewee E

Younger children coming to the park is likely to be a result of improved safety and offerings at the park, which include a playground, improved skate park, sports fields, community facility, netball court and the overall mood of the park. The mood of a place, especially a third place, is significant in the case of a park and is established by its users (Oldenburg, 1999). As a third place, it is a space that is optional in the sense that people do not have to go to these places; rather, they choose to go and spend their time in these spaces. The community of Randwick Park achieved significant recognition through winning 'community of the year'. Also, the comment that "bringing people in to Randwick helps destigmatise the past" reflects the evolution and transformation that the park and community have undergone. Bringing outsiders into the community to show them how the park and community has changed will, in turn, change wider perceptions of the park.

Riverton Reserve has been transformed significantly and the quotes highlighted in this section express the park's evolutionary journey from a space to a place with significant positive place attachments. Tuan (1990:99) succinctly expresses the need to understand the evolution of place attachment through the statement: 'Awareness of the past is an important element in the love of place'. If the history of Riverton Reserve was not analysed or acknowledged it would be difficult to understand how place attachment has developed over time and how it has gone from the extreme of topophobia to topophilia in a short timeframe. Topophilia stems from the community having a sense of place (Bowring, 2013). Place, place attachment and sense of place, although not the theme for this section, will run throughout all themes discussed here, as place and community are the concepts that underpin this research.

Before concluding this section, there is an interesting idea that needs attention. In the place and place attachment theme, the park is called a place to 'gather', 'meet', and 'congregate', and it emerges as a positive place that people like. In the past, however, gangs also used Riverton Reserve as a place to gather, meet and congregate. It seems that the only change to 'gatherings' at the park has been the type of people and their activities in the space. Theoretically there has been change in the users of the park but the function of the park has not changed as it still remains a place to 'gather' and 'meet'. It is no surprise that the park's role as a gathering space has stayed constant as third places such as parks are characterised by being places to meet and socialise (Aiken, 2009). From my perspective as the researcher and also as a parks professional, I believe people do not recognise or value parks for their 'meeting' and 'gathering' function. Rather, parks are generally acknowledged as offering opportunities for physical activity and for their ecological functions. The social dimensions revealed in this case study indicate that parks should be valued more highly for the role they play in facilitating planned and unplanned 'meetings' between people since these social interactions enable and promote a sense of community. The next theme – ownership and responsibility – will further explain community members' place attachments and the reasons for their connection with the park.

5.3 Theme 3 – Ownership and Responsibility

To set the scene for this section, I refer back to my earlier discussion of ownership (see Chapter Three) in which I explained that generally the ownership and responsibility of public spaces such as parks is held by the local authority, in this case is Auckland Council (Collins & Shantz, 2009). The Randwick Park community have *de facto* ownership of Riverton Reserve through an arrangement with Auckland Council, which will be explored in the next

theme of partnership. Regardless of official arrangements, users of third places (whether they be cafes or parks) often consider the space as ‘their own’ as it is a place that has specific experiences and relationships unique to that person or community (Slater & Koo, 2010). Interviewees in this research expressed a sense of ownership and responsibility for the park through the following comments:

“I think everyone has a sense of belonging and ownership to this place.”

Interviewee D

“I think we do have a sense of ownership and especially for those of us I think, that live here, we care about it.” Interviewee B

“just being proud, it’s our place. I sense there’s a group of people that feel like it’s our park, it’s ours, and so if you come and use it, you treat it well.” Interviewee

E

“it’s the ownership, it’s something to be proud of, something that’s beautiful, something that’s usable, something we own, something that we can invest in.”

Interviewee E

“so responsibility is key, when you’re responsible for something you invest into it, which means you feel like you own it, so that’s kind of a key concept.”

Interviewee E

As these comments illustrate, the evolution and transformation the park has undergone has instigated feelings of ‘ownership’, ‘belonging’, ‘pride’ and ‘responsibility’ among interviewees. Ownership is expressed as shared ownership which can promote a strengthened sense of community through actions to defend their ‘place’ (Kearns, 1998).

The next set of quotes to be explored are examples from the interviewed community members. Compared to the above quotes which demonstrate how interviewees felt regarding ownership and responsibility, the following quotes illustrate community members’ observations about the park and community.

“We felt like we owned it, so we made the rules up. There’s no smoking on the park, no drinking on the park, there’s no graffiti at all on the park and just gotta be a nice person, you don’t have to talk to people but don’t be nasty.” Interviewee C

“It’s always helpful to have a linger [person], just someone around that shows they care. It keeps the standards up of keeping the place tidy and clean”

Interviewee D

“seeing the local people involved in employment in the park and keeping it, cos if you own a park, that’s ownership, you look after it . . . our thought was how do we create ownership of the park and that’s when there was communication with Southern Initiative and council could there ever be a possibility that we could have our local people employed, knowing our park and looking after the gardens, cleaning the facilities” Interviewee E

“lots of people are here from the neighbourhood so because of that, it’s a safe place, a place that offers lots of opportunities, lots of engagement, it’s not graffitied, so it’s respected, the playground caters for the younger ones, so lots of kids are engaged in it now.” Interviewee A

These observations of community ownership and responsibility in action set Riverton Reserve aside from other parks in Auckland. There would be very few, if any, parks that are able to quote these examples of community ownership, especially in such a positive light. The comment “we felt like we owned it, so we made up the rules” refers to the skate park. There was one particular skater involved in the design of the park, indicating that a sense of ownership came from being involved and included in the project. This comment is significant since, as a result of the *de facto* ownership, the skate boarders feel that they wanted to keep the park clean, safe and friendly for the community. The second quote regarding a ‘linger person’ is actually a skate park guardian or supervisor. Having a presence, encouraging positive behavior and being actively engaged in the park is seen to reduce vandalism and undesirable behavior according to Collins and Shantz (2009). The third quote about employing local people to maintain the park suggests a sense of physical ownership and responsibility. People who are from the community are more likely to take better care of a local park than a person whose job it may be to do so. This is likely because a park employee may not always have a personal connection or sense of attachment to the place. The last quote illustrates how the park has become safer because of the *de facto* ownership and sense of ‘control’ over the activities and offerings the park provides to its community. In a way, these examples of ownership and responsibility represent ‘community resource management’. Although this term usually refers to custodial attitudes and behavior towards natural resources such as waterways, forestry or biodiversity, it does often include land management which can include parks. The community of Randwick Park are managing their

resources through their *de facto* ownership of the park which suggests that local ownership is key for community development, long term social benefits and maintaining resilience (Varghese, Krogman, Beckley & Nadeau, 2006:506).

The community of Randwick Park showcases some great outcomes related to community development and resilience as a result of their *de facto* ownership and responsibility for the park, as demonstrated by the quotes below:

“If the government designed the skate park it wouldn’t have the same love that it has now. It gave us ownership, us designing it. If the council had brought it in, yea it would have been skated to death but by the wrong people cause when you work for something and you finish it, it makes it yours.” Interviewee C

“I think that’s the beauty of when you’ve got community people that live here in relationship with council and this development we will then also act as Kaitiaki [Guardian] of the area.” Interviewee A

“it’s the ownership, it’s something to be proud of, something that’s beautiful, something that’s usable, something we own, something that we can invest in, like getting the contract to look after the lawns and the contract to run this, it means that we invest ourselves into it, yeah.” Interviewee E

“I know everybody knows, because there’s no one up here drinking, there’s no tagging, there’s no shit that happens around here.” Interviewee C

As a result of the *de facto* ownership of the park, the community, according to the interviewees, have been able to co-design a skate park for their community, become kaitiaki or guardians of the area, keep the park from being used inappropriately and even provide employment to locals. In the first quote, the key point is: “if the government designed the skate park it wouldn’t have the same love that it has now”. The mention of ‘love’ of the park as a place in this quote links place attachment, topophilia and ownership. Both place attachment and community ownership have been ‘closely linked to community development’ (Schroder, 2008:178). The second and third quotes mention individuals acting as ‘kaitiaki’[guardians] and ‘investment’ in place. Both concepts reflect place attachment since only a person who cares for or is attached to the place will want to take on the role of guardian. Further, people who are locals are likely to take pride in their work caring for the park, resulting in better outcomes for the park and the community. Through ownership community members are invested in the place and this will improve their resiliency to change

in the future (Shuman, 1998). By employing locals to maintain the park, the community is improving their community capacity and thus their overall resilience (Berkes & Folke, 1998). The last quote also relates to ideas about resilience advanced by Adger (2000) who states that resilience can be demonstrated through sustaining desired behavior, rules and social norms that build overall benefits for the community. The last quote implies that if people know about the community ownership of the park, or are involved in it, then the undesirable behaviour experienced in the past will be avoided.

Overall ownership and responsibility for the park has allowed the community to develop their capacity and become resilient. From an outsider's point of view, I would speculate that if there was to be another unfortunate and unsettling event, such as the homicide in 2008, then the Randwick Park community would likely be able to bounce back and provide support for each other due to their resilience. Community resilience is defined by the ability of the community to cope during change and is a measure of community capacity (Berkes & Folke, 1998). The Randwick Park community are a unique example in Auckland of how a park can build community resilience through *de facto* ownership. However, it is not unheard of for parks to be a source of resilience in the community. After the 2011 earthquake in Christchurch, for instance, vacant areas were turned into temporary urban spaces such as parks to create positive emotions and experiences for the community to engage with and improve community resilience (Wesener, 2015). As explained earlier, parks are the 'gathering' places for the community. Parks as third places also provide opportunities for interactions, connections and a sense of wellbeing (Oldenburg & Brissett, 1982). A sense of community wellbeing is also an indicator of community resilience (Varghese *et al.*, 2006). Parks, like libraries and community halls, are a key place in the community that are open to all members of the community and provide multiple functions to community members.

5.4 Theme 4 – Citizen Participation & Partnership

Citizen or public participation can be further categorised into community participation (Buono, Padiaditi & Carsjens, 2012). The community of Randwick Park is a great example of community participation in the management of a local resource. Throughout this chapter I have offered examples of community participation based on the fact that community members have love for the park, have wanted to influence change, and feel a sense of ownership and opportunity through partnership with council. This section will explore how the ownership and management of Riverton Reserve has enabled community participation and supported its citizens to be empowered. Insights from the interviewees related to these issues will be explored through the following quotes:

“with any community facility largely, it has to do with the leadership of the facilities and how they choose to position themselves in the community.” Interviewee F

“The main thing is if communities want to do something like this, they have to find a leader” Interviewee C

The first two quotes recognise the importance of leadership in community participation. Leadership is often key for a successful community-based initiative or organisation. There needs to be a person or small group of persons willing to motivate, advocate and drive the community goals forward to enable progress and success. Community participation is a form of volunteering through dedicated time, commitment, involvement and sometimes sacrifice (Kelly, 1997). Some of the community members of Randwick Park who began their involvement with the park and community through volunteering activities have, in some cases, gained paid employment as a result. Research and literature looking at participation in local parks has generally focused on ecological volunteering which, although similar to the volunteering at Riverton Reserve in the beginning, has different outcomes and motivations. It has been suggested by Driver *et al.* (1991) that most volunteering in parks has the aim of improving conditions to respect the environment. This definition is in some ways relevant to the community of Randwick Park whose members wished to be involved in their park to improve the aesthetics and feel of the park, as well as engagement with the community, and subsequently sought to improve opportunities for community development. The first two quotes demonstrate the importance of place and place attachment through leadership. The leader for a community initiative needs to come from the community they are leading since there is less chance of the community supporting or engaging in the initiative when the leader is a person from outside the community. The leader or leaders need to have a sense of place attachment and a sense of ownership. Glover, Parry & Shinew (2005) assert that place and volunteering must be localised. This creates an ongoing sense of commitment and motivation for the volunteer, as well as appreciation for the intrinsic value of ‘doing the right thing’ for the community (Buono, Padiaditi & Carsjens, 2012).

The next quote demonstrates the empowerment that community members may feel through the recognition that they are valued citizens and that the place they live in should be valued:

“So when people start to own and start to say ok, I’m a citizen, I can make a difference, I can do this with others, then we’re actually saying, actually we deserve to be treated better and so that thinking that is a transformation of the heart and the connection to the neighbourhood, so this is our whenua, this is our place, we live here, our kids grow up at here” Interviewee A

The above interviewee talks about community involvement and participation as an expression of being a citizen. Rather than a citizen of the state, they are referring to their observations of community members becoming ‘citizens’ of the community and supporting its goals and development. The implication is that these people are “good citizens through their engagements, contributions, prior volunteering activities and support for the collective needs of the community (Staehele, 2017). It is important to acknowledge the above mention of ‘a transformation of the heart’ as this comment indicates a ‘transformation’ of the community member’s heart through contributions to the park and community. Further, this comment demonstrates that Riverton Reserve is the heart of the community, as mentioned in the place attachment section. The statement ‘transformation of the heart’ is arguably being used as a double entendre indicating that when the community transform the heart of their community – the park – they are transforming their own hearts and becoming ‘good citizens’.

The quote below links ownership to becoming a citizen and the recognition of local expertise:

“So, overall goals were about ownership and about becoming citizens, it’s about recognising that locals are the experts and that locals know a lot, even though it’s not necessarily been recognized in the past, locals have a whole, an incredible skillset.”

Interviewee E

Because the local community had been exposed to the park and were familiar with how it was used in the past, they were the experts regarding what needed to be changed and by taking ownership were able to make this happen. The ownership of the park and recognition for their knowledge and expertise allowed the community to develop and community members were recognised as ‘good citizens’ improving their park.

The model of community participation that has been operating at Riverton Reserve since 2010 has been possible through the partnership between representatives of the Randwick Park community and the local authority, Auckland Council. This section will cover perceived types of partnership and the experiences, challenges and benefits of partnership for the park and community that interviewees reported.

Partnership can take on various forms. According to Goodwin (2009), a partnership is an arrangement bringing together specified partners in order to achieve a goal. This is a definition of partnership in its loosest form; there can be varying degrees to which each partner participates and this can characterise relationships and overall partnership. Although this analysis is not based around participation *per se*, Arnstein’s Ladder (1969) provides a reference point to understand how the Randwick Park Community has been able to participate in a relationship with Council.

The interviewees presented their thoughts regarding Arnstein's Ladder (1969) and their community-council partnership, as follows:

"Probably somewhere between partnership and delegated power I would've thought." Interviewee H

"I'd say we are at citizen control. . . we have, we have the authority and the ability and the capacity to be able to make decision that directly affect what happens in the park. . . it's not total control because there's a boundary around it, around expectations of you know, the standard of mowing and around some KPI's and stuff but pretty much I think we've got citizen control but we also got the partnership, so it's definitely good." Interviewee E

"Partnership, I think." Interviewee H

"I think it's more community led than a partnership. Well that's how I see it. The building and the facility are there for the community and we are using the community plan to be able to lead what the community might need or want in that space." Interviewee F

Interestingly the participants all had a range of perspectives regarding the community's relationship with council. 'Partnership' still seemed to be the common explanation. However, the mention of 'delegated power' and 'citizen control' is significant. These responses show that some interviewees perceive the community to have more power/decision making abilities than if it were just a normal partnership. The last quote mentions 'community led', rather than 'partnership'. This descriptor is not an option on Arnstein's Ladder (1969) but possibly it should be. 'Community led' can be interpreted as the community having come up with the initiative and being the ones to drive it whilst still relying on some council support. The relationship or partnership between the Randwick Park community and Council is essentially a governance arrangement. In the eyes of the interviewees, governance has been decentralised and powers transferred (Parag, Hamilton, White & Hogan, 2013) to enable the community to maintain and operate the park. According to Arnstein's (1969) description of partnership, this enables engagement and negotiation with the traditional power holder, resulting in a redistribution of power and inclusion of local citizens. The relationship between community and council reflects Arnstein's description of partnership as the community have been able to negotiate with council and attain the power to manage the park and its facilities. I believe that partnership is not a term to be discounted. However,

based on the perspectives of interviewees as reported here, it seems they feel a greater sense of community ownership and leadership than partnership.

It is possible that some of the participants' experiences may have informed how they perceive the community-council relationship or partnership. The quotes below demonstrate some experiences and observations over the duration of the relationship:

"It's hard, it's really hard work doing a partnership with Council. I know we're different". Interviewee A

"We experienced tokenism with council in the beginning. They came in, there was lots of restructuring happening. . . they came in to say that we've been given 6 months to a year to work with you guys to empower you guys to be able to look after this place and after the end of 12 months, we'll hand you the keys and you'll have all the skills and we can walk away. So, we just said, well first thing is, you're not handing us the keys, we've already got the keys." Interviewee E

"kind of had this idea, we've empowered the community now they've done the development, the building's there, sweet, see ya. . . it's like, nah, nah, nah, we've had a partnership right up to now, in a partnership you don't just walk away," Interviewee E

"they [council] try and force stuff to happen and it can't. It just has to happen organically because otherwise you're doing it to people, not with them. Interviewee F

"that we set up the Trust to be able to run this, so I realized that as a community, we couldn't kind of own it as a community, as an individual, we couldn't own it, but as an entity, it gave the identity and power and so as an entity we could negotiate with council to start talking about the partnership relationship that we wanted and then we finally negotiated that we get on a 10 year plan." Interviewee A

These experiences and observations highlight the challenges that interviewees have faced working with council. The first quote acknowledges that the community of Randwick Park has a different model of working with council than other communities. This is significant as often a local government organisation will have processes and protocols for how they work with community, and the model at Riverton Reserve is a divergent model for council and for

New Zealand. Traditionally the council has been able to operate, maintain and develop their parks with minimal, though improving, stakeholder engagement, which follows entrenched and normative frameworks to manage resources (Sharp, McDonald, Sim, Knamiller, Sefton & Wong, 2011). This is a very different approach to how governments typically manage resources (Sharp *et al.*, 2011) and therefore it is not surprising that the community-based park management model at Riverton Reserve challenges the norms of park management.

The second quote mentions experiences of 'tokenism' during which empowerment was forced near the beginning of the relationship. Often empowerment is a council agenda. However, empowerment cannot be successful when it comes from top-down mechanisms (White, 1996). It is unfortunate that this stage of the partnership did not feel genuine for the community, especially because community representatives had been driving the initiative. The interviewee who spoke of tokenism does, however, go on to say: "So we just said, well first thing is, you're not handing us the keys, we've already got the keys". This statement demonstrates the passion that the community have for their role in the park and also shows that they have the strength to challenge the normative frameworks that operate within local government. The third quote again mentions 'empowerment' and how it seemed the council was imposing empowerment on the community. Empowerment comes from within the community and council can support community to feel empowered, but it's not something that can be forced or imposed upon a community. This observation links to the fourth quote in which the interviewee recognises council's approach as 'forcing' or 'trying to make things happen' which will lead to the community not feeling consulted or involved and will likely cause upset within the relationship. The last part of the fourth quote includes the comment: "It just has to happen organically because otherwise you're doing it to people, not with them". This statement indicates that letting relationships develop is key to working with communities. In other words, when partnership can 'happen organically' this enables the community to feel heard, involved and, in the long term, empowered. Empowerment is a source of community identity much like place attachment is. An empowered community builds itself up from the 'grass roots' and builds the community's capacity and ultimately it's resilience (Berkes & Folke, 1998).

The last quote for this section explains the challenges associated with the process of partnership. The community was not in a position, nor did it have the capacity, to just take on the role of managing the park. There was a need for the 'community' to become an 'entity', which is the Trust that operates the park and its facilities. Communities are often faced with the 'expert discourse' such that they are not recognised as experts and therefore are not able to participate or contribute to particular aspects in the authority realm (Galbraith, 2013).

By establishing the Trust, the community was able to be recognised as a legal entity and obtain, or be perceived to have obtained, 'expertise' to take on the management of the park. It is unfortunate that this process was needed to create some levelling between council and community as most other communities are likely to not be in a position to do this. Randwick Park was fortunate to have had some effective leadership to enable their community to pursue this venture.

A final aspect of the partnership theme involves exploring the benefits of the arrangement experienced by the Randwick Park community. The quotes to be discussed are as follows:

"this is partnership and the rules about hiring, we just decided we would deliberately give a lower price for our local people that live in Randwick, so when they hire the facility, they get a discounted rate. . . Because they're the ones often struggling, we don't want our local people not being able to use the facility because they can't afford it. So, we're able to do things like that when we've got the power to manage." Interviewee A

"the trust here has a sort of a, not a consultative, but a protective approach to the community, in the sense that they'll protect the assets for the community, not rather than from." Interviewee F

"led by the community, so the community know what they need, and they also need to be at the table and part of that." Interviewee H

"If council had to run everything here themselves and paying from what we understood from budget, it's probably at least half the price so it's a win that, but also we're also able to solve a lot of problems ourselves that doesn't require outside agencies to get involved." Interviewee E

"It's given the council a different way of looking at a community led model." Interviewee A

The first quote above mentions how the partnership enables the community to use and manage the park and facility in a way that benefits the park. The second and third quotes demonstrate how the partnership has enabled the community to lead and serve themselves, which is important as they are people using the park. It is also important to note that the interviewee who mentions a 'community-led approach' (quote three) understands this approach as the community 'protecting' its 'assets' for itself. This type of thinking links to

aforementioned ideas of ownership and responsibility, whereby giving the community the opportunity to be *de facto* owners through this partnership has empowered them to preserve the park for themselves. Baker, Wilkerson & Brennan (2012) suggest that partnerships led by community organisations are able to connect and engage with the local community better than if government was leading the initiative. Community-led initiatives are important and should be recognised as highly valuable because local government is not familiar with how a specific community is organised (Baker *et al.*, 2012). When an initiative relates to a specific community, local government authorities are not the experts; rather the community have the expert knowledge about the place they live, the place they love and the place which, in this case, they own in a *de facto* sense.

The fourth quote in the section above indicates a benefit for both Council and community. Council most likely benefit through reduced costs. However, this has not been confirmed with council and the community benefit through solving their own problems and improving their own community capacity and development. The fifth quote suggests more of a reflective benefit to the Randwick Park community, council and other future community projects. There is an assumption of success for the community-led model at Randwick Park because there are no specific measures of success. However, as the model is still operating and appears to be working well for the community the benefit of Council pursuing this relationship allows the community-led model to continue. This continuity will provide various learning experiences for Council when it comes to working with communities. There is growing recognition of the important role of community-based management of activities and resources and their contribution to community knowledge (Fleeger & Becker, 2008). Future communities are therefore likely to benefit from the challenges, learnings and experiences of both Randwick Park and Council. Ultimately, this case study demonstrates the possibilities and value of community-led models

There is another a quote that warrants highlighting. Although this quote (detailed below) relates to the benefits of the partnership between community and council, it specifically describes how the partnership has real-world benefits to the community. The interviewee who highlighted this issue said:

“Yeah, so employment, but also development, so we’ve you know, planted a whole lot of trees, and then there’s also so there’s money, opportunities, employment opportunities, ownership opportunities, leadership development that’s occurred from it, break away from the welfare system.” Interviewee E

This comment demonstrates how the partnership and *de facto* ownership of the park and its facilities have enabled community development in Randwick Park. The partnership has allowed the community to develop social enterprises that maintain the park and the facility, supporting community members to be employed. This is hugely significant. The park has created opportunities for community members to become independent from the welfare system and be empowered, thereby enabling community development. This is the very essence of Randwick Park, providing opportunities for the community to better itself and, in turn, better the park as well.

5.4.1 Sub Theme – Participation and Socioeconomic Status

There is a sub-theme of citizen participation that is worth examining. This theme is based around participation and socioeconomic status, which has been acknowledged several times throughout this research. Not only is the community of Randwick Park in a low socioeconomic area, there is a high level of community volunteering, involvement and overall participation in the area, which, according to the literature, is not typical (Brightbill, 1960; Andrew *et al.*, 1994; Omoto, 2014). However, despite the case study as a whole demonstrating some contradictory evidence, important insights have been clearly illustrated. For example, an interviewee observed a difference in socio-economic status that had impacted how the community engaged with services provided in facilities and parks:

“in a weird way, it’s [a similar park and facility to Riverton Reserve] in a very rich neighbourhood and rich people don’t engage. . . the wealthy people purchase services, they don’t participate in communities.” Interviewee F

This reflection is a valuable insight from someone who works with parks and facilities similar to Riverton Reserve and has observed different engagement from the community. The comment regarding rich people not engaging is significant. Within the literature review, I noted that volunteering and community involvement has been frequently framed as a middle-class act. Often it is thought that people who have money and time available are able to give direction to community and society (Brightbill, 1960). In North America it has been noted by several authors that voluntary acts in parks have been from ‘affluent’ members of the community (Andrew, Harvey & Dawson, 1994). This idea is supported by Omoto (2014) who suggests that there is a relationship between class and voluntary membership that can be linked to ‘collective volunteering’ and community involvement. The observations from the interviewee above contradict the literature and the case study of Randwick Park also contradicts the literature. Randwick Park is a highly deprived neighbourhood and is not classed as an affluent or middle-class neighbourhood. The Randwick Park community does

not have a large number of voluntary associations. However, the community do have their park, Riverton Reserve, which seems to be the hub of voluntary and community involvement activities. This may be an anomaly or it may point towards a change in voluntary and community involvement activities. To date, there has been little literature highlighting the contributions made within low socioeconomic communities to provide or enhance their local assets. There has also been a lack of research in New Zealand focused on investigating the relationships that local communities have with their parks. There is a need for further research into community involvement, engagement and ownership of local urban parks in the quest to achieve both positive outcomes for parks and communities.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

The various ways in which parks support and sustain life is a growing area of research. Most literature has focused on the environmental functions and the health benefits (both physical and psychological) provided by parks (Sherer, 2003; Swanwick, *et al.*, 2003; Bedimo-Rung *et al.*, 2005). However, there is only limited research regarding the community benefits and outcomes that parks can facilitate (Chiesura, 2004; Jones, 2002). Parks allow for people from various backgrounds, through informal and unplanned meetings, to interact through common activities and shared experiences. This set of processes promotes community identity and social cohesion (Reeves, 2000). A community with high levels of involvement, participation and connection is likely to have high social cohesion, which has been recognised to have health benefits and supports overall community wellbeing. Members of communities with higher social cohesion are expected to live longer, have better cardiovascular health due to increased physical activity through community activities, and have better mental health as they are connected socially which reduces feelings of isolation and loneliness (PHAC, 2008).

There are also benefits for parks when communities participate and are involved in the space. Parks generally have little formal or informal control and with little intrinsic guardianship are vulnerable to undesirable activities (Groff & McCord, 2012). Community involvement and participation in their local park demonstrates that the park has been cared for and asserts in a positive way that the park is a community territory (Troy & Grove, 2008). This case study of Randwick Park has demonstrated the value of a community caring for, participating in and taking ownership of their park. By taking ownership of the management of the park the community has been able to transform the park from an unsafe, underutilised and unattractive space to a safe, welcoming, attractive and well utilised place that they have become highly attached to. This type of model allows the community to shape the park to suit their needs and enables community place-making to happen. Not only has the community become the kaitiaki, or guardians, of the park, but also the park has become part of the community, as is reflected by the interviewees in this research who described the park [Riverton Reserve] as the “heart and soul of Randwick”.

6.1 Research Review

To conclude the research, I begin by summarising the contribution of each chapter, as follows:

Chapter One presented the current state of urbanisation and the environmental and human health effects that it is having on urban life. Parks, I argued, are able to mitigate several adverse effects of urban development. Parks can, for example, sustain ecosystem services, provide for recreation and exercise, and improve mental health. Most importantly for this research, I have asserted that parks can facilitate various community development outcomes.

In Chapter Two I presented the foundation of literature upon which this research is grounded and builds upon. The review of current literature provided the opportunity to highlight areas which this research can contribute to and also provided alternative perspectives. The key gaps in the literature that this research contributes to were identified in Chapter Two as: research into parks and the role they play in supporting community development; urban park-based research that was not focused on the environment or physical activity; *de facto* community ownership of a park through citizen participation; and community influences on place development. This case study also provides an alternative perspective on volunteering by illustrating that even though Randwick Park is a low socio-economic area with high deprivation there is still a high level of community volunteering, involvement and participation.

Chapter Three provided the context of the case study and also presented Riverton Reserve in relation to the other parks across the Auckland region. It is important to acknowledge that Auckland Council manages and maintains over 4000 parks. However, Riverton Reserve in Randwick Park is the only example of the community having full *de facto* ownership of a park and its operations. There are other parks across Auckland where communities are involved. However, the involvement of these communities aligns with normative ideas of community participation as solely about the achievement of ecological outcomes. Also, none of these communities have the same formal arrangement of managing, operating and governing the park as is the case at Riverton Reserve. This research has illustrated how and why the Randwick Park community has been able to succeed in establishing and sustaining their ownership arrangement with council, but other communities have not.

Chapter Four discussed the research strategy and explained how this research is underpinned by critical geographical understandings of place, parks and community participation, as well as being informed by my positionality as a researcher. The research

strategy allowed flexibility through a case study approach, semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. The research was underpinned by the concepts of place, parks and community participation as these are the key elements of the case. The positions I hold as a parks professional, a long term resident of South Auckland and a researcher, have each inevitably influenced my interpretation of data and the development of research themes. However, I believe the themes presented are robust and may well have arisen if another researcher had conducted this research.

Chapter Five presented, examined and reflected upon the key themes from the interviews. The key themes were place and place attachment, evolution and transformation, citizen participation and community development. Within the theme of place and place attachment there was strong evidence of topophilia – extreme place attachment through love of place. Topophilia was expressed by most interviewees. There were also other appearances of love that were illustrated through the symbolisation of Riverton Reserve and interviewees' descriptions of the park as the 'heart' of the community. It was also clear that evolution and transformation can refer not only to the park but to the overall 'feel' of the community. The theme of citizen participation illustrated the various forms and arrangements of participation in the community, physically and at a political level. The present chapter will critically reflect on the core concepts and findings explored and examined in all previous chapters. This reflection will address how the core concepts relate to the research questions and objectives. By way of reminder, the research question and objectives were:

To understand the evolution of Riverton Reserve as a place where the Randwick Park community have assumed management responsibility.

- 1. To understand how community have shaped the park as a place*
- 2. To understand the governance of the park between community and local government from the community's perspective*
- 3. How did the story of community involvement and management of the park evolve?*
- 4. To understand how the evolved management model has supported community development over time*

6.2 Critical Review of Core Concepts

This section will revisit Figure 2 which was first presented at the end of Chapter Two. I will revisit Figure 2 in order to include additional notes which will be superimposed on to the diagram in light of the foregoing analysis. Figure 10 below depicts these additions and

illustrates the processes and interactions between the core concepts of this research, as well as how these can result in community development outcomes.

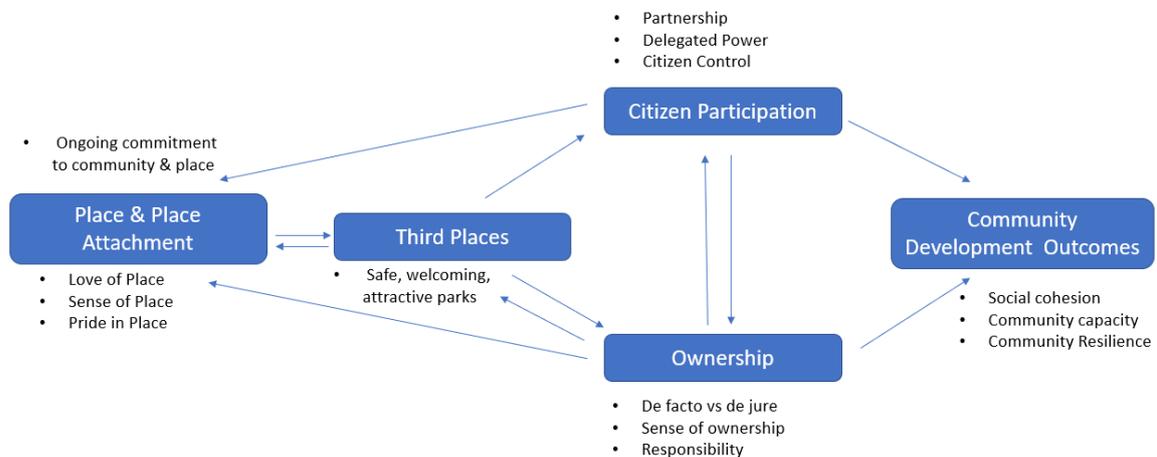


Figure 10. Key concepts diagram including findings from this case study.

The case study of Randwick Park revealed that there was a strong sense of place and place attachment, specifically in the form of love of place and pride in place. Love of place, also known as topophilia (Tuan, 1990), suggests a deeper connection with the park than just caring for it and wanting the park to look aesthetically pleasing. Rather, the park is a place of strong emotional connection for the community. As mentioned previously when the earlier version of the above figure was presented, there is no direct link to place attachment and community outcomes. However, 'ownership' and 'citizen participation' are expressions of place attachment. It is clear from this research that assumed ownership and ongoing citizen participation have fostered a sense of pride and love for Riverton Reserve. Place attachment has also resulted in the park acting as a third place and being transformed into a safe, welcoming and attractive park for its community. Without citizen participation and *de facto* ownership of Riverton Reserve the park may not have been transformed and shaped into the place it is today. Both citizen participation and ownership are key drivers in developing place attachment and delivering community outcomes. Without citizen participation and *de facto* ownership, it is possible there would not be the same outcomes for community or for place. The level of citizen participation is also an important factor. The interviewed community members understood their participation in various forms; as partnership, delegated power and citizen control. These levels of participation are at the top of Arnstein's Ladder (1969). Importantly, had participation been reflective of one of the lower rungs it may not have been

possible for the community to have influence or a sense of empowerment and, consequently, effective outcomes for the community's development would not have been delivered.

Reflecting upon the community of Randwick Park and the community development outcomes that have been achieved through the *de facto* ownership of Riverton Reserve, as well as their ability to shape the park as a place, there are some specific examples that are worth mentioning.

Social cohesion

The interviewees communicated a clear 'sense of belonging' that had developed as a result of their involvement and engagement with Riverton Reserve. Belonging creates a sense of connection to others and is often referred to when discussing social cohesion. Community cohesion is an important outcome not only for the individual's sense of belonging and health, but also for the collective since community connections facilitate support networks and further develop a strong sense of community.

Community capacity

Interviews confirmed that community capacity has increased significantly as a result of the community having *de facto* ownership of Riverton Reserve. By way of example, one interviewee stated that "seeing the local people involved in employment in the park and keeping it, cos if you own a park, that's ownership, you look after it". Being able to support the community through employment opportunities is a great way of developing community capacity, supporting families and reducing the adverse effects associated with unemployment. By allowing the community to operate the community facility it is possible for the community to have some control over the programmes and activities that are delivered. The programmes currently delivered cater to the needs of the community through offering access to services such as Plunket, programmes for personal development and health improvement, as well as cultural activities to promote and support the diverse cultural identities in the community.

Community resilience

Although community resilience was not mentioned specifically in interviews, it is a key outcome of both social cohesion and community capacity. This case study has demonstrated that through attachment to a place that has become a central hub the community has developed resilience and if they were to be negatively impacted by change or a shock then it is likely that the park would be a place of both physical and social support

for them. Parks as resilience infrastructure is a consideration not covered in this research. However, due to its location, size and the facilities it can offer, the park would be able to support the community if needed. In terms of social support, personal networks and involvement and engagement with the park have the potential to facilitate the cohesion and support needed for the community to return to a normal state in the event of a shock or significant change. Riverton Reserve's community management model demonstrates the contribution parks make to community development. If the key concepts outlined in Figure 10 converge in time and place, parks are able to facilitate these processes and potentially deliver positive community outcomes.

6.3 Future Research

There are three components of this research which could provide opportunities for future studies.

Firstly, in terms of the research strategy, the methods used were effective to address the research question and objectives. However, interviewing a larger number of people in the community in a future study could reveal a wider range of themes and strengthen analysis of the themes explored in the current study.

Secondly, time is always a constraint in research. However, it would be very interesting and insightful to conduct a longitudinal study to assess whether research themes and interviewee perspectives change over time. The present research, although valuable, provides a snapshot of the opinions and perspectives of interviewed community members during 2019. Extending the research longitudinally over a series of years could provide valuable information regarding how community composition may impact community involvement within the park. What would happen if the people who have been involved with the park over many years left the area and were replaced by new people with no connection or place attachment? Would the park still hold its identity within the community, for example? Will the next generation of community members, who are currently children, learn the value of their park, take ownership of the park and shape the park to meet their future needs? Such questions could be addressed in a longitudinal study.

Thirdly, as this research has been a single case study, it would be of interest to undertake research with a 'control' park as a second case study. This would mean replicating the research undertaken at Randwick Park at another park that is managed by council to allow

comparisons between a community managed park and a council managed park.

Undertaking case study comparison research could provide an understanding of the less tangible benefits of community management, such as social cohesion and community development. It is probable that social cohesion is unlikely to be high in the context of a park where the surrounding community only use park facilities in isolation and do not undertake participatory activities. Including a control site in future research (e.g., a council managed site) would add further confirmation of the value of community management of parks and the community-based benefits that parks provide.

Nonetheless, this thesis has made a valuable contribution by addressing important gaps in current academic knowledge related to parks, places and participation. Ultimately, the research has extended understandings regarding community park management in Auckland and New Zealand.

Appendices

Appendix A

Interview Questions Community

Overall Research Objectives:

- To understand how community has shaped the park as a place
- To understand the governance relationship between community and local government
- To establish what were the processes/actions/events that enabled a share management model for Randwick Park
- To understand how this shared management has support community development over time

Context Questions

Name:

Role present:

Involvement:

Part One – Personal Relationship with the Park

Tell me about the park and what it means to you?

- Do you use it?
- How do you use it?
- What do you like about the park?
- Can you explain why you like that?

How would you describe the feel of the park?

- Why do you think it feels this way?
- Did the park always feel this way?

Part Two – What do you observe in the park/community

Can you tell me how the park is used?

- Who uses the park?
- How do they use the park?
- Is there anyone who doesn't use the park?
- Who and why do you think they don't use the park?

Tell me about the relationship the Randwick Park community has with the park?

- What do you think the park means to the community?
- Why do you think it means this?
- How do the community show this?

In a few words can you describe what the park means to the Randwick Park community?

Can you tell me why this park is special/unique to the Randwick Park Community?

In your opinion, what has been the most significant change in the park over the years?

- Tell me why you think this?
- What has this meant for the park and the community?

Is there a sense of ownership and responsibility for the park?

- Can you give me some examples?
- Why do you think the community feel this way?

Part Three – Park Management

Are you aware of how the park is managed?

- How do you know this?
- Are all community members aware of this?
- How are they participating in this management?

How would you describe the community are involved in this management?

- Show Arnstein's ladder
- Ask why?
- Has this changed over time?

Can you tell me why the park is managed in this way?

- Was there a trigger that led to the management model?
- What are the motivations for this management model?

Can you tell me what were the goals for this type of management?

- Have these been achieved?
- Why do you think this?

What opportunities have come from the community involvement in the park?

- How have these opportunities affected the community?

In your opinion do you think this management model has been useful/effective/working well?

In your opinion what does the Randwick Park community think of this management model?

Appendix B



School of Environment Reception
Science Centre, Building 302,
Level 6, Room 620
23 Symonds Street, Auckland
T +64 9 923 8465
W www.env.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1142 New Zealand

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

Project Title: Understanding how community ‘ownership’ has shaped a park as a place – A case study of Randwick Park, Manurewa, Auckland.

Researchers: Miss Hannah Chapman-Carr (Student), Dr Ann Bartos & Professor Robin Kearns (Staff)
To: Randwick Park Community Member

This research is being undertaken to collect data for a thesis to fulfil a Masters degree in Environmental Management.

The aim of this research seeks to understand the evolution and implications of Riverton Reserve in Randwick Park as a place where the residential community has taken ‘ownership’. The research is looking to understand how community have shaped the park over time, their motivations, the processes and the relationships between community and local government. The community will be identified as those who have been involved with the development of the park and those who use the park. Auckland Council are the local government organisation in this case study.

We are motivated to undertake this research in an effort to increase knowledge and research on park management involving community. Currently there is limited research documenting community ownership and involvement in parks that is focused on improving community outcomes such as community cohesion, resilience, wellbeing and development of a sense of place. There is also a lack of New Zealand specific case studies. The Randwick Park community and their relationship with Riverton Reserve is unique in terms of the traditional park management approach of top-down management rather than working collaboratively. Riverton Reserve in Randwick Park is the ideal case study to explore the development of place in a park through community involvement/‘ownership’. (Ownership in this context will be referring to de-facto ownership).

Interview for Randwick Park Community Member

We would like to interview members of the Randwick Park community to gain a greater understanding of the evolution and implications of community ‘ownership’ of Randwick Park. This interview can be done either in person or by phone and will take between 30 minutes to 1 hour to complete. The interview will take a semi-structured form with open-ended questions. The interview will seek to inquire about the governance relationship between community and council, the processes/actions/events leading to community ‘ownership,’ and what forms of community development might be occurring in the Randwick Park community, beyond Riverton Reserve. It is expected that up to 10 community members from Randwick Park will be recruited for interviews.

Audio Recording

We request that interviews be audio recorded with your consent. If you consent to your interview being recorded, you may ask to stop the tape at any time. If you do not consent to be audio recorded, hand notes will be written by the interviewer. Post interview the recorded interview will be transcribed for the purposes of analysis. Participants will be sent a copy of the interview transcript, and you may review and request to edit changes. You may withdraw any data provided up to two weeks from the date of being sent the transcripts or notes for those who do not wish to be recorded.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

The interview process will not be anonymous as the interviewer will know the identity of the participant. The interview process will be confidential, and the identity of the participant will only be known by the interviewer/researcher. Identities will be kept confidential for the duration of the research.

Given the small pool of participants from different sectors confidentiality will be aimed for, however, there is a chance that participants could be recognized.

Data use and storage

Data and images collected will be used for the purposes of Hannah Chapman-Carr's Thesis as well as the potential use in publications and conference presentations. No names or identifying details will be used when referencing data from interviews for thesis or publication purposes.

All hardcopy material collected will be held in a locked filing cabinet within the University of Auckland's School of Environment department, and all digital data will be held on School of Environment password-protected servers. After six years, all research material will be either destroyed (papers will be shredded) or permanently deleted from servers.

Participation in the research is entirely voluntary. Participants are free to withdraw from participation at any time without providing a reason. You will be provided a koha, in the form of a \$50 supermarket voucher as a thank you for your time.

You may choose to have a summary of the research findings sent to you at the end of Miss Chapman-Carr's completion of her thesis.

Thank you very much for your time and contribution to this research. You may contact Hannah directly should you have any further queries about the study.

Hannah's email address is hcha455@aucklanduni.ac.nz.

My supervisors are:

Dr Ann E. Bartos
Senior Lecturer, School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Phone (09) 373 7599 ext. 82571
Email: a.bartos@auckland.ac.nz

Professor Robin Kearns, School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Phone: (09) 373 7599 ext. 88442
Email: r.kearns@auckland.ac.nz

My Director of School is:

Associate Professor Julie Rowland
School of Environment
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019, Auckland
Phone: (09) [923 7412](tel:09-923-7412)
Email: j.rowland@auckland.ac.nz

For any queries regarding ethical concerns please contact: The Chair, The University of Auckland
Participants Ethics Committee, The University of Auckland, Research Office – Office of the Vice
Chancellor, Private Bag 92019, Auckland, 1142. Telephone: (09) 373-7999 extension: 83711. Email:
ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on 19 August 2019 for
three years, Reference Number 023307

Appendix C



SCIENCE
SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT

School of Environment Reception
Science Centre, Building 302,
Level 6, Room 620
23 Symonds Street, Auckland
T +64 9 923 8465
W www.env.auckland.ac.nz
The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland 1142 New Zealand

CONSENT FORM

This consent form will be held for a period of six years

Project Title: Understanding how community ‘ownership’ has shaped a park as a place – A case study of Randwick Park, Manurewa, Auckland.

Researchers: Miss Hannah Chapman-Carr (Student), Dr Ann Bartos & Professor Robin Kearns (Staff)

I have read the Participant Information Sheet. I understand the nature of this research and that participation in this research is voluntary. I understand why I have been selected and that I have had the opportunity to ask questions and had them answered to my satisfaction.

- I agree to participate in the research.
- I understand participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at any stage without providing a reason.
- I understand that this interview will take approximately one hour to complete.
- I understand I am giving my own opinion and will try to answer the questions as best as I can.
- I understand that my name and identity will be kept confidential by the researcher for the duration of the research and publication of findings.
- I understand that I may review and request to make changes to my interview transcript up to two weeks after the interview.
- I understand that any data collected will be used in thesis production as well as publication and conference proceedings.
- I understand that information collected in the interview will be securely stored for 6 years and then destroyed.

I understand all of the above and I agree to take part in this research.

I **consent / do not consent** (please circle) to this interview being audio-recorded.

Name (please print): _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

I **wish / do not wish** to receive a summary of findings, which can be emailed to me at this

email address: _____

Appendix D

Office of the Vice-Chancellor
Office of Research Strategy and Integrity (ORSI)



The University of Auckland
Private Bag 92019
Auckland, New Zealand

Level 11, 49 Symonds Street
Telephone: 64 9 373 7599
Extension: 83711
humanethics@auckland.ac.nz

UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND HUMAN PARTICIPANTS ETHICS COMMITTEE (UAHPEC)

19-Aug-2019

MEMORANDUM TO:

Dr Ann Bartos
Environment

Re: Application for Ethics Approval (Our Ref. 023307): Approved

The Committee considered the application for ethics approval for your study entitled **Understanding how community 'ownership' has shaped a park as a place - A case study of Randwick Park, Manurewa, Auckland.**

We are pleased to inform you that ethics approval has been granted for a period of three years.

The expiry date for this approval is 19-Aug-2022.

Completion of the project: In order that up-to-date records are maintained, you must notify the Committee once your project is completed.

Amendments to the project: Should you need to make any changes to the project, please complete an Amendment Request form in InfoEd, giving full details along with revised documentation. If the project changes significantly, you are required to submit a new application to UAHPEC for approval.

Funded projects: If you received funding for this project, please provide this approval letter to your local Faculty Research Project Coordinator (RPC) or Research Project Manager (RPM) so that the approval can be notified via a Service Request to the Research Operations Centre (ROC) for activation of the grant.

The Chair and the members of UAHPEC would be happy to discuss general matters relating to ethics approvals. If you wish to do so, please contact the Ethics Administrators at humanethics@auckland.ac.nz in the first instance.

Additional information:

1. Do not forget to complete the 'approval wording' on the PISs, CFs and/or advertisements and emails, giving the dates of approval and the reference number. This needs to be completed before you use the documents or send them out to your participants.

Please quote Protocol number **023307** on all communication with the UAHPEC regarding this application.

(This is a computer generated letter. No signature required.)

UAHPEC Administrators
University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee

c.c. Head of Department / School, Environment
Prof Robin Kearns
Miss Hannah Chapman-Carr

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